ROMAN EPICUREANISM AND LUCRETIUS

ROMAN EPICUREANISM
AND
LUCRETIUS

By

JOHN WHEELWRIGHT BROWNE, JR., B.A.

A Thesis

Submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies

in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements

for the Degree

Master of Arts

McMaster University

October, 1967

MASTER OF ARTS (1967) McMASTER UNIVERSITY
(Latin) Hamilton, Ontario.

TITLE: Roman Epicureanism and Lucretius

AUTHOR: John Wheelwright Browne, Jr., B.A.
(University of Waterloo)

SUPERVISOR: Dr. J.S.A. Cunningham

NUMBER OF PAGES: v, 98

SCOPE AND CONTENTS: This thesis argues that the Epicureans did not simply repeat the ipsa dicta of Epicurus, but developed new areas of study (e.g., logic, rhetoric) of which Epicurus did not approve. This transmuted Epicureanism influenced the Romans of the late Republic and some of its ideas appear in Lucretius' De Rerum Natura.

Chapter 1 offers a brief historical sketch of some Epicureans of the late Republic and suggests that there was a peculiarly Roman Epicureanism as evidenced by their lives and actions. Chapter 2 discusses changes in Epicurean attitudes due to the influence of other schools, and the desire to "popularize" Epicureanism among the Romans. Chapter 3 outlines the evidence for the existence of Epicurean works in Latin other than the De Rerum Natura. Chapter 4 deals with Lucretius' debt to the early Epicureans, the later Epicureans and his Roman milieu.

PREFACE

Acknowledgements

I wish to acknowledge the help of several members of the Department of Classics. Dr. A.G. McKay has been of great help in the overall preparation and lay-out of the thesis. Dr. G.M. Paul has spent valuable time reading and commenting on the historical sections. My greatest thanks must go to my supervisor, Dr. J.S.A. Cunningham, who first suggested the topic and whose patience, when the work seemed to progress so slowly, encouraged me to complete the task.

The abbreviations frequently used in the text of the thesis are listed below.

John W. Browne

Abbreviations

AJP	American Journal of Philology
BAGB	Bulletin de la Association Guillaume Bude
CW	Classical Weekly

Diog.	Diogenes Laertius, Lives and Opinions of Eminent Philosophers
Pauly	Pauly-Wissowa-Kroll, Real Encyclopädie der Altertumswissenschaft
Usener	H. Usener, Epicurea, Rome 1963.

All quotations from Lucretius are from Cyril Bailey's edition of De Rerum Natura, 3 vols., Oxford, 1963 (referred to as "Bailey").

All quotations from Cicero and Diogenes Laertius are from the Loeb texts unless otherwise specified.

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

In the middle of the second century, the first Epicurean philosophers were driven from Rome because they were introducing "pleasures" into the city.[1]

καλῶς ἄρα ποιοῦντες Ῥωμαῖοι οἱ
πάντα ἄριστοι Ἄλκιον καὶ Φιλίσκον τοὺς
Ἐπικουρείους ἐξέβαλον τῆς πολέως,
Λευκίου τοῦ Ποστουμίου ὑπατεύοντος,
διὰς εἰσηγοῦντο ἡδονάς.

(Athen. 12, 68)

Nothing more is heard of Alkios or Philiskos, but their removal seems to have done little ultimate good. One hundred years later, Cicero states that Epicureanism "plerisque notissima est"[2] and complains[3]

> Itaque alii voluptatis causa omnia sapientes facere dixerunt neque ab hac orationis turpitudine eruditi homines refugerunt. Alii cum voluptate dignitatem coniungendam putaverunt ut res maxime inter se repugnantis dicendi facultate coniungerent; illud unum derectum iter ad laudem cum labore qui probaverunt prope soli iam in scholis sunt relicti.

Within a few years of this protest, Lucretius' De Rerum Natura, the most comprehensive surviving Latin

---

1 for the dating: see below, Chap. 2.

2 De Fin. 1, 13.

3 Pro Caelio 41. cf. the notes in Austin's text (3rd ed., Oxford, 1960), p. 104.

explication of Epicureanism, was published. Such a poem, while it may be the product of genius "multis luminibus ingeni"[4] usually has roots that lie deep in the culture of the period. Bailey has traced the Greek sources of the De Rerum Natura, but 200 years intervened between Epicurus' death and the composing of the poem.[5] Surely Lucretius' debt was not entirely to the Greek Epicureans; all Italy, it seems, was discussing and arguing the philosophy of the Garden.[6] The purpose of this thesis is to indicate that, although great devotion to Epicurus tended to hinder changes in his philosophical system, there was a progressive development in Epicurean thought in Italy from the mid-second to the mid-first century. This development was caused by discussion and writing in Epicurean schools, by dialogue with other philosophers, and by a widespread popularizing movement. The De Rerum Natura should be read with a view to this development and the literature it produced as well as by direct reference to the extant works of Epicurus.

---

4 ad Quint. Frat. 2, 3.

5 Bailey, I, pp. 51-72 and throughout the commentary.

6 "Italiam totam occupaverunt". Tusc. Disp. 4, 7. The meaning of Italiam can be questioned. In Pro Archia 5, Cicero refers to South Italy by contrast to Latium and Rome. In Pro Deiot. "totam Italiam" is linked with "cunctum senatum" and implies leading Romans of the day. Cicero is ironical here (Tusc. Disp. 4, 6), but the point seems to be Epicurus' system is being widely discussed.

In order to establish a useful frame of reference, to become familiar with some of the names involved, and to illustrate the Roman practice of Epicureanism, I thought it best to begin with a brief biographical and historical sketch. Next I have discussed the introduction of new ideas into the Epicurean "system" both from within the school and without, and changes that took place in the organization of the school itself in an attempt to show that an historical development (somewhat akin to that of Stoicism though not nearly so drastic) may have been the reason for the differing practices of Roman and Greek Epicureans. Finally I have tried to locate Lucretius in this changing picture.

Before beginning, it might be best to examine some aspects of Epicureanism as taught and lived by Epicurus.

Epicureanism

The Epicurean system was tripartite: the Canonic dealt with the theory of knowledge, Physics with all natural science (including theology) and the Ethics.

Διαιρεῖται τοίνυν εἰς τρία, τό
τε κανονικόν, καὶ φυσικόν, καὶ ἠθικόν.[7]

The most important part of the system was the Ethics since the only purpose of philosophy was to teach one how to live

---

[7] Diog. 10, 29-30.

the "Happy"or good life:[8]

> ὥσπερ γὰρ ἰατρικῆς οὐδὲν ὄφελος μὴ τὰς νόσους τῶν σωμάτων ἐκβαλλούσης, οὕτως οὐδὲ φιλοσοφίας, εἰ μὴ τὸ τῆς ψυχῆς ἐκβάλλει πάθος.

Hence, the only purpose of physics was to help the philosopher arrive at correct ethical principles by an understanding of the workings of nature:[9]

> οὐκ ἦν τὸ φοβούμενον λύειν ὑπὲρ τῶν κυριωτάτων μὴ κατείδοτα τίς ἡ τοῦ σύμπαντος φύσις, ἀλλ' ὑποπτευόμενόν τι τῶν κατὰ τοὺς μύθους. ὥστε οὐκ ἦν ἄνευ φυσιλογίας ἀκεραίους τὰς ἡδονὰς ἀπολαμβάνειν.

The canonic was subordinated to both ethics and physics: it provided the criteria of truth by which the validity of physical and ethical principles could be judged.[10] Dialectic and the use of special terms, definition, in short, the apparatus of formal logic are rejected.

---

[8] Usener, 221; cf. Diog. 10, 122.

[9] Κύριαι Δόξαι 12; cf. K.D. 11, 13.

[10] Diog. 10, 30.

μὴ πεινῆν, μὴ διψῆν, μὴ ῥιγοῦν [18]

and wealth is not necessarily a guarantee of happiness:

πολλοὶ τοῦ πλούτου τυχόντες
οὐ τιν' ἀπαλλαγὴν τῶν κακῶν
εὗρον ἀλλὰ μεταβολὴν
μειζόνων. [19]

The Epicurean notion of friendship which Cicero frequently attacks, is based on self-interest,[20] but Epicurus says that a friend should never be abandoned even in difficulties.[21] The extant letters show Epicurus' friendliness to his pupils; his general goodness and amiability are frequently cited by Diogenes.[22] His school was based on friendship and mutual confidence.[23] Indeed the greatest attraction of the Garden seems to have been its congenial atmosphere and simple life.[24] Great stress was

---

18 Usener, 200; cf. 202-203, 469.
19 Usener, 479; cf. 478, 480.
20 Usener, 580, 581.
21 Diog. 10, 120.
22 Diog. 10, 9.
23 Diog. 10, 11.
24 Diog. 10, 10-11.

placed on the mutual support offered by friends:

ὧν ἡ σοφία παρασκευάζεται εἰς τὴν τοῦ ὅλου βίου μακαριότητα, πολὺ μέγιστόν ἐστιν ἡ τῆς φιλίας κτῆσις.[25]

There seems to have been somewhat of a mystical fellowship between Epicurus and his students.[26] Epicureanism was, then, very much dependent on some sort of community preferably an organized school, but at the least, a group of good friends.[27]

The motto of Epicurean life might very well be summed up as Λάθε βιώσας.[28] The wise man will withdraw from public life to obtain the greatest peace of mind possible.[29] Above all he will take no part in politics for this would cause him great upset.[30]

I have briefly pointed out Epicurus' attitude toward the arts, politics, friendship, the pursuit of pleasure and community living. This is by no means a comprehensive survey

---

[25] K.D. 27.

[26] Diog. 10, 6: μυστικὴ συνδιαγωγή.

[27] The "wise man" will himself try to establish such a school when he feels he has advanced sufficiently in wisdom; Diog. 10, 120.

[28] Usener 551; cf. 552-554; Diog. 10, 119.

[29] K.D. 14.

[30] Diog. 10, 119. This is the problem vis à vis the Romans: they professed Epicureanism but were not consistent in their practice; see below, Chapter 1.

of Epicurus' teachings. (I have, for example omitted any comments on his physical theories) but will provide information to illustrate points of contrast with Epicureanism as practised in Rome and Italy during the last century of the Republic.

CHAPTER I

Introduction

The first Epicurean philosophers came to Rome in the middle of the second century. The year of their departure is difficult to fix because of the problem of dating the consulship of Postumius. Boyancé suggests either 173 or 154;[1] Broughton settles on 154, a date which seems more reasonable. The philosophers and rhetoricians had been expelled from Rome in 161;[2] an embassy of philosophers arrived in the city in 155, but were soon asked to leave because they had begun to teach. There were no Epicureans in the embassy; they may have returned to Rome and begun teaching when they saw the other schools doing so.

The charge alleged against Alkios and Philiskos was they were introducing "pleasures". The philosophy that made voluptas the summum bonum would not be very welcome during the time of the Elder Cato; but even Cicero who lived in an age

---

1 P. Boyancé, "L'épicurisme dans la société et la littérature romaines" B.A.G.B. 1959, p. 501 ff. offers arguments for both dates but comes to no conclusion.

2 T.R.S. Broughton, Magistrates of the Roman Republic, 2 vols. (New York: American Philological Association, 1952), under 161 B.C.

more receptive to Greek ideas and philosophical speculation claimed they did everything for the sake of pleasure.[3] The opponents of Epicureanism seem to have seized on that aspect of the philosophy which would be most offensive to the Roman virtues of dignitas and severitas to make it seem as offensive as possible. Athenaeus does not elaborate, but it is unlikely that Alkios and Philiskos would have been expelled had they remained quietly in their hortulus. There must have been enough Romans interested in Epicureanism for the authorities to adjudge it a menace and pass the decree of expulsion.

In the De Amicitia, Laelius makes a clear reference to Epicurean teachings:

> Neque enim adsentior eis, qui nuper haec disserere coeperunt, cum corporibus simul animos interire atque omnia morte deleri, plus apud me antiquorum auctoritas valet.... Sin autem illa veriora, ut idem interitus sit animorum et corporum nec ullus sensus maneat, ut nihil boni est in morte, sic certe nihil mali, sensu enim amisso, fit idem quasi natus non esset... (De Amic. 13-14; italics mine).

The dramatic date of the dialogue is 129 and, since nuper could refer to a period several years earlier, Laelius' remark may indicate that Epicurean teachers returned to Rome soon after

---

[3] De Off. 1, 5.

the 1st expulsion.[4]

---

[4] It can be argued that since Cicero wrote the De Amicitia in 44 his description of events which took place 80 years previously might not be accurate. Interest in Epicureanism was on the rise ca. 45 (see below, Chap. 3) and Cicero may have wanted to show that Epicureanism was never really welcome in Rome. But Cicero's great pains over the accuracy of his work would seem to indicate that Epicurean teachers were indeed back in Rome ca. 130.

ROMAN EPICUREANS

Titus Albucius

Titus Albucius was, perhaps, one of the first of the senatorial class to adopt Epicureanism as his philosophy. He studied in Athens as a young man and returned to Rome a "perfect" Epicurean.[5] Albucius was in Athens in 120 since he clashed with Scaevola as the latter was passing through the city on his way to Asia Minor.[6] He must, however, have returned to Rome to begin his political career by 119 because he prosecuted Scaevola de pecuniis repetundis when Scaevola returned from his praetorship. He was, no doubt, revenging himself.[7] Albucius seems to have had a moderately successful political career for he became propraetor in Sardinia ca. 104. He returned to Rome, declared a triumph for himself,[8] and was charged de repetundis by Scaevola in 103.[9] He was banished to Athens where he continued his philosophical pursuits.[10]

---

[5] "Fuit autem Athenis adolescens, perfectus Epicurus evaserat". Brutus, 131.

[6] De Fin., 1, 8. For the dating, see Madvig, De Fin., p. 23; Douglas, Brutus, p. 107.

[7] For Scaevola's antipathy to Albucius, see De Fin, 1, 8; De Orat., 3, 171. For the trial, Brut., 102.

[8] Prov. Con., 15; in Piso., 92.

[9] Mayor, De. Nat. Deo., vol. I, p. 200; Douglas, Brut., p. 107.

[10] "nonne animo aeqissimo Athenis exsul philosophabatur?" Tusc., 5, 108.

He presumably died in exile.

The purity of Albucius' motives for becoming an Epicurean are certainly open to question. He was educated in an era which no longer held Greek culture suspect since Scipio and his associates had shown that the best of the Greek could be joined to the best of the Roman without a diminution of the traditions of the Republic. Indeed, it soon became the mark of the educated gentleman to speak Greek and be conversant in Greek philosophy. As DeWitt remarks:

> It must be noted that a small section of Roman society surrendered itself to higher education before the middle classes became infected with aspirations to culture....The fruit of this was a group of learned men "Docti sermones utriusque linguae."[11]

Albucius probably went to Athens to become cultured. He developed a healthy case of Graecomania; his frenzied Hellenism provided the basis for Lucilius' attacks.[12] Epicureanism may have suited Albucius' pretensions; years later, Cicero twitted him about his philosophical leanings.[13] But we ought not to overlook the possibility that, although not a model Epicurean, Albucius may have graced his library with Epicurean writings. Epicureanism was spread by personal contact;[14] even

---

[11] N. DeWitt, "Notes on the History of Epicureanism", TAPA 63, (1932), p. 168.

[12] J.F. D'Alton, Roman Literary Theory and Criticism (New York, 1962), pp. 32, 45-46, gives a full account of Albucius' Graecomania and its implications.

[13] Tusc., 5, 108-109.

[14] see D.R. Dudley, Lucretius (London, 1965), p. 21; N. DeWitt, "Epicurean Contubernium", TAPA 67 (1936), pp. 55-64.

if Albucius were lacking such lofty motives, it is unlikely he could resist parading his philosophy before his friends.[15] How many other young men took an interest in Epicureanism to be "in vogue", we cannot know. Nor does the evidence warrant drawing any conclusions as to the effect Albucius may have had on Epicureanism at Rome.

Gaius Velleius

Cicero gives the role of the Epicurean interlocutor in the De Natura Deorum to C. Velleius, a senator who was, perhaps, a tribune in 90.[16] Cicero describes Velleius as one of the leading exponents of Epicureanism in 77-76, the dramatic date of the dialogue.[17]

> offendi eum [Cotta] sedentem in exedra et cum C. Velleio senatore disputantem ad quem tum Epicurei primas ex nostris hominibus deferebant. (De Nat. Deo., 1, 15.)

Cicero implies that Velleius' interest in Epicureanism is not the dilettantism of an Albucius:

> "Tres [Cotta, Balbus, Velleius] enim trium disciplinarum principes convenistis..."[18]

Balbus is said to have been "not inferior to the most dis-

---

[15] De Nat. Deo., 1, 93.

[16] Broughton, II, 474, lists him under "Magistrates of Uncertain Date," and suggests that he may have been enrolled in the senate by Sulla.

[17] Mayor, p. xli, suggests the date lies between 77-75; Rackham, in the Loeb edition, settles on 76.

[18] De Nat. Deo., 1, 16.

tinguished Stoics of Greece"[19] and Cotta devoted himself to studying the philosophy of the Academy.[20] Although the language may be humorous, Velleius' interest in philosophy does seem genuine. L. Licinius Crassus refers to Velleius' Epicureanism in the De Oratore, the dramatic date of which is 91.[21] The implication is that Velleius had been interested in Epicurean philosophy for approximately fifteen years. There are indications that by 77 there was a "resident" philosopher in Velleius' household, but no clue as to how long he had been living there or who he was.

> Saepe enim de familiari tuo
> ---- videor audisse cum te togatis
> omnibus sine dubio anteferret,
> paucos tecum Epicureos e Graecia
> compararet. (De Nat. Deo. 1, 58)

I agree with Madvig who rejects the words "L. Crasso" as a gloss from De Oratore, 3, 78;[22] he supposes that the words "familiari tuo" refer to Phaedrus. This would be most convenient for establishing an unbroken tradition of Epicurean writers in Rome, but I must agree with Mayor who rejects the suggestion[23] as well as that of substituting Philodemus' name.[24] "Familiari tuo",

---

19 Mayor, p. xli.

20 De Orat., 3, 145.

21 De Orat., 3, 78. The dating is based on Crassus' death a few days after the dialogue (1, 24; 3,1).

22 Mad., De Fin., p. 36.

23 De Nat. Deo., 1, p. 154.

24 See "Phaedrus" and "Philodemus" below for the dating of the arrival of both men in Italy.

probably indicates someone occupying a position analogous to that of Diodotus in the household of Cicero, or Antiochus in that of Lucullus. Although the compliment may have been inspired by a desire for continued patronage, the phrase "togatis omnibus" (which I take as referring to Roman as contrasted to Greek Epicureans) coupled with Cicero's implication that Velleius had been an Epicurean for a number of years, make it reasonable to conjecture that there were several Romans interested in Epicureanism in the eighties and seventies.

Titus Pomponius Atticus[25]

Atticus was born in 110[26] of an equestrian family.[27] He spent his youth engaged in literary studies and remained in Rome until c. 86[28] when his father died. Atticus then left for Athens-- ostensibly he was continuing his studies, but he may have wished to avoid the Marian-Sullan conflict. He was in Athens in 79 when Cicero visited him there[29] and remained there until 65 when conditions were settled enough for him to return

---

[25] For this analysis of Atticus' Epicureanism I am indebted to R.J. Leslie, "The Epicureanism of Titus Pomponius Atticus (Columbia Diss.), Philadelphia, 1950.

[26] Nepos, Atticus, 21-22: Atticus died in 32 at the age of 77.

[27] Nepos, 1.

[28] Nepos, 2., see the notes in Roebuck p. 22 for the dating based on the murder of Sulpicius by Sulla.

[29] De Fin., 5, 3.

to Rome.[30] He avoided political life very carefully although he did advise and assist Cicero.[31] He also may have been involved in the Antony-Octavian confrontation.[32] Atticus seems to have been content to travel, manage his business interests and follow cultural pursuits. He died in 32.[33]

Atticus' introduction to Epicureanism may have occurred when Phaidros visited Rome in 88.[34] His longest contact with a fully organized Epicurean school took place during his stay in Athens where he spent much time with Phaidros whom he admired deeply.[35] An inscription, restored by Raubitschek, on a statue of Atticus dedicated by Phaidros' daughter refers to him as τὸν ἀκουστὴν τοῦ Φαίδρου,[36] a pupil of Phaidros. Atticus often refers to Epicureans as his friends and fellow students[37] and calls the philosophy of Epicurus his own.[38]

---

[30] Nepos, 4: "tranquillatis autem rebus Romanis remigravit Romam..."

[31] Nep., 6.

[32] Nep., 19-20.

[33] Nep., 22.

[34] See Phaidros, below.

[35] "...sum multum equidem cum Phaedro...in Epicuri Hortis..." De Fin., 5, 3; cf. ad fam., 13,1.

[36] A.E. Raubitschek, "Phaidros and His Roman Pupils", Hesperia 18 (1949), p. 102.

[37] ad Att., 4,6; 5, 10; Nep. 12, 3; De Leg. 3, 1.

[38] De Leg. 1, 53; De Fin. 5, 96; ad Att. 16, 7.

There can be little doubt that Atticus considered himself, and was considered by others, to be an Epicurean. It is not difficult to visualize Atticus and his friends discussing Epicurean philosophy as Cicero portrays them in the later books of the De Finibus. Indeed, it may have been from Atticus, or from Atticus' library, that Cicero obtained most of his information about Epicureanism: at the time of the composition of the De Natura Deorum Cicero writes to Atticus asking for Phaedrus' περὶ θεῶν and περὶ Παλλάδος.[39]

Atticus' adoption by his uncle left him a wealthy man.[40] This wealth and his business ventures would seem to conflict with Atticus' Epicureanism. Yet he remained, for the most part, aloof from politics and was described as courteous, affable and generous-- qualities much admired by Epicurus himself. Atticus, not unlike Albucius, seems to have been an Epicurean because it suited him and not because of any deep conviction. Leslie perhaps best summarizes Atticus' attitude toward Epicureanism by saying that his personality and his exposure to Greek culture induced him to live a peaceful and reasonable life but that his "Romanism" prevented him from withdrawing completely from political life.[41]

---

[39] ad Att., 13, 43. For the possibility that Cicero is copying from a treatise of Philodemus, see below.

[40] Nep. 5.

[41] Leslie, p. 73.

Lucius Saufeius

Lucius Saufeius is described by Nepos as the aequalis of Atticus and, like Atticus, he was one of the knightly class.[42] He probably left for Athens within a few years of Atticus where he, too, spent several years studying philosophy.[43] Whether Saufeius heard Phaidros lecture in Rome is not attested by any evidence, but there can be little doubt that he spent much time with Phaidros in Athens. On a statue base discovered in the agora, we find that Saufeius called Phaidros his καθηγητήν.[44] DeWitt has shown that the were the leaders of the small groups into which Epicurean students were divided.[45] The word implies a close relationship based on friendship and mutual good-will and indicates that Saufeius must have been an active member of the school. Saufeius, like Atticus, seems to have possessed a certain degree of magnanimity for the people of Athens erected a statue to him ἀρετῆς ἕνεκα.[46]

---

42 Nep. 12, 3.

43 "complures annos studio ductus philosophiae Athenis habitabat". Nepos 12, 3.

44 The complete inscription may be found in A.E. Raubitschek, "Phaidros and His Roman Pupils".

45 N. DeWitt, "Organization and Procedure in Epicurean Groups", CP 31 (1936), p. 206.

46 Raubitschek, p. 99.

Saufeius and Atticus remained good friends after they had both left Athens. Cicero sent letters to Atticus via Saufeius offering the excuse "hominem tibi tam familiarem sine meis litteris ad te venire nolebam."[47] It was through Atticus' influence that Saufeius' property was rescued from the proscriptions of the triumvirs in 43.[48] Cicero was close enough to Saufeius to be able to question him on matters political without fear of compromise[49] and to joke about his Epicureanism.[50] Perhaps Saufeius, too, was one of Cicero's sources for Epicurean writings.

Saufeius seems to have been a busy writer.[51] The only fragment of his work surviving is quoted in Servius and indicates that his writings were of an historical-philosophical nature:[52]

> Saufeius Latium dictum ait quod ibi latuerant incolae qui quoniam in cavis montium vel occultos caventes sibi a feris beluis vel a valentioribus vel a tempestatibus habitaverint Cascei vocati sunt, quos posteri Aborigines cognominarunt, quoniam ab iis ortos esse se cognoscebant, ex quibus latinos etiam dictos.

---

47 ad Att. 7, 1.

48 Nep., 12.

49 ad Att. 16, 3.

50 ad Att. 15, 4.

51 ad Att. 2, 8; cf. ad Att. 1, 3.

52 Servius, comm. in Aen. 1, 6.

The fragment is remarkable because it bears a startling resemblance to a passage in Book 5 of the De Rerum Natura

> sed nemora atque cavos montis silvasque colebant
> et frutices inter condebant squalida membra
> verbera ventorum vitare imbrisque coacti
> (5, 955-57)

and would thus seem to provide another link between Saufeius and his Epicurean contemporaries.[53]

Lucius Manlius Torquatus

Cicero gives the task of expounding the Epicurean position in Book 1 of the De Finibus to L. Manlius Torquatus. Torquatus had a fairly active political career. In 65, he prosecuted one of the consuls-elect, P. Sulla, on a charge of ambitus. He remained closely connected with Cicero during the latter's praetorship and brought Sulla to trial again in 62.[54] Torquatus was praetor when Caesar crossed the Rubicon. He was an avowed Pompeian[55] and was stationed at Alba where the six legions he commanded fled as Caesar approached.[56] In 48 he was taken prisoner by Caesar at Oricum and released.[57] He fled with

---

[53] cf. F. Münzer, "Ein Römischer Epikureer", Rh. Museum 69 (1914), p. 625 ff. where he proves the relationship between these lines and the fragment quoted from Saufeius' work.

[54] Pro Sulla 1; 8; passim.

[55] ad Att. 7, 2.

[56] Bell. Civ. 1, 24.

[57] Bell. Civ. 3, 11.

Pompey and was slain in 46 at Hippo Regius.[58]

At the beginning of Book 1 of the De Finibus, Cicero says

> Accurate quondam a L. Torquato, homine omni doctrina erudito, defensa est Epicuri sententia de voluptate.
>
> (1, 13)

Cicero often refers to this first (Epicurean) book of De Finibus as the "Torquatus".[59] Now we know that Cicero always attempted to give the characters in his dialogues as much vraisemblance as possible. Torquatus is compared favorably with M. Cato, one of the most outstanding Stoics of the period. There can, I feel, be little doubt as to Torquatus' fitness for the role of the Epicurean spokesman. Yet, other than an admission that he knew of Siro and Philodemus[60] Torquatus does not seem to have acted very much like an Epicurean. He was involved in politics, an accomplished orator, a wide reader,[61] a man who did not seem to practice Epicurean withdrawal at all. This paradox--an intellectual interest in Epicureanism coupled with an involvement in current affairs--is a problem which I will discuss more fully at the end of this chapter.

---

58 Bell. Afr. 96.

59 ad Att. 13, 5; 13, 32.

60 De. Fin. 2, 119.

61 Brut. 265.

Lucius Calpurnius Piso (Caesoninus)[62]

Lucius Calpurnius Piso was praetor in 61; upon his return from his province, he narrowly escaped exile by throwing himself at the mercy of his judges.[63] A few years later, his daughter married Julius Caesar. With Caesar's support, Piso was elected consul for 58.[64] It was during Piso's consulship that Clodius brought forward his bill de capite civis Romani aimed at the removal of Cicero. As payment for his part in the plot, Piso obtained the province of Macedonia.[65] Piso left early for his province and began to plunder it to such an extent that he had to be recalled.[66] Piso was a censor at the outbreak of the civil war in 50[67] and his efforts to placate his son-in-law failed.[68] He left Rome, but does not seem to have fled from Italy.[69] After Caesar's assassination, little more is heard of Piso other than that he was legate in the embassy to Antony at

---

62 see his biography in Pauly 3, 1387.

63 Val. Max. 8, 1, 6.

64 Bell. Gall. 1, 6.

65 Pro Ses. 53.

66 Pro Ses. 44; In Pis. 87-90.

67 Bell. Civ. 1, 3.

68 see Broughton, II p. 265.

69 ad Fam 14, 14.

Mutina in 43.[70]

The evidence for Piso's Epicureanism is found in Cicero's speech In Pisonem. Cicero compares the trophies that Piso set up in Macedonia to the triumph that Albucius declared for himself "ut duorum Epicureorum similitudinem in re militari imperioque videatis [patres]".[71] Cicero says that only the fear of violence will deter Piso from taking a certain course of action: "Dolor enim est malum ut tu disputas."[72] He calls Piso "ex argilla et luto fictus Epicurus" and pictures him sending an Epicurean tract ("libellum") to calm Julius Caesar's (his son-in-law) passion for future triumphs, with the Epicurean sentiments:

> in quibus homines errore ducuntur, quas di neglegunt, qui, ut noster divinus ille dixit Epicurus, neque propitii cuiquam esse solent neque irati. (In Piso. 59)

Cicero is, of course, being deliberately abusive. However, I do not think that he would continually mention Piso's Epicureanism or use the examples he does if there were not some basis in reality for the charge. Elsewhere, Cicero shows that he knows full well that Piso has used Epicureanism to cloak his vices;[73] while the picture here is exaggerated, I think it fair to assume that Piso was a (nominal) Epicurean.

---

[70] ad Fam. 12, 4; Phil. 7, 28.

[71] In Piso. 92.

[72] In Piso. 65.

[73] Post red. in sen. 14; Pro Ses. 110.

The strongest argument for Piso's interest in Epicureanism is his association with Philodemus of Gadara, an Epicurean who arrived in Italy ca. 70. The identification of Philodemus with the Greek teacher mentioned In Pisonem 68-72 is made by Asconius,

> Philodemum significat, qui fuit Epicureus illa aetate nobilissimus, cuius poemata sunt lasciva.[74]

There can be little doubt that Asconius is correct;[75] I will examine their relationship more fully in a later part of this chapter.

Gaius Memmius[76]

Gaius Memmius was probably born ca. 98 of an old aristocratic family. In 66, he was one of the plebeian tribunes[77] and by 58 with the aid of Cicero's support, he had been elected praetor.[78] After serving his term of office, he was appointed governor of Bithynia. By 54, Memmius was ready to make a bid for the consulship. He had changed his political alignment and

---

[74] Asconius Commentarii ec. G. Giarratano (Amsterdam, 1967), 16 C (p. 18).

[75] see M. Hadas, "Gadarenes in Pagan Literature", CW 25 (1931), p. 29).

[76] based on the biography in Pauly 21, cols. 609-615; Bailey 2, 598-599.

[77] Plut. Lucullus, 37.

[78] ad Q. Frat. 1, 2; 1, 5.

was supported in his campaign by Caesar.[79] He was not expected to succeed, so he bribed heavily. When he did lose, he was charged with ambitus. He was convicted and went into exile--first to Athens and then to Mitylene.[80] He presumably died in exile.[81]

In his youth, Memmius had shown considerable interest in Epicurean philosophy. Cicero points out that Patro cultivated his friendship and hints that Memmius and his friends had formed an Epicurean group ("tuos omnes"):

> Sed et initio Romae, cum te quoque et tuos omnes
> Patro observabat, me coluit in primis...
> (ad Fam 13, 1.)

Perhaps because of this early connection with Patro, Memmius had come into possession of some of Epicurus' property and the buildings thereon. In 51, he was apparently ready to tear the structure down; he ran into conflict with Patro who appealed to Cicero for help.[82] There is an interesting suggestion that Memmius may have contemplated a restoration of the Epicurean property and argued with Patro as to how this was to be carried out.[83] Besides

---

[79] Suet. Div. Iul. 73; ad Att. 4, 15.

[80] ad Att. 5, 11.

[81] In Brut. 248 (dramatic date 46) he is spoken of as dead.

[82] ad Fam. 13, 1; 13, 2; 13, 3.

[83] J.B. Stearns, "Lucretius and Memmius", CW 25 (1931), p. 68.

his relationship with known Epicureans (Patro, Lucretius), there is a passage in the Rhetorica of Philodemus where the author addresses a "Gaius", who could be Memmius.[84]

Memmius' practice of Epicureanism seems to have left much to be desired. In fact, he was very like Piso and probably used Epicureanism to hide his profligacy under a philosophical guise. He seduced Lucullus' wife.[85] His conduct in Bithynia received eloquent comment from Catullus;

> ...meum secutus
> praetorem refero datum lucello
> O Memmi, bene me ac diu supinum
> tota ista trabe lentus inrumasti!
> Sed quantum video, pari fuistis
> casu...
> (28, 7-12)

> ...nihil neque ipsis
> nec praetoribus esse nec cohorti
> cur quisquam caput unctius referret
> praesertim quibus esset inrumator
> praetor nec faceret pili cohortem
> (10, 9-13)[86]

---

[84] Philodemus, Rhetorica, ed. Sudhaus (Teubner, 1892), p. 223.

[85] ad Att. 1, 18.

[86] The casus shared by Catullus and his friends in poem 28 was an empty purse; Piso and Memmius presumably had full ones. While it could be argued that no one got anything from the province mentioned in poem 10, Catullus' comments indicate that Memmius held out on his staff.

Memmius was exiled for political misdemeanours.

Why did Lucretius address the De Rerum Natura to a man of Memmius' character? Lucretius may have been trying to convert him. On the other hand, we ought not to forget that character may have had little to do with the dedication. Memmius was a literary dilettante who was supporting other poets (Catullus, Cinna) while Lucretius was writing. If Lucretius' hope for suavis amicitia was a bid for patronage, Memmius--an important Roman with Greek interests and Epicurean leanings who had himself written poetry[87]--was an obvious choice.[88] Memmius seems to have disappointed Lucretius as he did Catullus: his name appears rarely in the last books Lucretius composed and he seems to have done little to aid the publication of the poem.

Greek Epicureans in Italy

In these biographies of some Roman Epicureans who lived before or during Lucretius' lifetime, I have made reference to the contact which they maintained with Greek Epicureans.[89] Three of these Greek teachers deserve special mention: Phaidros, Philodemus and Siro.

---

[87] Pliny, Epist. 5, 3; Ovid, Trist. 2, 433.

[88] see W. Allen, "The Friendship of Lucretius with Memmius", CP 33 (1938), p. 167 ff.

[89] for some later Roman Epicureans see the end of this chapter.

Phaidros

Facts about the life and movements of Phaidros are scarce and the gaps are considerable.[90] He was probably born ca 138 of a distinguished Athenian family. He was in Athens before his trip to Rome[91] during which time he presumably occupied a position of importance in the Garden, then under the direction of Zeno and Demetrius. Here he remained until just before 88 when the political pressures of the Mithridatic wars caused him to leave. He went to Rome; it was at this time that Cicero heard him lecture.[92] Most likely Phaidros returned to Athens soon after Sulla regained control of the city. He was lecturing there in 79 when Cicero and Atticus heard him.[93] His role in the school was one of the καθηγηταὶ or outstanding teachers.[94] He was more than likely regarded as the head of the school[95] in which capacity he was succeeded by Patro.

---

90 for the literary evidence see Pauly, Phaidros (8); inscriptional evidence may be found in Rabitschek, "Phaidros and His Roman Pupils".

91 De Leg. 1, 53; Raubitschek, p. 98, note 12.

92 ad Fam. 13, 1; for the dating Pauly 19, col 1557; Madvig on De Fin. 1, 16.

93 De Fin. 1, 16.

94 Raubitschek, p. 99, 101.

95 see the remarks made about his relationship with Patro in ad Fam. 13, 1.

Phaidros' activities during his stay in Rome are somewhat of a mystery. The statement in the Oxford Classical Dictionary that "He was the head of the Epicurean school in Rome for a short while"[96] seems to me to go beyond the evidence. He would have hardly come to Rome, however, had there been little interest in Epicureanism and, consequently, little chance of supporting himself. It would be interesting to know whose patronage he had; Madvig suggests Velleius[97] but Atticus and Saufeius are also reasonable conjectures. Certainly he lectured. The Epicureans in Rome must have been quite honoured by his visit; Velleius, Atticus, Saufeius as well as Cicero were probably among his hearers. His great personal charm, like that of Epicurus, had an influence on all who heard him[98]. Within a year of Phaidros' departure from Rome, Atticus also left for Athens and Lucius Saufeius followed a few years later.

Philodemus

One of the most important figures in the history of Epicureanism in Italy is Philodemus of Gadara. Younger than Phaidros, Philodemus may have studied under him, but most of his training was received from Zeno of Sidon and Demetrius of Sparta

---

96 O.C.D. p. 673, Phaidros (2).

97 see his note on De Fin. 1, 16 and my comments above.

98 De Nat. Deo. 1, 93.

who were leading teachers in the Garden ca 100.[99] Philodemus' activities before he arrived in Italy are unknown. By 70, he had settled in a villa near Naples where many rolls written by him were found.[100]

The magnificence of the villa and its furnishings indicate that it must have belonged to a wealthy Roman. Piso is usually mentioned as the owner, but there is no definite proof for this contention.[101] The exact nature of the relationship between Piso and Philodemus is open to debate.

Philodemus addresses some of this work to Piso.[102] Cicero says that Philodemus was living with Piso in 55 and had known him for several years.[103] Perhaps the most reasonable conjecture would be that, although Philodemus had other prominent Romans as his friends,[104] Piso was his principal patron.[105]

Asconius calls Philodemus "Epicureus illa aetate nobilissimus".[106] Although Cicero reviles Piso he is aware that Piso

---

[99] J.L. Stocks, "Epicurean Induction", MIND 34 (1925) p. 185 ff.

[100] Pauly 19, cols. 2444-2445.

[101] see Nisbet's edition of In Pisonem (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1961), pp. 186-187 and the references there cited.

[102] Anth. Pal. 11, 44 φίλτατε Πείσων ; in περὶ τοῦ καθ' Ὅμηρον ἀγαθοῦ βασιλέως we find ὦ Πείσων (quoted from Allen and DeLacy, "The Patrons of Philodemus" CP 34 (1939), p.64.

[103] In Piso. 68.

[104] Allen and DeLacy, CP 34, p. 59 ff.

[105] for a complete discussion of Piso and Philodemus, and the villa, see Nisbet, appendices III and IV.

[106] Asconius, Commentarii, 16C.

has misinterpreted Philodemus' teachings.[107] Even in his invective mood, Cicero pays due respect to Philodemus admitting that he is cultured and possesses literary interests unusual in an Epicurean.[108] His epigrams and the careful style of his composition seem to bear out Cicero's remarks. When he is being less polemical, Cicero calls Philodemus an optimus vir et homo doctissimus.[109]

Two-thirds of the identified rolls at the Herculaneum villa were written by Philodemus.[110] A partial list of his works shows that he covered almost every field of composition. He wrote a Rhetoric (περὶ ῥητορικῆς), a treatise on logic (περὶ σημείων καὶ σημειώσεων), a history of philosophy (ἡ τῶν φιλοσόφων σύνταξις), a work on political science (περὶ τοῦ καθ' Ὅμηρον ἀγαθοῦ βασιλέως), protreptic discourses (περὶ Ὀργῆς , περὶ κακιῶν), a theological tract (περὶ θεῶν), consolations (περὶ θανάτου), and even a work on music (περὶ μουσικῆς). While most of the treatises are written from an ethical viewpoint that is decidedly Epicurean, Philodemus discussed topics that do not seem to belong to orthodox Epicureanism (e.g. music, rhetoric). As Tenney Frank remarks,

---

107 In Piso. 69; Post red. in sen. 14.

108 In Piso. 70.

109 De Fin. 2, 119.

110 Nisbet, p. 186.

> The essays disclose a man not wholly confined to the ipsa verba of Epicurus for they show more interest in rhetorical precepts than was displayed by the founder of the school; they are more sympathetic toward the average man's religion, and not a little concerned about the affairs of state. All this indicated a healthy reaction that more than one philosopher underwent in coming in contact with Roman men of the world...[111]

Did Philodemus write these works for general circulation or for his own Epicurean group?[112] Some of the treatises might have been for the instruction of Philodemus' friends. But such a vast output over a period of years, the careful attention to style, the range of topics covered indicate an habitual writer who wrote for publication.

As I have tried to indicate above, the Epicureanism that Philodemus was popularizing was several removes from the original teachings of the Master.[113] Yet it was this "reactionary" Epicureanism that provided the basis for Cicero's comments in the De Finibus and the De Natura Deorum, that may have influenced the Novi Poetae, that may have affected the Augustan poets.[114]

---

[111] T. Frank, Vergil (Oxford, 1922), p. 50.

[112] alluded to in Diog. Laert, 10, 24.

[113] for specific examples, see below, chapter 2.

[114] For the influence of Philodemus on Cicero: Schanz-Hosius, Geschichte de Römischen Literatur, I4, p. 506 (for the De Fin.), p. 511 (for the De Nat. Deo.); also see Mayor's introduction to De Nat. Deo. For his influence on the Novi Poetae: C. Neudling, "Epicureanism and the New Poets", TAPA 80 (1949), p. 429 ff.; for his influence on Vergil: Tenney Frank, Vergil (Oxford, 1922), chaps. 5, 7; ---------, "Vergil's Apprenticeship," CP 15 (1920), p. 103 ff. For the possibility of Philodemus' influence on Horace: C.O. Brink, Horace on Poetry (Cambridge: University Press, 1963), pp. 43-135)

Why such changes, such shifts in emphasis from physics and ethics to rhetoric, politics and the arts, occurred in Roman Epicureanism will form the burden of my second chapter.

Siro

At the conclusion of Cicero's arguments in the second book of De Finibus, Torquatus says that he is at no loss for Epicurean authorities to whom he can refer Cicero. Cicero replies

> 'Familiares nostros, credo, Sironem dicis et Philodemum cum optimos viros, tum homines doctissimos.' 'Recte', inquit Torquatus 'intellegis'.
>
> (De Fin. 2, 119.)

In a letter to Trebianus written in 45, Cicero asks to be commended to everyone, but especially to Siro whom he calls noster amicus and prudentissimus.[115] These passages indicate that Cicero knew Siro and was aware that Siro had published. Since both were written in 45, I think that we may assume that Siro's writings were becoming known in Rome from 50-45.

Servius tells us that Vergil and several other young Romans joined an Epicurean group led by Siro.[116] Further

---

[115] ad Fam. 6, 11.

[116] Servius, comm. in Verg. Aen. 6, 264: "Sironem... magister suum Epicureum"; cf. comm. in Verg. Buc. 6, 13.

evidence to the same effect is given in Catalepton 5

> nos ad beatos vela mittimus portus,
> magni petentes docta dicta Sironis,
> vitamque ab omni vindicabimus cura.
> (vv. 8-10, O.C.T.)

where the words docta dicta and ab omni cura confirm the idea that Siro is the teacher of a group of Epicureans.[117]

Vergil probably joined Siro's circle in 45; this date gives added weight to the conjecture that the writings of Siro were being circulated at that time.[118]

A fragment of the Herculanean papyri links Siro to the Naples area (and thus to Philodemus) and indicates that Siro had some sort of a group interested in philosophy living with him:

ἐδ]όκει δ' ἐπ[ανελθεῖν] μεθ' ἡμῶν
εἰς [τὴν Νεά]πολιν πρὸς τὸν [φιλτατο]ν
Σίρωνα [κ]αὶ τὴν [περὶ αὐτ]ὸν ἐκεῖ
διαίτη[σιν καὶ φι]λοσόφους ἐνεργ[ῆσαι
ὁμι]λίας Ἡρκλ[ανέωι τε συχνό]τε[ρον
παρενδιατρῖψαι][119]

---

117 I am aware that the authorship of the Appendix Vergiliana is open to question; for the Vergilian authorship of Cat. 5 see DeWitt, Vergil's Biographia Litteraria (Toronto, 1923?), p. 33 ff.

118 DeWitt, Biographia, p. 36; T. Frank, Vergil, p. 47.

119 Cronert's restoration as given in Nesbit, p. 187 Pauly, under "Siro", replaced φίλτατον and ὁμιλίας with ἡμέτερον and συλλαλίας ; the basic meaning is the same.

It is difficult to imagine that Siro and Philodemus did not know each other; indeed two such efforts to spread Epicureanism can hardly have been unrelated. How many students were involved in the Naples group is hard to estimate, but if the restoration of some of the names found in the Herculanean papyri is correct, some important Augustan literary figures spent time in the Cecropius hortulus.[120]

Roman Epicureanism

We would expect that Epicureanism, since it was principally an ethical system for living a happy life, would have influence on the actions and attitudes of those Romans who said they professed it. Yet the diversity in the characters of the Roman Epicureans who are, I feel, representative, indicates that the personality of the adherent influenced his practice of Epicureanism. Piso and Memmius might well have been unsavoury characters even if they could not have justified their excesses with the doctrine of voluptas. Torquatus did not seem to feel an obligation to withdraw from public life. Atticus was drawn to the school because of his personality and cultural interests.

---

120 Varius Rufus, Plotius Tucca, Quintilius Varus, Q. Horatius Flaccus; see C.M. Hall, "Some Epicureans at Rome", CW 15 (1935), p. 114.

> Atticus may be supposed to have professed Epicureanism partly to be in fashion and partly because as a devotee of things Hellenic he had to have a philosophy and Epicureanism suited him better than anything other.[121]

The Roman Epicureans did not seem to think that they were deviating unduly from Epicurean principles when they entered political life or amassed a personal fortune. They cannot be charged with lack of orthodoxy if changes had occurred in the Epicurean attitudes towards politics, that is, if the Epicurean notion of withdrawal from public life had been modified to suit the Roman interest in politics. Certainly there was interest in and study of the philosophy of the Garden. But, when a political crisis arose, Roman Epicureans became deeply involved.

As an example I should like to cite the reactions of the Epicureans to the murder of Caesar.[122] Some Epicureans were anti-Caesarian, eg. Trebianus, L. Papirius Paetus and, of course, Torquatus.[123] M. Fadius Gallus wrote a panegyric of Cato in 45.[124]

---

121 D.R. Shackleton - Bailey. Cicero's Letters to Atticus 3 vols., (Cambridge Univ. Press, 1965), vol. 1, p. 8, n. 5; the opinion is negative, I feel, but not unfair.

122 For the information contained in this section, I am deeply indebted to a review essay by A. Momigliano "Epicureans in Revolt" JRS 31 (1941), p. 151 ff. The article is very valuable.

123 Trebianus: ad Fam. 6, 11; Paetus: ad Fam. 9, 16; 9, 18; 9, 25; Torquatus died fighting for Pompey: see above.

124 ad Fam. 7, 24-25; his Epicureanism mentioned in ad Fam. 7, 26; 9, 25

Cassius' conversion took place ca. 44.[125]

Some Epicureans supported Caesar. Piso, and by implication Philodemus, Pansa and Trebatius Testa were friendly.[126] But even Caesar's supporters urged moderation. Piso strove for peace and, though Pansa's sympathies were not with the liberators, he was strongly opposed to Antony.[127] Even Philodemus seems to have been a moderate: in the work on Kingship, he suggests that the king should compose civil strife and not employ violence to gain his ends.

On the whole, despite their mixed motives, the Epicureans stood for the Republic and against Caesar.

Caesar's murder moved the entire group to act. Atticus became involved with Antony and Octavius. Horace fought with the Liberators, Pansa took the field for the Republic, and Piso attacked Antony.[128] L. Saufeius' proscription might indicate that he was involved in political manoeuvres.

Epicurus felt that the law was necessary for peace[129] and that the philosopher should remain aloof from affairs of state.[130]

---

125 ad Fam. 15, 16; 15, 19.

126 Suet. Div. Iul. 78.

127 ad Fam. 11, 1, ad Att 15, 8.

128 Philipp. 1, 10-14; cf. the references in Momigliano's article.

129 Usener, fr. 530.

130 Usener frgs. 548, 554.

If necessary, he can pay court to a king.[131] Philodemus, too, felt that political activities were not part of the philosopher's life.[132] Working with Caesar would have been fine; but battling with him and his successor (Antony) was contrary to the tradition of the school. The Roman Epicureans fought primarily because of centuries of Republican tradition and only secondarily because Epicurus exhorted them to despise death. Lucretius too exhibits this strain of Roman Epicureanism. The idea of human progress, the ability of man to change his world and reach for higher goals is evident in his picture of human evolution.[133] He even implies that only magistrates and laws -- not kings -- can bring peace.[134] Enthusiasm, not withdrawal, is the key-note of this section.

Summary

What assessment can we make of Roman Epicureanism? First, there is a long history of interest in Epicurus' teachings in Rome dating from ca. 150 that grew stronger in the years preceeding the composition of the De Rerum Natura. Second, there was frequent contact between Roman Epicureans and leading Greek Epicureans whose writings were in circulation. Finally, the Roman interest in Epicureanism seems to proceed from a general interest in things

---

131 Diog. 10, 120.

132 Rhetorica 2, 12, 8; 2, 28, 7 but passages in the περὶ ... ἀγαθοῦ βασιλέως and περὶ θεῶν show he was, perhaps, involved.

133 5, 925 ff.

134 5, 1136 ff.

Hellenic; in a time of crisis the maxims of Epicurus regarding the "Hidden Life" and non-involvement in political affairs were forgotten.

CHAPTER II

Introduction

As I showed in the Introduction, Epicureanism was basically a communal philosophy: instruction was carried on in a group whose members lived together and patterned their lives after the example of the Master.

The technique of self-instruction from the writings of Epicurus was also employed as the letter to Herodotus indicates.[1] But (as I shall try to show) changes occurred in the use that was made of Epicurus' writings and in the methodology of the school which brought it about that the Epicureanism to which the Romans were exposed differed, in spirit, from the teachings of Epicurus. Such a change may be inferred from a remark of Cicero. He quotes a saying of Epicurus on friendship, (friendship is based on self-interest), disagrees, and then continues

> Attulisti [speaking to Torquatus] aliud humanius horum recentiorum numquam dictum ab ipso illo...
>
> (De Fin 2, 82)

The modern Epicureans, implies Cicero, have made Epicureanism humanius and more appealing. Why and how such changes in attitude occurred is the subject of this chapter.

---

[1] see below.

Epicurean Groups[2]

The most complete account of the organization within the school is found in the περὶ παρρησίας of Philodemus. The organization outlined therein may refer specifically to Philodemus' group, but since the roll was probably based on the lectures (σχολαί) of Zeno, we may assume that the picture of the school given in περὶ παρρησίας is representative of Epicurean circles generally.[3]

The basis of the "system" was goodwill and friendship (φιλία) which expressed itself in mutual concern and responsibility for one another's advance toward wisdom. This concern took the form of correction of faults; one title in the tract may be translated "How through correction we shall heighten the goodwill of the students toward ourselves in spite of the very process of correction."[4] The process of correction had become a specialized art (ποικίλη φιλοτεχνία) by the time Philodemus was writing and had its own vocabulary, eg. correction was simple (ἁπλῆ) when given straight-forwardly and directly, or mixed (μικτή) when reproof was compounded with praise

---

[2] for this section I am indebted to two articles by N.W. DeWitt: "Organization and Procedure in Epicurean Groups" CP 31 (1936), p. 205 ff.; "Epicurean Contubernium", TAPA 67 (1936), p. 55 ff.

[3] N.W. DeWitt "Parresiastic Poems of Horace", CP 30 (1935), p. 312.

[4] DeWitt, CP 31, p. 20.

and exhortation. Very careful rules were laid down concerning how, when and where correction was to be delivered.[5]

Obviously, the observation of character played an important part in the school. Students are listed in the περὶ παρρησίας as being weak and incapable of profiting by correction, of ugly disposition, incorrigible, dilatory - in short, the whole gamut of character faults is listed.[6]

Each of the members of the school looked to his peers and to those above him for correction. But the example upon which all were to model their lives was the pattern given by Epicurus. The students took a pledge: "We will be obedient to Epicurus according to whom we have made it our choice to live."[7] This devotion was a force in Cicero's day; Atticus remarks:

> ... nec tamen Epicuri licet oblivisci si cupiam cuius imaginem non modo in tabulis nostri familiares sed etiam in poculis et in anulis habent.[8]

This personal cult of the founder probably existed from the inception of the school. Hermarchus and Metrodorus named

---

[5] DeWitt, CP 31, p. 209.

[6] Theophrastus' Characters shows that the later Peripatetics were also moving in this direction, ie., character observation as an aid to correcting faults.

[7] DeWitt, CP 31, p. 205.

[8] De Fin 5, 3; it is interesting to note that Epicurus was the only teacher besides Pythagoras to give his name to a school. Both schools exhibited a mystical fellowship; both emphasized the dicta of the Master.

their sons after the master;[9] the account of Diogenes indicates a high personal regard for Epicurus.[10] The spirit of the original community - the "mystical fellowship"[11] - was still evident to Cicero ca. 50:

> At vero Epicurus una in domo, et ea quidem angusta, quam magnos quantaque amoris conspiratione consentientes tenuit amicorum greges, quod fit etiam nunc ab Epicureis
> (De Fin. 1, 65)

The same feeling of joy at joining the school is found in Catal-epton 5:

> nos ad beatos vela mittimus portus,
> magni petentes docta dicta Sironis,
> vitamque ab omni vindicabimus cura.
> (8-10)

The school, then, always seems to have kept to the spirit of the original group. What is new is the emphasis put on the correction of faults, the careful classification of moral lapses, the reduction of Epicurean life to a τέχνη even if it be a φιλο-τεχνία. Evidence that the Naples group followed the spirit of the περὶ παρρησίας is found in Horace. In Satires 1, 5, he says of Tucca and Varius (members of Siro's circle):

> animae quales neque candidiores
> terra tulit...
> (41-42)

---

[9] Diog. 10, 19; 10, 26.

[10] see Introduction.

[11] Diog. 10, 6.

where candidiores undoubtedly carries the notion of frankness and free speech (παρρησία). In Odes 1, 24, 7 he implies that two of the most outstanding qualities of Quintilius Varus were his "incorrupta fides" and "nudaque veritas"; veritas, as a noun, carries the same meaning as candidiores.[12] There is an implied correction of Vergil by Varius in Catalepton 7. Vergil himself was noted for his friendship and ability to get along with others.

Cicero was not unfamiliar with the concept of Epicurean fellowship. He uses the words consuetudo, convictus, and vita communis in his letters to known Epicureans[13] and speaks of his desire to retire to write philosophy in what are most likely Epicurean terms:

> Mihi enim iudicatum est --- me totum in litteras abdere tecumque et cum ceteris earum studiosis honestissimo otio perfrui.
>
> (ad Fam. 7, 33, 2)

The Epicurean tone is even more remarkable when we remember that the letter is addressed to Publius Volumnius Eutrapelus, a known friend of Atticus[14] and an undoubted Epicurean.[15]

---

[12] N.W. DeWitt, CP 30, p. 314.

[13] see ad Fam. 7, 1, 4; 5, 14, 3.

[14] Nepos Atticus 9, 10.

[15] ad Fam. 7, 33.

But many of the Roman Epicureans could not and did not practice the withdrawal to the school that Vergil did. They were not so closely involved in the community life of the school, although they did meet and converse with other Epicureans. These men (eg., Torquatus, Velleius) were, in a sense, lay members of the school to whom was directed number 41 of the Sententiae Vaticanae:

> All the same we must laugh and practice our philosophy, applying it in our own households, taking advantage of our other intimacies to this end, and under no circumstances whatever falter in making our utterances consistent with the true philosophy[16]

The spirit of this injunction is clear from the περὶ παρρησίας, but it is to be applied beyond the school in the circumstances that any individual may find himself in his own household.

The Written Works (Epitomes)

The problem of students who could not remain in direct contact with the school was not new, but had arisen from the very first.

Epicurus began teaching in Mitylene and Lampsacus, but within five years he had moved to Athens.[17] Here he remained

---

[16] trans. N.W. DeWitt, "Epicurean Contubernium" TAPA 67 (1936), p. 59; italics mine.

[17] Diog. Laer. 10, 15.

until his death in 270. Thus, he was in the position of being a scholarch in residence in Athens who had not completed the education of the new students in Asia Minor. The only contact between the groups would be by correspondence. In addition to letters addressed to students in Lampsacus and Mitylene, there is evidence that Epicurus wrote to pupils as far distant as Egypt and Asia.[18]

The three extant letters are probably representative of the contents of most of the communication between teacher and pupils: explanations of points already discussed but not fully understood. But the later letters (Herodotus, Pythocles)[19] are of a slightly different nature. The writings of the Master filled nearly 300 rolls.[20] The letter to Herodotus seems to be an attempt to condense this material into a unit of workable size--easy to carry, simple enough to memorize-and provide the student with an index of some sort.[21] But the letters were not solely written as an aid to the correlation of the larger corpus; they were also for the instruction of the students, both the mature[22] and those whose duties prevented them from pursuing philosophy as deeply as they might like.[23]

---

[18] Usener, 135-6.

[19] for the chronology of letters see DeWitt, "The Later Paideia of Epicurus", TAPA 68 (1937) p. 327.

[20] Diog. 10, 27.

[21] Her. 35: ἐπιτομὴν τῆς ὅλης πραγματείας cf, 37.

[22] Her. 83.

[23] Pyth. 85.

The use of the letters as sources for Epicurean philosophy is exemplified by Cicero in De Finibus 2, 96-99, where he quotes at length from a letter to Hermarchus[24] in his discussion with Torquatus.

There are several references to another summary besides the letter to Herodotus, or μικρὰ ἐπιτομή,[25] called the μεγάλη ἐπιτομή[26]. The "Larger Epitome" seems to have been a condensation of the περὶ φύσεως prepared, no doubt as a method of self-instruction. These Epitomes--primers as DeWitt calls them[27]--were written in the last years of Epicurus' life and show an increased emphasis on memorization as opposed to total comprehension. (cf. Pyth. 84.)

The terseness of the Principal Doctrines makes them even better suited to quick recall. They were used in this fashion in Cicero's day:

> In alio vero libro in quo breviter comprehensis gravissimis sententiis quasi oracula edidisse sapientiae dicitur, scribit his verbis, quae nota tibi profecto, Torquate, sunt (quis enim vestrum non edidicit Epicuri κύριας δόξας id est quasi maxime ratas, quia gravissimae sunt ad beate vivendum breviter enuntiatae sententiae?)...
>
> (De Fin. 2, 20)

---

[24] Evidence for the existence of such a letter is found in Athenaeus; see Usener 121.

[25] Diog. 10, 135.

[26] Usener 24-26.

[27] N.W. DeWitt, "The Later Paideia of Epicurus", TAPA 68 (1937), p. 33.

The epitomes commanded the most panoramic view of the truth. The student was to memorize as much as he was capable of absorbing - but no more - to aid him in obtaining the most comprehensive view of the truth.[28] This is the very method that Lucretius recommends to Memmius:

> namque alid ex alio clarescet nec tibi caeca
> nox iter eripiet quin ultima naturai
> pervideas ...[29]
>
> (1, 1115-1117)

Self-help, the use of the epitomes, is then, the method for those who cannot "live in residence" or whose "worldly" cares keep them from joining the community.

Popularized Epicureanism

Although the Epitomes were written for the instruction of the "non-resident" members of the school, it also seems to me that this shift from studying deeply the rolls of the Master to the memorization of the Epitomes marks an attempt to attract followers, to cater to the needs of a widely spread group embracing men of different ages, ability and background.

The problem of popularizing a philosophical belief did not only belong to the Epicureans. Plato and Aristotle both published popular works as well as treatises for advanced students. The Cynics were noted for their propaganda methods. By

---

[28] Diog. Laert. 10, 36.

[29] cf. 1, 407-8.

the second century B.C. consolations, essays on friendship, protreptic discourses, praises of virtue and condemnations of vice were in circulation, varied only to adapt the literary commonplaces to the tenets of the particular school publishing them. Zeller says:

> [Hellenistic philosophy] made use of the methods of proselytism which were especially characteristic of the oriental religions and found in the Cynic and Stoic diatribes, the popular philosophic sermon and the literary tract powerful instruments for the dissemination of their ideas.[30]

It is most likely that Epicurus would have condemned the use of such rhetorical devices employed in these literary-philosophical works as not befitting the philosopher.[31] The later Epicureans, however, showed little hesitation in adopting the methodology of the other schools. Early in the 2nd half of the 3rd century the Epicurean scholarch Polystratus wrote a protreptic work On Irrational Contempt.[32] Philodemus' works provide many instances of the attempt by the later Epicureans to present their philosophy in the "popular" manner by adopting the methods that the other schools found so successful.

---

[30] E. Zeller, Outlines of the History of Greek Philosophy, trans. L.R. Palmer (New York: Meridian, 1955), p. 226.

[31] πολλῆς ἐστιν ἡ ῥητορικὴ τριβῆς καὶ συνηθείας: Usener 109; cf. 330.

[32] DeLacy, "Lucretius and the history of Epicureanism" TAPA 79 (1948) pg. 21 where he cites Heinze, Lucretius III, p. 55.

His tract περὶ Ὀργῆς for example, treats of the vice of anger in a way which is very like other Roman popular treatises.[33] The περὶ Ὀργῆς opens with a definition giving the essential nature of anger.[34] Cicero follows the same procedure in Tusc. Disp. 3, 24 and 4, 11 where he defines and subdivides before he begins the discussion on the distress of the soul. The same procedure is also followed by a later writer: Seneca defines anger at the very beginning of the De Ira.[35] The definition given, the tract moves on to a discussion of causes so that a cure might be found. This, too, is the method used by Cicero: "causa aegritudinis reperta, medendi facultatem reperiemus". The second section (cures) begins in the περὶ Ὀργῆς at col. 1, 12; Seneca begins De Ira 2 "Quoniam quae de ira quaeruntur tractavimus, accedamus ad remedia eius",[36] Cicero starts listing remedies in Tusc. Disp 3, 77. This division into a theoretical (nature, definition) and a practical (cures) section was laid down by Chrysippus (a Stoic) and seems to have remained prescriptive even for the

---

[33] I am following the text of περὶ Ὀργῆς as given by R. Phillipson, "Philodems Buch uber den Zorn", Rh. Mus. 71 (1916) pp. 425-460. All numerical references are to this text.

[34] fr. A, B, C.

[35] De Ira 1, 3.

[36] 2, 18.

Epicureans.[37]

The common cure for these vices is, of course, philosophy. In Tusc. Disp. 3, 84 Cicero claims"... si effecturam philosopia profitetur, nos modo curationem eius recipiamus"; In the περὶ Ὀργῆς Philodemus says that to cure anger " φάρμακον οὐκ ἔστι πλὴν τοῦ κανονικοῦ λόγου"(col. 31, 15-18). The structure and tone of the περὶ Ὀργῆς is, then, related to other popular works in manner of presentation.[38]

That Philodemus was following a method of presentation long used in Epicurean schools can be inferred from Papyrus Herculanensis 831 probably written by Demetrius the Laconian, Philodemus' teacher. The roll περὶ μετεωρισμοῦ exhibits the same features of literary style I have just outlined: definitions, lists of symptoms, remedies, the suggestion of philosophy as the best cure.[39] Demetrius also assumes a liberal standpoint in ethics. The tract is addressed to a young Roman and Demetrius recognizes as correct his inclination to a political career, his occupation with aesthetic questions and his moderate pursuit of wealth.[40] Epicurus stood against such

---

37 Phillipson, "Papyrus Herculaniensis 831" AJP 64 (1943), p. 149.

38 Phillipson points out some other commonplaces -- the use of education to cure anger, the list of physical signs of anger, the medical analogies-- in AJP 64, p. 152-153.

39 see Phillipson AJP 64, pp. 148 ff.

40 cols. 15, 12, 13, 17 in AJP 64, p. 156.

pursuits, but Demetrius seems to have realized that Epicureanism had to be geared to Roman life and ideals if it was to have any success in Italy.

Leslie remarks that Philodemus

> ... was enunciating the principle (indispensable for the survival of his sect in that society) that the study of and practice of music, poetry and rhetoric were permissible for enjoyment if not for the orderly presentation of logical thought.[41]

The desire to compete with other schools not only affected the form of Epicurean writings, but forced the Epicureans to develop new areas of study in which the philosophers of other schools were proficient but which they neglected because of prohibitions of Epicurus.

I have already mentioned some of Philodemus' less "orthodox" works. One area in which the influence of the other schools (in the form of reaction) is most clear is that of logic.

Philodemus' logical treatise περὶ σημείων carried logical theory far beyond the work of Epicurus who despised dialectic as misleading.[42] Philodemus' authorities were leading Epicurean teachers, Zeno and Demetrius,[43] so he can hardly be

---

[41] Leslie, Atticus, p. 24; italics mine.

[42] Diog. 10, 31.

[43] περὶ σημείων col. 19, 5; 28, 5.

accused of lack of orthodoxy.[44] The problem with which the treatise deals is that of finding a basis in experience for an assertion that goes beyond experience. The sign is from experience (σημεῖον) the inference (μεταβασις) is to the unseen,[45] Reasoning, for the Epicureans, is carried out by ὁ καθ'ὁμοιότητα τρόπος - resemblance of one thing to another. While the Epicureans based their reasoning on empirical observation, and induction, the Stoics developed a more formal logic based on deductive, syllogistic reasoning. They saw no necessary connection between seen and unseen, but argued that a proposition could be proven if it were shown that the negation of such a proposition rendered the terms meaningless (ὁ κατ'ἀναςκευὴν τρόπος). For example, the Epicureans might argue from the known mortality of men in Athens that all men everywhere were mortal. The Stoic would say that all men are mortal for no non-mortal is man. The one school emphasized experience and inference, the other terms and their formal arrangement. The moving force behind the περὶ σημείων is the necessity of proving the validity of the connection καθ' ὁμοιότητα.

---

[44] Bailey makes such a charge in the Greek Atomists and Epicurus (Oxford, Clarendon, 1928), p. 259; I cannot agree.

[45] see J.L. Stock, "Epicurean Induction" MIND 34 (1925) p. 196 ff. for the theory and the appropriate texts.

Philodemus seems to have taken the basic principles of the empirical method from the medical schools and their ideas of observation (αὐτοψία). He used several logical principles formulated by Aristotle[46] as well as some Aristotelian vocabulary: ἐπαγωγή, καθόλου, καθ'ἕκαστον [47]

This document (περὶ σημείων) illustrates that the Epicureans adapted ideas from other schools to argue with the Stoics who were themselves developing their philosophy in response to questioning and arguing within their own school. As DeWitt says:

> "[This tract] enables us to appreciate the care with which the Epicureans studied the thought of other philosophers that they might improve their own philosophical system.[48]

Changes in Argumentation

New elements in Epicurean philosophy can sometimes be more easily seen in debates with opponents rather than in any positive statements of orthodoxy.

In the following section, I will attempt to show that ideas that were seminal in Epicurus are developed by the later

---

[46] Knowledge of reality derived from sense perception: De An. 432a 3-14; perceptions are usually true, falsity lies in judgement: De An. 418 a 11-16, 427b 11-14.

[47] see DeLacy "Contributions of the Herculanean Papyri to Our Knowledge of Epicurean Logic", TAPA 68 (1937) p. 319.

[48] TAPA 68, p. 325.

Epicureans; arguments Epicurus used against his contemporaries are often re-directed by the later Epicureans against the Stoics insofar as the later Stoic ideas resembled those of the earlier philosophers with whom Epicurus disagreed. The later Epicureans (Phaedrus, Philodemus, Lucretius) also borrowed arguments from other schools when these suited their purpose. I will argue, then, for a progressive development in Epicurean philosophy arising from contact with other schools.

The Epicureans attributed to Plato and the later Platonists the view that the sun, moon, and stars were deities.[49] Epicurus' arguments against astral deities are rather abbreviated. In the letter to Herodotus, he says[50]

> Καὶ μὴν ἐν τοῖς μετεώροις φορὰν καὶ τροπὴν καὶ ἔκλειψιν καὶ ἀνατολὴν καὶ δύσιν καὶ τὰ σύστοιχα τούτοις μήτε λειτουργοῦντός τινος νομίζειν δεῖ γενέσθαι καὶ διατάττοντος ἢ διατάξοντος καὶ ἅμα τὴν πᾶσαν μακαριότητα ἔχοντος μετ' ἀφθαρσίας... μήτε αὖ πυρὸς ἀναμματα συνεστραμμένον τὴν μακαριότητα κεκτημένα

---

[49] Nat. Deor. 1, 30. The dialogues in question are the Timeaus and Laws.

[50] I have quoted in full so that the similarity may be clearly seen.

κατὰ βούλησιν τὰς κινήσεις
ταύτας λαμβάνειν· ἀλλὰ πᾶν
τὸ σέμνωνα τηρεῖν, κατὰ πάντα
ὀνόματα φερόμενον ἐπὶ τὰς
τοιαύτας ἐννοίας, ἵνα μηδ' ὑπεν-
αντίαι ἐξ αὐτῶν <γένωνται> τῷ
σεμνώματι δόξαι...

(Diog. 10, 76-77)

In the Letter to Menoeceus, he is even more terse:

πρῶτον μὲν τὸν θεὸν ζῷον
ἄφθαρτον καὶ μακάριον νομίζων,
ὡς ἡ κοινὴ τοῦ θεοῦ νόησις
ὑπεγράφη, μηθὲν μήτε μακα-
ριότητος ἀνοίκειον αὐτῷ πρόσ-
απτε· πᾶν δὲ τὸ φυλάττειν αὐτοῦ
δυνάμενον τὴν μετ' ἀφθαρσίας
μακαριότητα περὶ αὐτοῦ
δόξαζε.

(Diog. 10, 123)

Lucilius states the Stoic position in the second book of the De Natura Deorum:

> ordo autem siderum et in omni aeternitate constantia neque naturam significat (est enim plena rationis) neque fortunam quae amica varietati constantiam respuit; sequitur ergo ut ipsa sua sponte suo sensu ac divinitate moveantur.[51]

An even clearer example of how close the Stoic position is to that of Plato is found later:

> Earum autem perennes cursus atque perpetui cum admirabili incredibilique constantia declarant in his vim et mentem esse divinam...[52]

Velleius adapts and expands Epicurus' arguments against the astral dieties of Plato to refute the Stoic position. He, too, says that a continuously moving god cannot be happy:

> Nempe ut ea celeritate contorqueatur cui par nulla ne cogitari quidem possit; in qua non video ubinam mens constans et vita beata possit insistere.[53]

He develops the argument that nothing inconsistent with divine dignity must be thought of the gods into refutation of the Stoic anima mundi:

---

[51] De Nat. Deo. 2, 43.

[52] De Nat. Deo. 2, 55.

[53] De Nat. Deo. 1, 24; cf. 1, 52.

> Qui vero mundum ipsum animantem sapientemque esse dixerunt, nullo modo viderunt animi natura intellegentis in quam figuram cadere posset ... admirabor eorum tarditatem qui animantem immortalem et eundem beatum rotundum esse velint..[54]

Velleius carries the argument to a logical conclusion when he asserts that the gods must have a human form because of its great beauty:

> Quodsi omnium animantium formam vincit hominis figura, deus autem animans est, ea figura profecto est quae pulcherrima est omnium, quoniam deos beatissimos esse constat, beatus autem esse sine virtute nemo potest nec virtus sine ratione constare nec ratio usquam inesse nisi in hominia figura, hominis esse specie deos confitendum est.[55]

Lucretius also states that certain bodies are not fit dwelling places for divine life:[56]

> quippe etenim non est cum quovis corpore ut esse posse animi natura putetur consiliumque.

He rejects completely the notion that the gods can exist

> putribus in glebis terrarum aut solis ⟨in⟩ igni aut in aqua...aut altis aetheris oris.[57]

---

[54] De Nat. Deo. 1, 23-24.

[55] De Nat. Deo. 1, 48.

[56] 5, 126-127.

[57] 5, 142-143.

This argument is essentially the same as that of Velleius in De Nat. Deo. 1, 23 and is likewise directed against the anima mundi of the Stoics.[58] Thus Lucretius, as did his fellow Epicureans turned against the Stoics arguments that Epicurus had used to refute philosophers of an earlier time.

I have cited only one example of the way in which the arguments of Epicurus were expanded and brought to bear against the contemporaries of the Roman Epicureans.[59]

To show a real development, rather than a change of emphasis or simple re-application of an older argument, requires that we find Epicureans opposing an idea that appeared in Stoic circles after the death of the Master.

The Stoic notion of divine providence-- that the gods created the world for the sake of mankind--was developed and championed by Chrysippus.[60] Since Chrysippus was probably only a child at the time of Epicurus' death, it is unlikely that Epicurus ever contended directly with this notion. Although the concept of benevolent providence might be answered indirectly from the passages on providence already cited from the letter,[61] the later Epicureans developed their own refutations of the Stoic position.

---

[58] Bailey 3, 1338-1340.

[59] For another example, cf. Lucretius' treatment of Heraclitus and the Stoics in Bk. I, 635 ff. and Bailey's notes. I discuss this passage more fully in Chap. 4.

[60] Copleston II, 134 ff; DeLacy, TAPA 79 (1948), p. 16.

[61] e.g. the working of the universe takes place "without the ministration or command...of any being who at the same time enjoys perfect bliss along with immortality". Herod. 77, Loeb trans.

Before he discusses whether providence is benevolent or not, Lucretius asks a more basic question: why did the gods create at all?

> quid enim immortalibus atque beatis
> gratia nostra queat largirier emolumenti,
> ut nostra quicquam causa gerere aggrediantur?
> quidve novi potuit tanto post ante quietos
> inlicere ut cuperent vitam mutare priorem?
> nam gaudere novis rebus debere videtur
> cui veteres obsunt; sed cui nil accidit aegri
> tempore in anteacto, cum pulchre degeret aevum,
> quid potuit novitatis amorem accendere tali?
>
> (5, 165-173)

Velleius asks Balbus the same questions from a slightly different viewpoint:

> sciscitor cur mundi aedificatores repente
> exstiterint, innumerabilia saecla dormierint...?
> isto igitur tam inmenso spatio quaero, Balbe,
> cur Pronoea vestra cessavit?...Quid autem erat
> quod concupisceret deus mundum signis et
> luminibus tamquam aedilis ornare?...Quae ista
> potest esse oblectatio deo? quae si esset, non
> ea tam diu carere potuisset.[62]

This line of reasoning does not (as far as I am able to tell) appear in Epicurus. The coincidence of the arguments--what could entice the gods to stir after years of peace, what lack could they have that would ever be filled by created things--shows that there was probably a common Epicurean source used by both Lucretius and Cicero.[63] Regardless of the source, this is an argument developed independently from the traditions of the Master in response to the Stoics.

---

[62] De Nat. Deo. 1, 21-22.

[63] Bailey, III, 1345, is quite positive.

Velleius' argument against a benevolent providence is based on the distinction, made by the Stoics themselves, between the wise and the stupid. He asks why, if there are so many stulti, were the beauties of the universe designed?

> An haec, ut fere dicitis, hominum causa a deo constituta sunt? Sapientiumne? Propter paucos igitur tanta est facta rerum molitio. An stultorum? At primum causa non fuit cur de inprobis bene mereretur; deinde quid est consecutus? cum omnes stulti sint sine dubio miserrimi, maxime quod stulti sunt...[64]

Cotta, criticizing the Stoics in the third book of the De Natura Deorum makes a very similar point: the gifts of providence are beneficial only to those wise enough to use them properly

> quos videmus si modo ulli sunt esse perpaucos. Non placet autem paucis a dis inmortalibus esse consultum; sequitur ut nemini consultum sit.[65]

It appears as if the Epicureans and the Academics have joined forces against the common enemy.

Lucretius adds a slightly different twist to this argument when he asks what harm could have ever befallen man were he never created:

---

[64] De Nat. Deo. 1, 23.

[65] De Nat. Deo. 3, 70.

> quidve mali fuerat nobis non esse creatis?
> an, credo, in tenebris vita ac maerore iacebat,
> donec diluxit rerum genitalis origo?
> .....
> qui numquam vero vitae gustavit amorem
> nec fuit in numero, quid obest non esse creatum?[66]

There is a strong parallel here to Velleius' language in De Nat. Deo. 1, 22: "...antea videlicet tempore infinito in tenebris tamquam in gurgustio habitaverat." Velleius is talking of the gods, but Lucretius may have transferred the image to mankind. Bailey suggests a common Epicurean source[67]; the metaphor may have been a commonplace in Epicurean circles. The point is that there seems to be a sharing of ideas and the images with which these ideas are expressed; hence, communication between Lucretius, other Epicureans, and other schools.

Another argument shared by Academics and Epicureans appears in the Academica Priora. Cicero wonders

> cur deus, omnia nostra causa cum faceret, sic enim vultis [i.e. you Stoics] tantam vim natricum viperarumque fecerit? cur mortifera tam multa ac perniciosa terra marique disperserit?[68]

Lucretius first uses this line of attack in 2, 167 ff. He expands it in Book 5, 195-234. The argument is especially

---

[66] 5, 174-176; 179-180. For the non-Epicurean tone of this remark see my note below on Men. 126.

[67] Bailey 3, 1345 and passim.

[68] Acad. 2, 120.

clear in lines 218-221:

> praeterea genus horriferum natura ferarum
> humanae genti infestum terraque marique
> cur alit atque auget? cur anni tempora morbos
> apportant? quare mors immatura vagatur?

Velleius also uses this argument in De Nat. Deorum when he says "ita sunt multa incommoda in vita..."[69]

There is in this argument a pessimism that is quite foreign to Epicurus who considered life a blessing and censured the view that it was better for a man never to have been born.[70] The entire proof, that there could not be a benevolent providence because of the evils in the world was traditional,[71] and its use, in addition to the borrowing of material I have already mentioned, marks a developing rapport between the later Epicureans and other philosophical schools.

Summary

I have outlined, in this chapter, some of the changes that occurred in Epicureanism because of a desire to gain adherents, particularly from among the Romans who were interested in matters literary or who had no time to join an Epicurean school, and because of contact with other schools, principally the Stoics. I have tried to show that the letter form first used by Epicurus gradually gave way to literary forms that other teachers had

---

[69] De Nat. Deo. 1, 23.

[70] Men. 126:
cf. Luc. 5, 174-176 and Bailey's comments.

[71] Bailey 1351 cites Empedocles and the ps.-Platonic Axiochus.

found so successful; the later Epicureans, in an attempt to attract readers, seemed willing to emphasize quick memorization rather than gradual understanding. Fuller instruction was, no doubt, given in the schools (there would be little call for a treatise as involved as the περὶ σημείων outside the school) which seem to have changed little, but many Roman Epicureans must have been satisfied with the epitomes and the Κύριαι Δόξαι.

Are we to assume that this popularizing movement took place only to attract those who could read Greek, i.e. the nobiles? Was there any attempt to make the teachings of Epicurus available to those who spoke only Latin? I think there was and it is to the evidence for a body of popular works, written in Latin, that I now turn.

CHAPTER III

Epicurean Popularizers

At the beginning of Book 4 of the Tusculan Disputations, Cicero laments that, although the Romans have committed their law, their speeches, and some of their antiquities to writing, "nulla fere sunt aut pauca admodum Latina monumenta" of the true (vera) philosophy that started with Socrates and formed the basis for the Stoic, Peripatetic and Academic schools since none of their Roman exponents had the time or inclination to write.

> ...sive propter magnitudinem rerum occupationemque hominum sive etiam, quod imperitis ea probari posse non arbitrabantur.[1]

He continues

> cum interim illis [Stoics, Peripatetics, Academics] silentibus, C. Amafinius exstitit dicens cuius libris editis commota multitudo contulit se ad eam potissimum disciplinam sive quod erat cognitu perfacilis, sive quod invitabantur illecebris blandae voluptatis...[2]

Amafinius' success was quickly followed by other authors whose works were written in a manner that made them easily understood. The result of this literary output, claims Cicero, is that the

---

[1] Tusc. Disp. 4, 6.

[2] Tusc. Disp. 4, 6.

philosophy of these men took Italy by storm:

> Post Amafinium autem multi eiusdem aemuli rationis multa cum scripsissent, Italiam totam occupaverunt, quodque maximum argumentum est non dici subtiliter, quod et tam facile ediscantur et ab indoctis probentur, id illi firmamentum esse disciplinae putant.[3]

There can be little doubt that these men were turning out Epicurean writings. Cicero mentions "blanda voluptas",[4] and Cassius claims that Amafinius took his inspiration from Epicurus.[5]

The remarks of Varro in the Academica suggest that Amafinius wrote an explication of Epicurean physics, perhaps a translation of the works of the Master:

> Iam vero physica si Epicurum--id est si Democritum--probarem, possem scribere ita plane ut Amafinius; quid est enim magnum, cum causas rerum efficientium sustuleris, de corpusculorum (ita enim appellat atomos) concusione fortuita loqui?[6]

Varro also points out that not only is the system of Epicurus easily explained (it avoids the concept of efficient causality), but that Amafinius

---

[3] Tusc. Disp. IV, 7.

[4] Voluptas was used to translate ἡδονή : the De Rerum Natura opens by describing Venus as "hominum divumque voluptas" (see Bailey 2, 591 on this line). In view of the usual reaction of the opponents of Epicureanism (ie. that it was based on unbridled pleasure), Cicero's words can hardly refer to any other philosophy.

[5] ad Fam. 15, 19.

[6] Acad. 1, 6; Lucretius generally uses "corpora" for atoms; "corpuscula" is found in his work only six times (metrical convenience could account for this).

and his aemuli have made it even simpler to grasp because they shunned accepted terminology, syllogistic proofs, definitions, divisions--in short, all the usual philosophical apparatus that would frustrate an untrained[7] reader:

> Vides autem...non posse nos Amafini aut Rabiri similes qui, nulla arte adhibita, de rebus ante oculos positis, vulgari sermone disputant, nihil partiuntur, nihil apta interrogatione concludunt, nullam denique artem esse nec dicendi nec disserendi putant.[8]

Amafinius was not alone. We learn of a Catius and a Rabirius who were also involved in writing Epicurean treatises. Cassius implies that there may have been several others engaged in producing Epicurean works in Latin:

> Ipse enim Epicurus, a quo omnes Catii et Amafinii...profiscuntur....[9]

Of Rabirius we know nothing except that his writings were classed by Cicero with those of Amafinius because of their lack of artistic excellence.[10] There is little more information about Catius. He is credited with works De Rerum Natura and De Summo Bono.[11] Quintilian also says that Catius wrote Epicurean works

---

[7] imperitus, Tusc. Disp. 4, 6.

[8] Academica 1, 5. It is interesting that Cicero uses the phrase "de rebus ante oculos positis" in his description of these works; Lucretius uses vision images to describe the learning process (see the introduction to Book 3) and commonly draws his metaphors from daily experience.

[9] Ad. Fam. 15, 19, 2. Italics mine.

[10] Acad. 1, 5.

[11] Schol. on Horace Satires 2, 4: "quattuor libros de rerum natura et de summo bono".

and judges his style more favorably than Cicero or Cassius: "In Epicureis levis quidem, sed non iniucundus tamen auctor est Catius".[12] Catius seems to have little facility in translating Greek terms properly; Cicero comments that his rendering of εἴδωλα as "spectra" is far from happy:

> Catius Insuber, Ἐπικούρειος, qui nuper est mortuus, quae ille Gargettius [Epicurus] et iam ante Democritus εἴδωλα hic "spectra" nominat.[13]

Catius died ca. 45.

I think it is possible to make some conjectures about the quality of these Epicurean writings. They were free from abstruse philosophical concepts, and composed with little attention to artistic form. The comments of Cicero and Cassius indicate that they may have been translations of Greek Epicurean works. The quantity of published material would indicate a demand on a fairly large scale. Perhaps they were libelli of the type that Cicero urged Piso to send to Caesar:

> ...quid cessat hic homullus ex argilla et luto fictus [Pisō] dare haec praeclara praecepta sapientiae clarissimo et summo imperatori, genero suo? Fertur ille vir... gloria; flagrat, ardet cupiditate iusti et magni triumphi; non didicit eadem ista quae tu. Mitte ad eum libellum.[14]

---

[12] Inst. Orat. 10, 1, 124.

[13] ad. Fam. 15, 16, 1; the letter was written January 45.

[14] In Pisonem 58-59, the implication is that Caesar has not learned to rest "content" as a good Epicurean should. Trebatius Testa was converted in Caesar's camp in 53 (ad. Fam. 7, 12). Cicero does not approve of Testa's action; it is rather ironical that he suggested a tract be sent to the camp in the first place.

The reference, is of course, highly ironical; but Cicero probably would not have used the phrase "mail him a tract" if there had not been enough truth in it to hurt. I have indicated elsewhere the shift in Epicurean teaching methods from inductive reasoning to a conversion process. Pamphlets could have played a role in spreading Epicureanism; and emphasized the need for conversion to such an extent that there was little attention paid to literary grace or careful exposition of doctrine. The contents of such a pamphlet may have given Cicero the inspiration for the prosopopoeia that occurs in 59-60 of the In Pisonem:

> quid est, Caesar, quod te supplicationes totiens iam decretae tot dierum tanto opere delectent? In quibus homines errore ducuntur, quas di neglegunt, qui ut noster divinus ille dixit Epicurus, neque propitii cuiquam esse solent neque irati.... Inania sunt ista, mihi crede, delectamenta paene puerorum, captare plausus, vehi per urbem, conspici velle. Quibus ex rebus nihil est quod solidum tenere, nihil quod referre ad voluptatem corporis possis.[15]

Does the evidence allow a plausible suggestion for the dating of these writings? I believe so. The trial of Caelius Rufus was the occasion of Cicero's remark that "illud unum derectum iter ad laudem cum labore" was being neglected by those who were doing omnia voluptatis causa.[16] Cicero is offering an excuse for Caelius sowing his wild oats, but an excuse must

---

[15] In Piso 59-60.

[16] Pro Caelio 41; see my introduction, p. 1.

have some basis in fact if it is to carry any weight. A year later, in the In Pisonem, Cicero made quite an issue of Piso's Epicureanism[17] and used a parody of an Epicurean moralizing speech.[18] In 53, C. Trebatius Testa was converted in Gaul.[19] In the year 45 fall Cicero's letters to the Epicurean Papirius Paetus,[20] the conversion of Cassius takes place in the same year.[21] Vergil probably left for Naples in 45, perhaps as part of a general exodus from Rome.[22] The De Amicitia was written in 44[23] and may have been an attempt by Cicero to steal some Epicurean thunder, by composing a treatise on a favorite Epicurean subject.[24]

Cicero wrote most of his philosophical works in the years 45-44. His attacks on Epicureanism in these works bec me more pointed than any he had delivered previously.[25]

---

17 In Piso. 37; 68 ff.

18 see above.

19 ad. Fam. 7, 12.

20 ad. Fam. 9, 15-26.

21 ad. Fam. 15-16.

22 see above; cf. Suetonius Div. Iul. 42-43.

23 for the dating see introd. Loeb. edition.

24 for the influence of Epicureanism on the De Amicitia see DeWitt TAPA 63, p. 174 where he suggests that Cicero wrote in reaction to Epicureanism: "After the publication of this essay the word friendship belonged no longer to the Epicureans".

25 See below.

I would suggest, then, that interest in Epicureanism was growing among the Romans in the fifties and forties and may have reached a peak in the early forties.[26]

All the references to Amafinius occur in works written ca. 45; some imply that Amafinius writings were recent eg. Cassius' remarks to Cicero[27] seem to be a comment on a contemporary situation. Would not Cicero's attacks on the unpolished style of the Epicureans lose some of their force if he had criticized an author who wrote several years earlier? Lucretius' claim to be the first to translate Epicureanism ---"primus cum primis ipse repertus | nunc ego sum in patrias qui possim vertere voces"[28] has caused some difficulty to editors who place Amafinius' writings before Lucretius' poem.[29] His complaint about the patrii sermonis egestas (1, 832)[29a] indicates that he was struggling to form a new vocabulary since (he implies), no one else had yet done so. Yet it seems that Amafinius and his fellow writers had made some attempt at translation.[30] Lucretius' claims could be justified if he and the other Epicurean writers were contemporaries: Lucretius would not know of their work nor they of his.

---

[26] Dewitt, "Vergil and Epicureanism", CW 25 (1932) p. 90 suggests that the arrival of Posidonius in 51 (for which he quotes Suidas 3055 A) may have been the beginning of a reaction against Epicureanism.

[27] ad. Fam. 15, 19.

[28] 5, 336-337.

[29a] cf. 3, 260; 1, 139.

[29] see Bailey's comments on 5, 336; cf. H.H. Howe AJP 72, p. 58.

[30] see the references above to their attempts to translate Epicurean terms.

Lucretius' boast to be "primus cum primis" and his complaint about the "sermonis egestas" might be a literary pose. But if Amafinius "et alii verborum interpretes" were Lucretius' contemporaries, their work would correspond with the rise of interest in Epicureanism in the fifties and forties and lend force to Cicero's arguments as well as validity to Lucretius' comments.

For whom did Amafinius, Catius and Rabirius write? Velleius, Atticus, Torquatus--Epicureans among the nobiles---could read Greek. They had received instruction from prominent Greek Epicureans, either personally or through their writings, and so would have little need of Latin translations. Cicero characterizes Varro as saying

> "Nam cum philosophiam viderem diligentissime Graecis litteris explicatam, existimavi si qui de nostris eius studio tenerentur, si essent Graecis doctrinis eruditi, Graeca potius quam nostra lecturos; sin a Graecorum artibus et disciplinis abhorrerent, ne haec quidem curaturos quae sine eruditione Graeca intellegi non possunt...[31]

These men, eruditi Graecis doctrinis, realized the problems inherent in translation because of the lack of Latin technical vocabulary,

> Complures enim Graecis institutionibus eruditi ea quae didicerant cum civibus suis communicare non poterant, quod illa quae a Graecis accepissent, Latine dici posse diffiderent.[32]

---

[31] Acad. 1, 4.

[32] De Nat. Deorum 1, 8.

They appreciated the fact that, if stylistic graces were missing, their work would not find favour with those of the same intellectual background.

> ...multi iam esse libri Latini dicuntur scripti inconsiderate ab optimis illis quidem viris, sed non satis eruditis. Fieri autem potest ut recte quis sentiat et id, quod sentit, polite eloqui non possit....Itaque suos libros ipsi legunt cum suis nec quisquam attingit praeter eos, qui eandem licentiam scribendi sibi permitti volunt.[33]

As a result they did not write philosophical works in Latin, even though Cicero urged them to do so:

> ...hortor omnes, qui facere id possunt, ut huius quoque generis laudem iam languenti Graeciae eripiant et transferant in hanc urbem....philosophia nascatur Latinis quidem litteris ex his temporibus....[34]

Presumably if Varro's statement reflects their attitude they read little philosophy in Latin as well for they had no need to do so.

The men who did read the "popularized" Epicureanism taught by Amafinius and his fellow interpretes were drawn to it

> sive quod erat cognitu perfacilis, sive quod invitabantur illecebris blandae voluptatis, sive etiam, quia nihil erat prolatum melius, illud quod erat tenebant.[35]

---

[33] Tus. Disp. 1, 6.

[34] Tusc. Disp. 2, 5.

[35] Tusc. Disp. 4, 6.

These men spoke simple, non-rhetorical Latin (vulgari sermone)[36] and probably little Greek.[37] By reading these tracts, they could appear learned in Greek philosophy, yet avoid the difficulties of Plato or Aristotle.[38]

H.H. Howe puts forward a very interesting suggestion as to the identity of these men:

> [They] came from all over Italy, they were presumably well-to-do citizens of the municipia, grown prosperous since the end of the social war. Newly risen from low estate, they would be alive to the terrors of superstition which, in the eyes of Cicero, could frighten no old woman.[39]

Howe bases his thesis on the attitude adopted by Cicero towards Epicureanism. Cicero says that he writes his philosophical works partly as political tracts[40] and claims that the need for his work has become more pressing because of the number of philosophical (Epicurean) writings in circulation.[41]

---

[36] Acad, I, 5.

[37] implied in Academ. 1, 4.

[38] "Platonis et Aristotelis philosophia minus apta erat romano ingenio propter difficultatem et a vitae usu alienam rationem," J. Woltjer, Lucretii philosophia cum fontibus comparata (Groningae, 1877), p. 3. This would seem to confirm that the readers of these translations were drawn to them principally because they were easily understood (see Cicero's charges above) and the other schools were producing "nihil melius".

[39] H.H. Howe, "Amafinius, Lucretius and Cicero AJP 72 (1951), p. 607.

[40] ad. Fam. 9, 2.

[41] Tusc. Disp. 1, 6.

Cicero's attacks become more pointed in his post-45 writings and he seems to concern himself a great deal with demolishing Epicureanism (eg. Tusculan Disputations, De Natura Deorum, De Finibus all spend considerable time discussing Epicureanism). He often claimed that Epicureanism could destroy the social fabric of the state because it both destroyed pietas, upon which society was founded,[42] and prevented men from participating in the affairs of state.[43] Thus, Howe reasons, Cicero's dialogues could be an attempt to win followers from among the municipia to his conception of government by first demolishing Epicurean theories.

Howe's thesis is highly speculative. According to Cicero himself, Amafinius was writing for a wide audience whereas he was writing for men of taste.[44] Cicero dismisses these Epicurean writings in a rather high-handed manner: the tracts are written vulgari sermone, "the language of the masses"[45], and were read by indocti,[46] uneducated men. Varro's comments in Academica 1, 4 also have a very snobbish attitude.[47] The tone of Cicero's remarks indicates that these works were written in a distinctly plebeian style.

---

[42] De Nat. Deo. 1, 4.

[43] De Rep. 1, 12; De Leg. 1, 39.

[44] cf. Tusc. Disp. 1, 5-6.

[45] Lewis and Short, A Latin Dictionary (Oxford 1962), under Vulgus.

[46] Tusc. Disp. 4, 7.

[47] quoted above, p. 68.

This disdain, implying a plebeian taste in the reader, could hardly be expected to win many adherents from "leading citizens" of the municipia. On the other hand, Cicero may be discrediting these writings by hinting that they were not respectable fare for a Roman gentleman of letters. He would then be paying a (very) indirect compliment to anyone who adopted his political theories. However, I think this argument goes far beyond the evidence. If any inference may be drawn from Cicero's remarks, other than that he does not approve of the style of these writings,[48] it is that Amafinius, Catius and Rabirius wrote for a widespread lower class audience.

Summary

The evidence for the dating of the Epicurean popular writings, the audience to whom they were directed and the material they contained is scanty. But there does seem to be enough to indicate that there was a relatively widespread attempt by Epicureans to publish Latin tracts to win adherents to their school. The use of written works to spread Epicureanism would be consonant with the methodology adopted by the school after Epicurus' death.

---

[48] Woltjer remarks: "Praecipua causa cur Cicero ita censuerit fortasse haec fuit quod Epicurus rhetorum artes contemnebat..." (p. 3) and "Non ad systema Epicuri, sed ad formam qua exprimitur, Ciceronis verba referenda sunt." (p. 4)

CHAPTER IV

Introduction

Lucretius probably began composing the De Rerum Natura in 59; he died between 55-50 before he could complete his work.[1] He was, then, in the vanguard of the rise of interest in Epicureanism that took place ca. 55-45. In this chapter, I would like to show that Lucretius' poem is an artistic blend of the teachings of Epicurus and contemporary Roman culture and that it has affinities with the ideas developed in the School after the death of the Master.

Early Epicurean Elements in the De Rerum Natura

Lucretius does not seem to have concerned himself with writing on the studies carried on by Philodemus and other later Epicurean teachers. There are no treatises on music, or logic that bear his name. Lucretius treated the entire system as outlined by Epicurus: Books 1 and 2 treat of atomic theory; Books 3 and 4 discuss the soul, sensation, theory of knowledge; Books 5 and 6 deal with the world and celestial phenomena. In a sense, Lucretius is a reactionary: his detailed treatment of physics, couched as it is in archaic language, might be said to be a return to the early teachings of Epicurus. "Volgus abhorret

[1] Bailey 1, 4-5.

ab hac..." he claims and re-iterates Epicurus' statement that men will be full of fear and unable to lead a quiet life unless they understand the workings of the universe.[2]

> hunc igitur terrorem animi tenebrasque necessest
> non radii solis neque lucida tela diei
> discutiant, sed naturae species ratioque.
> (1, 146-148)

Lucretius pictures himself as a close follower of the founder and speaks of him with the fervour of one of the original students of the school.

> qui primus potuisti inlustrans commoda vitae,
> te sequor, o Graiae gentis decus, inque tuis nunc
> ficta pedum pono pressis vestigia signis,
> non ita certandi cupidus quam propter amorem
> quod te imitari aveo....
> (3, 2-6)

Lucretius prays for Epicurean peace and quiet and hopes that Memmius will be able to withdraw from the affairs of state,

> ...vacuas auris ⟨animumque sagacem⟩
> semotum a curis adhibe veram ad rationem
> (1, 50-51)

Although he realized (as did Demetrius)[3] that a man must sometimes be involved in state affairs:

> ...nec [potest] Memmi clara propago
> talibus in rebus communi desse saluti
> (1, 42-43)

The best illustration of the care that Lucretius took to follow the Master's teachings is given by Bailey in his Introduction (1, 23), where he points out the close correspondence

---

[2] 1, 145-148, K.D. 12 quoted in the Introduction p. 4.

[3] see Chapter 2, p. 53.

between the Letter to Herodotus and the De Rerum Natura. Bailey suggests that Lucretius used the "Greater Epitome" and perhaps the περὶ φύσεως itself as well as the Herodotus letter.[4] I think there is very little doubt that Lucretius was deeply indebted to Epicurus,[5] but I would suggest that he also owed something to the developments that took place in the school after the death of the Master.

Later Epicurean Elements in the De Rerum Natura

In the prologue to Book 5, Lucretius eulogizes Epicurus:

> nam si, ut ipsa petit maiestas cognita rerum,
> dicendum est, deus ille fuit, deus, inclute Memmi,
> qui princeps vitae rationem invenit eam quae
> nunc appellatur sapientia, quique per artem
> fluctibus e tantis vitam tantisque tenebris
> in tam tranquillo et tam clara luce locavit.
>
> (5, 7-12)

We have already seen Atticus' remarks on Epicurean devotion to the Master.[6] Cicero censures the philosophers of his day for

---

[4] Bailey 1, 25.

[5] I realize that this treatment of early Epicurean elements in the De Rerum Natura is rather abbreviated, but Lucretius' debt to Epicurus has already received full recognition. Woltjer's book Lucretii philosophia cum fontibus comparata is still one of the best sources for a detailed comparison of Epicurus and Lucretius. Bailey's commentary frequently cites passages in Lucretius that parallel sections in the extant letters of Epicurus. My thesis is that Lucretius was also influenced by later developments in Epicurean thought, a line of argument of which I have found little mention elsewhere.

[6] see Chap. 2, p. 44.

this type of extravagant praise:

> ...soleo saepe mirari non nullorum insolentiam philosophorum, qui naturae cognitionem admirantur eiusque inventori et principi gratias exultantis agunt eumque venerantur ut deum; liberatos enim se per eum dicunt gravissimis dominis, terrore sempiterno, et diurno ac nocturno metu. Quo terrore? Quo metu? Quae est anus tam delira quae timeat ista quae vos, videlicet, si physica non didicissetis, timeretis?[7]

The similarity of language between the two passages would indicate that Lucretius was following a common-place method of praising Epicurus, one that was also used by the Roman Epicureans.

I have mentioned the emphasis placed on the correction of personal faults in Philodemus' school.[8] Lucretius is not afraid to lecture Memmius. He tells Memmius that he would be able to grasp the workings of the universe if only he applied a little effort to the task: "Haec sic pernosces parva perductus opella",[9] an exhortation that seems to be in accord with Cicero's comment that Memmius fled "non modo dicendi verum etiam cogitandi laborem".[10] The longest lecture appears at the end of Book 3. Lucretius concludes it:

---

[7] Tusc. Disp. 1, 48.

[8] see Chapter 2, p. 43.

[9] 1, 1114.

[10] Brut. 247.

> tu vero dubitabis et indignabere obire?
> Mortua cui vita est prope iam vivo atque videnti,
> qui somno partem maiorem conteris aevi
> et vigilans stertis nec somnia cernere cessas
> sollicitamque geris cassa formidine mentem
> nec reperire potes tibi quid sit saepe mali, cum
> ebrius urgeris multis miser undique curis
> atque animi incerto fluitans errore vagaris.[11]

This passage (starting at 1025) seems to be in the spirit of the περὶ παρρησίας: candor, wit, correction, a skillful mixture of praise and censure.

There is a strong proselytizing air in the poem. Lucretius is dedicated to the task of converting Memmius: he spends long nights

> quaerentem dictis quibus et quo carmine demum
> clara tuae possim praepandere lumina menti
> res quibus occultas penitus convisere possis.[12]

This process of carefully seeking out the proper words to help Memmius understand recalls the method that Cicero suggested to Piso:

> ...si iam ipse coram congredi poteris,
> meditare quibus verbis incensam illius
> cupiditatem comprimas atque restinguas.[13]

Lucretius seems intent upon heaping up so many arguments that Memmius will be forced to capitulate:

---

[11] 3, 1045-1052.

[12] 1, 143-145.

[13] In Piso 59, italics mine

> quod si pigraris paulumve recesseris ab re
> hoc tibi de plano possum promittere, Memmi
> usque adeo largos haustus e fontibu' magnis
> lingua meo suavis diti de pectore fundet,
> ut verear ne tarda prius per membra senectus
> serpat et in nobis vitai claustra resolvat,
> quam tibi de quavis una re versibus omnis
> argumentorum sit copia missa per auris.[14]

This proselytizing tone is carried throughout the poem by the use of "tu", "te", "tibi". The De Rerum Natura is, in a sense, a conversation between two people - teacher and pupil. Even if it be denied that Memmius is the addressee, and that the poem was written for his conversion, the use of the singular pronoun (rather than the plural) gives the poem a personal flavour and shows that Lucretius was writing to convert the individual reader, not a group, to the truths of Epicureanism.[15]

Lucretius' method of attacking earlier philosophers is well illustrated in Book 1, 635-919, where he refutes the theories of Heraclitus (635-704), Empedocles (705-829), and Anaxagoras (830-919). In 275 lines Lucretius deals with more than ten different arguments but manages to refute them with only three basic arguments: these men did not admit the existence of the void, they do allow infinite division of the primary particles, they subscribe to the idea that ex nihilo nihil fit. The problem of the void, the indivisibility of the atoms, and the impossibility of creation ex nihilo are carefully dealt with in

---

[14] 1, 410-417

[15] see Bailey 1, 32-33 for the argument that Memmius was not the addressee but that the poem was directed to the general reader. Farrington "Form and Purpose in the De Rerum Natura", in Lucretius (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1965), pp. 28-29 refutes this view.

the letter to Herodotus.[16] It seems as if Lucretius has memorized the principal points of the physical theory to use them against his opponents. This was the very method recommended to the users of the epitomes:[17] αὐτὰ ταῦτα ἐν μνήμῃ τιθέμενα συνεχῶς βοηθήσει.

In the examination of the logical treatise περὶ σημείων we saw that Philodemus offered a defense of reasoning κατ' ὁμοιότητα.[18] A brief outline of Lucretius arguments on the atomic theory as found in Book 2 shows that he uses the same analogical method in proving the existence of the unseen from the seen.

(1) 112-122: the movement of the motes in a sunbeam visibly illustrates the motion of the invisible atoms (videbis 116).

(2) 194-200: a visible demonstration from the natural world that the atoms cannot move upward (nonne vides, 196).

(3) 263-285: an illustration from horseracing to show how the atoms of the mind cause bodily motion (iamne vides, 277).

(4) 317-332: analogies from flocks of sheep and movement of troops to prove that the atoms move even though we cannot perceive their motion (videntur, 332)

---

16 Diog. 10, 39-41.

17 Diog. 10, 83.

18 see Chap. 2, p. 55.

(5) 352-376: a series of comparisons from the visible world to prove the variety of atomic shapes (esse videbis, 372).

(6) 688-699: a favorite image:

> quin etiam passim nostris in versibus ipsis
> multa elementa vides multis communia verbis,
> cum tamen inter se versus ac verba necessest
> confiteare alia ex aliis constare elementis;
> ---
> sic aliis in rebus item, communia multa
> multarum rerum cum sint primordia, verum
> dissimili tamen inter se consistere summa
> possunt . . .

This same comparison is found in 1, 823-9 and later in 2, 1013-22. The pun on elementa (letters, atoms) makes the comparison more explicit.

This brief outline of Lucretius' use of analogy (a device used throughout the poem) shows that Lucretius puts Philodemus' dry reasonings into practice.

I have suggested that the later Epicureans (Philodemus, Demetrius) had to give their works a certain rhetorical polish to make their philosophy appealing to a cultured Roman audience. Philodemus not only wrote his treatises in a standard format[19] but composed a work on rhetoric itself. Cicero claims that the lack of rhetorical polish would be most detrimental to the appeal of a philosophical work:

---

[19] eg. περὶ Ὀργῆς ; see Chap. 2, p. 52 ff.

> Fieri autem potest ut recte quis sentiat et id, quod sentit, polite eloqui non possit ... Itaque suos libros ipsi legunt cum suis, nec quisquam attingit praeter eos, qui eandem licentiam scribendi sibi permitti volunt.[20]

Lucretius quite frankly admits that he uses rhetoric to make his discourse interesting

> sed veluti pueris absinthia taetra medentes
> cum dare conantur, prius oras pocula circum
> contingunt mellis dulci flavoque liquore
> ut puerorum aetas improvida ludificetur
> labrorum tenus.....
> .....
> sic ego nunc, quoniam haec ratio plerumque videtur
> tristior esse quibus non est tractata, retroque
> volgus abhorret ab hac, volui tibi suaviloquenti
> carmine Pierio rationem exponere nostram
> et quasi musaeo dulci contingere melle
> si tibi forte animum tali ratione tenere
> versibus in nostris possem...[21]

Lucretius' most outstanding use of rhetoric is the hexameter poem itself.[22] Bailey spends over thirty pages carefully documenting Lucretius' use of alliteration, periphrasis, transferred epithets, assonance, repetition and other standard poetic devices. In addition to his poetic skill Lucretius shows a familiarity with other genres of literature. He opens the poem with a hymn to Venus, a most unusual beginning for a poem that

---

[20] Tusc. Disp. 1, 6.

[21] 1, 936-940; 943-949.

[22] cf. Epicurus strictures on poetry, Usener 228-230.

will prove that the gods did not interfere in the affairs of men.[23] J.P. Elder, in a most important article, has explained the quasi-allegorical nature of these lines and saved Lucretius from the charge of inconsistency.[24] Lucretius also uses allegory in Book 3, where he explains that the terrors of Acheron are symbols of man's guilty feelings. This scorn of Acheron does not appear in Epicurus' extant writings, but does appear in Cicero,[25] and was perhaps a philosophical and rhetorical commonplace. Another use of allegory occurs in Book 2 where Lucretius explains the stories of the Great Mother.[26]

In the passage describing Iphigenia's murder, Lucretius shows a definite satiric element. He enlists our compassion with description of Iphigenia emphasizing the pathos of the description by using the marriage metaphor:

> nam sublata virum manibus tremibundaque ad aras
> deductast, non ut sollemni more sacrorum
> perfecto posset claro comitari Hymenaeo
> sed casta inceste nubendi tempore in ipso
> hostia concideret mactatu maesta parentis....[27]

---

[23] The divisions are: praise (1-20), petitions (21-9), ground for petitions (31-40, 44-9), necessity for petitions (41-3); see Bailey 2, 591.

[24] J.P. Elder, "Lucretius 11-49", TAPA 85 (1954), p. 88 ff; cf. P. Friedlander "Epicurean Theology in Lucretius' First Prooemium", TAPA 70 (1939) p. 368 ff. I cannot emphasize enough the importance of these articles for an understanding of the entire poem.

[25] Tusc. Disp. 1, 10; 1, 48; De Nat. Deo. 1, 86.

[26] 2, 600-660

[27] 1, 95-99.

The irony occurs in the opening and closing lines: a description of the "noble" Greeks ("Ductores Danaum delecti, prima virorum") and a prayer-like formula ("exitus ut classi felix faustusque daretur") frame the passage.[28]

The Iphigenia section also provides an example of Lucretius' dramatic ability. Another highly dramatic section is the account of the plague at Athens. The opening is horrific:

> principio caput incensum fervore gerebant
> et duplicis oculos suffusa luce rubentis,
> sudabant etiam fauces intrinsecus atrae
> sanguine et ulceribus vocis via saepta coibat
> atque animi interpres manabat lingua cruore
> debilitata malis, motu gravis, aspera tactu[29]

Lucretius sustains the dramatic tone for a space of 150 lines, and closes in the same mood:

> namque suos consanguineos aliena rogorum
> insuper exstructa ingenti clamore locabant
> subdebantque faces, multo cum sanguine sa[illegible]pe
> rixantes potius quam corpora desererentur[30]

Lucretius' analogical argumentation, his recognition of Memmius' political endeavours, his use of rhetoric to make his work appealing, are in the tradition of the later Epicureans.

---

[28] 1, 86; 100. cf. C. Murley "Lucretius and the History of Satire", TAPA 70 (1939), pp. 380-395; for other examples, see D.R. Dudley "The Satiric Element in Lucretius" in Lucretius (London, 1965), p. 115 ff.

[29] 6, 1145-1150.

[30] 6, 1283-1286.

Roman Elements

I have suggested throughout this thesis that Epicurean philosophy acquired a distinctly Roman outlook when it was transferred from a Greek to a Roman setting. Roman elements are frequently in the De Rerum Natura.

Lucretius describes the victory of Epicurus over superstition in terms of a Roman triumph:

> ....refert nobis victor quid possit oriri
> quid nequeat.....
> .....
> quare religio pedibus subiecta vicissim
> obteritur, nos exaequat victoria caelo.[31]

He portrays Epicurus as a paterfamilias:

> tu pater es, rerum inventor, tu patria nobis
> suppeditas praecepta.....
> (3, 9-10)

The sacrifice of Iphigenia employs the imagery of Roman marriage ("claro comitari Hymenaeo", "Virgineos...comptus"), and sacrificial ceremonies (infula, ministri, ferrum). The atoms are described in words applied to warfare:

> praeterea magnae legiones cum loca cursu
> camporum complent belli simulacra cientes
> fulgor ubi ad caelum se tollit totaque circum
> aere renidescit tellus subterque virum vi
> excitur pedibus sonitus clamoreque montes
> icti reiectant voces ad sidera mundi
> et circumvolitant equites mediosque repente
> tramittunt valido quatientes impete campos.[32]

---

[31] 1, 75-79; italics mine.

[32] 2, 323-330.

Lucretius draws some of his metaphors to describe the con-joining of the atoms from Roman legal parlance: coetus, conciliatus, concilium, congressus, conventus are typical; per foedera sanci-tum, (1, 586) de plano promittere, (1, 411) obsignatum (2, 581), are other examples.

When Lucretius rails against society, it is particularly Roman social conventions that he censures:

> .....nunc aurum et purpura curis
> exercent hominum vitam belloque fatigant;
> .....
> .....at nos nil laedit veste carere
> purpurea atque auro signisque ingentibus apta
> dum plebeia tamen sit quae defendere possit [33]

Lucretius' attacks against religion are based on Roman religious custom:

> nec pietas ullast velatum saepe videri
> vertier ad lapidem atque omnis accedere ad aras
> nec procumbere humi prostratum et pandere palmas
> ante deum delubra nec aras sanguine multo
> spargere quadrupedum nec votis nectere vota
> sed mage pacata posse omnia mente tueri [34]

Lucretius' attacks on religion are more frequent and violent than those of Epicurus.[35] Cicero advocated the theory that religious offices should be kept in the hands of the aristocrats since such offices provided an excellent means of controlling the people.[36]

---

[33] 5, 1423-24; 1427-1429. Italics mine.

[34] 5, 1198-1203; cf Bailey 3, 1515 on these lines.

[35] Bailey 2, 608.

[36] De Leg. 2, 8, 12.

Lucretius may have been reacting against the control of the optimates;[37] in any case, he was undoubtedly moved to scorn by the abuses of his own day rather than by the reasonings of Epicurus' writings.

One other aspect of Lucretius' "Romanism" should be mentioned. He tells Memmius he is moved to write by "sperata voluptas suavis amicitiae" (1, 141-142). This could be an appeal for Memmius' patronage[38] but Lucretius was more probably thinking of the Epicurean notion of friendship that formed the basis for such groups as the Naples school.[39]

Summary

DeWitt says of Lucretius:

> "He seems to have been a lonely worker... indebted to no living teacher, standing aloof from the main Epicurean movement of his time."[40]

Viewed in the light of the developments that were taking place in Epicurean thinking the De Rerum Natura does not appear as anomalous as DeWitt implies. With the Romans who professed

---

37 see B. Farrington, Science and Politics in the Ancient World (London: Allen & Unw in: 1946), pp. 160-216; Farrington's theory is not widely accepted; see Momigliano, JRS 31.

38 W. Allen, CP 33 (1938) p. 167 ff.

39 see above chapter 2; K.D. 27.

40 TAPA 63, p. 170.

to be Epicureans, Lucretius shared an interest in the religious, social and political facets of his own milieu. Philodemus and Demetrius did not scorn poetic or rhetorical artifice; neither did Lucretius. Yet Lucretius still managed to issue a recall to the teachings of Epicurus. The De Rerum Natura is not, then, unrelated to the Epicureanism of Lucretius' time; rather it contains all the elements of a philosophy that is both Roman and Epicurean.

CONCLUSION

The point de départ for my investigation was the difference between the theory and practice of those Romans who claimed to be Epicureans. Rather than immediately accuse intelligent men of deliberate misinterpretation, I investigated the transmission of Epicureanism from Athens to Rome. I have argued that, not only was Epicureanism preserved (Lucretius' poem was a return to the teachings of Epicurus) but was also, as it were, "domesticated" for Roman use by the incorporation of Roman elements and given a wider appeal by the use of literary devices. The evidence for "popularizers" is, indeed, slight but the work of Lucretius would seem to point in the same direction: that is, in order to be preserved, Epicureanism had to be transmitted and in the course of transmission unavoidably experienced alteration at the hands of the transmitters, This altered form of philosophy of the Garden I have ventured to call Roman Epicureanism; its peculiar blend of diverse elements I feel, is best represented by Lucretius' De Rerum Natura.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Primary Sources

Asconius. Commentarii. ed. G. Giarratano. Amsterdam, 1967.

Catullus. Catullus: a Commentary. ed. C.J. Fordyce. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1965.

-------- Catull. ed. W. Kroll. Stuttgart: Teubner, 1960.

Cicero. (Loeb editions)

-------- Brutus. ed. G.L. Hendrickson. 1942.

-------- De Finibus. ed. H. Rackham. 1914.

-------- De Natura Deorum. ed. H. Rackham. 1933.

-------- De Officiis. ed. Walter Miller. 1913.

-------- De Oratore. vol. 1, ed. E.W. Sutton. 1942.
vol. 2, ed. H. Rackham. 1942.

-------- Epistulae. ad Atticum. 3 vols. ed. E.O. Winstedt
vol. 1, 1912.
vol. 2, 1913.
vol. 3, 1918.

-------- Epistulae ad familiares. 3 vols. ed. W. Glynn Williams.
vol. 1, 1958.
vol. 2, 1929.
vol. 3, 1954.

-------- In Pisonem, Pro Scauro, etc. ed. N.H. Watts. 1931.

-------- Tusculan Disputations. ed. J.E. King. 1927.

Cicero. (other editions with commentaries)

-------- Brutus. ed. A.E. Douglas. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1966.

-------- De Finibus. ed. J.N. Madvig. Hildesheim: G. Olms, 1963. (orig. pub. Copenhagen, 1876).

-------- De Natura Deorum. ed. J.B. Mayor. 3 vols. Cambridge: University Press. vol. 1, 1891.
vol. 2, 1893.
vol. 3, 1885.

-------- De Oratore. ed. A.S. Wilkins. Oxford: University Press, 1892.

-------- In Pisonem. ed. R.G. Nisbet. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1961.

-------- Letters to Atticus. ed. and trans. D.R. Shackleton Bailey. Cambridge: University Press, 1965.

-------- Pro Caelio. ed. R.G. Austin. 2nd ed. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1952.

Epicurea. ed. H. Usener. Rome: L'Erma di Bretschneider, 1963.

Lucretius. De Rerum Natura. ed. C. Bailey. 3 vols. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1947.

-------- De Rerum Natura. ed. H.A.J. Munro. Vols. 1 and 2, 4th edition. Cambridge: Bell and Sons, 1866.

Nepos. Three Lives: Alcibiades, Dion, Atticus. ed. R. Roebuck. London: Bell, 1958.

Philodemus. Volumina Rhetorica. ed. S. Sudhaus. Vols. 1, 2 and supplement. Amsterdam: A.M. Hakkert, 1964.

Servius. In Vergilii Carmina Commentarii. ed. G. Thilo and H. Hagen. 4 vols. Teubner, 1923.

[Vergil]. Appendix Vergiliana. ed. R. Ellis. Oxford: Claredon Press, 1963. (Oxford Classical Text).

Secondary Sources
(cited in text)

Allen, W., Jr., "The Friendship of Lucretius and Memmius", CP 33 (1938) p. 167 ff.

Boyance, P., "L'épicurisme dans la société et la littérature romaines", BAGB, 1959.

Broughton, T.R.S. Magistrates of the Roman Republic. 2 vols. New York: American Philological Association, 1952.

Copleston, F. A History of Philosophy. Vol. 1, part 2. Image Books, New York, 1962.

DeLacy, P.H., "Lucretius and the History of Epicureanism", TAPA 79 (1948), pp. 12-23.

-------- and W. Allen, Jr., "The Patrons of Philodemus", CP 84 (1939), pp. 96-103.

DeWitt, N.W., "Epicurean Contubernium", TAPA 67 (1936), p. 55 ff.

-------- "Notes on the History of Epicureanism", TAPA 63 (1932) p. 66 ff.

-------- "Organization and Procedure in Epicurean Groups", CP 31 (1936), pp. 205-211.

-------- "Parresiastic Poems of Horace", CP 30 (1935), p. 312 ff.

-------- "The Later Paideia of Epicurus", TAPA 68 (1937), pp. 326-333.

-------- "Vergil and Epicureanism", CW 25 (1932), p. 27 ff.

-------- Vergil's Biographia Litteraria. Toronto: University Press, 1965.

Dudley, D.R., ed. Lucretius. Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1965.

Elder, J.P., "Lucretius 11-49", TAPA 85 (1954), p. 88 ff.

Farrington, B. Science and Politics in the Ancient World. London: Allen and Unwin, 1946.

Frank, Tenney. Vergil. Oxford, 1922.

-------- "Vergil's Apprenticeship", CP 15 (1920), p. 103 ff.

Friedlander, P., "Epicurean Theology in Lucretius' First Prooemium", TAPA 70 (1939) p. 368 ff.

Hadas, M., "Gadarenes in Pagan Literature", CW 25 (1931) p.27 ff.

Hall, C.M., "Some Epicureans at Rome", CW 28 (1934), p.113 ff.

Howe, H.H., "Amafinius, Lucretius and Cicero", AJP 72 (1951), p. 57 ff.

Leslie, R.J. The Epicureanism of Titus Pomponius Atticus. Columbia Dissertation: Philadelphia, 1950.

Momigliano, A.E., "Epicureans in Revolt", JRS 31 (1941), p. 151 ff. (A review essay)

Münzer, F., "Ein Römischer Epikureer", Rh. Museum 69 (1914), p. 625 ff.

Murely, C., "Lucretius and the History of Satire", TAPA 70 (1939), pp. 380-395.

Phillipson, R., "Papyrus Herculaniensis 831", AJP 64 (1943), p. 145 ff.

-------- "Philodems Buch uber den Zorn", Rh. Museum 71 (1916), pp. 425-460.

Raubitschek, A.E., "Phaidros and His Roman Pupils", Hesperia 18 (1949), pp. 96-103.

Stearns, J.B., "Lucretius and Memmius", CW 25 (1931), p. 65 ff.

Stocks, J.L., "Epicurean Induction", MIND 34 (1925), p. 185 ff.

Trever, A.A., History of Ancient Civilization, vol. 2: The Roman World. New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1939.

Woltjer, J. Lucretii philosophia cum fontibus comparata. Groningae, 1877.

Zeller, E. Outlines of the History of Greek Philosophy. trans. L.R. Palmer. New York: Meridian, 1955.