

Otium and Voluptas:
Catullus and Roman Epicureanism

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Catullan *amicitia* vs. Epicurean φιλικία

Porci et Socratōn, duae sinistrae
 Pisonis, scabies famesque mundi,
 vos Veraniolo meo et Fabullo
 verpus praeposuit Priapus ille?
 vos convivia lauta sumptuose
 de die facitis, mei sodales
 quaerunt in trivio vocaciones?

(Catullus 47)¹

Piggy and cut-price Socrates,² Piso's left-hand men, plagues on the world with your insatiable appetites, does that rampant Priapus prefer *you* to my dear Veranius and Fabullus? Do *you* indulge in smart dinners all day long, at vast expense, while my friends beg for invitations at the crossroads?

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¹ Catullus is quoted from the text of Mynors: 1958; for Lucretius, I have used Bailey: 1922. Quotations from Philodemus' epigrams follow the text and numeration of Sider: 1997. All translations are my own, unless otherwise indicated.

² As my translation suggests, I find it more plausible that *Socratōn* is a derisive pseudonym coined by Catullus – along similar lines to *Mentula*, “Prick,” with reference to Caesar's associate Mamurra, in poems 94, 105, 114 and 115 – than a nickname adopted by Philodemus himself (so Sider 1997: 34–37). Sider is surely right to link the pseudonym with the cycle of epigrams addressed by Philodemus to Xanthippe/Xantho, whose name implicitly connects her with Socrates' wife and thus lends the poems in which she appears a potentially philosophical coloring; given the Epicureans' generally negative attitude towards Socrates, however, a more attractive hypothesis, to my mind, is that the delicate self-irony thus implicit in the identification remains tacit until “actualized” by Catullus. In the context of poem 47, the diminutive form suggests disparagement of the addressee's philosophical pretensions, presented here as a mere cover for self-indulgent hedonism (see further below).

This short invective attack on Piso's morally dubious dining companions has been the subject of much discussion amongst scholars, since Gustav Friedrich first suggested in 1908 that "Socraton" should be understood as a pseudonym for Philodemus, the Epicurean philosopher and protégé of Caesar's father-in-law, L. Calpurnius Piso.³ The identification has been challenged, but is widely accepted amongst scholars both of the Catullan corpus and of Philodemus,⁴ and points to a degree of antagonism on Catullus' part towards Piso and his retinue and indeed towards Epicurean philosophy in general. Such a hostile attitude might appear rather surprising in a writer whose outlook on life appears in some respects so consonant with Epicurean values: Catullus' privileging of *otium* and personal friendship, his bitter tirades against the corruption of public life and general dissatisfaction with the *mos maiorum*, his rejection of traditional poetic forms with their celebration of civic values in favor of an aesthetics of *lepos* and *venustas*, all have their analogues in contemporary Epicurean thought. Nevertheless, closer consideration of the Catullan corpus, and particularly of the marked echoes of Philodemus and his fellow-Epicurean poet Lucretius, suggests that ultimately the poet abnegates any kind of philosophical commitment; the poems' substitution of an idealized *amor/amicitia* for the traditional aristocratic valorization of status and achievement in the public sphere parallels but does not, in the end, converge with the philosophical comradeship enjoyed by Philodemus and his "faithful companions" (ἐτάρους . . . παναληθέας, *Ep.* 27.5 = *AP* 11.44.5) or the untroubled seclusion in the "citadel of the wise" advocated by Lucretius (2.7–8).⁵

³ Friedrich: 1908, 228. Space precludes discussion of the prosopographical problems surrounding the identification of Catullus' Piso, on which see Syme: 1956, Nisbet: 1961, 180–182 and Wiseman: 1969, 38–40. Worth noting, however, is the dramatic date of Catullus 28, on Veranius' and Fabullus' unprofitable provincial service under Piso, and therefore presumably of the closely connected poem 47, which would be close in time to the delivery of Cicero's *Against Piso* (55 BC). It is difficult to believe that a contemporary audience familiar with Cicero's speech would not have thought immediately of Calpurnius Piso and Philodemus when confronted by an attack on the philosophically named sidekick of a Piso whose uncontrolled appetites extend to sexual and gastronomic excess.

⁴ Most recently Thomas: 1994, Sider: 1997, 23–24 and Cairns: 2003, 181–183 (Shapiro: 2014 argues that there is no decisive evidence for the identification and prefers to see both addressees as stock types; but see n. 3). Given the association between Epicureans and pigs attested (e.g.) by Cic. *Pis.* 37 (*Epicure noster ex hara producte non ex schola*) and Hor. *Ep.* 1.4.16 (*Epicuri de grege porcum*), it seems best to take Porcius, too, as a pseudonym, though it is more difficult to identify a likely candidate (Cairns: 2003, 184–187 suggests Plotius Tucca; Thomas: 1994, 152, less plausibly, Lucretius).

⁵ Notwithstanding the superficially similar sentiment of Catullus 31.7–8 *o quid solutis est beatius curis, | cum mens onus reponit?* ("Oh what is more blissful than release from care, when the mind lays aside its burden?"). The release from care envisaged in this poem is clearly presented as something temporary, even fleeting: As he emphasizes elsewhere (68.34–35), Catullus is truly at home amid

Whether Catullus himself “was” an Epicurean, as argued at length by Pasquale Giuffrida, is something that we can never know, though it is my contention in what follows that nothing in the poems prompts such a supposition.⁶ A question that we can legitimately pose, however, and one which may prove more fruitful, is how the poet responds to the sociopolitical crises of his era, and how much overlap we can find between his responses and those of his Epicurean contemporaries. Conversely, it seems worth asking whether the clear parallels between Catullus’ invective against (Porcius and) Socratio and Cicero’s attacks on Piso and other Epicureans bespeak a rather conventional hostility towards (Epicurean) philosophy on our poet’s part.

We shall return later in this essay to Catullus 47; but before doing so, I would like to explore the implications of what is certainly the most widely recognized Philodemean echo in Catullus. Poem 13, the famous “anti-invitation” to Fabullus, may be read as a parodic response to Philodemus, *Epigram* 27 (*AP* 11.44), incidentally the most overtly Epicurean of all Philodemus’ surviving poems:⁷

Cenabis bene, mi Fabulle, apud me
paucis, si tibi di favent, diebus,
si tecum attuleris bonam atque magnam
 cenam, non sine candida puella
 et vino et sale et omnibus cachinnis. 5
 haec si, inquam, attuleris, venuste noster,
 cenabis bene; nam tui Catulli
 plenus sacculus est aranearum.
sed contra accipies meros amores
 seu quid suavius elegantiusve est . . . 10

the social and erotic entanglements of the metropolis, with all their attendant *curae*. The tranquillity of Sirmio can be no more than a brief respite.

⁶ Giuffrida: 1950, 89–288. Giuffrida’s arguments rest on now long-abandoned notions of Catullan *purezza* and *castità*, as well as a somewhat eccentric understanding of Epicurean poetics, and have been largely discredited in subsequent scholarship (already by Granarolo: 1967, 205–224). Nevertheless, his central theory that Catullus’ ideal of friendship is indebted to the Epicurean conception of φίλος is still occasionally repeated in modern work on the poet (e.g. Landolfi: 1982 140 and Luciani: 2005, 162). In view, however, of the emphasis Catullus lays on reciprocity, obligation and *benevolentia* in, e.g., poems 72, 73 and 76, affinities with the traditional *Roman* code of aristocratic *amicitia* are to my mind far more striking. Cf. Ross: 1969, 80–95, on Catullus’ manipulation of “the (almost technical) terminology of . . . political alliances at Rome” (83), and, for compelling parallels in the language of Cicero’s letters, Fitzgerald: 1995, 128–134. For discussion of the evidence for the Epicureanism of two of Catullus’ contemporaries, namely Caesar and Atticus, see Volk (Chapter 5) and Gilbert (Chapter 4) in this volume respectively.

⁷ On the relationship between the two poems, see esp. Hiltbrunner: 1972, Carilli: 1975, 942–945, Marcovich: 1982 and Dettmer: 1989.

You'll dine well, my dear Fabullus, at my place in a few days time, by the gods' grace—if you bring with you a good, big dinner, not forgetting a pretty girl, and wine and salt/wit and everything that's amusing. *If* I say, you bring all this, my charming friend, you'll dine well: For your Catullus' purse is full—of cobwebs. But in return I'll give you pure love(-poetry), or whatever is sweeter and more stylish . . .

Αὔριον εἰς λιτὴν σε καλιάδα, φίλτατε Πείσων,
ἔξ ἐνάτης ἔλκει μουσοφιλῆς ἔταρος
 εἰκάδα δειπνίζων ἐνιαύσιον· εἰ δ' ἀπολείψεις
 οὔθ' αὖτα καὶ Βρομίου Χιογενῆ πρόποσιν,
ἀλλ' ἐτάρους ὄψει παναληθέας, ἀλλ' ἐπακούση 5
 Φαιήκων γαίης πουλὺ μελιχρότερα.
 ἦν δέ ποτε στρέψεης καὶ ἐς ἡμέας ὄμματα, Πείσων,
 ἄξομεν ἐκ λιτῆς εἰκάδα πιστότην.

Tomorrow from the ninth hour, my dear Piso, your friend, beloved of the Muses, calls you out to his humble abode for your annual visit, for dinner in celebration of the Twentieth.⁸ If you leave behind your sow's udders and draughts of Chian wine, yet you will see the truest of friends and hear things much sweeter than the land of the Phaeacians. But if ever you turn your eyes our way, Piso, we shall celebrate a richer Twentieth, instead of a modest one.

As indicated above, the structure of Catullus' poem precisely mirrors that of Philodemus' epigram (opening address with the date/time of the dinner;⁹ contrasting lines on what the addressee will *not* find on offer and the "much sweeter" figurative "fare" to be provided by the host). But Catullus sends up the alleged modesty of Philodemus' dwelling and the banquet to take place there: *His* speaker is not so much an advocate of *litotes* as, simply, broke, to such an extent that Fabullus must bring the dinner, the drink and even the obligatory *candida puella*. Reading the two poems together, we might understand this as a dig at what could be seen as hypocrisy¹⁰ on Philodemus' part: What begins as an invitation ends as a

⁸ The phrase εἰκάδα δειπνίζων ἐνιαύσιον has been the source of considerable scholarly controversy: I follow Sider: 1997, 156–158 (cf. Sider: 1995, 46–50), who understands δειπνίζων in its usual sense, "feeding," and takes ἐνιαύσιον to qualify σε rather than εἰκάδα. The reference is to the regular Epicurean gatherings held on the twentieth of the month since the Founder's own day (DL 10.18; further testimonia and discussion in Clay: 1998, 89–90, 97).

⁹ The lack of specificity in Catullus' *paucis diebus* is of course part of the poem's humor. We might paraphrase: "You'll get a good dinner one of these fine days, if you're lucky."

¹⁰ Which is not to say that the poem's conclusion cannot also be understood as perfectly orthodox in Epicurean terms: Epicurus warns that even austerity can be taken to excess (VS 63; cf. Diogenes of Oenoanda NF 146), and does not suggest that we should turn down the occasional treat if offered; indeed, the fragments of his letters include requests for "offerings" to supplement his usual meagre diet (fr. 130 U, DL 10.11 = fr. 182 U). Tutrone: 2017 persuasively argues that gratitude (whether

begging letter from Piso's client (or parasite?).¹¹ Particularly important for our purposes is that what Catullus offers his friend in return for bringing his own dinner is distinctly different from the (presumably) philosophical conversation and companionship on offer at Philodemus' party.¹² *Meros amores* is a disputed phrase, the interpretation of which is only made more difficult when Catullus goes on to connect it with a perfume given to his girl by the gods of love: Without entering into the long-running debate on the question, let me merely suggest that the mysterious *unguentum* may be understood as an emblem of the *venustas* and *urbanitas* that the poet prizes so highly in the literary, social and erotic spheres alike.¹³ As a gift of the gods of charm (*Venus/venus*) and desire (*Cupido/cupido*), the perfume may be understood as embodying the smartness and elegance of the dinner party, as well as the affection (*amores*: Compare the end of the previous poem, 12.16–17, where the speaker celebrates his love – *amem* – for Fabullus and Veranius) in which both Fabullus and the *puella* are held, and the elegant love-poetry (*amores*)¹⁴ in which this affection is enshrined. Philodemus asserts that the Epicurean *φιλία* he hopes to share with Piso is friendship in the truest sense (*παναληθέας, 5*); Catullus in response redefines “unmixed love/friendship” (*meros amores, 9*) in terms of a shared

expressed verbally or through material *beneficia*) was fundamental to Epicurean *φιλία*; see also Asmis: 2004, 161–176, who points out that both Epicurus and Philodemus himself regard it as entirely proper for the wise person to seek remuneration for philosophical teaching. For the suggestion that Philodemus self-consciously characterizes both himself and Piso as “beggars,” see Sider 1995: 49–50.

¹¹ It has been called into question whether the relationship between Piso and Philodemus should be understood as one of *clientela*; but see Sider 1997: 5–7 (with n. 11), who argues cogently that the terminology of patronage is fully applicable here.

¹² Unlike the majority of commentators, I take the primary reference here to be to philosophical discussion rather than poetic performance: In the context of the reference to true friendship and to Phaeacian pleasures, this seems to me a more natural assumption (Epicurean discourse taking the place of Odysseus' *apologoi*, or perhaps more specifically his notorious speech [*Od.* 9.5–11] on the pleasures of good fellowship and the table). For the comparison between Epicureans and Phaeacians (usually in the mouth of hostile witnesses), see esp. Buffière 1956, 317–322 and Gordon 2012, 38–71: The allegorist Heraclitus, writing in the second or third century AD, labels Epicurus, with his supposed love of sensual pleasure, “the Phaeacian philosopher” (*Alleg. Hom.* 79.2), but – as Gordon shows – the slur clearly goes back much earlier, and Philodemus' epigram can be understood as a response to it. This is not to deny that the epigram also has metapoetic implications: See further below.

¹³ For this interpretation of the *unguentum*, cf. esp. Vessey: 1971, Marcovich: 1982, Bernstein: 1985, Dettmer: 1986, Richlin: 1988, 356–358, Gowers: 1993, 229–244; the more graphically sexual interpretations of Littman: 1977 and Hallett: 1978 lack textual support, and have been generally rejected.

¹⁴ For *amores* in this sense, cf. e.g. Virg. *E.* 10.53–54, Ov. *AA* 3.343, *Tr.* 2.361, *OLD* s.v. *amor* 5. This interpretation also helps to explain the concluding joke, since the word *nasus* is used not infrequently as a metaphor for the faculty of critical discrimination (e.g. Hor. *Sat.* 1.4.8, Plin. *NH praef.* 7, Mart. 1.3.6).

possession of chic, stylishness, elegance – qualities that have very little to do with *voluptas* in the Epicurean sense.

We should of course acknowledge in this connection that Philodemus, too, is a poet: Indeed, he draws attention to the fact in the second line of his invitation to Piso, characterizing himself as μουσοφιλής, “beloved of the Muses.” Possibly, then, the entertainment that he offers his patron should be taken to include poetry, as David Sider suggests in his commentary on *Ep.* 27.¹⁵ The epigram can be understood on a metapoetic as well as a philosophical level: The elegant simplicity of Philodemus’ poems is “sweeter” than the more sumptuous style of Homeric epic.¹⁶ Similarly Cicero – though distinctly backhanded in his compliments – praises Philodemus’ verse as *ita festivum, ita concinnum, ita elegans, nihil ut fieri possit argutius* (“so charming, so clever, so elegant that nothing could be neater,” *Pis.* 70). Here, then, we might at first glance perceive a certain convergence between Catullus’ and Philodemus’ poetics: Both express a preference for “light” verse, characterized by its charm or “sweetness” (μελιχρότερα, *Philod. Ep.* 27.6; *suavius*, *Cat.* 13.10); both perhaps look to Callimachus as a model.¹⁷ Intertextual reminiscences of Philodemus in Catullus’ poetry tend to suggest antagonism or perhaps rivalry rather than approval, however, and I suggest that the needling quality of the echoes I am exploring here can be attributed to a hostility on Catullus’ part to the Greek poet’s Epicureanism, for all the superficial similarities between their literary ideals.

Above all, it is the centrality of both poetry and *urbanitas* to Catullus’ writing and the social relations it depicts and facilitates that drives a wedge between him and Philodemus. There is nowadays a broad scholarly consensus that orthodox Epicureanism does not permit its adherents too serious a commitment to the study or composition of poetry: Epicurus himself urged his disciple Pythocles to shun all παιδεία (fr. 163 U), and appears to have decreed that the wise man will not “devote himself to the writing of poetry” or “make a practice of writing poetry” (ποίηματα . . . ἐνεργεῖα οὐκ ἂν ποιῆσαι, DL 10.121 = fr. 568 U);¹⁸ Cicero’s Epicurean

¹⁵ Sider: 1997, 155–156.

¹⁶ For the relatively uncommon comparative μελιχρότερος in a similarly programmatic context, cf. Callimachus, *Aet.* fr. 1.16; cf. also *Ep.* 27.2–3, where Aratus is praised for his imitation of τὸ μελιχρότατον | τῶν ἐπέων (“the sweetest of the verses”) of Hesiod.

¹⁷ Cf. n. 16 above; Catullus invokes Callimachus, as *Battiades*, most explicitly at 65.16 (introducing poem 66’s translation of the *Coma Berenices*) and 116.2, but echoes can of course be heard throughout the corpus (see e.g. Knox: 2007).

¹⁸ On the text and interpretation of this phrase, see especially Asmis: 1995, 22.

speaker Torquatus accordingly dismisses literary study as a *puerilis delectatio* (*Fin.* 1.72). Philodemus appears, in the fragments of his philosophical writing, to concur with this position, particularly in *On Music*, where the study of music is dismissed as too laborious and as getting in the way of more serious pursuits (*Mus.* 4 cols. 151–152 Delattre); in *On Poems* he denies that poetry can be “useful” or “beneficial,” at least *qua* poetry (*Poem.* 5 cols. 25.30–34, 32.17–19 Mangoni). As an inherently *pleasurable* activity, writing or listening to poetry is not to be dismissed out of hand, certainly; but it must take second place to genuinely beneficial activities – in particular, philosophical discussion and study. Sider has argued, with some plausibility, that epigram is thus the perfect literary form for the Epicurean poet, owing to the “appearance of not having required any effort” – the improvisatory quality – cultivated by the Hellenistic epigrammatists.¹⁹

The contrast with Catullus, who praises the minute and painstaking nine-years’ labor of Cinna on his epyllion *Smyrna*, and pours scorn on the Suffenuses and Volusiuses who toss off thousands of lines with casual abandon, could hardly be more marked.²⁰ The exchange of poems and discussion of works in progress are crucial facets of the social life of Catullus and his *amici* as depicted in the poems; and the reading and writing of poetry has a quasi-erotic charge, strong enough to keep the poet awake all night and longing for more, or to make the listener – like Fabullus in poem 13 – long to become “all nose.”²¹ The superficial similarity between Philodemus’ and Catullus’ poetics noted above must, then, be heavily qualified when the two poems are read in their broader contexts. Indeed, as I have already suggested, even within Catullus’ response to Philodemus’ epigram we can observe a crucial change of emphasis: The layering in Philodemus’ poem of the philosophical and the metapoetic, both of which are implicit in the reference to the Phaeacians, is replaced in Catullus’ case by a single, if multi-faceted, ideal: There is no separation between the

¹⁹ Sider: 1997, 27–28 and 32 (quoted phrase at 32). Cf. Asmis: 1995, 32–33.

²⁰ Poems 95; 22; 36. Cf. also the ideal of literary “polish” implied by the image of the pumice-finished book-roll at 1.2. This is not to deny that Catullus, who is, after all, as much an epigrammatist as Philodemus, can project an air of ostentatious casualness when it suits him to do so (notably, in the informal and quasi-erotic verse-swapping session recollected at 50.1–6), as CUP’s anonymous reader rightly reminds me. Nevertheless, the overall impression that the reader derives from Catullus’ collection is of a writer wholly devoted to his craft, for all his self-deprecating insistence on the essential non-seriousness of his themes and life-style.

²¹ For exchange of poems and discussion of work in progress, see esp. poems 14, 35, 38, 50, 65 and 68A, and (e.g.) Wray: 2001, 99–106, Stroup: 2010, esp. 72–88; for the erotic charge of poetry, see (in addition to 35 and 50) 16.7–11, with Fitzgerald: 1995, 34–55.

different senses of *meros amores*, and the *venustas* and *cupido* symbolized (on my reading) by the *unguentum* belong equally to the spheres of poetry, *amicitia* and *amor*.

Friendship, Patronage and Politics

If Catullus' conception of *amicitia* is to be contrasted, as I have suggested, with the Epicurean *φιλία* promised by Philodemus, it is also worth bearing in mind the quite different social dynamics of the two poems. Catullus invites a friend of (presumably) similar social status, whereas Philodemus' poem is, in part, a request for material assistance from a social superior, his patron Calpurnius Piso.²² I have already suggested that Catullus 13 can be read as a kind of parody of this element in Philodemus' poem; and the relationship between friendship and patronage – both of which are subsumed under the Latin word *amicitia* – seems worth exploring further in each of the two poets. This brings us back to poem 47, with its depiction of Philodemus/Socration and Porcius as disreputable parasites, inexplicably favored by the equally disreputable Piso. We can hear echoes here of the anti-Epicurean polemic of Cicero's *Against Piso*: The *convivium de die*, the dinner-party beginning before the end of the working day, is emblematic of a decadent indolence, of the kind pilloried by Cicero in his attack on Piso's (alleged) self-indulgent hedonism (*Pis.* 22):

Quid ego illorum dierum epulas, quid laetiam et gratulationem tuam, quid cum tuis sordidissimis gregibus intemperantissimas perpotationes praedicem? Quis te illis diebus sobrium, quis agentem aliquid quod esset libero dignum, quis denique in publico vidit?²³

Why need I mention the banquets of those days, your delight and rejoicing, the utterly unrestrained drinking-bouts you engaged in with your filthy flock? Who ever saw you sober during those days, who ever saw you doing anything befitting a free citizen, who ever saw you in public at all?

²² For a nuanced analysis of the social dynamics of the relationship between Piso and Philodemus, see Tutrone: 2017, 288–290.

²³ Cf. *Pis.* 67, where Cicero lampoons Piso for combining self-indulgence with lack of good taste: In contrast to Catullus (47.5–6), who writes of *convivia lauta*, Cicero denies Piso even the ameliorating gloss of *urbanitas* (*nihil apud hunc lautum, nihil elegans, nihil exquisitum*). The discrepancy can be attributed in part to the different perspective adopted by the two writers: Cicero attacks Piso as a peer, Catullus as potential host/patron, to whose dinners (he and) his friends would *wish* to be invited. For Piso's daytime drinking, cf. also *Pis.* 13, 18 and – for his (allegedly) debauched lifestyle in general – *Red. Sen.* 14–15 and *Sest.* 22–23.

Like Cicero, Catullus has a specific axe to grind here: Poem 47 forms, along with 10 and 28, a kind of miniature invective cycle, in which Piso and Gaius Memmius are attacked for their supposed ill-treatment of their younger protégés, Veranius and Fabullus, and of Catullus himself while on provincial service in Macedonia and Bithynia respectively. The poet and his friends will have formed part of the entourage of junior colleagues and *aides-de-camp*, the *cohors amicorum*, personally selected by the governor from amongst his friends and acquaintances. It is clear that young men undertaking such a posting expected to make a financial profit as well as gain experience of provincial administration, and Catullus' major complaint is that Memmius and Piso have prevented him and his friends from doing so. This high-handed behavior (as Catullus characterizes it)²⁴ is represented by the poet as a breakdown in the system of patronage, which has been corrupted by the arbitrary favoritism of the *nobiles* and their lack of interest in assisting their juniors: In vividly sexual language (10.12–13; 28.9–13), the speaker complains that he and his friends have been “screwed” by their commanding officers, and poem 28 closes with a bitter outcry against the “noble friends” who have – he claims – abused their privileged position and so disgraced the name of Romulus and Remus.²⁵ Each of the three poems draws an implicit contrast between the personal friendship that exists between Catullus and his *sodales* – Veranius and Fabullus in 28 and 47, Varus and Cinna in 10 – and the perverted, so-called *amicitia* of a patronage system gone awry. Catullus attests to a sense of exclusion and disempowerment amongst young members of the provincial elite, striving to find a place on the political stage of the metropolis – a stage increasingly dominated, in the mid-50s BC, by the Triumvirs and their partisans.

Whereas Philodemus, in his invitation to Piso, suggests a convergence between two senses of “friendship” (as patronage and as Epicurean *φιλία*), Catullus sets up an opposition between what we might call the “public” and the “private” aspects of *amicitia*, and tends to privilege the latter. The

²⁴ With, certainly, more than a touch of self-irony (cf. Skinner: 1989; 2001; Nappa: 2001, 87–93). Braund: 1996 argues that the speaker discredits himself to such an extent that the image of Memmius that emerges from the poem is ultimately a positive one: While it is true, however, that preventing one's *cohors* from profiteering might indeed be represented as praiseworthy, the graphically sexual language tells against such a reading.

²⁵ Cf. 29.23–24 for a similar outcry against Caesar and Pompey (*socer generque*, 24), who have “destroyed everything” through their indulgence of unworthy protégés such as Mamurra.

opening lines of poem 10, for example, seem to align personal friendship with *otium*, in contrast to the public sphere of the Forum (10.1–2):

Varus me meus ad suos amores
visum duxerat e foro otiosum

My friend Varus, finding me at leisure, took me from the Forum to meet
his girl . . .

The juxtaposition *e foro otiosum* is pointed: Varus leads Catullus *away from* the *negotium* of the Forum, inviting him into a private world of love and friendship. It is, significantly, from this decentered perspective that Memmius' lack of concern for his *cohors* is denounced.

At the same time, throughout the collection Catullus represents himself and his *sodales* as an exclusive social circle, access to which is reserved for the *urbani* and *venusti*. If Catullus – as he depicts himself – is on the fringes of the political elite, he is very much at the center of the smart set, a position from which he is empowered to pronounce on the (un)sophisticated behavior of his peers, and to police the boundaries of the in-group. Characters such as Asinius Marrucinus (poem 12), Suffenus (22) or Egnatius (39) are excluded on the grounds of social or literary *faux pas*; Fabullus, Veranius, Cinna and Calvus are “in.” Of course, there is considerable irony in the fact that betrayal seems as endemic to the personal friendships the poet celebrates as to the corrupt public world he condemns: Alfenus in poem 30, Rufus in 77 and the unnamed *amicus* of 73 are all denounced as false friends, who – like Lesbia – fail to keep up their side of the “contract” of mutual *officium*. Nevertheless, the contrast with Epicurean *φιλία*, the brotherhood of the enlightened that is potentially accessible to all, is again marked.

In this connection, Lucretius' dedication of his *On the Nature of Things* to Memmius offers a particularly instructive comparison.²⁶ At 1.140–142, in commenting on the difficulty of expressing the *Graiorum obscura reperta*, the “obscure discoveries of the Greeks,” in Latin verse, Lucretius gracefully attributes his persistence in his task to his hope of gaining Memmius' *amicitia*:

sed tua me virtus tamen et sperata voluptas
suavis amicitiae quemvis efferre laborem
suadet . . .

²⁶ I assume with most Lucretian scholars that the dedicatee of the *DRN* is to be identified with Catullus' Memmius, the praetor of 58 BC. Hutchinson: 2001, arguing that the poem should be dated to the early 40s rather than the mid-50s, suggests instead the tribune of 54; but cf. the rejoinder of Volk: 2010.

But your virtue and the longed-for pleasure of sweet friendship induce me to undergo any toil . . .

It is often assumed that the reference here to *amicitia* amounts – like the conclusion of Philodemus’ epigram – to an appeal for patronage; but whatever the nature of the historical relationship between Lucretius and Memmius, it is clearly framed within the poem in terms of Epicurean ideals. As in Catullus, friendship is represented as something “sweet” – attractive, desirable (*suavis*: cf. Cat. 13.9–10 *amores | seu quid suavius . . . est*); but more than that, it is the pleasure (*voluptas*) that Lucretius anticipates from it that motivates him to write his poem. The pun on *suavis* and *suadet* underlines the characteristically Epicurean identification of pleasure as “the starting point of every choice and every aversion” (*Men.* 129); moreover, the doctrine that friendship is a pleasure worth pursuing for its own sake is amply attested in Epicurus’ surviving writings.²⁷ If, then, it is specifically *Epicurean* friendship that Lucretius seeks, this is something that will follow, presumably, from Memmius’/ the reader’s successful conversion to Epicureanism. Two corollaries follow: First, that Lucretius’ conception of friendship, in contrast to Catullus’, is inclusive – if Memmius figures in part as a kind of stand-in for the reader-in-general, then the poet may be said to seek the “friendship” of all of us: Any reader can, and indeed should, become an Epicurean.²⁸ Secondly, Lucretius’ implicitly professed desire to convert Memmius – to win him as an Epicurean φίλος – has potentially important consequences for the latter’s political activities, alluded to earlier in the proem.

In his opening prayer to Venus, Lucretius warmly praises Memmius as a man whom the goddess Venus (apparently a kind of patron deity of the family)²⁹ “has always wished to succeed and win honor in all things” (*tempore in omni | omnibus ornatum voluisti excellere rebus*, 1.26–27), and who cannot well absent himself from public life “at a time of danger for our country” (*patriai tempore iniquo*, 1.41–43). But this opening encomium is arguably undermined by – or at least in tension with – what the poet has to say about political life and in particular competition for status and office later in the poem.³⁰ In both the proem to Book 3 and the

²⁷ KD 27, 28, VS 23, 52, 56, 57, 78; cf. also Cic., *Fin.* 1.66, DL 10.10–11, 120.

²⁸ Cf. Tutrone: 2017, 325–327, and, for the “universalizing tendency” of Epicureanism in general, Roskam in this volume (Chapter 2).

²⁹ For the (mainly numismatic) evidence, see Schilling: 1954, 271–272.

³⁰ For a range of views on these passages and Lucretius’ handling of political activity in general, see esp. Fowler: 1989, Benferhat: 2005a, 81–96, Roskam: 2007a, 83–101, Schiesaro: 2007, McConnell:

account of the origins of government at the end of Book 5, Lucretius attributes the desire for fame and success in the public sphere ultimately to the fear of death. Far from selflessly seeking their country's good – as a Cicero would assert – politicians are motivated, he argues, by a desire for personal security, misguidedly associating power and influence with protection from their fellow-citizens (3.59–64; 5.1120–1122). On Lucretius' analysis, however, political competition is in fact ruinous on both the individual and the collective level. In Book 5 he argues that success in the political rat-race not only involves painful effort and anxiety (*sine incassum defessi sanguine sudent*, | *angustum per iter luctantes ambitionis*, “leave them to weary themselves and sweat blood for nothing, as they struggle along the narrow path of ambition,” 1131–1132) but inevitably generates *invidia*, “envy” or “ill-will,” which, like lightning, is most prone to strike those who climb highest (1125–1128). So security is much more likely to be achieved by *avoiding* public life altogether: “Better peaceful obedience than the desire to exercise *imperium*” (*ut satius multo iam sit parere quietum | quam regere imperio res velle*), as Lucretius provocatively asserts at 1129–1130. The community, too, is adversely affected by competition for status and position: In memorable lines from the proem to Book 3 (68–77), Lucretius argues that the desire for primacy leads inexorably to the carnage of civil war – a line of argument that will have seemed highly topical and, again, provocative during the years of social and political upheaval that preceded the outbreak of hostilities between Caesar and Pompey. But this, too, is the very “time of danger for our country” which was seen to absorb Memmius' attention in the proem to Book 1. In effect, then, Lucretius admonishes his dedicatee that he would do better, both from the personal and from the collective point of view, to withdraw altogether from public life.

In taking Epicurus' injunction against political activity (οὐδὲ πολιτεύσεται [sc. ὁ σοφός], DL 10.119 = fr. 8 U) absolutely at face value, Lucretius seems more radical than many of his contemporaries. Roman Epicureans generally found ways of reconciling their philosophical beliefs with the practice of politics: Piso, Manlius Torquatus, the tyrannicide Cassius, even (indirectly) Cicero's friend Atticus continued to play a

2012 and Hammer: 2014, 114–144. Fish: 2011, 76–87, seeks to minimize the negativity of Lucretius' treatment, and to bring it more closely into line with that of contemporary Epicureans, arguing that the target of attack is political *ambition* rather than political activity as such; his analysis of the relevant passages of the *DRN* involves reading decidedly against the grain, however, and is not to my mind persuasive. Contrast Roskam: 2007a, esp. 97–99, for the view that Lucretius “radicalizes” Epicurean doctrine in this area.

prominent role in public life in spite of their professed Epicureanism.³¹ Arguably, Epicurus himself leaves room for such a position: He concedes that the wise man will show concern for his reputation (though only so far as to avoid falling into contempt, DL 10.120), and, according to later writers, his injunction against political participation was qualified with an “in the normal course of things.”³² Philodemus, in this context, takes a distinctly different line of approach from Lucretius: Whereas the latter seeks – on my reading – to divert his dedicatee from the public career on which he has embarked, the former adopts the role of philosophical adviser, dedicating his *On the Good King According to Homer* to Piso. Constraints of space preclude a full discussion of Philodemus’ treatise here, but it is worth noting that the fragments suggest that overriding themes were justice and ἐπιείκεια – gentleness or reasonableness – as exemplified, for example, by Nestor, or by Odysseus’ rule of Ithaca (which, according to Telemachus, was as “gentle [ἡπιος] as a father’s,” *Od.* 2.47).³³ It is easy to see how Philodemus’ injunctions might be viewed as cohering with the Epicurean pursuit of serenity – conciliation is arguably much more likely to foster a quiet life than competitiveness and the desire for preeminence – and it is notable that Piso’s actual political policies seem very largely to have accorded with the precepts of his mentor (Nisbet, for example, characterizes him as “moderate and statesmanlike”).³⁴ But Philodemus’ prescription for political harmony (or, more precisely, Homer’s prescription, on Philodemus’ Epicurean reading) certainly diverges sharply from that of Lucretius.

³¹ See esp. Benferhat: 2005a, 98–169 (Atticus), 173–232 (Piso), 261–266 (Cassius), 266–270 (Torquatus); cf. also Castner: 1988, 16–23 (Piso), 24–31 (Cassius), 40–42 (Torquatus), 58–61 (Atticus); Griffin: 1989, 28–32, and 2001; Sedley: 1997 (esp. 46–47), Benferhat: 2002, D. Armstrong: 2011, 109–116. Momigliano: 1941 goes too far, however, in positing a “heroic Epicureanism” as a motivating factor among the opponents of Caesar (so Griffin: 1989, 29–31; cf. Sedley: 1997, 41); conversely, the view of Castner: 1988 and Griffin: 1989 that philosophical commitment amongst the Roman elite was a relatively superficial matter and had little impact on actions in the public sphere has been widely disputed (esp. by Benferhat: 2005a, but also in the more recent work of Griffin herself). See also Valachova: 2018 and Volk in this volume (Chapter 5), as well as Roskam’s essay in this volume (Chapter 2) on the dilemma in *On Ends* of Cicero’s Torquatus, who is portrayed as a devout Epicurean and an active politician, and that of Gilbert (Chapter 4), who examines the Epicureanism of Atticus.

³² Cic. *Rep.* 1.10–11, Sen. *De Otio* 3.2 = fr. 9 U, Plut. *Adv. Col.* 1125C = fr. 554 U; Fowler 1989: 127–128, Roskam: 2007a: 50–56.

³³ See esp. cols. 24, 28–29, 30, 42 Dorandi. On the themes of the *On the Good King According to Homer*, see esp. Amsis: 1991, 23–27. For a brief discussion of Philodemus’ role as “philosophical adviser,” with further bibliography, see also Fish: 2016, 57–58.

³⁴ Nisbet 1961, xiv; cf. Griffin: 2001, Benferhat: 2002 and 2005a, 178–210.

The “Epicurean” stance on political participation at the period that concerns us is, then, by no means straightforward; but whether we think in terms of Lucretius’ uncompromising rejection of public life or the more “engaged” approach of Piso and Philodemus, Catullus again seems to have only so much in common with either. The disenchanting attitude of the Memmius and Piso poems is not untypical of the collection as a whole: While many of the invective poems are “political” in the sense that their targets are public figures (particularly Caesar and his partisans), their overriding sentiment is one of disgust with the state of civic business in general. A representative example is poem 52, in which outrage at the political advancement of Nonius and Vatinius provokes the rhetorical question *quid est, Catulle? quid moraris emori?* (“What’s up with you Catullus? Why prolong your life?” 1,4). Though he has sometimes been regarded as an anti-Caesarian partisan, it is noteworthy (as Yasmina Benferhat sagely observes) that what he professes toward Caesar is not so much hostility as studied indifference.³⁵ As we have seen, he shows a tendency to follow Lucretius’ implicit advice to Memmius, turning his back on the public sphere in favor of personal relationships and literary composition. But these relationships are far from bringing him the ἀταραξία that Lucretius proclaims – something which he, arguably, does not even seek, as we shall see.

It is worth observing, too, that Catullus appears deeply pessimistic about the moral condition of the human race in general, to judge at least from the concluding lines of poem 64. The downbeat coda with which the epyllion ends contrasts the virtue of the Age of Heroes with the moral bankruptcy of the present day (397–406):

sed postquam tellus scelere est imbuta nefando
iustitiamque omnes cupida de mente fugarunt,
perfudere manus **fraterno sanguine fratres**,
destitit extinctos gnatus lugere parentes,
optavit genitor primaevi funera nati,
liber uti nuptae poteretur flore novellae,³⁶
ignaro mater substernens se impia nato

³⁵ Benferhat: 2005b, 139: “Le plus frappant réside sans doute dans l’indépendance manifestée jusqu’au bout par Catulle à l’égard de César” (“The most striking thing is undoubtedly the independence shown throughout by Catullus with regard to Caesar”). See esp. poem 93, *nil nimium studeo, Caesar, tibi velle placere* . . . (“I’m none too eager, Caesar, to wish to please you . . .”). The tendency in recent anglophone scholarship has been to view Catullus as “profoundly estranged” from Roman public life: see e.g. Nappa: 2001, 85–105, Skinner: 2003, esp. 23–24, 137–142, Konstan: 2007 (quoted phrase at 78).

³⁶ I follow Goold in printing Machly’s *uti nuptae* with Baehrens’ *novellae*, for the MSS *innuptae* . . . *novercae*. For discussion, see Fordyce: 1961, *ad loc.*, and Trappes-Lomax: 2007, 205.

impia non verita est divos scelerare penates.
omnia fanda nefanda malo permixta furore
iustificam nobis mentem avertere deorum.

But once the world was plunged into unspeakable wickedness and all drove justice from their greedy hearts, brothers drenched their hands in brothers' blood; the son ceased to mourn for dead parents; the father longed for the death of his young son, so that he might freely pluck the flower of his newwed bride; the impious mother, lying with her unknowing son, did not shrink from sinning impiously against the household gods. Everything speakable and unspeakable, thrown into confusion by our evil madness, has turned the gods' just mind away from us.

We can again detect considerable irony here – given that the alleged glories of the heroic age evoked earlier in the poem include the heartless abandonment of the innocent Ariadne by Theseus (52–264), the bloody slaughter of countless Trojans by Achilles (343–360) and the gorily described sacrifice of Polyxena on the latter's tomb (362–364).³⁷ Nevertheless, it is striking that these closing lines bear a strong resemblance to Lucretius' analysis of civil strife in the proem to Book 3: In particular, the phrase *perfundere manus fraterno sanguine fratres* ("brothers drenched their hands in brothers' blood," 64.399) is similar in both cadence and sense to Lucretius' *crudeles gaudent in tristi funere fratris* ("cruelly, they rejoice in a brother's tragic death," 3.72). Catullus, though, seems to reject, or at least ignore, the Epicurean poet's prescription even while pointedly evoking it. Like many ancient writers and thinkers from Hesiod on, he treats human degeneracy as a tragic inevitability, leaving no room for Lucretius' more optimistic suggestion that – at least on the individual level – escape from this bleak prospect to a life of serenity is a genuine possibility.³⁸

vesanus Catullus

Catullus' vehement, even passionate, expressions of affection for male *amici* in such poems as 9, 12, 14 and 50 are complemented by the ideal of *amor-as-amicitia* in his relations with Lesbia. Most pithily expressed in the phrase *aeternum hoc sanctae foedus amicitiae* (109.6), this ideal is explored from a variety of angles through the sequence of Lesbia-epigrams culminating in the longer, introspective poem 76. Catullus exploits the

³⁷ For echoes of Lucretius' account of the sacrifice of Iphigenia (1.80–101) in these lines, see Skinner: 1976 and Morisi: 2002; ironic readings of the coda to Catullus 64 include Curran: 1969, Bramble: 1970, esp. 25–29, Konstan: 1977, 82–84 and Gaisser: 1995, 613.

³⁸ Cf. Morisi: 2002, esp. 187–190.

hallowed ideals of reciprocity, *officium* (75.2), *benevolentia* (72.8, 75.3; cf. 73.1) and – most startlingly – *pietas* (76.2, 26), to recast his admittedly adulterous affair (68.143–146) as a relationship of mutual commitment and more-than-physical affection, analogous to male–male friendship or intrafamilial relations (72.4). Lesbia, moreover, is herself idealized, both in the polymetrics and in the elegiacs. Figured as a goddess (68.70, 133–134), she is beyond compare with other women (43.7–8, 86.5–6), and has, accordingly, inspired a love greater than any woman has ever attracted in the past (87), or (even more hyperbolically) will attract in the future (8.5, 37.12). The speaker’s passion for her is assimilated to madness (7.10) or – when things go awry – to an incurable disease (76.19–26).

In various respects, this group of poems also invites comparison with both Philodemus and Lucretius. Intertextual echoes of both poets can be detected in Catullus’ Lesbia cycle, though in Lucretius’ case interpretation is problematic owing to the impossibility of determining the relative chronology of the two writers. I assume here, for the sake of argument, that Catullus echoes Lucretius rather than vice versa; but an equally good case can be made for Lucretius’ poem as the “receiving” text.³⁹ In any case, the essence of my argument will stand whichever way the intertextual dialogue is understood to proceed: Whether Lucretius takes Catullus as an *exemplum* of the evils of love or Catullus (as I argue here) ostentatiously rejects the Epicurean remedy for his ills, the essential antagonism between the two poets’ views on *amor* remains.

In Philodemus’ case, the matter seems more clear cut, even if we leave on one side the widely held axiom that Roman writers read the work of their Greek counterparts but not vice versa. I have already noted that Catullus 13 reads as a parody of Philodemus’ invitation poem to Piso; and much the same can be said of Catullus 43, which can be interpreted as a similarly antagonistic reworking of another of Philodemus’ epigrams, 12 Sider (= *Anth. Pal.* 5.132):

ᾠ ποδός, ᾧ κνήμης, ᾧ τῶν (ἀπόλωλα δικαίως)
μηρῶν, ᾧ γλουτῶν, ᾧ κτενός, ᾧ λαγόνων,
ᾧ ὤμοιν, ᾧ μαστῶν, ᾧ τοῦ ῥαδινοῖο τραχήλου,

³⁹ Majority opinion perhaps leans towards the view that Catullus’ is the receiving text, at least in poem 64, where the majority of close verbal echoes are concentrated: see e.g. Grimal: 1978, 258–259, Giesecke: 2000, 10–30; for the opposing view, see Herrmann: 1956 and Biondi: 2003. For Catullan echoes (?) in the finale to Book 4, see Lieberg: 1962, 284–300, Kenney: 1970, 388–390 (= 2007: 324–326), R. D. Brown: 1987, 139–143, Luciani: 2005 and Baier: 2010. A less historicizing approach is advocated by Tamás: 2016, whose notion of “reciprocal intertextuality” (developed in relation to Catullus 64) could be applied productively to the finale to Lucretius 4.

ὦ χειρῶν, ὦ τῶν (μαίνομαι) ὀμματίων,
 ὦ κατατεχνοτάτου κινήματος, ὦ περιάλλων 5
 γλωττισμῶν, ὦ τῶν (θῦέ με) φωναρίων·
 εἰ δ' Ὀπικὴ καὶ Φλώρα καὶ οὐκ ἄδουσα τὰ Σαπφοῦς,
 καὶ Περσεὺς Ἰνδῆς ἠράσσατ' Ἀνδρομέδης.

O foot, O leg, O (I'm done for) those thighs, O buttocks, O bush, O flanks,
 O shoulders, O breasts, O delicate neck, O hands, O (madness!) those eyes,
 O wickedly skillful walk, O fabulous kisses, O (slay me!) her speech.
 And if she *is* an Oscan—a mere Flora who does not sing Sappho's verses—
 Perseus too fell in love with Indian Andromeda.

(tr. Sider)

Salve, nec minimo puella naso
 nec bello **pede** nec nigris **ocellis**
 nec longis **digitis** nec ore sicco
 nec sane nimis **elegante lingua**,
 decoctoris amica Formiani. 5
 ten provincia narrat esse bellam?
 tecum Lesbia nostra comparatur?
 o saeculum insapiens et infacetum!

Greetings, girl with no small nose, no pretty foot, no dark eyes, nor long
 fingers, nor dry mouth, and certainly none too stylish a tongue, girlfriend of
 the bankrupt of Formiae! Does the province call you beautiful, and com-
 pare my Lesbia with you? O what a dull and graceless age we live in!

Both poems employ the form known as *blason anatomique*, whereby the
 woman's body parts are itemized and each in turn praised or criticized.
 Striking in Catullus' poem, though, is the technique of negative enumer-
 ation: The girl's nose is *not* small, her foot *not* pretty, her fingers *not* long,
 and so on. Catullus' poem, in effect, inverts Philodemus': Where the
 Greek poet exclaims rapturously over Flora's feet, eyes, hands and (nota-
 bly) speech, Catullus condemns these same features – in the case of his
 target, the girlfriend of Mamurra (the “bankrupt of Formiae,” 5) – for their
inelegance. True beauty belongs, in contrast, to Lesbia, as any generation
 not devoid of judgment and wit would immediately see. In contrast,
 Philodemus pronounces himself content with Flora, for all her lack of
 sophistication and culture. The reference to Lesbia seems particularly
 pointed in this context: The soubriquet of Catullus' *puella* is of course
 evocative of Sappho – the most famous “woman of Lesbos” – the very poet
 of whom Philodemus' Flora is said to be ignorant.⁴⁰

⁴⁰ The adjective *insapiens* (8) is perhaps similarly loaded: Ironically, it is the philosophical Philodemus
 who turns out to be “unwise,” while Catullus implicitly arrogates to himself preeminence in

What is it, then, that Lesbia has and Mamurra's girlfriend lacks? An answer is suggested by another poem that employs the *blason anatomique* structure, poem 86:

Quintia formosa est multis. mihi candida, longa,
 recta est: haec ego sic singula confiteor.
 totum illud formosa nego: nam nulla venustas,
 nulla in tam magno est corpore mica salis.
 Lesbia formosa est, quae cum pulcherrima tota est, 5
 tum omnibus una omnis surripuit Veneres.

Many think Quintia beautiful. To me, she's fair-skinned, tall, stands well: I grant her these qualities, listed off like that. But I totally deny her that word "beautiful": For she's no style, no grain of salt/wit in all that tall body. Now *Lesbia* is beautiful: Not only is she utterly lovely, through and through, but she's robbed all other women of all their charm.

Catullus checks off Quintia's qualities, in a way that recalls the lists of body parts in poem 43 and Philodemus' epigram on Flora, but he denies that they add up to "beauty": Quintia lacks the "grain of salt," the indefinable sparkle, and the charm (*venus*) that Lesbia uniquely possesses. Again, the poem virtually reverses the sentiment of Philodemus' epigram: Whereas Flora's physical qualities outweigh her lack of culture, Lesbia's desirability is founded on something very like the *urbanitas* that Catullus values in his male *amici*.⁴¹

Catullus' intertextual engagement with Philodemus' poem may be seen as symptomatic of a broader contrast in outlook between the two poets. In general, it seems fair to say that Philodemus' fairly numerous erotic epigrams largely complement the pragmatic attitude adopted in *Epigram* 12, and fall into line with Epicurean doctrine on love and sex, as expounded most fully by Lucretius in the finale to *On the Nature of Things* Book 4, where romantic love (or, in Epicurean terms, obsessive desire for an individual sex-object) is unambiguously condemned as a disturbing delusion. Prostitutes are recommended as suitable partners for casual, no-strings sex (4.1071), though Lucretius does perhaps admit a kind of

sapientia (in the etymologically primary sense of "good taste" [OLD s.v. *sapio* 5]?). (I owe this point to Alison Keith, in discussion at the 2018 Symposium Cumanum.)

⁴¹ For *sal* as a desirable male quality, cf. 12.4 and 14.16, where the reading *salse* (*G*) is to be preferred to *false* (*OR*); cf. also the *sal* that Fabullus is to bring with him to the dinner of poem 13 (5), which may be understood both literally and metaphorically (as suggested by the placement of the word between *vino* and *omnibus cachinnis*). For *venus(tas)* in male *amici*, cf. 13.6 *venuste noster*, and 3.2, 22.2.

de-romanticized partnership based on habit and a realistic assessment of the woman's qualities as an acceptable alternative (4.1190–1191, 1278–1287).⁴² Philodemus, admittedly, does not stick consistently to these principles, and at times portrays himself as unable to resist his desire even when he knows it will lead only to grief (*Ep.* 13),⁴³ or as rejecting the easily available ἑταίρα in favour of the cloistered virgin (*Ep.* 11). So, too, in the first epigram (in Sider's numeration), Philodemus disclaims any understanding of his own passion for Xanthippe, in terms closely echoed by Catullus in the famous *odi et amo* (poem 85): Catullus' *nescio* is particularly reminiscent of the enjambed οὐκ οἶδα at the beginning of line 4 of Philodemus' poem. But elsewhere Philodemus' stance seems more closely in line with Epicurean doctrine: Like Horace (who, indeed, quotes him in this context, *Sat.* 1.2.120–122), Philodemus ridicules those who spend a fortune on adulterous affairs with married women when cheap, casual sex is freely available (*Ep.* 22), and several other epigrams depict dealings with prostitutes or ἑταίραι. If Sider⁴⁴ is right to see philosophical coloring in the Xanthippe poems, we might even understand this as an instantiation of the de-romanticized marital or quasi-marital relationship apparently approved by Lucretius at the very end of Book 4: Xanthippe is perhaps depicted as Philodemus' wife, depending on how the textual problem at 7.5 is resolved,⁴⁵ and seems to be connected with the theme of misspent youth and its end in *Epigrams* 4–6. Here, Philodemus hails the onset of middle age with its greying hair as the “age of understanding” (συνετης . . . ἡλικίης, *Ep.* 4.4, 5.4) and bids farewell to the “madness” of his youth (μανίη, *Ep.* 4.8; cf. 5.2 ἐμάνην), when he indulged himself in wine and women. In *Epigram* 4, the Muses are asked to mark a coronis – or, perhaps, to mark Xanthippe as the coronis – signalling the end of his μανία. We can perhaps detect the traces of a narrative trajectory in Philodemus' poetry, according to which the hot passions of youth depicted in such epigrams as 11 and 13 are abandoned as a result of maturity and philosophical enlightenment (if that is the implication of the “loftier thoughts”

⁴² For different assessments of the tone and implications of these lines, see esp. R. D. Brown: 1987, 371–372 and Nussbaum: 1994, 185–186.

⁴³ Sider: 1997, 110, accepts the MSS attribution to Philodemus; Gow-Page and others assign this epigram to Meleager, on the basis of the name Heliodora, which appears in several of Meleager's epigrams.

⁴⁴ Sider: 1987; 1995; and 1997, 33–36.

⁴⁵ Sider prefers the reading φιλεράστρι' ἄκοιτις (a scribal correction in MS *P*) to Schneider's φιλεράστρια κοίτη (for the MS κοίτης). For discussion, see Sider: 1997, 89–90.

envisaged at the end of *Ep.* 5). Xanthippe, on Sider's reading, figures as a fellow-Epicurean, a worthy partner for the philosophically enlightened poet (and we should remember that Epicurus admitted female as well as male disciples to his school). At the same time, the poet declares a preference for the casual liaison (*Ep.* 22; cf. *Ep.* 17.5–6): Whether or not we choose to see a tension here with his apparent devotion to Xanthippe, this stance appears to be in keeping with Epicurean orthodoxy.

Catullus' poetry too has its narrative aspect, and again the contrast with Philodemus is striking. Where Philodemus disclaims the $\mu\omicron\nu\iota\alpha$ of youth, Catullus appears to welcome the frenzy of his passion for Lesbia, referring to himself as *vesanus Catullus*, "crazed" or "frenzied Catullus" (7.10), urging Lesbia to "live and love" (5.1) and refusing to be content with even an infinite number of kisses. As we have seen, he celebrates his devotion to her in terms borrowed from the lexicon of male *amicitia* and aristocratic obligation, and pursues an adulterous relationship in preference to the casual liaisons recommended by Horace and Lucretius. Even when things go awry between the lovers, Catullus cannot rid himself of his painful feelings for her, which wrack him like a disease (76).

It is in this last respect that intertextual connections with Lucretius seem particularly marked: The cycle of obsession, disillusion and disgust is memorably portrayed at *DRN* 4.1058–1140, where Lucretius asserts that the initial drop of Venus' sweetness leads inevitably to "chill anxiety" (1060), jealousy and regret (1133–1140), and the natural desire for sex becomes a feverish madness, a festering wound that grows worse from day to day. Lucretius ridicules male idealization of women who are in reality just as flawed as any other, and the use of absurd pet-names to conceal (or even celebrate) their faults (1153–1170). Notable here is the phrase *tota merum sal*, literally "pure salt" (1162), applied by the deluded lover to a woman of small stature: Both the phrase and the context resonate with Catullus' idealization of Lesbia in poem 86. Catullus, then, seems a prime example of the obsessive, romantic love which Lucretius attacks. If, as suggested above, we assume that Catullus is responding to Lucretius rather than vice versa, we can again read the intertextual relationship as one of self-conscious antagonism on Catullus' part. The idealization of *amor* as a more-than-physical passion for one, exceptional individual, and as a mutual commitment analogous to male–male *amicitia*, is the precise inverse of Lucretius' denunciation of emotional commitment in favour of a casual, or at most non-passionate, liaison.

Catullus seems again to recall Lucretius, somewhat sardonically, in poem 76, where he admonishes himself of the need to free himself from his *longus amor* (13–14):

difficile est longum subito deponere amorem?
difficile est, verum hoc qua lubet efficias

Is it hard to lay aside a lasting love all at once? It's hard—but you must do it somehow!

The emphatically repeated – and somewhat prosaic – phrase *difficile est* is used by Lucretius in a similar context (4.1146–1150):

nam vitare, plagas in amoris ne iaciamur,
 non ita **difficile est** quam captum retibus ipsis
 exire et validos Veneris perrumpere nodos.
 et tamen implicitus quoque possis inque peditus
 effugere infestum, nisi tute tibi obuius obstes . . .

To avoid becoming entangled in the snares of love is not so difficult as to escape those very nets, once trapped, and to break the strong knots of Venus. And yet, even after you have become ensnared and entangled you might escape the danger, if it were not that you stand in your own way . . .

In what follows, Lucretius makes it clear that the remedy for the lover's difficulties is simply to stop deluding himself and see his beloved as she really is (4.1171–1191). Catullus, in effect, rejects the prescription: Clear-eyed understanding of Lesbia's "true" character (cf. 72.5, *nunc te cognovi*) has failed to cure him of his passion, and indeed inflamed his desire all the more (72.5, *impensius uror*), so that all he can do now, in a very un-Epicurean move, is to call upon the gods to rescue him from his predicament (76.17–26). Catullus' Lesbia-cycle, then, both confirms and challenges Lucretius' analysis of romantic love: Idealization is followed by disillusion, just as the Epicurean warns; but it is not clear that for Catullus this invalidates the ideal of *amor-amicitia* proclaimed in poem 109; nor – he implies – is it as easy to extricate oneself from the "snares of love" as Lucretius (and, in a slightly different way, Philodemus) suggests.⁴⁶

Conclusion

I return, in closing, to poem 47 and its invective assault on Socratio/Philodemus. Philip De Lacy shows, in an important article, that Cicero's

⁴⁶ Luciani's (2005, 158) assertion that poem 109 represents the fruits of a "maturation psychologique" and embodies "l'idéal d'une volupté stabilisée, qui . . . ressemble fort à l'ataraxie vantée par Lucrèce" does not seem to me to be borne out by the text of either poem.

invective against Piso relies heavily on the conventional clichés of anti-Epicurean polemic, many of which can be traced back to Epicurus' lifetime.⁴⁷ I suggest that the same goes for Catullus. Porcius and Socraton are represented as greedy and unscrupulous parasites, and their patron as a shameless lecher. Similarly, Epicurus and his earliest followers are regularly accused by hostile witnesses of preaching indulgence in the grossest physical pleasures, and of servile flattery towards the politically powerful for their own selfish ends.⁴⁸ Catullus' characterization of Piso and his protégés coheres, I have argued, with a tendency throughout the collection to adopt a resolutely unphilosophical – or even anti-philosophical – stance: Intertextual echoes of both Lucretius and Philodemus are suggestive of antagonism rather than sympathy or philosophical alignment. There are, to be sure, points of convergence between the three poets; but ultimately these serve only to point up the markedly different ways in which the Epicurean poets, on the one hand, and the urbane neoteric, on the other, react to the turbulent times in which all three lived and wrote.

⁴⁷ De Lacy: 1941.

⁴⁸ For the former charge, see e.g. DL 10.6–7, Cic. *Nat. D.* 1.113; for the latter, DL 10.4–5, Athen. *Deipn.* 7.279f. Cicero similarly depicts Philodemus as an *adsentator*, too concerned with his own advantage to correct Piso's crude misunderstanding of Epicurean *voluptas* (*Pis.* 70). As Marilyn Skinner (1979, 141) argues, Catullus also draws on the stereotypical figure of the parasite in New Comedy; his use of comic models may be seen, however, as complementary to the element of anti-Epicurean polemic (cf. Damon: 1997, 235–251, for the suggestion that Cicero's portrait of Philodemus can itself be situated within a tradition of caricaturing philosophers as parasites, which can be traced back to Middle Comedy).