CHAPTER 2

Sint Ista Graecorum: *How to be an Epicurean in Late Republican Rome – Evidence from Cicero's* On Ends *1–2*

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A Philosophy for Dummies all over the World?

Imagine: One day you discover the ultimate truth – what do you do? Of course, you are delighted and enthusiastically want to share your discovery with the rest of the world. Your predecessors have already published, after arduous research and a painstaking thinking process, all the little bits of truth that they had fished out of a nature that – as Heraclitus already knew – likes to hide (fr. 22 B 123 = Themistius, *Orat.* 5.69b). Then, after this age-long tradition of careful searching, the day comes that light definitively breaks through and the decisive truth is found, a turning point in intellectual history. From that moment on, there is no need for further discussions, as the clear truth is available to everyone.

This is what happened at the end of the fourth century BC, and the "divine mind"[1] who discovered the truth was Epicurus. For later followers such as Lucretius, his discoveries eclipsed all previous achievements. They were even more precious than the gifts of Ceres and Liber, more impressive than Hercules' labors (*DRN* 5.13–54; cf. also 3.1–30). No wonder, then, that Epicurus also wished to communicate his insights to all other people. He addressed his letters to everyone, men and women alike,[2] to both young and old (*Men.* 122), to both upper and lower classes, including slaves.[3] He even showed a fundamental openness to other philosophical traditions, provided that they were compatible with the truth he discovered.[4] And this

[1] Lucr. 3.15; cf. also 5.8.

[2] Plutarch, *De lat. viv.* 1129A (πᾶσι καὶ πάσαις); *Adv. Colot.* 1126F (πρὸς πάντας ἐγράφετο καὶ πάσας); Seneca, *Ep.* 14.18; cf. also Epicurus, *Hdt.* 37; *Pyth.* 85; fr. [59] Arr.[2] For the women living in the Garden, see esp. Gordon: 2004; cf. Erler: 1994, 287–288.

[3] Such as Mys (DL 10.3 and 10), who also received letters from the master (fr. 152–155 U). According to DeWitt: 1954, 95, Mys' position "was comparable to that of Tiro in the household of Cicero."

[4] See *Nat.* 14, col. 1–17 Leone; Erler: 2011, 19–22.

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eagerness to divulge the Epicurean truth *urbi et orbi* was taken over by later followers. It still seems to have lost nothing of its original enthusiasm in the second century AD, when Diogenes of Oenoanda published his inscription for the sake of everyone: the young, the old, and those who are somewhere in between, "not yet old, but not indeed young either,"[5] including not only Greeks but foreigners, too.[6] And since he explicitly addresses future generations as well (fr. 3.IV.13–V.4), we may even in our own day witness the appeal of the school.[7] Epicurean philosophy, in short, has a remarkably strong universalizing tendency.

Although this tendency is well known, we sometimes risk forgetting how radical it was and how far-reaching its consequences actually were. After all, we may reasonably presume that Epicurean philosophy meant something completely different for a female slave at Demetrius' court in Epicurus' day and for a male aristocrat in the Rome of Vespasian. It is not evident that all the differences in time, place, external circumstances and prevalent ideological presuppositions can be bracketed without any problem. If philosophy, indeed, "does have a geography,"[8] it is worth re-examining seriously Epicurus' claim of the universalizability of his philosophy.

In *On Ends*, Cicero suggests that the Epicureans recruit their followers among the uncultivated peasants (2.12). This may be no more than a polemical smear, in line with Cicero's generally unfavorable view of Epicureanism,[9] but we may take it as an excellent point of departure for a thought experiment. Let us, for the time being, leave Cicero's world and return to that of Epicurus in order to take a few local farmers – say Gorgias and Daos, the characters of Menander's *Grouch* – from their plough in order to turn them into Epicureans. Of course, Gorgias and Daos are not very learned, to say the least, and are entirely ignorant of philosophical speculation. Is it possible to transform them in a satisfactory way into genuine Epicureans?

Yes, it is. Epicurus insisted that no erudition is required to understand his truth and live according to it,[10] and in spite of the impressive learning

[5] Fr. 29.III + NF 207.I.13 – NF 207.III.13.
[6] Fr. 3.V.4–8; 30.I.14–II.2; 32.II.9–III.1; 119.III.2–3.
[7] See Bergsma, Poot and Liefbroer: 2008 for an assessment of the applicability of Epicurus' philosophy to the situation of our own day.
[8] Woolf: 2015, 5.
[9] Cicero usually places Epicurus' philosophy at the lowest level, associating it with beasts and with vulgar, effeminate, narrow-minded hedonism; see esp. Görler: 1974, 63–83.
[10] See, e.g., DL 10.6 (= fr. 163 U); Athenaeus, 13.588a; Plutarch, *Non posse* 1094D (= fr. 117 U); Lactantius, *Div. inst.* 3.25.7 (= fr. 227[a] U); Cicero, *Fin.* 1.71–72 and 2.12; *Nat. D.* 2.74; cf. Erler: 1992b, 317–319.

of later Epicureans such as Philodemus, we should not tone down the radical nature of Epicurus' original claim. Metrodorus even went so far as to say that we should not be dismayed if we do not know on which side Hector fought, or if we cannot quote the opening lines of the *Iliad* (Plutarch, *Non posse* 1094E = fr. 24 K.). Gorgias and Daos, then, can even do without the absolute minimum in this respect. But what *do* they need? First of all, if they swallow Epicurus' "fourfold remedy" (τετραφάρμακον), they will no longer be afraid of the gods and of death, and they will gain a sound insight into pleasure and pain. On that basis, they can begin to pursue their pleasures in their own way, since Epicurus left much room for individual judgment of concrete circumstances.[11] What they further need, then, is a careful calculus of pleasure and pain, and in that field, sober-minded farmers like Gorgias and Daos, who stick to common sense, may well have some advantage over sophisticated minds.[12] Beyond this, we cannot expect that they will have deep insight into the Epicurean canon, in epistemological theories about preconceptions and perception, in complicated details of Epicurean theology, atomism and the swerve, or in the tenets of other philosophical schools. In that sense, their Epicureanism will be rudimentary,[13] but they will experience all the pleasures of their belly – which, we should not forget, is the principle and root of every good[14] and the region that contains the highest end (Plutarch, *Non posse* 1098D = fr. 40 K.) – they will not be seduced by excessive and unnecessary luxury or by empty desires, and they will be free from superstition and the fear of death. The Epicureanism of Gorgias and Daos will be an Epicureanism sui generis, no doubt, but it will be perfectly in line with their character, condition and the particular circumstances of their lives. In other words, it will be precisely the kind of Epicureanism that is fitting for them. We can conclude, then, that it is indeed possible to turn them into genuine Epicureans.

Similar thought experiments can be set up about female slaves at the royal court in Epicurus' day, about old sculptors, ordinary cobblers or barbarian traders. All their situations are different, but all of them can in their own way adopt Epicurean philosophy. In this essay, I would like

[11] See on this Roskam: 2007a, 147–148 and *passim*. Such openness is the logical implication of the choice for pleasure as the final end.

[12] In that respect, Epicurus' statement that "prudence" (φρόνησις) is even more precious than philosophy itself (*Men.* 132) makes perfect sense indeed.

[13] Perhaps not unlike the simplified Epicureanism propagated by authors like Amafinius and Catius (Cicero, *Acad.* 1.5; *Tusc.* 4.6–7; *Fam.* 15.16.1–2 and 15.19.2); Roskam: 2007a, 84–85.

[14] See Athenaeus 7.280a and 12.546f (= fr. 409 U).

to focus on a completely different context, viz. the world of the late Cicero. In a way, the challenge is here even greater, since we are now dealing with a completely different place (Rome), date (the first century BC) and (social, political, ideological) context, yet our basic question remains the same: Is Epicurus' truth still equally relevant in this particular situation or do the new circumstances ask for significant modifications or even undermine the whole doctrine? Our question, in short, is: How can one be an Epicurean in late-Republican Rome?

This, of course, is quite an ambitious question and a full answer would require a book-length study, if only because several alternatives are possible. In all likelihood, Amafinius would come up with a view that differs from those of Philodemus, Lucretius or Cicero. For reasons of space, I confine myself to one author (Cicero) and one work (*On Ends*). This double limitation implies that our conclusions will only yield a partial answer. Nevertheless, we will see that Cicero's discussion of Epicureanism in the first two books of *On Ends* raises several general questions that are particularly relevant for our topic and even allow us to reach more generic conclusions.

The Greek Perspective of *On Ends* 1–2

In the proem to *On Ends* (1.1–12), Cicero defends his decision to write philosophical works in Latin against the widespread aversion to philosophy and against a certain snobbish preference for Greek works. Although this proem is not without relevance for our question, as it thematizes in a direct and programmatic way the confrontation between the Greek and Roman intellectual world in Cicero's day, I nevertheless prefer to skip it and immediately turn to the actual discussion, both because the proem stands on itself and may have been conceived earlier[15] and because it has been well studied recently.[16] We will have some opportunities, though, to refer to it in the course of our analysis.

Before Torquatus starts his defense of Epicurus' doctrine of the final end in Book 1, Cicero first launches a short general attack against Epicurean philosophy, rejecting in a fairly systematic way its natural philosophy (1.17–21), logic (1.22) and ethics (1.23–25). One of the striking aspects of this initial criticism is its predominantly Greek intellectual framework. In the domain of natural philosophy, for instance, Cicero focuses on the

[15] It may have been one of the proems gathered in the separate *volumen prohoemiorum* (*Att.* 16.6.4).
[16] See esp. Baraz: 2012, 113–127.

relation between several views of Democritus and Epicurus. What he offers us, in other words, is the kind of brief, technical discussion we also find in Greek theoretical polemics,[17] and what we do not find at all are clear traces of a specifically Roman input. The same holds true for his discussion of logic. As far as ethics is concerned, Cicero compares Epicurus' position with that of Aristippus and the Cyrenaics – again, the same Greek school tradition. Yet here we at last find a Roman element, too: Cicero confronts Torquatus with the impressive achievements of his own ancestors. This is the first encounter with the Roman world in the discussion. I shall come back to it later and examine how "Roman" this argument actually is. For the time being, I confine myself to the observation that Triarius ignores it in his recapitulative summary of Cicero's attack (1.26). There, Aristippus' name is at least mentioned, while the famous Torquati are not.

Torquatus' survey of Epicurus' philosophy shows the same general tendency. Just like Cicero, he usually refers to a Greek intellectual framework. He even explicitly states that he will say nothing new (1.28), which is an interesting disclaimer in our context. Of course, the phrase *nihil novi* need not imply that Torquatus directly takes over everything from Epicurus himself – we shall see in a moment that he also takes into account later developments. Still, it is not without importance that he begins his account by underlining that his approach is perfectly in line with Epicurus, "the author of the system himself" (1.29). The whole emphasis, then, is on continuity.

Moreover, throughout Torquatus' survey, we find many clear references to the Greek tradition. Epicurus' understanding of pleasure as the absence of pain is illustrated with a reference to an Athenian statue of Chrysippus and opposed to the Cyrenaic view (1.39). Several sections contain an accumulation of material that can be related to the Greek tradition and to the position of Epicurus himself,[18] and even Torquatus' examples sometimes sound rather Greek. His reference (in 1.58) to a city rent by faction reminds one of the well-known "Greek" problem of a πόλις ruined by internal στάσις, and as examples of true friendship, Torquatus lists Theseus and Orestes (1.65).

The overall impression, so far, is that the intellectual framework of *On Ends* 1 is to a very significant degree that of the Greek tradition. A similar

[17] See, e.g., Plutarch, *Non posse* 1100A and esp. *Adv. Colot.* 1108E–1111E, with the discussion of Kechagia: 2011, 179–212 and Castagnoli: 2013.

[18] Just a few other examples, of which there are many more: 1.38 ~ KD 18; 1.40 ~ KD 2 and 4; 1.45 ~ KD 29; 1.57 ~ KD 5; 1.63 ~ KD 16 and 19; 1.65 ~ KD 27; 1.68 ~ KD 28.

conclusion holds true for the second book as well, although the Roman element there becomes more prominent. But as we shall see later, the Greek pole is not forgotten, to say the least. Cicero often refers to Epicurus and to his "alter ego" Metrodorus (2.7 and 2.92). This observation in itself already undermines the hypothesis[19] that the founding fathers of the school were no longer relevant in Cicero's day and that Cicero only read the works of contemporary Epicureans. It is true that Cicero elsewhere claims that Epicurus' and Metrodorus' works are only read by the Epicureans themselves (*Tusc.* 2.8), but such polemical statements should not be taken at face value. Even more, ancient polemicists as a rule tend to take the orthodox position of the founders of the school as their point of reference rather than dealing with later modifications, and Cicero is not different in this respect. Although he was interested in contemporary developments (see below), he undoubtedly regarded the writings of the ancient masters as the principal criterion for determining the orthodox position.

Just like the first book of *On Ends*, the second contains many references to technical discussions that were held in the Greek philosophical schools. Cicero more than once recalls the position of Hieronymus of Rhodes (2.8; 2.16; 2.32) and of Aristippus (2.18; 2.20). In the context of a doxographical survey of views regarding the final end,[20] he mentions the views of Aristotle, Callipho, Diodorus, Hieronymus and Aristippus (2.19), and again, more elaborately, those of Aristotle and Polemo, Callipho, Diodorus, Aristippus, the Stoics, Hieronymus, Carneades, Pyrrho, Aristo and Erillus (2.34–35; further developed in 2.36–43). Remarkably enough, all of these thinkers belong to the old, Greek tradition. Should we conclude, then, that Cicero could not come up with one Roman thinker who developed a relevant thought about this issue? Perhaps we should, at least in the sense that no Roman thinker at that time had become a paradigmatic figure whose philosophical position was regarded as innovative and worth mentioning alongside the views of the great Greek philosophers. The latter, by contrast, often appear in Book 2: Cicero mentions the seven Sages (2.7), Democritus (2.102), Socrates (2.1–2; 2.90), Plato (2.2; 2.4; 2.45; 2.52; 2.92), Aristotle (2.17; 2.106), the Cyrenaics (2.114), the Stoics (2.13) – including Zeno (2.17), Cleanthes (2.69) and Chrysippus (2.44) – and Carneades (2.59). More than once, their names

[19] Put forward by Delattre: 1984.

[20] The whole survey rests on the traditional *Carneadea divisio* and follows the polemical approach of the New Academy; see Lévy: 1984; cf. Brittain: 2016.

also occur concerning points of secondary importance.[21] Occasionally, Cicero's references to the Greek tradition even risk becoming pedantic. A case in point is his elaborate discussion of the conflict between Socrates and sophists like Gorgias (2.1–2) – as if Torquatus and Triarius, who are both explicitly characterized as learned men (1.13; cf. 1.26), really needed such a lesson.

Moreover, the "Greek framework" of Book 2 is not confined to the philosophical tradition but also includes illustrious statesmen and warlords (2.62, 67, 97 and 112) and famous examples of friendship (2.79). One may add to all this anecdotes such as the one about Themistocles and Simonides (2.104) and several highlights of the Greek literary tradition: a reference to the famous story of Solon and Croesus (2.87, referring to Herodotus 1.29–33), an allusion to Xenophon's description of the Persians' diet (2.92, cf. Xenophon, *Cyr.* 1.2.8), a translation of a verse from Euripides (2.105; *TrGF* 5.1, fr. 133) and a reference to famous Greek authors and artists (2.115).

This long list may be tedious and prosaic, but it is important in that it shows how relevant the Greek tradition is for Cicero in these first two books of *On Ends*. On the basis of this survey, we can already come to some conclusions.

First, the above list illustrates how Roman aristocrats like Torquatus and Cicero actually engage in philosophy. Their whole thinking is moulded by the traditional framework of the Greek philosophical schools. They have no problem with linking their different views to that of the great Greek thinkers of the past. When Torquatus, for instance, expresses his preference for continuous speeches, Cicero immediately – almost naturally, one might say – connects this with the position of Zeno the Stoic.[22] As already observed above, moreover, no attempt can be found to relate the opinions of Torquatus and Cicero to that of important Roman thinkers. The overall philosophical framework of Books 1 and 2 of *On Ends* is Greek.

This is the direct consequence of Cicero's thorough familiarity with Greek philosophy. Since he attentively followed at Athens the courses of Zeno and Phaedrus in his youth,[23] we can be sure that he even knew the

[21] E.g. in 2.15 (Heraclitus and Plato), 2.17 (Zeno and Aristotle) and 2.52 (Plato).

[22] We may well discover a subtle trace of malice in Cicero's attempt to connect the position of his Epicurean friend with that of the Stoic Zeno. In the context of this friendly dialogue, this suggestion is probably *sine ira*, but not necessarily *sine studio*. Later, Diogenes of Oenoanda would offer a clever Epicurean retort by publishing his Epicurean inscription on a Stoa.

[23] See esp. *Fin.* 1.16 and *Fam.* 13.1.2; cf. *Nat. D.* 1.93 and *Phil.* 5.13. On Phaedrus, see esp. Raubitschek: 1949 and Erler: 1994, 273.

Garden from the inside. Moreover, he in all likelihood deepened his knowledge by reading the works of contemporary Epicureans[24] and by discussing Epicurean philosophy with his learned friends (including Atticus, his former fellow student in the Athenian Garden).[25] This background, then, also helps to explain the great significance of the Greek tradition in the first two books of *On Ends*: Cicero had so thoroughly appropriated this tradition that it simply had become part and parcel of his own philosophical frame of reference.

This conclusion strongly problematizes the clear-cut opposition between "Greek" and "Roman" that can often be found in scholarly literature. Fundamental questions about happiness, the final end, the successful life and so on have a general scope and cannot really be pegged down to one specific world (either Greek or Roman). If indeed Roman thinkers like Cicero prove to reflect about such problems on the basis of the rich Greek tradition that they have entirely appropriated, a rigid dichotomy between "typically Greek" and "typically Roman" makes no sense at all. One might object, though, that such radical opposition can to an important extent be traced back to the works of Cicero himself. This is true, indeed. Especially in the programmatic proems to his dialogues, such an opposition can be found more than once, but it occurs elsewhere, too. In the second book of *On Ends*, for instance, Cicero repeatedly argues that some topics are not permitted to Romans and should be left to the Greeks: *sint ista Graecorum* (2.68; cf. 2.80). Moreover, such opposition between "Greek" and "Roman" is not merely a rhetorical construct of Cicero himself, but seems to rest on broader contemporary debates and convictions.[26] Yet even though all this is true, it is appropriate to maintain an attitude of caution towards oversimplified applications of such labels. As we saw, Cicero and Torquatus have made traditional Greek thinking their own to such an extent that it had become part and parcel of their thinking. Cicero elsewhere claims that he has always combined Greek and Latin elements (*Off.* 1.1), and even more instructive than such explicit statements are passages such as *On Ends* 2.105–106, where he smoothly combines Greek material (Epicurus, Euripides, Aristotle) with Roman

[24] Such as Lucretius (see Gatzemeier: 2013, 27–47) and Philodemus (see Delattre: 1984 and Tsouna: 2001; Erler: 2001 is more skeptical about Philodemus' importance for Cicero's discussion of Epicureanism, although he too agrees that Cicero probably read Philodemus' works).

[25] For the Epicureanism of Atticus, see Gilbert (Chapter 4) in this volume.

[26] See Baraz: 2012, 13–42.

(T. Manlius Torquatus, Marius, Scipio Africanus).[27] That Cicero does not deem it necessary to comment on such combinations tellingly shows that to his own mind, and probably to those of his intellectual friends, the clear-cut distinction between "Greek" and "Roman" was far less evident than he himself sometimes suggests.

Second, this conclusion throws further light on the situation of the Epicurean school in Cicero's day. The philosophical community of the Garden in Athens still existed, and we may presume that it even had some doctrinal authority, although it had ceased to be the only institution where the "orthodox" position was defined. Other circles, like that in Campania where Philodemus was active, had meanwhile come into existence[28] and saw no problem in disagreeing with the Athenian Garden. In such a context, the Epicurean school is no longer synonymous with the Athenian Garden.[29] In other words, a man can also be a full member of the Epicurean school when he endorses the Epicurean point of view during a discussion on Cicero's estate at Cumae or when he pursues Epicurean pleasures in Piso's villa in Herculaneum. Epicureanism was not merely institutionally embedded, but had become a school of thinking that was spread over many local communities. From such a perspective, then, the Torquatus of *On Ends* is no less a full member of the Epicurean school than a student of the Athenian Garden, and can no less participate actively in the philosophical debates that are held within the school. This evolution raises two further questions.

First, did it entail innovations in communicative patterns within the school? The different participants in the discussion in *On Ends* show a remarkable friendliness, being lavish in giving compliments to one another. They prove to be open-minded, as a rule try to be fair, and while drawing out their friends (1.26 and 1.72) they confirm their willingness to listen to each other's arguments and even to be persuaded (cf. 1.15; 1.23).[30] How all this relates to traditional communication patterns in

[27] In this context, Cicero's repeated use of Greek poets in their Latin translation also deserves mention. See on this also Cicero's own comments in *On Ends* 1.4–5. A survey of the material can be found in Dueck: 2009.

[28] Even in Epicurus' own day, several such communities already existed, such as that of Lampsacus, and Epicurus kept in touch with its members through a lively correspondence.

[29] Cf. Fuhrer: 2012.

[30] A further indication of this fundamental open-mindedness is the open end of the discussion; cf. Schofield: 2008.

the Epicurean Garden (e.g. to the ideal of frank speech and to the notorious polemical laughter) is a topic that calls for further study.[31]

Second, did it entail doctrinal innovations? Both Cicero and Torquatus attach great importance to their own critical judgment (1.6; 1.12; 1.72), and three times Torquatus indeed expresses his personal opinion about a discussion that is carried on in his school. In 1.29–31, he distinguishes between three views on the choice for pleasure as the final end. Epicurus himself regards this choice as self-evident, relying on the senses. Other Epicureans aim at a more subtle position, thinking that sense perception should be supported by further rational arguments. Yet others are less confident and acknowledge that the issue requires a lot of theoretical speculation. This list, then, is not a merely neutral juxtaposition of three contrasting views, but also contains a concise critical evaluation of them. Again, it is evident how thoroughly Torquatus has appropriated this school tradition. Furthermore, and quite remarkably, he himself opts for the third view, which to a certain extent disagrees with Epicurus himself. Torquatus no doubt qualifies as a loyal Epicurean, but he never gives up his critical sense. Somewhat further (1.55), he points to the complicated question of the relationship between mental and corporeal pleasures and pains. Again, he admits that many Epicureans adopt a different position, but insists that these are ignorant. Here, too, Torquatus expresses his own judgment, deciding for himself who are the *imperiti* and whose view is correct. The third section where Torquatus deals with internal disagreements in the Epicurean school concerns friendship (1.66–70). Some Epicureans insist that every friendship rests on utility and personal pleasure, others argue that the pursuit of pleasure constitutes the initial impetus for friendship but that we later begin to love our friends for their own sake, and yet others believe that friendship is based on a kind of contract. The particularities of these different theories need not detain us here.[32] Important for us is that Torquatus here again expresses his personal judgment. In his opinion (1.66: *ut mihi videtur*), the first position is well tenable, whereas the second one is advocated by Epicureans who are a bit more timid yet still fairly acute (1.69).

[31] For the importance of frankness in an Epicurean context, much interesting information can be found in Philodemus' *De lib. dic*. As to the issue of polemical laughter, relevant is, for instance, the difference between Torquatus' courtly behavior in *On Ends* and Velleius' aggressive approach in *On the Nature of the Gods*; see on the latter Classen: 2010.

[32] They are often discussed in secondary literature; see, e.g., Mitsis: 1988, 98–128; O'Connor: 1989; O'Keefe: 2001; E. Brown: 2002; Evans: 2004; D. Armstrong: 2011; Frede: 2016.

These three passages may help in refuting a prejudice that existed for a long time in scholarly literature and has only gradually been abandoned, viz. the belief that the Epicurean school was one monolithic tradition, in which no real discussion was possible and where every adherent unquestioningly agreed with what Epicurus said.[33] This view was to a significant extent influenced by un-Epicurean sources such as Seneca (*Ep.* 33.4), Numenius (Eusebius, *PE* 14.5.3 = fr. 24 des Places) or indeed Cicero, who suggests in *On Ends* that Epicurus' position is the "light" of his followers (2.70) and that a great multitude of people will be glad to accept everything Epicurus teaches them as true (2.28). Torquatus, for his part, appears as an enthusiastic admirer of Epicurus.[34] But we now see that this admiration for and loyalty towards his master is not uncritical and that he sometimes even defends positions that run counter to those of Epicurus. Torquatus, in short, is a genuine Epicurean who is not afraid of following his own *iudicium*.

Moreover, it is not just on minor details that he dares to express his own opinion, but on fundamental issues like pleasure and friendship, and he deals with these questions in a fairly technical way that echoes the theoretical debates in the schools. It has been observed that all the participants in the philosophical discussions of Cicero's dialogues are aristocratic Romans and that professional (often Greek) house-philosophers are glaringly absent.[35] This observation is pertinent indeed, but it should be (re) interpreted in light of the conclusions reached above. As a matter of fact, in his capacity as a follower of Epicurus, Torquatus adds no less to the position of his school than would a professional philosopher. Even more, as Cicero presents the situation in *On Ends* 1–2, the difference between the professional philosopher and the aristocratic members of Cicero's erudite circle is slight. Nor is there any significant difference concerning the "Greek" and the "Roman" perspective.[36] We have seen that Torquatus adopts precisely the Greek traditional framework that the professional Greek house-philosophers had and that he considers his own position to be in line with that of his Greek philosophical predecessors. What we find in *On Ends* 1–2, then, is not a dynamic of opposition between "Greek"

[33] Seminal studies that did much to undermine this unjustified view include Angeli: 1988, 82–102; Sedley: 1989; Erler: 1992a; 1992b; cf. also Roskam: 2007a, 149–150.

[34] He regards his master Epicurus as "the only person who has discerned the truth" (1.14) and as the "great explorer of the truth, the master-builder of human happiness" (1.32); cf. also 1.63 and 1.71–72. The translations, here and elsewhere, are borrowed from the Loeb edition.

[35] Fuhrer: 2012, 243; Steel: 2013, 229; Gildenhard: 2013, 261–262.

[36] *Contra* Blyth: 2010/11, 73, and Gildenhard: 2013, 261–263.

and "Roman" but a dynamic of completion and culmination of the Greek tradition. That this was indeed how Cicero himself saw it is further corroborated by his provocative claim at the outset of the *Tusculan Disputations* that the Romans generally improve upon what they have received from the Greeks (1.1). Torquatus, Cicero and others, then, do not merely receive and appropriate the Greek tradition, but also improve on it from the inside.

The question then remains: How did they manage to do this? Their approach is much less radical than Cicero suggests. Again, we should not be misled by the rhetoric of Cicero's proems. In dialogues like *On Ends*, we see more clearly how the process of reception and appropriation in Cicero's circle concretely works. The Roman aristocrats follow the traditional paths of the (Greek) school and lay their own accents, often on the basis of views that, again, had already been elaborated by previous (Greek) members of the schools. It is striking indeed that nowhere in the aforementioned passages from *On Ends* are the "improvements" Cicero has in mind or Torquatus' personal opinions influenced by the changed circumstances or by peculiar insights that have been derived from any specifically Roman context. On the contrary, concerning the discussions about both pleasure and friendship, Torquatus refers to the polemical objections of other philosophical schools (1.31 and 1.69). Throughout his survey, then, Torquatus follows the internal logic of traditional school debates without borrowing a single argument from the specifically Roman attitude towards friendship or pleasure.

Finally, all this has important implications for the question of Cicero's sources. On the basis of the results of the German tradition of *Quellenforschung*, the bulk of the first book of *On Ends* was long traced back to a treatise of a later Epicurean author; the second one (and the polemical attack in 1.17–25), so it was argued, was directly influenced by a lost treatise of Antiochus.[37] This hypothesis obviously provides an easy explanation for the omnipresence of the Greek element in the first two books of *On Ends* (as it regards the whole discussion as mere ἀπόγραφα of two Greek works), but it does so at a high cost, by unduly reducing Cicero to his sources. Nowadays, scholars have become much more sensitive to the *voluntas auctoris* of later writers.[38] Cicero was no mere slave of his

[37] The hypothesis was elaborated by Hirzel: 1882, 630–668 and accepted in the *RE* article by Philippson: 1939, 1136–1137.
[38] See, e.g., D'Anna: 1965, 32–52 on Cicero.

sources, nor were his dialogues mere "copies" of earlier Greek works.[39] As noted above, Cicero had an excellent knowledge of Epicurean philosophy and was perfectly able to present the core of Epicurus' philosophy while adding his own criticism and his own arrangement (1.6).

One element, however, is often neglected in such discussions of Cicero's sources: the importance of social contacts in the aristocratic circles of Cicero's day. The literary setting of *On Ends* and other dialogues is not merely a matter of fictional *ornatus*. These learned philosophical discussions among friends also reflect practices that prevailed in the high society of the late Republic, as is illustrated in Cicero's correspondence.[40] Erudite members of the aristocracy discuss philosophical topics with one another, and during these conversations they fall back on ready knowledge, on what they have learned in their youth, on books they read in their leisure time and on what they remember from earlier discussions. We should not underestimate the influence that this scholarly interaction in such "intellectual communities"[41] had on Cicero's works. It probably helped to shape Cicero's general philosophical view; moreover, isolated passages from the dialogues sometimes even found their direct origin in previous discussions between Cicero and one of his friends.[42]

What about the Romans in *On Ends* 1–2?

We have seen that the clear-cut opposition between "Greek" and "Roman" is problematic in Cicero's case and that the participants in the discussion of *On Ends* have fully appropriated a traditionally Greek perspective as their own frame of reference. The question remains, however, whether this appropriation is entirely unproblematic. Here and there, Cicero suggests it is. In 1.50, for instance, Torquatus explains the Epicurean view of justice and illustrates it with a reference to the recent past (*ut te consule*). By this short phrase, which implies a clever argument *ad hominem*, he claims that his doctrine is corroborated by what recently happened in Rome. Epicureanism, in other words, can smoothly and without any problem be applied in contemporary Rome as well. There are also situations, however, where such an application is prima facie less evident. In what follows, I deal with four domains where input from the specifically Roman

[39] In spite of what he claims himself in *Att.* 15.52.3; see Bringmann: 2012 for a recent interpretation of this passage.

[40] See on this esp. Griffin: 1995. [41] Steel: 2005, 106–114.

[42] A case in point is *On Ends* 1.25, which can only be understood against the background of Cicero's correspondence with Cassius (*Fam.* 15.17.3 and 15.19.2–3); see Roskam: 2019.

context can be expected, and examine to what extent this input entailed modifications and reinterpretations of the Epicurean point of view.

The first domain is that of language. Cicero presents Epicurean philosophy, including its technical terms, in a new linguistic context, which sometimes requires quite a lot of creativity. Cicero often comments upon his work as a translator.[43] In *On Ends* 1–2, however, he seems to minimize the importance of this issue. In 2.10, he deals with the precise meaning of the Latin term *varietas* in order to show that the problem does not lie with the term but with the content of Epicurus' doctrine. In this case, then, the difference in language does not interfere with the understanding of what Epicurus wanted to say. More important in this context is Cicero's discussion of the term *voluptas*, which he regards as the correct translation of the Greek ἡδονή (2.12–15). He defends his translation with unusual insistence, going so far as to claim that "no instance can be found of a Latin word that more exactly conveys the same meaning as the corresponding Greek word than does the word *voluptas*" (2.13). Not every scholar agrees with Cicero on this,[44] and an analysis of the semantics of the two terms may well reveal subtle differences in connotation, but that may not suffice to undermine the whole of Cicero's argument. We should also bear in mind that Lucretius used the same term *voluptas*, which seems to imply that even contemporary Roman Epicureans considered the term the accurate translation of ἡδονή. If they were entitled to do so, Cicero, so it seems, was entitled to do the same. Anyhow, in this case, too, Cicero strongly underlines that the use of a different language nowhere interferes with a correct interpretation of Epicurean doctrine.

The upshot of all this is that Epicurus' Greek language is no obstacle at all to introducing his philosophy to Rome. Conversely, nowhere in *On Ends* 1–2 can there be found any claim that new insights, derived from the use of Latin terminology, require substantial modifications in Epicurus' philosophical doctrine. A translation can sometimes cause some problems, perhaps, but the content is much more important than the words (2.20).

The second domain concerns virtue. Torquatus deals at length with the virtues of wisdom, temperance, courage and justice (1.42–53). This is an interesting section that has elicited much discussion. Phillip Mitsis has found in this passage influence of a typically Roman perspective, as opposed to the orthodox Epicurean point of view.[45] David Sedley agrees with Mitsis about the presence of much non-Epicurean material in this

[43] See, e.g., Powell: 1995c; Reinhardt: 2005; Blyth: 2010/11; Glucker: 2012.
[44] See Powell: 1995b, 299. [45] Mitsis: 1988, 69–70.

section but finds a different explanation, arguing that Torquatus rather uses a more general framework closely connected to the Platonist ethical tradition and to widespread values.[46] Yet others have shown – correctly, to my mind – that we should not underestimate the amount of orthodox Epicurean material in Torquatus' argument.[47] But this discussion above all shows, once again, that we should avoid using such labels as "Greek" or "Roman" in an absolute way, as if this were self-evident. In fact, both Torquatus and Cicero know and even share basically the same frame of reference, which is that of the traditional philosophical schools, and then deal with it from the perspective of their own philosophical convictions. Cicero's reply to Torquatus in Book 2 is particularly illustrative in this respect. He develops a lengthy argument in order to show that justice cannot be explained in terms of self-interest (2.51–59). Whereas for Epicurus, justice fundamentally rests on fear of detection,[48] Cicero objects that real life proves Epicurus wrong, for shrewd criminals are not stopped by this fear (2.55) and powerful rulers do not even need to be bothered by it (2.57). Here, we can easily detect the influence of Cicero's expertise as a lawyer. He uses his great experience in this field in order to confront Torquatus with a few concrete counter-examples. Especially interesting is the case of Publius Sextilius Rufus. He was left heir to Quintus Fadius Gallus, on condition that he would hand on Fadius' estate to his daughter, but then denied the arrangement and added that he thus observed the (Voconian) law (2.55). In this way, we have here an example of a wicked criminal who does not break the law but is even guilty *by means of* the law (2.55). This example is particularly well-chosen, as it provides a serious challenge to the Epicurean point of view. Apparently, there are criminals who can be certain that their crimes will go unpunished. And thus, so Cicero claims, we need another foundation for justice. If people act justly, their justice rests on the force of nature itself (2.58; cf. also 2.28).

Here, the input of the Roman context seems obvious. Cicero cleverly points to concrete events that happened in Rome and that undermine crucial presuppositions of Epicurus' system. Finally, we have come across clear evidence of the importance of Roman circumstances. Or have we? The conclusion is perhaps not so simple. A closer look shows that the central aspects of Cicero's argument can also be found in the Greek

[46] Sedley: 1996, 335–338; similarly Morel: 2016, 82–87.
[47] Tsouna: 2001, 168–169; D. Armstrong: 2011, 107–108; Fish: 2011, 88.
[48] KD 34–35. See on the Epicurean position, e.g., V. Goldschmidt: 1977; Vander Waerdt: 1987; Alberti: 1995; Cosenza: 1996; J. M. Armstrong: 1997; Van den Steen: 2009.

tradition. Epictetus, for instance, also emphasizes that a powerful criminal can sometimes be sure that he will go unpunished (3.7.13–14).[49] Cicero expresses precisely the same conviction, but illustrates this idea by means of examples that are closer to his Roman readers. Thus, he opts for Crassus and Pompey (2.57) rather than for, say, Alexander the Great, but fundamentally the core of his argument does not differ at all from what we read in Epictetus. Again, Epictetus emphasizes the power of nature in his polemics against Epicurus (1.23.1–10) – the context of the argument is different, but its essence is the same. Or one could take the example of Publius Sextilius Rufus, who knew that nobody could prove what the dead Fadius had asked him. This is a concrete elaboration of a theoretical question that Epicurus raised himself, viz. whether the sage would break the law if he would be sure that his crime would not be detected.[50] What Cicero is doing in all these cases, then, is bringing issues and arguments that he received from the Greek tradition closer to his readers by illustrating them with examples borrowed from Roman life. This conclusion is further supported by the last example with which Cicero closes this section, that is, Carneades' argument about the viper: Suppose you know that a viper is hidden somewhere, but you do not warn somebody whose death would be useful for you, then you definitely commit a wicked deed and yet can be absolutely sure that your crime will not be detected (2.59). Fundamentally, this is the same argument, though now more hypothetical and borrowed from the Greek tradition. Whereas Carneades devised a theoretical case, Cicero the lawyer knew of comparable cases that actually happened and deployed them against Epicurus.

We may conclude, then, that in this case too, Cicero's use of material that is directly derived from what happened in contemporary Rome does not entail substantial innovations in or modifications of traditional philosophical arguments. Instead the reference to Roman events and examples helps in mediating the Greek tradition to Cicero's Roman readers, and as such supports and contributes to the applicability and universalizability of Greek philosophy in general and discussions about Epicurean philosophy in particular.

A similar conclusion holds true for the many examples derived from the third domain: the achievements of famous ancestors. Cicero already elaborates this argument in his first attack at the beginning of *On Ends* 1. While we have seen above that the general perspective of this attack is that

[49] Cf. also Atticus, Eusebius, *PE* 15.5.5 = fr. 3 Baudry and fr. 532 U.
[50] See Plutarch, *Adv. Colot.* 1127D (= fr. 18 U); G. Seel: 1996; Roskam: 2012.

of the Greek school tradition, we should now give due attention to the one Roman element that it contains. Cicero at length recalls the celebrated heroic fight of Titus Manlius Imperiosus Torquatus and his condemnation of his son, and also mentions a later Titus Manlius Torquatus who banished his own son (1.23–24), pointing out that these men were not pursuing pleasure but were led by a sincere concern for the public interest. Yet this is no mere panegyric on the Roman tradition as opposed to Epicureanism. These examples are not chosen at random, but focus on the achievements of Torquatus' own ancestors. As such, they are a challenging *ad hominem* argument against Torquatus, who picks up the message (1.34).

Nevertheless, there is much more to it than a mere rhetorical *ad hominem* argument. This is evident from Book 2, where analogous arguments frequently occur, and not only about Torquatus' illustrious family. In 2.63–65, for instance, Cicero opposes Lucius Thorius, an inveterate clever hedonist, to the consul Marcus Regulus, who decided to return to Carthage in order to be tortured to death, and claims that the latter was not only more virtuous but even happier than the former. The argument rests on the power of Regulus' exemplary behavior, which seems completely at odds with Epicurean rationality and yet seems preferable. To a certain extent, this is a "false dilemma,"[51] not only because Thorius is not an acceptable paradigm of the Epicurean philosopher, but also because one could think of an alternative.[52] This whole argument is an intelligent rhetorical construct that strategically appeals to the instinctive feelings of the reader.[53] Near the end, Cicero also refers to panegyrics and epitaphs (2.116–117), which do not focus on pleasures but on great accomplishments – again the same argument, but now in the light of death and the afterlife, a context which makes the challenge even more radical and difficult to ignore.

What is especially interesting for our purposes, however, is that Cicero in such passages appears to refute the claims of the Epicureans by means of arguments derived from the great Roman tradition. Cicero, in other words, seems to construct a clear opposition between the Epicurean position and the Roman tradition. The impressive heroic exploits that he recalls time and again are (a) completely at odds with Epicurus' ideals and convictions and (b) typically Roman. However, on closer inspection the case proves,

[51] See on this argumentative technique, which also occurs in Cicero's speeches, Seager: 2011.
[52] Roskam: 2007b, 64. [53] Cf. Brinton: 1988.

once again, more complicated. In fact, both claims require further explanation.

(a) Cicero insists that the Epicureans are not interested in great achievements. Nor do they ever mention them in their discourses (2.67). At first sight, this looks like a polemical exaggeration. There can be no reasonable doubt that erudite Epicureans knew their history. Philodemus, for instance, uses history as an argument for his own Epicurean position,[54] Atticus was writing history (2.67) and Torquatus had no problem in assessing the value of Cicero's historical information (1.34). But these Epicureans read history through another lens, as appears, for instance, from Torquatus' own evaluation of the achievements of his distinguished forefathers. All these exceptional deeds, so Torquatus argues, are inspired by a concern for personal security and thus, ultimately, pleasure (1.34–36). This is a direct application of Epicurus' *Principal Doctrines* 6 and 7, which provided the Epicureans with an interpretative key for the evaluation of the past. In that sense, Cicero's argument that "history is dumb in the Epicurean discourses" is indeed problematic. Yet we should not dismiss it too early. Interestingly enough, here he speaks in the first person singular: He claims that he has "never heard" (*numquam audivi*) in Epicurus' school one mention of all these famous statesmen who are always on the lips of other philosophers (1.67). We know that Cicero studied in the Garden; if we believe his testimony, polemical though it may be, we may conclude that the Athenian Epicureans of Cicero's day were largely ignoring these topics, and this, after all, is not implausible, for the issue reflects more the interests of other philosophical schools like Platonism and Stoicism. If the Epicureans were confronted with an objection derived from the illustrious political tradition, they had their answer ready (along the lines of *Principal Doctrines* 6 and 7), but within their own school their focus was on different things. What mattered for them was maximizing their personal pleasure: Why should they bother with the heroic deeds of Themistocles? Why would they even take the trouble to ridicule such great actions during their meetings? Of course, the value of Cicero's testimony also depends on what courses he followed in the Garden – if he only took lessons in physics, his testimony would be right but quite uncharitable – and on the question of

[54] *Rhet.* II, 209, col. 6.28–30 S.; Roskam: 2007a, 107.

whether we can indeed take the claim of *numquam audivi* at face value, but in the not unlikely case that we are indeed entitled to do so, this passage offers us an interesting glimpse into internal school discussions of the Garden in Cicero's day.

(b) Cicero emphatically presents the great achievements of the past as something typically Roman. He contemptuously admits that the Greeks could adduce a few examples of heroic behavior, but insists that many more examples of such heroic self-sacrifice in the service of the public interest can be found in Roman history (2.62). The question, of course, is whether this is more than a piece of overblown rhetoric. The Greeks, one may presume, had no real difficulty in enumerating a list of analogous examples from their own history. In this respect, Plutarch's *Parallel Lives* are the perfect reply to Cicero. This suggests that Cicero's passing remark is ultimately little more than a challenging hyperbole inspired by unwarranted chauvinism.

However, there may be more to it than this. In order to understand fully Cicero's argument from illustrious Roman history, we should consider it in light of the philosophical tradition. For the core of Cicero's argument can indeed be traced back to a rich (Greek) tradition of anti-Epicurean polemics. Plutarch, for instance, is offended at Epicurus' criticism of great heroes such as Themistocles, Aristides and Epaminondas, and he extols their virtues against the trivial results obtained by the Epicureans.[55] Fundamentally, Cicero and Plutarch perfectly agree on this point, but Plutarch of course takes his examples from his own, Greek tradition. In other words, their concrete examples differ, but their basic argument is the same. Against that background, it should not surprise us that both Cicero and Torquatus conclude their discussion of concrete examples with a general phrase: In 1.24 Cicero deals with *optimus quisque* and in 1.37 Torquatus refers to "the glorious exploits and achievements of the heroes of renown." Such general phrases in fact express the gist of the argument, which can easily be made more concrete in different contexts. Cicero, then, is borrowing an argument from the philosophical tradition while giving it a "Roman flavor." This adaptation may have been partly motivated by his popularizing goals[56] – turning the introduction to philosophy into an introduction to the great Roman past – but Cicero's popularizing aim is no sufficient explanation. The focus on the Roman tradition is also a

[55] Plutarch, *Non posse* 1097C (= fr. 559 U) and *Adv. Colot.* 1127AB (= fr. 560 U); cf. Roskam: 2007b, 24–25.

[56] Thus Powell: 1995a, 9; cf. Maso: 2008, 15.

necessary condition for the efficiency and persuasiveness of the argument.[57] The more strongly these great examples appeal to the readers, the more cogent the argument becomes. What Cicero needs, then, is models that are well known to his readers, that are part and parcel of their intellectual world; in short, models like Lucretia and Regulus (2.65–66) rather than Epaminondas or Cimon, or models indeed like T. Manlius Torquatus Imperiosus (1.23; 2.60; 2.72–73; 2.105), one of the direct ancestors of his friend Torquatus.

In that sense, Cicero's focus on the "typically Roman" tradition is no less the result of his enthusiasm for the *mos maiorum* than of his familiarity with the philosophical school tradition and the demands of rhetorical persuasiveness. For Cicero indeed realized very well that for his aristocratic readers it was hard to reject any such argument. They could ridicule famous *Graeculi*, perhaps, but it was not so easy to laugh at the distinguished Romans of old. And Torquatus could make use of *Principal Doctrines* 6 and 7 in order to reinterpret the great deeds of his own ancestors from an Epicurean point of view, but this argument has its limits in that it cannot be used in order to save all heroic achievements in the history of Rome. What about the rest, then? Was Marcus Regulus a simple fool, like Lucretia and Lucius Verginius? Epicurus was prepared to take the consequences and make fun of great paradigmatic figures such as Epaminondas, even if he knew that this would be very offensive to many people, because he did not pursue the favor of the multitude.[58] It is not evident, however, that an aristocrat like Torquatus would be as ready to neglect the demands of *decorum*. This brings us to our last point.

In the second book of *On Ends*, Cicero blames Torquatus for an embarrassing inconsistency. Whereas Torquatus claims to do everything for the sake of pleasure, he cannot possibly maintain this stance while addressing the senate (2.74–77). On such occasions, he prefers to dwell on duty, fair-dealing, moral worth and so on; in short, to switch to the vocabulary of the Stoics and Peripatetics. And not without reason, for to be honest about his real political motivations when talking to the senators would almost surely ruin his later political career (2.76). And thus, Cicero concludes, Torquatus is forced to employ artificial language in order to conceal what he really thinks, or "change his opinions like his clothes,"

[57] *Contra* Striker: 1995, 58 ("he has the annoying habit of . . . interrupting or inflating an argument by more or less irrelevant stories from Rome's glorious past or deplorable present").

[58] See fr. 187 U; cf. Seneca *Ep.* 29.10 and 25.6 (= fr. 209 U) and Porphyry, *Marc.* 30 294.2–3 N. (= fr. 489 U).

confining his true convictions to a small circle of intimate friends and defending counterfeit opinions in public (2.77). This, to my mind, is one of the strongest arguments in Book 2 of *On Ends*. Cicero knew very well what kind of discourse was usually heard in the Roman senate and saw an obvious contrast with Torquatus' Epicurean ideals. The whole passage is characterized by a strong rhetorical tone,[59] but also makes a valid philosophical point, on the basis of the specifically Roman political context. What could Torquatus say in reply to this challenge?

At first sight, hardly anything at all. Nowhere in *On Ends* 1–2 does Torquatus develop new arguments that take into account the political context at Rome. He could have pointed to the exceptional situation at the end of the Republic, which required political engagement, but apparently did not think of this line of reasoning.[60] Nor is there any trace in Torquatus' exposition of an "over-riding sense of obligation to [. . .] non-philosophical fellow-citizens."[61] Even *Principal Doctrines* 6 and 7 are not used as an argument in favor of political engagement. We have seen that Torquatus used these doctrines as keys for an Epicurean interpretation of history, and that is probably what they were also meant for. Of course, they also offer interesting opportunities: If earlier politicians were right in pursuing their personal security and pleasure through a political career, the same argument may be valid for contemporary politicians, too.[62] Yet it is probably no coincidence that such an argument can nowhere be found in our extant sources. *Principal Doctrines* 6 and 7 focus on the past rather than the present, and prove especially useful as a defense against polemical attacks. They were never meant as a positive argument in favor of a political career, and later Epicureans never understood them as such. Epicurus was open-minded, no doubt, and made room for exceptions, but usually he rather recalled people from politics than stimulating them to all the dangers and pains that a political career necessarily involves.

[59] See Inwood: 1990; cf. also Roskam: 2007b, 65–68.

[60] Nor, by the way, did Cassius explain his decision to kill Caesar along these lines; cf. Griffin: 1989, 30–31.

[61] Sedley: 1997, 46–47, suggests that this may explain why so many Epicureans were involved in politics at the end of the Roman Republic. But Torquatus never seems to allude to such a motivation. He admits that "in certain emergencies, owing to the claims of duty or the obligations of business," pleasures may be rejected and pains chosen, but this is too vague to warrant the conclusion that Torquatus is thinking of the kind of "over-riding sense of obligation" that Sedley means. The *tempora* and *necessitates* can perfectly be understood as emergencies *of the Garden* (Roskam: 2007b, 37–41) and the claims of *officia* as duty towards friends.

[62] Cf. Fish: 2011, 75–76.

In *On Ends*, Torquatus brings forward only one argument in reply to Cicero's attack. At the very end of Book 2 he confidently asserts that he can fall back on greater authorities, namely, on Siro and Philodemus (2.119). For the time being, Cicero and Triarius kindly enough accept this argument *ex auctoritate*, although Torquatus has clearly failed to convince them. On that point, the dialogue ends, but we may well go on and wonder whether Philodemus could really help Torquatus on this issue. As far as I can see, he could not.

That is not to say, however, that Philodemus would run into problems himself. In his *Rhetoric* he makes an interesting distinction between the task of the philosopher, who should give his advice to the politician, and that of the politician, who should take into account this philosophical advice while making his political decisions. Such a collaboration between philosopher and politician yields advantages for the whole community (*Rhet.* III, col. 14[a], 30–15[a], 31 Ham.).[63] An interesting illustration of Philodemus' theoretical view may be found in the political career of Piso, who opted for a friendly, reconciliatory political course and avoided excessive ambitions that were a menace to the existing political order.[64] But Philodemus' position rests on a fundamental dichotomy between the field of the philosopher and that of the politician, both of which have their own autonomy.[65] Philodemus, then, adopts the perspective of the professional philosopher who looks at politics as an outsider. He has an interesting reply to Cicero's attack, but this reply cannot simply be taken over by a politician such as Torquatus.

Does this imply, then, that all the Roman Epicureans who engaged in politics indeed had a problem and that Cicero's criticism was correct? Not necessarily. One can take Piso as an example and assume, for the sake of argument (and perhaps correctly), that he indeed regarded himself as an Epicurean: Was such self-understanding credible at all? In my view, Piso's Epicureanism was no less credible than that of the simple farmer Gorgias with whom we began. Of course, there are some obvious differences between the two. Since Piso was an intellectual, we can presume a greater acquaintance with the theoretical details of Epicurean philosophy. He probably had no fundamental problem in accepting the great outlines of Epicurean physics: atomism, the mortality of body and soul, and even the conception of the gods. The Epicurean epistemology and canon were equally unproblematic, as was the basic goal of pleasure and even its

[63] Cf. Roskam: 2007a, 122–123; D. Armstrong: 2011, 120–121; Fish: 2011, 95–96.
[64] See on this esp. Griffin: 2001. [65] Roskam: 2007a, 104–119.

implications, such as the interpretation of pleasure as absence of pain, the simple life concerned with the gratification of limited natural pleasures or the interpretation of virtue as a means for pleasure.[66] If Piso could readily endorse all of these doctrines, his philosophical outlook is not to be seen as "Epicureanism light" but as genuine Epicureanism adapted to his own situation.

Furthermore, the most important adaptation was probably his political career. Here we come across a problem, a problem that should not be overemphasized, perhaps, but is still real, and Cicero was right in detecting it. The question is, however, whether this suffices to undermine fully the credibility of Piso's claim to be an Epicurean. Much depends on how careful Piso's calculus of pleasure and pain was. If he could, in the long run, derive more pleasure than pain from his political career, this career could be perfectly justifiable from an Epicurean point of view. And as a matter of fact, it has been repeatedly argued that the choice of an unnoticed life would have been much more difficult for an aristocratic man like Piso, who was born into a family that already counted many consular members.[67] If he had preferred private pleasures to the public *cursus honorum*, he would have fallen short of expectations. This is an important observation indeed, and in all likelihood it at least partly influenced Piso's course of action. Yet it is only one side of the coin. If we for a moment stick to the Epicurean point of view, we may insist that political commitment also entailed much trouble – even Cicero agreed on that (*Rep.* 1.4–6; *Orat.* 3.63) – and that most of Epicurus' arguments against participation in politics remain valid in Piso's case. We may presume, for instance, that Cicero's vitriolic speech *Against Piso* did not really contribute to Piso's Epicurean pleasures.

Thus, Piso faced the challenge of having to judge whether the choice for politics was, *rebus sic stantibus*, the one that would maximize his personal pleasures. All in all, Epicurus might well have recalled Piso (cf. Cicero, *Rep.* 1.3) as he recalled Idomeneus (Seneca, *Ep.* 22.5–6 = fr. 133 U), adding, though, that he should wait for the right opportunity[68] and that the decision ultimately lies with Piso himself. The choice is not self-evident, and scholars may disagree on what Piso should have chosen if he consistently followed the Epicurean criterion of pleasure (cf. KD 25); but even if

[66] Cf. the position of Cassius in *Fam.* 15.19.2–3, with Griffin: 1989 and Roskam: 2019.
[67] See, e.g., Morford: 2002, 107; Fish: 2011, 96; D. Armstrong: 2011, 118–119; cf. Benferhat: 2005a, 69, on Albucius.
[68] Roskam: 2007a, 48–49.

his calculus is wrong, he need not be embarrassed by Cicero's argument, for Piso can simply regard himself as a politician who listens to the advice of an Epicurean philosopher while retaining his own autonomy as a politician. From Philodemus' perspective, Piso occupies the place of the politician, not that of the professional philosopher, and in this capacity he should not meet the same demands of strict philosophical consistency.[69]

It is clear, then, that neither Philodemus nor Piso should be troubled by Cicero's argument. Torquatus, however, does have a problem. We have seen that he wants to be taken seriously as a full member of the Epicurean school. In that respect he assumes, as it were, the role of the professional philosopher. At the same time, he is about to assume the praetorship (2.74) and thus also plays the part of the politician. He thus combines the positions of Philodemus and Piso, and there the problem arises: Torquatus wants to have his cake and eat it, too, and Cicero is absolutely right in making this point. At the end of the second book of *On Ends*, he puts Torquatus on the spot. He should *either* opt for pleasure *or* become a benefactor of the entire human race (2.118). In other words, he has to choose between the role of the professional Epicurean philosopher who is pursuing his individual pleasures and that of the statesman whose concern is with the public interest. A combination of both roles is out of the question. And strikingly enough, Metrodorus agrees. He points out to his brother Timarchus that there is no need to save Greece, but to eat and drink in a way that will do the flesh no hurt and gratify it.[70] Metrodorus and Cicero thus agree on the basic opposition between the alternatives and on the need to choose between them (though not, of course, on what would be the correct choice). Torquatus for his part muddles up things by combining what is incompatible. In this respect, Cicero's criticism is entirely correct.

At this point, however, it is necessary to underline an obvious fact that is all too often forgotten: The Torquatus of *On Ends* is a *literary fiction*.[71] It is

[69] Torquatus' remark near the beginning of *On Ends* is telling in this respect: He supposes that Cicero rejects Epicurus mainly for stylistic reasons, since he can scarcely believe that he regards Epicurus' doctrines as untrue (1.14). We could never suppose that a public-spirited and ambitious politician like Cicero would be able to agree with Epicurus' philosophy – such an inconsistency is simply too strong. Torquatus apparently sees things differently. Of course, his challenge is primarily a means to draw Cicero out, yet it suggests that he has no major difficulties in connecting Epicureanism with active politicians.

[70] *Adv. Colot.* 1125D (= fr. 41 K); cf. also *Non posse* 1098CD and 1100D; Westman: 1955, 211–212; Roskam: 2007a, 72–73.

[71] Cf. Morel: 2016, 80. See also Hanchey (Chapter 3) in this volume for more on Cicero's anti-Epicurean rhetoric.

far from certain whether the historical Torquatus took the same course. Probably he indeed regarded himself as an Epicurean,[72] but in this he may have followed the course we attributed above to Piso. If so, he probably answered Cicero's argument from inconsistency with a shrug. The Torquatus of *On Ends* is different: For him, the demand of philosophical consistency between words and deeds is much more urgent. The historical Torquatus can regard the choice between pleasure and a political career as a "false dilemma," but Torquatus the literary character is less entitled to do so. This implies that Cicero's argument is only valid in the specific argumentative context he has carefully constructed himself. In other words, Cicero's argument is especially revealing for his own attitude towards philosophy (not for the general outlook of people like Piso or the historical Torquatus). Ultimately, he cannot prove that a Roman aristocrat (even a consul) can never be an Epicurean, but he at least makes the point that a professional Epicurean philosopher cannot easily become a consul without betraying his own philosophical convictions. Cicero's criticism of the character he has created in his dialogue is convincing, but his literary Torquatus is in the end a chimaera.

Conclusion

In this chapter we have examined whether Epicurean philosophy could be applied in the late Roman Republic, or whether the new context also entailed new problems that required modifications and innovations.

We have seen that Torquatus saw no problems in presenting his Epicurean convictions as relevant for his own life and that he did not feel the need for far-reaching compromises or adaptations. Instead, the Romans rather appropriated the Greek intellectual perspective. As we have seen, the general theoretical framework of the discussions in *On Ends* 1–2 is that of the Greek school tradition. Whenever Torquatus mentions new developments in Epicurean doctrine, these prove to be the products of the school tradition rather than modifications inspired by specifically Roman circumstances. And whenever Cicero refers to the Roman tradition in his critical reply, his references prove to rest on argumentative patterns that can already be found in the Greek tradition. What we have only rarely found in *On Ends* 1–2 is the development of new insights that are based on the peculiar context of Rome as opposed to that of Athens. The most interesting argument in this respect is probably that against the political

[72] See Castner: 1988, 40–42; Benferhat: 2005a, 266–270.

engagement of the Roman Epicureans. This, as we have seen, is a clever and convincing argument that seems to be directly derived from the concrete Roman political situation, although it does not entirely reflect historical reality but is based on a theoretical construct of Cicero.

All this has implications for the current hypothesis that Epicurean philosophy is fundamentally opposed to the typically Roman tradition, and that Stoic and Peripatetic philosophy yield much better opportunities to assimilate the traditional *mos maiorum*.[73] The principal problem with this view is that it rests, at least to a certain extent, on ideological presuppositions and constructs that unduly privilege specific interpretations of the Roman tradition, developed by men such as Cicero. But what is "typically Roman" or "typically Greek"? Such clear-cut oppositions and oversimplifying labels repeatedly occur in the rhetorical proems of Cicero's dialogues (and elsewhere, too), but they do no justice to the complexity of this matter. Cicero himself agrees – in no less rhetorical vein – that the Epicureans "occupied all Italy" (*Tusc.* 4.7). Even if this is rhetorical hyperbole, the statement may at least not be totally unfounded. But if Epicureanism were incompatible with "typically Roman" culture, then its success would be hard to explain. Moreover, we should then have to conclude that men like Torquatus and Cassius were not true Romans,[74] that Lucretius was not a true Roman, that even Atticus was not a true Roman. In spite of all his rhetoric, Cicero could never go that far.

[73] See, e.g., Erler: 1992b, 308; Baraz: 2012, 3; Woolf: 2015, 6 and 144; cf. also Hanchey: 2013b.

[74] A conclusion Cicero himself would strongly disagree with. He praises Torquatus' qualities in *Brut.* 265 and *Att.* 8.11b.1, and underlines Cassius' virtue and *dignitas* (*Fam.* 15.16.3). Of course, such friendly statements are influenced by the context, but this is no less true for the rhetoric of the proems.