



THE WISE MAN AND THE SEA: EPICUREANS ON SEA STORMS, SHIPWRECK, AND CHANCE*

The idea that the sea is a dangerous and alien element in which one is at the mercy of higher powers, is deeply imbedded in Mediterranean culture, and has many parallels in Greek and Roman literature. From an Epicurean point of view, however, such higher powers belong to the realm of irrational beliefs which could threaten one's ἀταραξία ('peace of mind'). What counts in Epicureanism is the rational calculus of all factors in order to minimize the influence of τύχη ('chance') on one's endeavours. This article explores how the Epicureans thought about the sea and its many dangers. It tries to establish under which circumstances the sage will travel by sea and gives special attention to Diogenes of Oenoanda's letter (fr. 71 + NF 214 + fr. 72 + fr. 70) about the shipwreck of Niceratus and his friends' failure to minimize the agency of chance.

Keywords: Epicureanism, Diogenes of Oenoanda, Philodemus, sea travel, chance, rational calculus

Introduction

For the ancient people of the Mediterranean region, the sea was an omnipresent, yet dangerously alien, element, an enchanting place where mankind could not venture without risking to fall prey to the awe-inspiring force of the natural elements.¹ As Socrates says in the *Phaedo*, they lived around the Mediterranean like ants and frogs around

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¹ As a result, numerous vivid descriptions of terrible sea storms can be found throughout Greek and Roman literature: e.g. Hom. *Od.* 5.282–450; Verg. *Aen.* 1.34–158. See also T. Biggs and J. Blum, 'Sea-storms in ancient epic', in C. Reitz and S. Finkmann (eds.), *Structures of Epic Poetry. Volume II.1: Configuration* (Berlin and Boston MA, 2019), 125–67 for sea storms in ancient epic and F. R. Berno, 'Naufragar m'è dolce in questo mare. Filosofi e naufraghi, da Lucrezio a Seneca (e Petronio)', *Maia* 67 (2015), 282–97 for the use of that topic in Roman philosophical literature.

a pond,² ever so close to the sea, but never quite at home within the foreign element itself, let alone that they might ever be its master. Sea travel, then, is a dangerous business: often, one can travel without encountering any serious trouble, but there is always the fear that one day one's luck will run out and that, like Odysseus, one will find oneself beset with divine sea storms, dangerous shores, and horrible monsters from the deep. Yet, even without mythology's many maritime terrors, the sea itself and the unpredictable weather that agitates it have more than enough dangers in store for the unsuspecting seafarer.

It should be no surprise, then, that the Epicureans were also forced to acknowledge the presence of the sea, and to come up with a proper way to deal with its inherent dangers. In what follows, we will first take a look at the ways in which the ancient Epicureans thought about the sea and its duplicitous nature. We will then consider the topic of sea travel and explore whether and under which circumstances the Epicurean sage will travel by sea. Lastly, we will take a close look at Diogenes of Oenoanda's report on the misadventures of the shipwrecked Epicurean Niceratus. As we will see, this passage does not only shed light upon key aspects of Epicurean thinking on sea travel, chance, and friendship, but may also possess an interesting intertextual dimension when read in the light of the famous proem to Lucretius' *De Rerum Natura* (DRN) 2.

The sea: calm but treacherous

To start with a positive note, it can be pointed out that the Epicureans liked the idea of the γαλήνη, the calm and placid sea, as a metaphor for the state of ἀταραξία that one should strive to achieve in one's own mind. Γαληνισμός ('mental calming') is what Epicurus encourages his reader to pursue in his letter to Herodotus.³ Yet, despite their positive attitude towards these soothing, and at times even enchanting, qualities of a tranquil sea, the Epicureans were also very much aware of its huge

² Pl. *Phd.* 109b: ὡσπερ περὶ τέλμα, μύρμηκας ἢ βατράχους, περὶ τὴν θάλατταν οἰκοῦντας.

³ Epicurus *Ep. Hdt.* 83. Also noteworthy is the Epicurean idea of philosophy (*PHerc.* 463 fr. 13), the good life (Plut. *Maxime* 778E = *Epic.* fr. 544 Us.), and even old age as a safe harbour (*Sent. Vat.* 17), sheltered from life's turbulent waves; cf. F. Longo Auricchio, 'Philosophy's Harbor', in D. Armstrong, J. Fish, P. A. Johnston, and M. B. Skinner (eds.), *Vergil, Philodemus, and the Augustans* (Austin, TX, 2004), 37–42 and D. Clay, 'Epicurus' Κυρία Δόξα XVII', *GRBS* 13 (1972), 36–66.

potential for treachery. Lucretius' descriptions make it perfectly clear that there is a significant difference between beholding the sea from the safety of land and actually venturing out on it, having to face all the risks that this may entail. His words in *DRN* 2.552–9 are telling:

Compare what happens when many mighty vessels have been wrecked: transoms, ribs, yardarms, prows, masts, and buoyant oars are tossed this way and that by the vast sea; floating stern-fittings are seen along every coast – a lesson to mortals that they should resolve to avoid the shifty sea with its snares and violence and deceit, and always mistrust it when with seductive serenity it wears a treacherous smile.⁴

The calm sea offers a false smile with which it lures people away from the land.⁵ Fickle as it is, it may suddenly turn on the unsuspecting sailor and try to crush him with the almost limitless violence of its waves, which are powerful enough to reduce even the most sturdy ships to mere flotsam. As far as the Lucretian narrator is concerned, the people of primitive times were better off without what he calls the *improba navigii ratio* ('the presumptuous art of navigation').⁶

The sea, then, be it calm or by contrast wild and stormy, is a wonderful thing to behold from the safety of dry land,⁷ and if one happens to observe seamen struggling against the waves, one should derive pleasure from the fact that one does not share their miserable fate:⁸

It is comforting, when winds are whipping up the waters of the vast sea, to watch from land the severe trials of another person: not that anyone's distress is a cause of agreeable pleasure; but it is comforting to see from what troubles you yourself are exempt.⁹

The proem to *DRN* 2 is arguably one of the most famous passages of the entire poem. The description of the observer who enjoys the sight of the roiling waves is the first of three pleasant situations: (1) watching the

⁴ Translation by M. F. Smith, *Lucretius. On the Nature of Things*, translated, with introduction and notes (Indianapolis, IN and Cambridge, 2001).

⁵ Compare the scene in *Aen.* 5.848–51, where, on a calm night out at sea, the deceitful Somnus appears and lulls Palinurus into sleep, upon which the hapless sailor is immediately swallowed by the sea's murky depths. Another excellent illustration of the sea's volatile nature can be found in Semonides of Amorgos' description of the 'sea-like' type of woman at fr. 7.27–42.

⁶ *DRN* 5.1002–6: 'Then, although the waves often rose and raged, they did so idly, vainly, and ineffectually, and lightly laid aside their empty threats. The seductive serenity of the sea was unable to ensnare anyone with the treacherous laughter of its waves: the presumptuous art of navigation was as yet undiscovered' (transl. Smith [n. 4]).

⁷ Parallels for this sentiment can be found in Cic. *Att.* 2.74 and Archipp. fr. 43 Kock = fr. 45 Kassel-Austin; cf. D. Konstan, *A Life Worthy of the Gods. The Materialist Psychology of Epicurus* (Las Vegas, NV, 2008), 31–2.

⁸ *DRN* 2.1–4.

⁹ Translation by Smith (n. 4).

sea from safe land, (2) watching a battle from a safe distance (*DRN* 2.5–6), and (3) observing the misfortunes of all sorts of fools with a thoroughly ataractic disposition, as it were, from the safe haven of Epicureanism's elevated and reinforced temples (*DRN* 2.7–13).¹⁰ The third option is, of course, the best of all, because it offers the sage pleasure and tranquillity at all times. The Epicurean observer looks down upon the foolish endeavours of his fellow human beings and rejoices in the fact that his wisdom allows him to make the right choices and to steer well clear from such precarious situations.¹¹ It would, in any case, seem that sea travel is put into the same category as being in a battle and the fool's pursuit of money and power. In fact, one could say that the former two bad life choices are often motivated by the foolish desire for unnecessary things like wealth and influence, as exemplified by the lives and deaths of greedy merchants who perish at sea and Roman generals who risk their lives on the battlefield in an attempt to win the fame and political prestige of an official triumph in the streets of Rome.¹² The fact that sea travel and military battle are

¹⁰ This particular passage has also drawn a lot of scholarly attention. For a number of recent studies, see, for example, D. Fowler, *Lucretius on Atomic Motion. A Commentary on De rerum natura 2.1–332* (Oxford, 2002), 16–66; P. De Lacy, 'Distant Views: The Imagery of Lucretius 2', in M. Gale (ed.), *Oxford Readings in Classical Studies. Lucretius* (Oxford, 2007), 146–57; L. Edmunds, 'Lucretius, *De rerum natura* 2, 7–8', *RPh* 81 (2007), 75–8; P. Mazzochini, 'Templa serena. Ipotesi sui modelli di Lucr. II 7–8', *Maia* 61 (2009), 564–7; F. R. Berno, 'Spettatori e filosofi. Nota a Lucr. 2, 7–13 (e Cic. *Tusc.* 5, 8–9)', *SIFC* (2015), 108–20; C. Eckerman, 'Practicing ataraxia at Lucretius' *De rerum natura* 2.7–8', *RhM* 163 (2020), 167–73; C. Eckerman, 'Ataraxia Vanquishes Eros: Lucretius' Sappho at *De rerum natura* 2.1–8', *Mnemosyne* 74 (2021), 152–60; W. Nijs, 'The Heights of Philosophy: Some Thoughts on Lucretius *DRN* 2.7–13', *AClass* 65 (2022), 141–156.

¹¹ See Konstan (n. 7), 29–42 and Fowler (n. 10), 38–40. The practice of comparing one's own fortune against the misfortune of others has parallels in Cic. *Fin.* 1.62; Plut. *De tranq. anim.* 470AB; Sen. *Dial.* 5.31.3 and Democ. 68B 191 DK (= Stob. *Flor.* 3.1.210), as pointed out by A. Grilli, 'Sul proemio del II libro di Lucrezio', *SIFC* (1957), 261–3. See also G. Roskam, *Live Unnoticed* (λάθε βιώσας). *On the Vicissitudes of an Epicurean Doctrine* (Leiden and Boston, MA, 2007), 88–9 and H. Broecker, *Animadversiones ad Plutarchi libellum Περὶ εὐθυμίας* (Bonn, 1954), 104–6. Lucretius explicitly adds that his observer does not derive pleasure from the misfortune of others, but from the fact that his observations heighten his awareness of his own happiness. Although the Epicureans were fundamentally egocentric in their pursuit of personal happiness, it is highly unlikely that they considered *Schadenfreude* a positive emotion. As far as we can judge from the truncated fragments of Philodemus' *De invidia, ἐπιχαρειακία* ('joy in the misfortune of others') was considered an undesirable emotion, associated with envy (*Invidia* frs. 14; 17); cf. A. Tepedino Guerra, 'Il *PHerc.* 1678: Filodemo sull'invidia?', *CErc* 15 (1985), 113–25.

¹² Cf. Phld. *Elect. et fugae* 5.12–19: 'For men suffer the worst evils for the sake of the most alien desires which they take to be the most necessary – I mean desires for sovereignty and brilliant reputation and great wealth and suchlike luxuries and other similar things' (transl. G. Indelli and V. Tsouna-McKirahan, [*Philodemus*]. [*On Choices and Avoidances*]. Edited with Translation and Commentary [Napoli, 1995]).

put on equal footing is yet another indication that, as far as the Lucretian narrator is concerned, there is no such thing as a risk-free sea voyage.¹³ In battle one always suffers a high risk of being wounded or killed, even though some soldiers might be lucky enough to emerge more or less unscathed from any number of confrontations. In the same way, some seamen might spend their entire life at sea without any serious trouble, but one would be very unwise to forget that, although these people have been lucky, disaster is always ready to strike. The soldier who goes to war is well aware of the fact that he is partaking in an endeavour in which numerous others will do their very best to kill him in whatever way they can.¹⁴ Very few people would casually decide to go to war as if doing so were a perfectly safe activity. Yet, countless people embark on sea voyages for the most trifling of matters, never even considering that they are, in fact, putting themselves in peril.¹⁵ They are, no doubt, misled by the sea's deceptively calm surface, which falsely reassures prospective travellers that it has absolutely nothing to do with the terrible shipwrecks one may sometimes hear about. To the mind of Lucretius' narrator, however, venturing out on the open sea is no less dangerous than going to battle, because, as we have seen above, the calm sea's alluring smile is never more than a mere subterfuge, hiding the promise of extreme violence soon to be unleashed upon the unsuspecting seafarer.

¹³ Interestingly, this is not the only passage in *DRN* where war and sea travel are lumped together as highly unsavoury activities. In *DRN* 5.999–1006, the Lucretian narrator points out that even the hardships and dangers of primitive times were preferable to the incredible folly of marching thousands of men into battle or entrusting one's life to the sea's unpredictable waves. Also in the category of newfangled self-destructiveness we find eating oneself to death (5.1007–8) and deliberately ingesting poison (5.1009–10).

¹⁴ Of course, military propaganda might convince him that war is a glorious endeavour, undertaken for the most noble of ideals, and that dying for his country will win him the everlasting gratitude and respect of his countrymen (cf. Hor. *carm.* 2.13: *dulce et decorum est pro patria mori*: 'it is sweet and proper to die for one's country'), as well as a wonderful afterlife in the company of the great heroes of old. Nevertheless, he will, in all likelihood, be aware of the fact that the battle itself is not going to be a pleasurable affair.

¹⁵ The failure to appreciate the sea's dangers is also illustrated by a story reported by Maximus of Tyre (*Or.* 30.3), which he uses as a metaphor for the impracticality of Epicurean hedonism. The story is about a foolish king who has a huge and luxurious ship constructed, believing that his upcoming sea voyage would be an opportunity for refined leisure and enjoyment. In so doing, he utterly ignores the fact that the sea can be a dangerous place where safety measures are far more important than luxury. Unsurprisingly, the heavy ship gets caught up in a storm, where it proves unable to ride the waves and is soon smashed apart, thus sending its foolish owner to a watery grave.

Will the sage travel by sea?

Does this mean that the Epicurean sage will never travel by sea, thus drastically limiting his own mobility? Epicureanism is a qualifying philosophy, where most practical precepts leave room for additional conditions and provisos.¹⁶ It is to be expected that in the case of sea travel, Epicurus' philosophy once again refuses to deal in absolutes when it comes to the daily life of his followers.

In *De morte*, the later Epicurean Philodemus (fl. first century BC) offers us an insight into this aspect of the Garden's practical thinking:¹⁷

For what need is there to mention those who put to sea out of the love of learning, or the wise men who sail for the sake of friends? On the other hand, it is certainly natural both to criticize and to deem wretched those who spend their whole life on the waves through love of profit, and are sometimes plunged into the sea as a result, but it is their life that is pitiable, not their death, when they do not exist; while for those who sail on essential business, but meet with an adverse fortune, neither (is pitiable), especially as death at sea does not necessarily confer more violent sufferings.¹⁸

In this passage, he responds to the popular belief that it is somehow worse to die at sea than on land, on account of the fact that in the former case one's body is swallowed by the sea and cannot be retrieved by friends or family.¹⁹ This is of course ridiculous, so Philodemus argues, considering that there is no life after death and whatever happens to our body once we are dead is of no concern to us at all.²⁰ The question of whether someone who dies at sea is pitiable or not does not depend on (the place of) his death as such, but on the reasons for which he chose to travel by sea. Wrong reasons are, for example,

¹⁶ See Roskam (n. 11), 148 and *passim*, as well as G. Roskam, *A Commentary on Plutarch's De latenter vivendo* (Leuven, 2007), 36.

¹⁷ *Morte* 33.23–36.

¹⁸ Translation by W. B. Henry, *Philodemus, On Death. Translated with an Introduction and Notes* (Atlanta, GA, 2009).

¹⁹ *Morte* 32.31–33.23. Philodemus' arguments here are quite humorous at times: he objects, for example, that one has no real need of the sea to drown, since one can as easily drown in one's bathtub, and that there is essentially no difference between drowning in sea water or in unmixed wine, 'because both are wet'. D. Armstrong, 'All Things to All Men: Philodemus' Model of Therapy and the Audience of *De Morte*', in J. Fitzgerald, G. Holland, and D. Obbink (eds.), *Philodemus and the New Testament World* (Leiden, 2004), 15–54 argues that Philodemus' more playful tone is due to the fact that *De morte* was meant for a broad audience, comprising both Epicureans and others.

²⁰ *RS 2*: 'Death is nothing to us: that which has been resolved has no feeling, and that which has no feeling is nothing to us.' For any scholarly question about the Epicurean view on death, J. Warren, *Facing Death. Epicurus and his Critics* (Oxford, 2006) remains absolutely indispensable.

those of merchants, who face the unpleasantness and the dangers of sea travel for the love of money.²¹ Although the Epicureans do not deny that it can be a positive thing to have a certain amount of wealth, it is no end in itself, especially if it involves toil or hardship, which makes it detrimental to the Epicurean goal of the pleasant life.²² The merchant who dies at sea is therefore a pitiable creature, but so is the one who survives, on account of the wretchedness of his misguided life. Yet, there are also good reasons to brave the sea. Educational pursuits, for example, can be an important factor in one's progress towards Epicurean wisdom.²³ If one is faced with the choice between staying at home where there is no Epicurean teacher at hand, or taking a risk to travel to where capable teachers can show the path towards true happiness, a sea voyage is a justifiable risk.²⁴ Travelling for the sake of one's friends is another reason for which one may take that risk. Friendship is, after all, a crucial part of Epicurean ethics, and the sage's willingness to take risks to come to the aid of his friends is well attested.²⁵ There are of course still other situations imaginable in which the urgency of essential business might outweigh the dangers. Philodemus himself, for instance, travelled not only from Gadara to Athens for educational reasons, but also from Athens to Italy, in

²¹ Cf. Cato *Agr.* 1 and 3–4, where the life of the merchant is described as *periculosum* ('dangerous') and *calamitosum* ('prone to disaster'). Horace's first *Carmen* also names the sea-faring merchant's incorrigible greed as the cause of his many troubles (e.g. 1.1.59–60). Cicero distinguishes between the wealthy merchant who runs a large enterprise and can eventually withdraw from the port to his estate, on the one hand, and his small-scale colleague who has to make his way from sea to port and back again, on the other (*Off.* 151). In Plato, we also find the idea that the trade that is engendered by the proximity of the sea tends to corrupt the city's inhabitants, which makes the sea a less than ideal neighbour (*Leg.* 705a).

²² *Oec.* 12.18–15.3. Philodemus' discussion on the right measure of wealth explicitly refers to Metrodorus' debate with the ancient Cynics. Considering that Philodemus seems to have had direct access to Metrodorus' writings on this topic, it is probably safe to assume that this part of Philodemus' economic thinking draws upon the views of the Garden's founding fathers. See also E. Asmis, 'Epicurean Economics', in Fitzgerald, Holland, and Obbink (n. 19), 149–61; V. Tsouna, *The Ethics of Philodemus* (Oxford, 2007), 177–80 and V. Tsouna, *Philodemus, On Property Management. Translated with an Introduction and Notes* (Atlanta, GA, 2013), xxv–xxviii.

²³ In *De bono rege*, Philodemus seems to characterize Telemachus' journey as a valuable experience that helps him further his personal development (*Bone rege* 23.14–19 Fish); cf. J. Fish, 'Philodemus on the Education of the Good Prince: *PHerc.* 1507, col. 23', in G. Abbamonte and A. Rescigno (eds.), *Satura. Collectanea philologica Italo Gallo ab amicis discipulisque dictata* (Napoli, 1999), 71–7; M. Erler, *Epicurus. An Introduction to his Practical Ethics and Politics* (Basel, 2019), 133–4.

²⁴ The imagery used in Epicurus' advice to Pythocles is also noteworthy: the latter is to hoist sail and steer away from all forms of *παιδεία*, as if this part of his philosophical education were an actual sea voyage (Diog. Laert. 10.6).

²⁵ In fact, it is said that, on occasion, the sage will even be prepared to lay down his life for his friend's sake (Diog. Laert. 120).

order to avoid the turmoil of the Mithridatic War.²⁶ It seems, then, that the sage will brave the treacherous waves, but only if a rational calculus of all relevant factors shows that he has sufficient cause to do so. It should therefore be no surprise that Diogenes Laertius reports that Epicurus himself rarely travelled, and even then only for the sake of visiting his friends.²⁷

Yet, even then he cannot rule out the possibility of being shipwrecked. Epicurus himself is reported to have made a narrow escape from such a fate, as we read in Plutarch's *Non posse*.²⁸ Apparently, the School's master was sailing for Lampsacus,²⁹ presumably on a trip to one of his friends there, when disaster struck and his ship was almost engulfed.³⁰ Unfortunately, Plutarch does not give us much information about this near disaster, nor do any of our other sources offer us something that might help elucidate the Plutarchan testimony.

Rational calculus gone wrong: the case of Niceratus

A much more detailed account of an even narrower escape is reported by the late Epicurean Diogenes of Oenoanda (fl. second century AD) in a letter to a group of fellow Epicureans who, apparently, sent a friend of theirs by the name of Niceratus to convey a message to Diogenes.³¹

²⁶ Cf. M. Gigante, 'Dove visse Filodemo?', *ZPE* 136 (2001), 25–32 and D. Sedley, 'Philodemus and the Decentralisation of Philosophy', *CErc* 33 (2003), 31–41.

²⁷ Diog. Laert. 10.10: 'He (sc. Epicurus) spent all his life in Greece, notwithstanding the calamities which had befallen her in that age; when he did once or twice take a trip to Ionia, it was to visit his friends there' (Transl. R. D. Hicks, *Diogenes Laertius. Lives of Eminent Philosophers. With an English Translation. Volume II* [Cambridge, MA and London, 1931]).

²⁸ Plut., *Non posse* 1090E (= *Epic.* fr. 189 Us.): 'And what need to mention the fury of mobs, the savagery of bandits, the crimes of inheritors, and again the pestilences of the air and the roaring sea that came near to engulfing Epicurus on his voyage to Lampsacus, as he writes?' (Translation by B. Einarson – P. H. De Lacy, *Plutarch. Moralia. Volume XIV. With an English Translation* [Cambridge, MA and London, 1967], modified after the emendation proposed by E. Bignone, *L'Aristotele perduto e la formazione filosofica di Epicuro II* [Firenze, 1936], 145, n. 1).

²⁹ One of these rare visits to Lampsacus is confirmed by Epicurus' letter to a child, which was written during his stay there (*Epist.* 32 Gomperz = *Epic.* fr. 176 Us.). For Epicurus' business in Lampsacus, see also D. Sedley, 'Epicurus and the Mathematicians of Cyzicus', *CErc* 6 (1976), 23–54.

³⁰ D. Clay, 'Sailing to Lampsacus: Diogenes of Oenoanda, New Fragment 7', *GRBS* 14 (1973), 49–59 provides a detailed discussion of this event.

³¹ Three fragments of the letter, fr. 70, 71, and 72 were discovered by Martin Ferguson Smith in 1970 and first published in M. F. Smith, 'New Fragments of Diogenes of Oenoanda', *AJA* 75 (1971), 357–89. At that time, it was believed that the shipwrecked man was in fact Epicurus himself. Clay (n. 30) and A. Grilli, 'Il naufragio d'Epicuro', *RSF* 33 (1978), 117–19, also discuss the discovered fragments against the background of Plutarch's report in *Non posse* 1090E. In 2017 an additional fragment of the letter (NF 214) was unearthed, which specifies that the shipwrecked

It seems, however, that the weather conditions were unfavourable for sea travel, and that, as a result, this Niceratus was caught in a storm and subsequently shipwrecked. Niceratus' sea voyage was undertaken to visit an Epicurean friend, and as such one would be inclined to consider it an acceptable course of action. Yet, Diogenes' letter is not only a description of what has befallen the hapless Niceratus, but above all a strong rebuke for his friends whose carelessness jeopardized Niceratus' life. Although we do not know what message it was that Niceratus was supposed to bring, clearly Diogenes did not consider it sufficiently urgent to warrant sea travel with the weather conditions of that time of year.

The agency of chance

In the first part of the letter, Diogenes signals a key problem of sea travel: the agency of chance (τύχη).³² Although it would be convenient if the wise person could carefully arrange his or her life in such a way that nothing ever goes amiss, Epicurus, and with him Diogenes, acknowledge that chance is very much part of the reality we live in.³³ It is, however, a changeable thing that should never be relied on. As we see elsewhere in Epicurean texts, those who attach too much value to it suffer from all sort of vices and are, eventually, brought low again when their luck runs out.³⁴ Chance is described as similar to fire, which will rapidly grow to dangerous dimensions if it is given fuel (fr. 71 I.3–5), which is exactly what the fool does when he blindly puts his trust in mere luck. The only thing that allows us to minimize the impact of chance on our lives is φρόνησις ('prudence'), the capacity to make a rational appraisal of all things and to check every choice and avoidance against the rational calculus of a course of action's

man is not Epicurus, but Niceratus, an otherwise unknown contemporary of Diogenes. See also J. Hammerstaedt and M. F. Smith, 'Diogenes of Oinoanda: The New and Unexpected Discoveries of 2017 (NF 214–219), with a Re-edition of Fr. 70–72', *EA* 51 (2018), 51–4 for a detailed account of the findings with regard to the fragments of this letter.

³² Diog. Oen. fr. 71I+II Hammerstaedt.

³³ The agency of chance is described as something that is clear (φανερός) and obvious to all (ἐν μέσῳ πᾶσιν προδήλος).

³⁴ Especially those who suffer from arrogance and cognate vices are sensitive to the vicissitudes of fortune. They build their self-image upon their good luck (cf. e.g. Phld. *Sup.* 13.34–8; 15.26–33; 5.19–26) and end up in deep humiliation and at the mercy of their enemies when, finally, their luck runs out (*Sup.* 12.30–6; 14.36–40).

advantages and disadvantages.³⁵ The sage, then, adopts sober reasoning (νήφων λογισμός) at every turn and avoids situations in which he is heavily dependent upon chance.³⁶ As a result, the matters that befall the sage on account of pure chance tend to be relatively small in number and importance. Even the sage might, for example, be caught unawares by a sudden shower of rain, or he might buy some clams and find upon opening them that they have gone bad. Despite his sober reasoning, he no doubt hoped and expected that he would stay dry or that he might be able to enjoy a delicious seafood dinner, but even if chance occasionally gets the better of him, these setbacks are so minor that they will by no means dampen his spirits or harm him in any significant way. Diogenes illustrates this point with a dictum that he ascribes to Epicurus himself: ‘it is seldom that [chance] impedes a wise man: it is reason which controls [and has controlled] the [greatest] and most important matters.’³⁷ The true Epicurean sage is not afraid of chance, but is also wise enough not to delude himself into thinking that he can completely remove it from his life: there are always things that he cannot foresee, or risks that he has to take because they are outweighed by the urgency of the course of action to which they are connected. In some cases, even the prudent sage may be harmed, although a systematic application of sober reasoning will reduce this risk to the point of negligibility (fr. 71 I.1–3). Obviously, the sea is a domain where many things can happen that lie beyond the sage’s control, and where the influence of τύχη is more keenly felt, which makes Diogenes’ discussion of chance a relevant preamble to his letter about Niceratus’ shipwreck.

For the adherents of traditional Greek religion, there is at least the illusion of being somewhat in control whenever they leave the safety of dry land. The sea and the meteorological phenomena that agitate it are, of course, the province of the immortal gods, fickle entities who punish and reward mortals whenever the fancy takes them. There is, however, the idea that the gods’ behaviour is linked to our

³⁵ Epicurus even extolls φρόνησις above philosophy itself in *Ep. Men.* 132. See also D. De Sanctis, ‘Φρόνησις e φρόνιμοι nel *Giardino*’, *CErc* 40 (2010), 75–86 and J. E. Heßler, *Epikur. Brief an Menoikeus. Edition, Übersetzung, Einleitung und Kommentar* (Basel, 2014), 294–324.

³⁶ *Ep. Men.* 132. See also M. Erler, ‘Nήφων λογισμός. A proposito del contesto letterario e filosofico di una categoria fondamentale del pensiero epicureo’, *CErc* 40 (2010), 23–9 and F. Verde, ‘ΤΥΧΗ e ΛΟΓΙΣΜΟΣ nell’epicureismo’, in F. G. Masi and S. Maso (eds.), *Fate, Chance, and Fortune in Ancient Thought* (Amsterdam, 2013), 177–97, who specifically discusses the relationship between λογισμός (‘reasoning’) and τύχη (‘chance’).

³⁷ Fr. 71 II.9–13.

actions. We can anger them, but it is also possible to appease them through sacrifices and demonstrations of our piety. It is a system of *do ut des*: we honour the gods and in return they grant us safe passage through their domain. This also means that the shipwrecked sailor bears responsibility for his own demise: it is his failure to appease the gods that brought him to ruin.³⁸

The Epicureans, on the other hand, reject the idea of divine interference altogether. Meteorological phenomena can only be explained through the principles of atomism, even though we are mostly unable to determine which set of atomic principles it is that is causing a certain phenomenon.³⁹ That is where the Epicurean method of multiple explanations comes in:⁴⁰ the weather can be explained in various ways, without the need to fall back on superstitious fears about the gods.⁴¹ Yet, coming up with a variety of possible explanations for the occurrence of sea storms does not allow the ancient Epicurean to prevent them from happening, nor does it always provide him or her with a reliable weather forecast. The Epicureans tend to lack the sufficient meteorological data needed to determine which of their explanations is correct, let alone when a certain phenomenon will occur.⁴² As a result, the multiple explanations can serve as a useful ethical

³⁸ The Epicureans would agree that the superstitious person is responsible for his own misfortune, but not on account of his failure to appease the gods. It is his mistaken belief in divine agency and his refusal to use his own rational capacities instead that lies at the basis of his misery (cf. Phld., *Elect. et fugae* 7).

³⁹ Epicurus *Ep. Pyth.* 86–8.

⁴⁰ The Epicurean method of multiple explanations has received a lot of scholarly attention over the years, including T. Bénatouïl, 'La méthode épicurienne des explications multiples', *CPS* 15 (2003), 15–47; L. C. Taub, 'Cosmology and Meteorology', in J. Warren (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Epicureanism* (Cambridge, 2009), 105–24; R. J. Hankinson, 'Lucretius, Epicurus, and the Logic of Multiple Explanations', in D. Lehoux, A. D. Morrison, and A. Sharrok (eds.), *Lucretius. Poetry, Philosophy, Science* (Oxford, 2013), 69–97; F. G. Masi, 'The Method of Multiple Explanations: Epicurus and the Notion of Causal Possibility', in C. Natali and C. Viano (eds.), *Aitia II. Avec ou sans Aristote. Le débat sur les causes à l'âge hellénistique et impérial* (Louvain-la-Neuve, 2014), 37–63; F. A. Bakker, *Epicurean Meteorology. Sources, Methods, Scope, and Organization* (Leiden, 2016); F. G. Corsi, 'Il metodo delle molteplici spiegazioni in Diogene di Enoanda', *Syzetesis* 4 (2017), 253–84; G. Leone, 'Diogene d'Oenoanda et la polémique sur les *meteora*', in J. Hammerstaedt, P.-M. Morel, and R. Güremen (eds.), *Diogenes of Oenoanda. Epicureanism and Philosophical Debates/Diogene d'Oenoanda. Épicurisme et controverses* (Leuven, 2017), 89–110; F. Verde, 'L'empirismo di Teofrasto e la meteorologia epicurea', *RfN* 90 (2018), 889–910 and F. Verde, 'Epicurean Meteorology, Lucretius, and the Aetna', in P. R. Hardie, V. Proserpi, and D. Zucca (eds.), *Lucretius. Poet and Philosopher* (Berlin and Boston, MA, 2020), 83–102.

⁴¹ Epicurus *Ep. Pyth.* 85: 'In the first place, remember that, like everything else, knowledge of celestial phenomena, whether taken along with other things or in isolation, has no other end in view than peace of mind and firm conviction' (transl. Hicks [n. 27]).

⁴² In fact, even the primitive type of 'weather forecast' provided by the behaviour of animals is rejected as mere coincidence (Epicurus *Ep. Pyth.* 115–6).

tool, taking away irrational fears, but are of very limited use if we want to be able to predict natural phenomena.

In all likelihood, a careful observance of the current weather conditions and the knowledge of expert seamen was absolutely essential for any assessment of the desirability of sea travel at a given time. Philodemus distinguishes between a superficial type of τέχνη ('art, craft') that philosophers may also acquire, and the specific τέχνη of the specialist on which they should not squander their time and energy.⁴³ It also appears that the philosopher is not shy to defer to the expertise of the second type of τεχνίται ('craftsmen, specialists') if he can derive benefit from it.⁴⁴ When it comes to matters of sea travel, the Epicureans will in all likelihood be more than happy to hear the advice of someone who is properly versed in ναυτική τέχνη ('seamanship').⁴⁵ Otherwise, they risk entrusting their lives entirely to chance whenever they decide to brave the elements, bereft even of the superstitious person's illusion that his own religious actions might achieve anything at all.⁴⁶ In this light, it is easy to understand why Diogenes would place such emphasis on the importance of rational thought in order to minimize the agency of chance: the Epicurean who fails to do so is certainly not better off than the superstitious fool.

Chance and shipwreck

In the next part of the letter that has been preserved we get an elaborate description of the shipwreck itself, which vividly evokes the

⁴³ Phld. *Oec.* 17.14–27.

⁴⁴ See, for example, Phld. *Oec.* 23.18–22, on making money from the expertise of specialized slaves and servants.

⁴⁵ For the Epicurean view on the arts, see D. Blank, 'Philosophia and technē: Epicureans on the arts', in Warren (n. 40), 216–33 and V. Tsouna, 'The Epicureans on *Technē* and the *Technai*', in T. K. Johansen (ed.), *Productive Knowledge in Ancient Philosophy. The Concept of Technē* (Cambridge, 2021), 191–225.

⁴⁶ For Plutarch, on the other hand, this is precisely an argument *against* the Epicurean claim that their philosophy leads to the achievement of a pleasant life. In his view, few things are more dismal than the life of the Epicurean who denies himself all hope that he will be rewarded for his piety and for whom the only consolation for an untimely death lies in the fact that 'death does not concern us'. Interestingly, Plutarch illustrates this with the image of a shipwreck, where Epicurus bluntly dashes all hope for divine guidance or help that the unlucky passengers may still have had (*Non posse* 1103CE). Of course, the crucial difference between Plutarch and Epicurus lies in the fact that the former actually believes that there are benign gods and that it would be wretched to deny oneself the comfort that this true belief engenders, whereas the latter holds that the gods do not care about us and that it is foolish to delude oneself by hoping for their help.

precariousness of Niceratus' chances of survival.⁴⁷ Due to the fragmentary nature of the letter, we do not get to know how Niceratus' ship happened to get caught in a sea storm. Instead, the account starts *in medias res* ('in the midst of things'), describing how the vessel's passengers and cargo are tossed about (NF 214 II.1–5). Diogenes describes how the ship's passengers survive the night (NF 214 II.6–7), which is, so he adds, contrary to expectation (NF 214 II. 6: *παρὰ δόξαν*). Yet, their luck does not hold out, and the very next day the inevitable happens (NF 214 III + fr. 72 I.4–5: *ἀνάγκη γὰρ ἦν*). As the intensity of the storm increases, the ship itself is carried away towards the rocky coast of Syme, where it is smashed apart (II.8–NF 214 III + fr. 72 I. 5). Niceratus survives this through mere luck, as he is thrown into a fissure between the rocks, where the waves cannot reach him in full force. However, his survival comes at a cost. He is first thrown against the sharp rocks and, in Diogenes' own words, crushed (fr. 72 II.4: *συνεπίβη*) and shredded (fr. 72 II.6: *κατε{ν}ξάνθη*), which is as one would expect (fr. 72 II.5: *ὡσπερ εἰκός*) under such circumstances, so Diogenes points out (NF 214 III + fr. 72 I.5–fr. 72 II.7). Eventually, the poor man, heavily wounded all over, reaches dry land, where he lies on his back, lacking the strength to move any further. In the end, he manages to survive, even though it is only by the end of the next day that help finally arrives (fr. 72 II.8–fr. 72 III.8).

The vivid description of the shipwrecked Epicurean who lies on a high vantage point (fr. 72 III.2: *σκοπιῶ*) by the stormy sea,⁴⁸ completely exhausted and dangerously wounded, offers a striking counterpart to the blissful Epicurean observer in *DRN* 2. Where the latter derives pleasure from the knowledge that he himself does not share the fate of those who are tossed about by the waves, Niceratus' look-out point offers him an almost identical view, but the potential pleasure of the experience is tainted by the fact that he himself has just experienced the tremendous violence of the sea first hand. He might find comfort in the knowledge that he has escaped the sea, provided that his physical state even allows him to feel any comfort whatsoever, but the pure pleasure of the Lucretian observer is beyond his reach. If

⁴⁷ Diog. Oen. NF 214II+III+fr. 72 I+II+III Hammerstaedt.

⁴⁸ Smith reads τῆς [ἄκροσ] σκοπιῶς ('on the [extremity of] the headland'), contrary to Hammerstaedt, who favours the reading τῆσ[δε τῆς] σκοπιῶς ('on this look-out point'): see Hammerstaedt and Smith (n. 31), 58. However that may be, the general idea of a protruding vantage point remains the same in either reading.

we read this part of the letter as a deliberate allusion to Lucretius' famous proem, then Diogenes may be offering his readers a bittersweet variation upon the *suave mari magno* motif,⁴⁹ in which any experience of refined *suavitas* ('pleasantness') has been replaced by the raw agony and exhaustion of a wounded human being struggling to survive. Concluding his report of Niceratus' fate, Diogenes emphasizes that the former's almost miraculous survival is not the product of any rational action or thought on the part of those who sent him, but entirely due to mere chance:⁵⁰

Now we [understand] the accidental, which did well what was [appropriate] to be allocated to you (for, my dears, [this] messenger is not dead who saved [this insight]). Then [it has] indeed [become clear that Niceratus is safe] by chance.

The description of Niceratus' fate is in itself presented as an illustration of the changeability of τύχη ('chance'): the shipwrecked passengers experience a rapid succession of events for better or for worse, sometimes in defiance of probability, at other times according to necessity. For Niceratus, the final outcome of the chance-driven process is that he gets to survive the whole ordeal, but Diogenes' account clearly suggests that the result could easily have been very different. To rely on chance is pure madness. Yet, although it is chance that saves Niceratus, it is important to note that Diogenes never says that it was chance that put him in danger in the first place: his friends are the ones who bear that responsibility, due to their failure to properly apply νήφων λογισμός ('sober reasoning') before deciding to send Niceratus on his way. Instead, they let chance do their job for them, entrusting it with their friend's wellbeing. Diogenes' remark that the accidental did that job well (fr. 72 III.10: εὖ ποιοῦν) is in all likelihood not without irony: chance has indeed kept Niceratus alive, but one can hardly claim that it also kept him from harm. If the friends had done their job themselves and had given due thought to Niceratus' wellbeing, he would in all likelihood have stayed safely at home, without having to go through the unpleasant experience that left him 'flayed all over' (fr. 72 II.14–fr. 72 III.1: ἐγδαρμένος ὅλος).

⁴⁹ *Suave, mari magno turbantibus aequora ventis, // e terra magnum alterius spectare laborem*: 'It is comforting, when winds are whipping up the waters of the vast sea, to watch from land the severe trials of another person' (transl. Smith [n. 4]).

⁵⁰ Fr. 72 III.8–15. Translation by Hammerstaedt (Hammerstaedt and Smith [n. 31]).

Negligence and friendship

Diogenes' rebuke towards Niceratus' friends is severe in the subsequent passage. It would seem that Diogenes accuses Niceratus' friends of two severe infractions against Epicureanism's core pillars at the same time.

First of all they neglected Epicurus' teachings about φρόνησις ('prudence') and τύχη ('chance'), giving fuel to the latter:⁵¹

So, [if] you had forgotten the doctrine, which we have expounded countless times, that the standard of our actions are the feelings of [both] pleasure and [pain], by reference to which we must determine [both the] avoidance of them [and the] pursuit of something else, do call it to mind.⁵²

Once again, Diogenes speaks with undisguised irony when he suggests that perhaps they might somehow have forgotten these basic doctrinal teachings in spite of the frequency with which they are expounded. We should bear in mind that Epicurus' letter to Menoeceus in which this doctrine is expounded ends with the explicit admonishment to rehearse these and similar precepts literally day and night.⁵³ A failure to heed Epicurus' own advice is, of course, highly unacceptable. Clearly, there is no valid excuse for this sort of misstep, as far as Diogenes is concerned. If Niceratus' friends are wont to forget even the most basic of Epicurean guidelines, they are found lacking as Epicureans and should immediately start rehearsing the relevant doctrine.

Second, their behaviour might be even less acceptable if they did not forget the Garden's position on chance, but deliberately ignored it when they decided to send Niceratus on a sea voyage. Although only the first lines of Diogenes' response to this second possibility have been preserved, the extant text gives us an idea of the general thrust of his rebuke:⁵⁴

But if you remember it (sc. the Epicurean teachings on chance), what got into you, my blessed friends, that you embarked on an action such as this, which has given rise to feelings painful to Niceratus and painful to us on account of his misfortunes? For is your claim that you have a firm grasp of the doctrine, but that with regard to the

⁵¹ Diog. Oen. Fr. 70 I.5–II.1 Hammerstaedt.

⁵² Translation by Hammerstaedt (Hammerstaedt and Smith [n. 31]).

⁵³ Epicurus *Ep. Men.* 135.

⁵⁴ Diog. Oen. Fr. 70 II + III Hammerstaedt.

decision of sending the man to us or not sending him, whether it had to be done [or not - - - - -] Nic[eratus - - -].

The friends' failure to observe one of the School's basic principles caused great suffering, not only for Niceratus, but also for Diogenes himself, so it appears. Forgetting core doctrines is bad, but it may be an even graver infraction if the failure of Diogenes' addressees to observe Epicurus' teachings is a case of negligence with regard to the wellbeing of a friend. Friendship is, after all, one of the core pillars of Epicurean ethics, and despite Epicureanism's egocentric traits, friendship seems important enough to allow the sage to make efforts that he might not even undertake for his own sake. He does extra work to ensure that he can provide for his friends,⁵⁵ and is always ready to share everything he has with them.⁵⁶ Moreover, he is prepared to suffer and sometimes even to die for his friend.⁵⁷ The firm knowledge that the Epicureans have friends who will immediately come to their aid whenever the need arises is the armour that protects them against fears and insecurities that might otherwise threaten to compromise their ataractic state.⁵⁸ All of these claims are, of course, not entirely unproblematic, and their compatibility with an egocentric philosophy in which friendship is above all instrumental for one's own happiness continues to be debated.⁵⁹ However that may be, it is crystal clear that the Epicurean sage will care for his friend's wellbeing and will under no circumstances jeopardize that friend's life if he can help it.⁶⁰ Unfortunately for Niceratus, that is exactly what his friends

⁵⁵ Phld. *Elect. et fugae* 21.1–7.

⁵⁶ Phld. *Oec.* 15.1–6 ; 25.14–23.

⁵⁷ Diog. Laert. 10.120.

⁵⁸ *Sent. Vat.* 34.

⁵⁹ See, e.g. J. M. Rist, 'Epicurus on Friendship', *CPh* 75 (1980), 121–9; P. Mitsis, *Epicurus' Ethical Theory. The Pleasures of Invulnerability* (Ithaca, NY and London, 1988), 98–128; D. K. O'Connor, 'The Invulnerable Pleasures of Epicurean Friendship', *GRBS* 30 (1989), 165–86; T. O'Keefe, 'Is Epicurean Friendship Altruistic?', *Apeiron* 34 (2001), 269–305; E. Brown, 'Epicurus on the Value of Friendship (*Sententia Vaticana* 23)', *CPh* 97 (2002), 68–80; M. Evans, 'Can Epicureans be Friends?', *AncPhil* 24 (2004), 407–24; D. Armstrong, 'Epicurean Virtues, Epicurean Friendship: Cicero vs the Herculaneum Papyri', in J. Fish and K. R. Sanders (eds.), *Epicurus and the Epicurean Tradition* (Cambridge, 2011), 105–28; D. Frede, 'Epicurus on the Importance of Friendship in the Good Life (*De Finibus* I.65–70; 2.78–85)', in J. Annas and G. Betegh (eds.), *Cicero's De Finibus. Philosophical Approaches* (Cambridge, 2016), 96–117; and P. Mitsis, 'Friendship', in P. Mitsis (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Epicurus and Epicureanism* (Oxford, 2020), 250–83, who offers an important critical survey of past scholarship.

⁶⁰ Cf. Diog. Laert. 10.120; *Sent. Vat.* 57. Interestingly, Epicurus also appears to have sent some of his friends overseas to the Royal Court in an attempt to counteract Timocrates' defamatory campaign against himself and the School (Plut. *Adv. Col.* 1126C). As far as we can tell, these

seem to have done with his life, thus violating one of the core foundations of Epicurean friendship. The fact that Diogenes mentions that he himself has also been grieved by the events illustrates how vulnerable the Epicurean network of friends can become when one of these friends fails to behave the way a good friend should. As a proper Epicurean friend, Diogenes himself finds it unpleasant to hear about the harm that has befallen Niceratus,⁶¹ must have felt sympathy for him,⁶² and may even have had to take care of him, heavily wounded and robbed of all money and possessions as Niceratus must have been after his misfortune.⁶³ It would seem that the negligence of a few people can sometimes harm the larger Epicurean community, especially if these people are expected to act in accordance with Epicurus' teachings, but fail to do so.⁶⁴

emissaries were spared of Niceratus' misfortune and arrived at the royal court safe and sound. Apparently, the result of Epicurus' rational calculus was that the matter was urgent enough and the sea sufficiently safe. It is, however, interesting to note that he did not make the journey himself. It could be that others were more suited to plead with the king, or that it was too risky for him to become entangled in Timocrates' web of court intrigue (cf. Roskam [n. 16], 47). Yet, one may also wonder whether his decision might not have been influenced by his aversion towards sea travel and its discomforts. If it is safe enough for friends to make a journey that he himself would consider unpleasant, and if these friends can handle things as well or even better than he himself would, then it is a perfectly rational decision for Epicurus to stay at home and save himself the trouble and discomfort of travel.

⁶¹ According to *Sent. Vat.* 56, the sage suffers as much from the torments of his friend as he would if he himself were subjected to them.

⁶² *Sent. Vat.* 66.

⁶³ Jürgen Hammerstaedt hypothesizes that Niceratus may have been on his way to Diogenes' house in Oenoanda when disaster struck. Martin Ferguson Smith, on the other hand, points out that it is more likely that Niceratus was heading to Rhodes, where Diogenes liked to spend his winters (Hammerstaedt and Smith [n. 31], 59). In either case, it cannot be ruled out that Diogenes was all of a sudden forced to make arrangements for the last leg of Niceratus' journey, considering that the latter was probably in no condition to arrange his own transport. Also of interest is the fact that T. H. M. Gellar-Goad, 'Trouble at Sea in Juvenal 12, Persius 6, and the Proem to Lucretius, *De rerum natura* 2', *CCJ* 64 (2018), 49–69, interprets Juvenal 12 as an example of how Epicureans are supposed to act when one of their friends is shipwrecked. He reads the poem against the background of Lucretius' proem to *DRN* 2 and argues that Juvenal's narrator embodies the ideal of the good Epicurean friend. This narrator brings the proper sacrifices upon hearing that his friend, Catullus, has narrowly escaped death at sea, knowing all too well that the latter has lost all his possessions and is at the moment unable to perform these sacrifices himself. Thus, he actively takes measures to ensure that his friend's peace of mind is restored, and that the joyful celebration of the latter's survival will eclipse the disturbing memories of the sea storm.

⁶⁴ Although there is probably no need to explore hypothetical situations about the trustworthiness of friends, like the ones outlined by Evans (n. 59), 219–20, it is rather obvious that Epicurean friends are supposed to make a genuine effort to care for each other and are generally more than happy to do so. The carelessness of Niceratus' friends will hardly have threatened to subvert the entire School. Nevertheless, their mistake was a serious one, and in a philosophical school where pleasure is the highest good, the needless, albeit not deliberate, infliction of harm to one

Conclusion

Τύχη ('chance') is a fickle mistress, indeed, and one to which no one should be ready to trust one's life, nor that of a friend. Especially when it comes to sea travel and the many dangers that flow from it, one should take great care to minimize the influence of chance. The Epicurean sage will sometimes find himself in a situation in which it is beneficial, or even downright necessary, for himself or his friends to venture out on the open sea, but he will only commit to such a course of action if the correct application of νήφων λογισμός ('sober reasoning') has shown that the weather conditions seem relatively favourable and that the advantages of making this voyage outweigh the potential risks. However, if dark clouds can be seen to gather on the horizon or if the errand is not very urgent, nor particularly beneficial, the wise man will just turn around, find a nice vantage point with a view of the sea,⁶⁵ sit back, and enjoy the awesome spectacle of churning waves from the blissful safety of dry land.

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of its members would not have been considered a trifling matter. The most notorious example of an Epicurean who was not merely careless, like Niceratus' friends, but who deliberately betrayed his friends, severely harming the entire School, is no doubt the renegade Timocrates (cf. Roskam [n. 16], 43–9).

⁶⁵ It is perhaps no coincidence that the Epicurean Villa dei Papiri on the Bay of Naples features a seaside belvedere (ἄποψις): cf. Phld. *Ep.* 29.5 Sider (= *AP* 9.412). It has been suggested by G. Sauron, 'Templa Serena. À propos de la Villa des Papyri d'Herculaneum: Contribution à l'étude des comportements aristocratiques romains à la fin de la République' *MEFRA* 92 (1980), 299, and X. Lafon, *Villa maritima. Recherches sur les villas littorales de l'Italie romaine (IIIe siècle av. J.-C. / IIIe siècle ap. J.-C.)* (Rome, 2001), 218 n. 39, that the villa's architectural design may have been influenced by *DRN* 2.1–4. See also M. Gigante (tr. D. Obbink), *Philodemus in Italy* (Ann Arbor, MI, 1995), 53–5. Even though this hypothesis might be somewhat too imaginative, we know for a fact that the Epicureans who convened in the Villa dei Papiri were very fond of their belvedere, where they spent many pleasant hours in each other's company (cf. Gigante [n. 65], 54).