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Callimachus on Plato and Cleombrotus*

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Philosophy, Herophilus might have warned, can be hazardous to your health. Reading Plato can even be fatal; or so suggests the epitaph Callimachus composed for Cleombrotus (*Ep.* 23 Pfeiffer=53 GP=*Anth.* 7.471).

> Εἴπας Ἥλιε χαῖρε, Κλεόμβροτος ὠμβρακιώτης
> ἅλατ' ἀφ' ὑψηλοῦ τείχεος εἰς Ἀΐδην,
> ἄξιον οὐδὲν ἰδὼν θανάτου κακόν, ἀλλὰ Πλάτωνος
> ἓν τὸ περὶ ψυχῆς γράμμ' ἀναλεξάμενος.
>
> Saying "Sun, farewell!" Cleombrotus th' Ambraciot
> leapt from a lofty wall into Hades below,
> not having seen any evil deserving of death; he'd only
> read the single tome, Plato's On the soul.

The story is bizarre, even shocking: a book induced a man to kill himself. The culprit, moreover, recounts another's death; Plato's "single writing On the soul" is of course the *Phaedo*, which enables Socrates' deathbed musings to reach beyond the grave.[1] It is not surprising, then, that modern critics typically consider the epigram a witty trifle, pleasant but inconsequential. Its depiction of suicide seems pointed rather than poignant, and like much of Hellenistic poetry, the poem is praised for ironic distance, not pathos. Many suggest that Callimachus sought to ridicule belief in an afterlife by commemorating a fool's leap of faith: "if the views expressed in [*Ep.* 23] represent C's own beliefs he presumably thought Cleombrotus a fool for his pains" (Gow and Page 204). Some propose a specific polemical target: Des Places (56) considers the epigram "ironique et dirigé contre l'enseignement de Platon sur l'immortalité"; Riginos (181) suggests that it "parodies the doctrine of the *Phaedo*." Only Wi-

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[1]This label for the dialogue, canonized three centuries later by Thrasyllus (Diog. Laert. 3.56–8), may be first attested here. It occurs only once in the Platonic corpus: *Epistle* 13 (363a), a letter of dubious authenticity, which may be later than the epigram; other early witnesses, such as Aristotle (e.g. *Metaph.* 1.9 991b3), typically refer to the dialogue by its modern title.

lamowitz (1920: 57) finds any respect for Plato in the epigram, though he too, in a later work (1924: 177), adopts a polemical interpretation.

Yet ancient audiences evidently took the story quite seriously. Verdicts naturally differ. Many condemn Cleombrotus, some chastize Plato, and others offer no criticism at all. But very few consider the suicide amusing. Callimachus is famously elusive, and opinions so divergent warrant scepticism. I shall argue, nonetheless, that the ancients better appreciated his tone and his emphasis here. Ridicule, I contend, is alien to the epitaph. It mocks neither Cleombrotus nor suicide, and certainly not Plato. Callimachus handles his material more sympathetically, and as often, he commends respect rather than scorn. One of his aims, in fact, is to highlight the power of Plato's writing. But before examining the poem in detail, it will be instructive first to review the ancient responses to the tale, which raise the possibility that Callimachus intended a topical allusion to a notorious philosopher. Then, because the influence philosophical literature had on his poetry is often underestimated if not ignored, I shall review evidence of his acquaintance with many of its leading figures and controversies. Callimachus was hardly a philosopher, and he might well have resisted the suggestion in the *Phaedo* that "philosophy is a very great art of the Muses" (μεγίστης μουσικῆς, 61a).[2] I hope to show, however, that he had more regard for philosophers in general and Plato in particular than most of his readers now suppose.

1. The Legend of Cleombrotus

Ancient references to Cleombrotus and his fate are remarkably numerous. At least two Roman poets borrowed the tale directly from Callimachus: Ovid used it in his *Ibis* (493–4), and a fourth-century admirer ventured an imitation (*Epigr. Bob.* 63; see Cameron 1993: 80–4). *Ep.* 23 was also cited by Greek grammarians for its diction: a full quotation, perhaps derived from Dionysus Thrax himself, appears in *Sch. Dion. Thr.* (160.15–18; cf. 3.21–3). Sextus Empiricus also quotes it in full in his book devoted to discrediting grammar (*Math.* 1.48), and phrases from it appear still in Choeroboscus (*in Theodos.* 125.17–18, 128.15–16, 139.14) and Eustathius (1959.61; cf. 243.43). But most references occur in philosophical contexts, where Cleombrotus became proverbial (Sinko, Williams). Cicero recounts his story twice, first in connection with Plato and Pythagoras (*Scaur.* 3.4) and later when arguing that death is no evil (*Tusc.* 1.84). Lactantius associates him with eminent philosophers (*Div. Inst.* 3.18.5–10), and Augustine takes his case as the paradigm of a plausible reason

[2]Perhaps but not necessarily "the greatest art"; cf. *Phdr.* 248de, 259b–d.

for suicide (*C.D.* 1.22). Gregory of Nazianzus twice lists him alongside figures from Greek myth and philosophy renowned for self–sacrifice (*Adv. Jul.* 1.70= 35.592 Migne, cf. Nonnus' commentary, 36.993 Migne; *virt.* 680–3=37.729 Migne, cf. Cosmas' commentary, 38.5 78 Migne). Jerome, in a letter of consolation (*Ep.* 39.3=22.468 Migne), cites him for his willingness to die. Neoplatonic introductions to philosophy regularly recount his reaction to the *Phaedo* as a cautionary tale (Ammonius *in Porph.* 4.18–25; Elias *Proleg.* 14.1–7; David *Proleg.* 31.27–33; ps.–Elias *in Porph.* 12.4–5, 12.38–9; Olympiodorus *in Alcib.* 5). Answering the tale in a pair of hexameters, Olympiodorus even thanks Plato's dialogue for saving his life (David *Proleg.* 31.34–32.5; cf. Elias *Proleg.* 14.8–12, ps.–Elias *in Porph.* 12.38–9, *Sch. Dion. Thr.* 160.19–23). By the end of the sixth century, this moralizing tradition had made Cleombrotus a source of amusement, as in a jocular epigram by Agathias (*Anth.* 11.354) and a Byzantine dialogue preserved among Lucian's works (*Philopatr.* 1).

Not all who mention the tale venture a judgment, favorable or otherwise. Among those who do, however, all before the Neoplatonists either express or imply a significant degree of respect. Cicero, our earliest witness, mentions Cleombrotus approvingly both times. Even the Church Fathers, who condemn suicide universally, cast him implicitly in a positive light. Augustine, clearly influenced by Cicero, raises the possibility that Cleombrotus acted from lofty motives (*C.D.* 1.22), and though his conclusion is unfavorable, he addresses this and two other suicides—Lucretia's (1.19) and Cato's (1.23)—with equal gravity. For Gregory and Jerome, Cleombrotus exemplifies pagan fortitude—far inferior to Christian virtues but impressive all the same. Even Lactantius, who denounces Cleombrotus for sinning against the sanctity of life, nonetheless ranks him in the exalted company of Zeno, Cleanthes, and Cato—all paragons of pagan virtue.

Presumably in response to these or similar complaints, several later Neoplatonists point out in their introductory lectures that Plato considers suicide impious.[3] They therefore charge Cleombrotus with misunderstanding and exonerate Plato by recalling his explicit prohibition: the *Phaedo* likens philosophy to a training for death but insists that nothing licenses killing oneself (61c–67e; cf. *Laws* 873cd, which recommends enforcing the prohibition with legal penalties). To sharpen the warning for students, the Neoplatonists even depict

[3]Plotinus also rejected suicide: see the very brief *Enn.* 1.9; cf. Elias *in Porph.* 15.23–16.2, which (shortly after discussing Cleombrotus) reports another work by Plotinus rebutting Stoic justifications of suicide. For connections between the *Phaedo* and Hellenistic debates about suicide, see Griffin; Rist 233–55.

Cleombrotus as an impetuous youth.[4] Thus, they agree with their Christian rivals both that suicide is wrong and that the fate of Cleombrotus merits serious attention. They simply disagree about who is at fault: the Church Fathers criticize philosophers for endorsing suicide in word and deed, whereas the Neoplatonists warn their students against grave misunderstanding.

Once his suicide became a polemical target, Cleombrotus was bound to face reproach, and I have found no kind words for him since. Initially, however, his reputation fared much better. Ovid, who drank deeply from the Callimachean springs, alludes to the story in his *Ibis*. In this obscure tirade, which professes to imitate Callimachus' lost invective of the same title and borrows repeatedly from several of his works, Cleombrotus appears in the company of five heroes from myth.[5] Ovid archly twists the culprit into "a Socratic work on killing" (494): *de nece* rather than *de anima* or even *de morte*. Yet even he assigns the story pride of place in a litany of precipitous deaths that includes Aegeus, Astyanax, Ino, Perdix, and Aglauros (*Ibis* 493–500). Every case is lamentable, deserving pity rather than reproach.

Cicero's regard appears more plainly. He paraphrases the epitaph twice, in each case portraying Cleombrotus as moved by lofty ideals.[6] In a speech for Scaurus delivered in 54 before an extraordinary audience packed with the most eminent members of the Roman nobility, Cicero recalls the suicidal deaths of four outstanding Senators from the previous generation (*Scaur.* 1–2).[7] All four he depicts as worthy of emulation; indeed, he later eulogized them (*Tusc.* 5.55, cf. *de Or.* 3.10; see Marshall 140–6). Here he emphasizes the glory of their fates by first recalling the suicide of Ajax, then denying that the vast literature

[4]The first to assign an age to Cleombrotus is Ammonius (*in Porph.* 4.21); though he may have taken the idea from elsewhere, all subsequent references probably derive from him. See Wildberg 36, who also argues that David and Elias were not Christian, though most of their listeners probably were.

[5]Historical characters, though not rare in the *Ibis*, are vastly outnumbered by mythical ones; but Ovid, drawing most if not all his allusions from earlier poetry, presumably deemed this difference irrelevant. Cf. La Penna xxxii–lv. The story of Cleombrotus was not known to all: a scholiast on the *Ibis* imagines he died trying to stop Athenians from burning books by Socrates!

[6]Cicero could have found the epigram in a collection of Callimachus' poetry, in Meleager's *Garland* (cf. Meleager 1.21–2 GP, likening Callimachus to "pleasant laurel ever full of pungent honey"), or even in philosophical texts. Epigrams by Callimachus had been popular in Rome at least since Cicero's youth: Catulus (dead by 86) composed a version of *Ep.* 41 (Gellius 19.9.14; cf. Horace *C.* 1.3.8); Cinna (slain March 44) rendered *Ep.* 27 (fr. 11 Morel); *Ep.* 42 has turned up on a wall of an Esquiline home (Pfeiffer ad loc.); cf. Cameron 1993: 51–6.

[7]Speaking in defense of Scaurus were Cicero, Q. Hortensius, M. Marcellus, M. Calidius, M. Messala Niger, and even Clodius (Asconius 20); on these and others in attendance, see Marshall 119–29 and 150–6.

of Greece records any parallel except Themistocles (3)—a case he later deemed unhistorical (*Brut.* 43). To preempt any challenge to this vaunt, he then turns to Cleombrotus.

> At Graeculi quidem multa fingunt, apud quos etiam Cleombrotum Ambraciotam ferunt se ex altissimo praecipitasse muro, non quod acerbitatis accepisset aliquid, sed, ut video scriptum apud Graecos, cum summi philosophi Platonis graviter et ornate scriptum librum de morte legisset, in quo, ut opinor, Socrates illo ipso die quo erat ei moriendum permulta disputat hanc esse mortem quam nos vitam putaremus, cum corpore animus tamquam carcere saeptus teneretur, vitam autem esse eam cum idem animus vinclis corporis liberatus in eum se locum unde esset ortus rettulisset. Num igitur ista tua Sarda Pythagoram aut Platonem norat aut legerat? qui tamen ipsi mortem ita laudant ut fugere vitam vetent atque id contra foedus fieri dicant legemque naturae. Aliam quidem causam mortis voluntariae nullam profecto iustam reperietis.
>
> But the Greeks of course are very inventive; they even recount how Cleombrotus the Ambraciot hurled himself from a very high wall, not because he had suffered at all, but—so I read in the Greeks—after reading the dignified and elegant book on death by the great philosopher Plato. There—I believe—Socrates, on the very day he had to die, argues at great length that what we now consider life is really death, since the soul is held by the body as if confined in a prison, and that life is really when this same soul is freed from the shackles of the body and returns to the place from which it arose. So had that Sardinian woman of yours ever studied or read Pythagoras or Plato? Yet even they praise death so as to prohibit anyone fleeing life, which they claim violates nature's pact and law. No other justification at all will you find for dying willingly.
>
> [*Scaur.* 4–5]

Cicero's praise here, gauged to suit his Roman audience, is reserved (note *ut video* and *ut opinor*). He prefaces the tale with the gibe that few Greeks live up to their lofty words (as *etiam* emphasizes), and he suggests that the whole story is a fabrication (*fingunt*). His reservations, however, imply respect for Cleombrotus by suggesting that his action is too impressive to be credible. When he abruptly returns to the case at hand, Cicero again implies approval: the prosecution's allegations that Scaurus drove a Sardinian woman to suicide are preposterous (see 5–6), he taunts, since *she* had never read Plato. The argument is heartless, its logic absurd. But by appealing to Senatorial prejudices, he could neutralize the emotional impact of any attempts by the prosecution to draw parallels with cases like Lucretia's.

It is unlikely, moreover, that Cicero was the only one present to be impressed with the tale of Cleombrotus. He could expect a favorable reaction

from the man presiding over the trial, the devoutly Stoic Cato (see Asconius 18). It may be that few others in the audience knew much about the work Cicero refers to as "the supreme Plato's weighty and elegant book about death"; and it may have been only dramatic license on Cicero's part a decade later to depict Cotta confessing that he cannot read the dialogue without weeping (*N.D.* 3.82). Cato, however, must have been familiar with the work. He surely admired the Roman suicides Cicero lists, and probably also Cleombrotus' choice. Eight years later in Utica, Cato returned to Plato's "dialogue on the soul" and reenacted its discussions as he too prepared to take his own life (Plut. *Cato min.* 68.2; see Geiger).[8] His death was widely publicized and his imitation of Socrates eulogized, quite likely by Cicero in his own homage, the lost *Cato* (cf. *Tusc.* 1.74), and certainly by others in the many works that soon made him a martyr to the Republic. By then, if not before, many would associate Plato's dialogue with suicide and view both the work and its effect with favor.

The following year, and nine years after Scaurus was acquitted (Asconius 18), Cicero returned to Cleombrotus in the *Tusculans*. There he devotes five books to defending five Stoic paradoxes, the first of which is that death is no evil. Most of Book 1, which he later dubbed *de contemnenda morte* (*Div.* 2.2), supports this thesis by arguing that the soul is immortal (*Tusc.* 1.26–75). After recounting a number of arguments, including several from the *Phaedo*, he closes his main argument by describing how belief in the immortality of the soul enabled Socrates and Cato to face death with equanimity (1.71–4). Cicero, of course, has to qualify Plato's prohibition of suicide in order to justify Cato's. But in extolling the claim that a philosopher's life is *commentatio mortis* (1.74–5), he only expands on Platonic precedent (*Phd.* 64a, 67d, 81a). Turning next to those who deny the immortality of the soul, he tries to show why even they should scorn death. One of his first moves here is to take up another theme found in the *Phaedo* (66b–e), that "death takes us away from evils, not from good things," which he illustrates by again virtually translating Callimachus.

> A malis igitur mors abducit, non a bonis, verum si quaerimus. Et quidem hoc a Cyrenaico Hegesia sic copiose disputatur ut is a rege Ptolemaeo prohibitus esse dicatur illa in scholis dicere, quod multi iis auditis mortem sibi ipsi consciscerent. Callimachi quidem epigramma in Ambraciotam Cleombrotum est quem ait, cum ei nihil accidisset adversi, e muro se in mare abiecisse lecto Platonis libro. Eius autem quem dixi Hegesiae

[8]Both Cato and Cleombrotus acted before actually suffering serious ills, though Cato's refusal to accept Caesar's clemency certainly placed him in grave danger.

liber est, 'Αποκαρτερῶν, in quo a vita quidam per inediam discedens revocatur ab amicis, quibus respondens vitae humanae enumerat incommoda. Possem idem facere, etsi minus quam ille qui omnino vivere expedire nemini putat.

So death takes us away from evils, not from goods, in point of fact. Indeed, the Cyrenaic Hegesias argued this so eloquently that he was reportedly prohibited by king Ptolemy from lecturing on the topic, because many who heard him resolved to kill themselves. Callimachus, in fact, has an epigram on Cleombrotus the Ambraciot, which recounts how, though nothing bad had happened to him, he threw himself off a wall into the sea after reading a book by Plato. Yet Hegesias has a book called "Persevering," in which someone departing from life by fasting responds to the entreaties of his friends by enumerating the troubles of human life. I could do the same, though not as much as Hegesias, who thinks life worth living for no one at all. [*Tusc.* 1.83–4]

Here Cleombrotus clearly serves to exemplify philosophical acceptance of death. But his suicide interrupts the account of Hegesias, a notorious Cyrenaic philosopher remarkable for a number of reasons. One is his bizarre fascination with suffering. Like other Cyrenaics, he was a hedonist. But quite unlike Aristippus, the companion of Socrates, rival of Plato, and reputed originator of a philosophy named after his birthplace in Cyrene, he is never reported enjoying anything. Quite the contrary, sources uniformly present him as utterly miserable (Giannantoni IV F). Most striking is Cicero's account of the jeremiad in his lost dialogue called "Abstaining," or literally, "Persevering." There his protagonist was fasting because he was convinced that life's woes far outweigh its pleasures.[9]

So compelling were his arguments, it seems, that Hegesias was dubbed Πεισιθάνατος (Diog. Laert. 2.86) and banned from lecturing by one of the Ptolemies. There are reasons, however, for doubting that he induced many suicides. Cicero qualifies his report as hearsay (*dicatur*); and even if his source was reliable, his own phrasing is ambiguous: resolutions (*consciscerent*) often stop short of action, and the key clause can be interpreted as an allegation

[9]It is uncertain who fasts: I follow the vulgate (as in Dougan), but Pohlenz prints *quidem*, though without reporting any mss. On Pohlenz's reading, Hegesias recounted his own fast and hence his survival; on the vulgate's, he depicted someone else, who may have starved in the end. Despite citing Cleombrotus to explain the edict against Hegesias (*quidem* after *Callimachi*), Cicero *contrasts* the suicide with Hegesias' book (note *autem*); and the title of Hegesias' book is ἀποκαρτερῶν, which denotes only fasting (Philod. *mort.* 6.10-14, Plut. *Pericles* 16.8, *Q.C.* 6.3 690a), not ἀποκαρτερήσας, which alone implies actual starvation (cf. Plut. *amor. prol.* 497d, *Lycurg.* 29.8).

either of fact (actual suicides) or of motive (Ptolemy's worry).[10] Moreover, Valerius Maximus (8.9 ext. 3), apparently summarizing Cicero, refers only to a desire (*cupiditatem*) for suicide. The only clear allegation of actual suicides comes in Plutarch (*amor. prol.* 497d), whose hostility is patent: conflating title and effect, he charges Hegesias with persuading his listeners to *starve* to death (πολλοὺς ἔπεισεν ἀποκαρτερῆσαι). Indeed, the title of Hegesias' book is ἀποκαρτερῶν, which denotes only fasting (Philod. *mort.* 6.10–14, Plut. *Per.* 16.8, *Q.C.* 6.3 690a), not ἀποκαρτερήσας, which alone would imply actual starvation (cf. Plut. *amor. prol.* 497d, *Lycurg.* 29.8). The tale of suicides, in short, probably deserves as much credence as the legend that Euripides inspired an epidemic of suicide, which originated as a joke in Aristophanes (*Ra.* 1049–55; cf. 117–34 for jokes about methods). Finally, by linking the tale with Cleombrotus, Cicero implicitly compares Hegesias with the exalted Plato: both move their audiences profoundly.

2. Callimachus and the Philosophers

Cicero's reference to a Ptolemaic edict implies that Hegesias and Callimachus lived in roughly the same period and place. Though precise dates are lacking (Laks 20 n. 8), Hegesias seems to have been contemporary with Aratus: he studied with Paraibates (Diog. Laert. 2.86), who was criticized by Menedemus (2.134), who in turn taught Aratus and was the eponymous subject of Lycophron's satyr play. It also appears that he acquired notoriety fairly early in Callimachus' life. Cicero neglects to say which Ptolemy ordered Hegesias to stop lecturing; but the omission of a cognomen is most natural for the first. In that case, the decree was probably issued before 282; and if Cicero's *rege* is accurate, it was issued after 304, when Soter first assumed a royal title (Gruen). Notoriety and chronology thus combine to make it unlikely that Hegesias escaped Callimachus' notice.

Hegesias also had close links with Callimachus' birthplace. His followers, known as Hegesiacs, formed one of the three branches of Cyrenaic philosophy (Diog. Laert. 2.85). The two other branches were named after natives of Cyrene: the Annicereans after Anniceris (Giannantoni IV G), and the Theodoreans after Theodorus "the atheist" (Giannantoni IV H). Even more notorious than Hegesias, Theodorus was banished more than once for impiety;

[10]Indirect discourse obscures the point of the subjunctive, whether introduced by *quo* (as in most mss.) or *quod* (as adopted by most editors). Note also that Cicero, despite citing Cleombrotus to explain the edict against Hegesias (*quidem* after *Callimachi*), actually *contrasts* the suicide with Hegesias' book (note *autem*).

he nonetheless served Soter as an emissary and ended his life in Cyrene enjoying high honors (Diog. Laert. 2.101–03). The early prominence of these groups is confirmed late in the third century by Hippobotus. Whereas later doxography minimizes or neglects differences among Cyrenaics (Diog. Laert. organized his work around a list that counts them as only one of ten groups: 1.19; cf. 2.47, 85), three of the nine groups Hippobotus counts are Cyrenaic (Diog. Laert. 1.19). Two are the Annicereans and Theodoreans; but the third is simply the Cyrenaics, instead of Hegesiacs. Given the reports that Anniceris disagreed with both Hegesias (Diog. Laert. 2.96) and Aristippus (Strabo 17.3.22), and that Theodorus "founded his own αἵρεσις" (Suda s.v. Theodorus), this suggests that Hegesias was actually considered the most legitimate heir to Aristippus (cf. Diog. Laert. 2.93; Laks 34–5, 48–9).

Callimachus may not have cared much about the lives and opinions of these influential intellectuals from his native land. But he certainly knew about them: his *pinakes* discussed the work of a certain Lysimachus, whom he labelled a Theodorean, rather than a pupil of Theophrastus, as Hermippus did (fr. 438).[11] His own works, moreover, display acquaintance with numerous other figures and issues prominent in contemporary philosophical discussions. The programmatic first *Iambos* centers on a celebrated tale about the Seven Sages abjuring rivalry. Not only did the tale itself circulate in multiple versions (Diog. Laert. 1.28–33), from which Callimachus chose as model a Milesian chronicle by Maeandrius or Leandrius (*FGrH* 491–2); the very identity of the Seven was hotly disputed from the fourth century on, not least because they were widely deemed the first philosophers.[12] Callimachus thus took a stand in a significant discussion about the origins of philosophy, albeit for ends of his own. The same debate makes the plainly facetious fr. 587 especially piquant, and in *Ep.* 1, a whimsically dramatized *aition*, he credits Pittacus with a proverbial gnome elsewhere ascribed to others of the Seven (Gow and Page 206). Similar issues of attribution appear midway through the first *Iambos* (fr. 191.52–63), where Callimachus takes sides in a controversy about the contributions Pythagoras and Thales made to Greek mathematics and astronomy (cf. Diog. Laert. 1.23–

[11]The poet may even have been related to Cyrenaics: a "Theodorus son of Callimachus" served as hoplite officer in Cyrene late in the fourth century, and two sons of Anniceris, one named Callimachus, served as cavalry officers (*GDI* 4833); cf. Meillier 335–7.

[12]Apart from a brief introduction, Diog. Laert. devotes all of Book 1 to discussing his own list of the Seven and then four leading alternates. Among the many early sources he cites is the "Callimachean" Hermippus (cf. frs. 5–16 Wehrli); another is Demetrius of Phaleron, to whom Stobaeus ascribed the only extant collection of the Sage's maxims (fr. 114 Wehrli=10 A 3 D–K =Stob. 3.1.172). On fr. 191, see Depew.

5). The former may have appeared in the *Aetia* (fr. 61), and allusions to Pythagorean lore appear in numerous elegiac fragments.[13] Fr. 553 borrows a phrase from Empedocles' *Katharmoi* (B 141 D–K); two others (*Iamb.* fr. 192.1–3 and *Aet.* fr. 1.7) may have drawn on his *On Nature* (B 74; Bing 1981)

More recent controversies are also in evidence. The beginning of the first *Iambos* refers scornfully to Euhemerus (fr. 191.9–11), who like Theodorus was dubbed "Atheos" for impugning traditional religion.[14] Euhemerism may also be a target of the observation, which closes the proem of the *Hymn to Zeus*, that Crete lay claim to Zeus' *tomb* (8–9; cf. fr. 202.15–17). The preceding lines in the same hymn, which resolve a dispute in the literary traditions about the god's birthplace by announcing that Cretans always lie (4–8), allude to a more erudite debate. Cretan mendacity was proverbial (Epimenides fr. 5), but it acquired new currency in the late fourth century, when Diodorus Cronus made famous the devastating logical paradox that results when a Cretan makes the claim; the epitaph on a Coan memorial to Philitas even claimed the poet died from trying to solve the puzzle (Ath. 9 401e).[15] Arguably the leading logician of the age, Diodorus also won from Callimachus the paradoxical praise that Momus himself admires him (fr. 393.1–2). So renowned are the philosopher's arguments, Callimachus adds, that even ravens ponder them aloud (fr. 393.3–4).[16]

Among Callimachus' epigrams are several that touch on philosophers more or less directly. Especially intriguing is his consolation for an Aristippus of Cyrene, who buried both a son and a daughter on the same day, the latter driven to suicide by grief (*Ep.* 20). The family is depicted as prominent, which the evidence of coins confirms (Gow and Page 190), and unless the name was common there, the founding Cyrenaic was probably an ancestor. The father may even be his grandson, known as Μητροδίδακτος and himself an author of

[13]Pfeiffer ad fr. 61 refers to frs. 191, 553, 499, 533, 586. I think his reservations about at least two of the last three instances can be answered; see also fr. 442. The motif of "the unworn path" (fr. 1.25–8) was also traced to Pythagoreans by some ancients; see n. 28 below.

[14]Later sources link the two: Sextus *Math.* 9.51; [Plut.] *Placita* 1.7=Diels 297–9, which quotes Call. frs. 191.9–11 and 586.

[15]Cf. Bing 1988: 76 n 42. Although the puzzle probably originated with Euboulides (Diog. Laert. 2.108; see Döring 108–11), credit for popularizing it probably belongs to Diodorus, who had enormous influence (Sedley 1977: 78): "wherever one of Euboulides' riddles has passed to the Hellenistic philosophers, Diodorus is the main vehicle of transmission... [His] importance lies not in originality ... but in his ability to impress ideas upon his contemporaries."

[16]The allusions, according to Sextus *Math.* 1.309, are philosophically sophisticated; cf. White. Soter was certainly acquainted with Diodorus, with whom he dined at least once (Diog. Laert. 2.111), apparently in Megara.

philosophical polemics (Giannantoni IV B). He was contemporary with Theophrastus, hence lived in Callimachus' lifetime, and the epigram gains point if it describes the daughter of a Cyrenaic taking to heart what her father was presumed to preach.[17]

Distinctly philosophical in tone is Callimachus' epitaph for Timarchus (*Ep.* 10), which speaks of rebirth, implies that the soul is immortal, and extols the deceased for piety. Its honoree may thus be one of the contemporary philosophers who bore that name (Gow and Page 190; Fraser 696–7). The Theaetetus praised in *Ep.* 7 for achieving a rare form of σοφίη is almost certainly the Cyrenean poet who composed an epitaph for Crantor (2 GP), who was a renowned member of the Academy until his death in the 270s. Either or both of the epigrams to Menecrates (*Ep.* 45 and 61) may address the philosopher–poet who taught Aratus. Less solemn uses of philosophy appear in the dialogue with Charidas of Cyrene (*Ep.* 13), where questions about the afterlife receive strikingly cynical answers, and again in the apology to Archinus (*Ep.* 42), which employs the diction of Stoic psychology to plead that even in an excess of passion the speaker behaved with "stoical" restraint. At least two other epigrams show the influence of Peripatetic research. In dedicating a nautilus to Arsinoe (*Ep.* 5), Callimachus drew on Aristotle's marine biology (Gutzwiller 196), as he apparently did for ornithology as well (see frs. 414–28, esp. 415, 421, 427; Pfeiffer ad loc. calls fr. 427 "nil nisi excerptum ex Aristot."). And in a jaunty sympotic vignette (*Ep.* 43), he interprets the fall of a garland as an omen of love, as Clearchus did in his *Erotica* (fr. 24 Wehrli, from Ath. 15 669c–70f; cf. Asclepiades 18 GP). Still other poems as well may be indebted to Clearchus' extensive work on proverbs and riddles (frs. 63–95 Wehrli).[18]

Two cases of homonyms deserve special mention here. One, an epitaph for Heraclitus (*Ep.* 2), deftly assimilates Callimachus' fellow poet to the renowned philosopher. Some could tell the difference (Diog. Laert. 9.17, Strabo 14.656); but among those misled were the Palatine anthologist who placed it after Meleager's to the earlier Heraclitus (121 GP), and Planudes, who included it among epigrams to philosophers. The other case involves two epigrams on Timon (*Ep.* 3 and 4), who is generally identified as the fifth–century Athenian mis-

[17]The son, whom Callimachus identifies as Melanippus, may also have had philosophical interests: a Melanippus from Cyrene appears in a catalogue of Pythagoreans from the fifth and fourth centuries (Iambl. *V. Pyth.* 37.267).

[18]See fr. 576, and Pfeiffer ad fr. 26.2. Cp. *Ep.* 1 and Clearchus fr. 71 (both in Diog. Laert. 1.80–1); *Iamb.* fr. 195.33 and *Hec.* fr. 237 both mention Pittheus solving riddles, and Clearchus (fr. 91a) discussed the plot of *Medea*, which also exploits a riddle Pittacus solved.

anthrope and proto–Cynic. But a veritable spate of epigrams, most if not all contemporary with Callimachus, also target a Timon: Zenodotus 3 GP, Leonidas 100 GP, Hegesippus 8 GP; *Anth.* 7.313 and 319 are anonymous, and *Anth.* 7.714 is ascribed to a Ptolemy.[19] Such attention may well reflect the notoriety of another Timon with a similar reputation for animus, the follower of Pyrrho the sceptic whose derisory image of Alexandrian literati in a bird-cage (Ath. 1 22d) is still widely quoted. Its source was the notorious *Silloi*, an epic parody which sought to glorify Pyrrho by lampooning virtually every other philosopher of note, both past and present (Long 1978). A prolific composer of verse himself (Diog. Laert. 9.110–11), Timon also helped Alexander the Aetolian and Homer of Byzantium with their plays, and he gave Aratus advice on Homerica (9.113). But his scathing caricatures may have provoked some to respond by reviving tales of the earlier misanthrope of the same name.

Callimachus was not the only poet of his day to admit philosophers and their ideas into his work. To name only some of the most obvious, Aratus won prompt and lasting fame for his Hesiodic transformation of the *Phainomena* of Eudoxus, the most illustrious member of the early Academy after Plato. Many others wrote epigrams on philosophers: epitaphs for Plato by Simias (6 GP), for Crates and Polemon by Antagoras (1 GP), for Crantor by Theaetetus (2 GP), for Zeno by Zenodotus (1 GP), and for Heraclitus by Theodoridas (16 GP), as well as lighter pieces on Zeno and Cleanthes by Posidippus (1 GP) and on Cynics by Leonidas (54, 55, 59 GP). Lycophron's only attested satyr play, the *Menedemus*, bore the name of the philosopher from Eretria whose austerity it eulogized (Diog. Laert. 2.139–40; cf. 133), whose reputation for dialectic won him and his followers the name "Eretriacs" (2.126; cf. 134–6), and whose travels on diplomatic missions made him a celebrity (2.140–3). Another member of the Pleiad, Sositheus, mocks the Stoic Cleanthes, probably also in a satyr play (fr. 4 Snell, in Diog. Laert. 7.173). Hegesianax, finally, caps his elegiac catalogue of the erotic affairs of a dozen poets (fr. 7 Powell) by recounting the amorous adventures of three philosophers: Pythagoras, Socrates, and—a token of his notoriety—Aristippus.

One reason for the literary appeal of philosophy is simply that philosophers and poets often moved in the same circles. Anecdotes about symposia and

[19]The identity of the last is unknown, but a distinct possibility is Philadelphus, who knew Timon personally (Diog. Laert. 9.110) and who allegedly composed epigrams; see Page 84–5, 112–14. This Alexandrian fascination with Timon may well have helped inspire Mark Antony to name his solitary refuge on a promontory near the Museum his "Timoneion" (Plut. *Antony* 69–70).

epigrams by philosophers attest to interactions. And while Athens remained the center for philosophy, the intellectual climate in Alexandria also attracted a number of leading lights. Not least was the exiled Demetrius of Phaleron, who became Soter's confidant and guided his support of literary enterprise (Pfeiffer 1968: 96–104). Strato, before returning to Athens to administer the Lyceum after Theophrastus died, joined Philitas and Zenodotus as tutors of Philadelphus in the 290s (Diog. Laert. 5.58). Even Theodorus the Cyrenaic served Soter as an emissary in his negotiations with Lysimachus (2.102). Soter also extended invitations to Stilpo (2.115), Theophrastus (5.37), and Zeno (7.24). None accepted, but the ruler's persistence indicates intense interest, whatever his motive.

Another spur to this interest in philosophy was the project to organize the entire corpus of extant literature. Only scattered references to this immense labor survive, but they are enough to show that Callimachus himself dealt with the philosophers. Those who composed verse, such as Parmenides (fr. 442) and Ion (fr. 449), naturally attracted his attention, not only as resources for his own poetry (Ion in fr. 203, cf. frs. 242, 342; cf. Empedocles in fr. 553), but also for the challenge they posed to conventional categories (cf. Arist. *Poet.* 1). Callimachus was apparently familiar also with Socratic circles: he criticized the didascalic dating of *Clouds* (fr. 454);[20] and Prodicus, whose pioneering lexicography had already excited Philitas (Pfeiffer 1968: 90–2, cf. 41–2), he not unreasonably labelled a rhetor rather than a philosopher (fr. 431), presumably because the sophist was best known for his declamations.[21] Covering Platonic circles as well, Callimachus recorded that Eudoxus—a preeminent associate of Plato, an influential exponent of hedonism (Arist. *NE* 1172b9–20), and the greatest mathematician of his era—had studied with the Pythagorean Archytas (fr. 429).[22] A work that required not only wide but close reading in philosophy is the monograph Callimachus devoted to the distinctive terminology and large

[20]Although Callimachus may not have known the difference, the Chaerephon whose work he catalogued in the *pinakes* (fr. 434) is probably not the famous admirer of Socrates (see Arethas' scholion on *Ap.* 20e) who appears in the *Clouds* as his closest associate (Dover 1968: xxxiii, xcv–viii): the Socratic died before 399 (*Ap.* 21a), whereas the author was apparently a fourth-century parasite (Ath. 6.242f–44a) and dedicated his work to a relative of the orator Aeschines (Dem. 19.287, Ath. 6.242d).

[21]See Guthrie 222–5, 274–80. Prodicus also influenced Euhemerism (Henrichs 107–15), and perhaps even Hegesias, if the diatribe on human vicissitude recounted in the ps.-Platonic *Axiochus* reproduces a speech by Prodicus, as claimed (366c–69a).

[22]The *pinakes* also covered Demosthenes (fr. 432), who was counted among Plato's students by Hermippus (Gel. 3.13; cf. Plut. *Demetrius* 5.7) and the quasi-Cyrenaic Mnesistratus (Diog. Laert. 3.47; cf. Ath. 7 279de).

bibliography of Democritus (Suda=Test. 1 Pf.); a likely fruit of this labor appears in the penultimate pentameter of the *Aitia*, where the envoi to the Muse uses a term closely associated with the philosopher (εὐεστώ, fr. 112.7).[23] The works of more recent philosophers provided material for a collection of "marvels," for which Callimachus drew heavily on Eudoxus and a number of Peripatetics, most notably Aristotle and Theophrastus (fr. 407, cf. fr. 410). Finally, his often mentioned but poorly understood work *Against Praxiphanes*, whatever its purport, shows that, on literary issues at the very least, Callimachus took seriously the arguments of some contemporary philosophers.[24]

3. Philosophical Deaths

In a striking coincidence many have noticed, Cleombrotus appears in the work that *Ep.* 23 names. Plato opens the dialogue and justifies its current title with a conversation between Phaedo, a companion of Socrates who authored a handful of lost dialogues, and Echecrates, his Pythagorean host in Phlius.[25] One function of this prefatory scene is to record who was present the day Socrates died. Phaedo names nine Athenians, excuses Plato as ill, then lists five foreigners (59b–c). His host, however, is surprised at his omission of Aristippus and Cleombrotus (τί δέ;), and Phaedo must explain that both were in Aegina (59c). The two were evidently considered companions: they are the only people Echecrates misses, and both he and Phaedo treat them as a pair. It is certainly possible, then, that Callimachus composed his epitaph for someone absent when Socrates died. The epigram itself displays acquaintance with the dialogue, and his two on Timon show that he wrote about earlier Athenians. But what would be the point of an allusion here?

[23]Democritus used the term for his ethical ideal (fr. B 4 D–K, cf. A 167), and it served as the title of one of his books (Diog. Laert. 9.46); on ancient lists of his works, see Guthrie 388. West 1969 proposes emending γλῶσσαι in Call. test. 1 to γνῶμαι and suggests this was the source of the problematic "Democrates" collection (B 35–115). Callimachus also drew on the novel medical terminology of Herophilus; see Oppermann.

[24]Brink, though duly critical of earlier suggestions that Callimachus could be called a Peripatetic, seems to me to exaggerate the differences between the critical standards of the philosophers and the poet.

[25]Echecrates was among the last Pythagoreans, according to Aristoxenus (Diog. Laert. 8.46); a later native of Phlius was Timon the Pyrrhonist. Phaedo and his followers were known as "Eliacs" until Menedemus won them all the label of Eretriac; all shared the Megarics' interest in logic satirized in fr. 393.

The occasion of the dialogue was extraordinary, and it naturally provoked discussion from the start.[26] Though absent, Aristippus could remark, when asked how Socrates died, "As I would pray to die" (Diog. Laert. 2.76). Interest in the dialogue did not wane. Late in the fourth century or early in the third, Strato composed a point by point refutation of its arguments (frs. 122–7 Wehrli), and it influenced early Stoicism on several important issues (Sedley 1993: 316–20). The earliest text of Plato yet recovered, some early third century scraps of papyrus found at Arsinoe, is from a copy of the *Phaedo* (*P. Petrie* i.5–8); though seriously corrupt, it proves that the dialogue circulated in Egypt well before Aristophanes' recension (Turner 108). Especially contentious, in fact, was the cast of characters listed at the opening of the dialogue, where all major Socratics, and several minor ones as well, are named as either present or absent. Attendance, it seems, assured philosophical legitimacy, as partisans of rival schools exploited the list for polemics. Whatever Plato's intentions, some of his admirers saw invective in his report that the original Cyrenaic was absent, and the charge gained currency that the hedonist and his companion had wallowed in debauchery while all the other Socratics discussed immortality in prison (Dem. *eloc.* 288, Diog. Laert. 2.65, 3.36; cf. Giannantoni IV A frs. 15–21).[27]

Not only was the *Phaedo* available for Callimachus to read, but Cleombrotus is exactly the sort of character who would appeal to his predilection for learned allusion. Famously attentive to neglected names and sidelights on major events, Callimachus proclaims in a programmatic boast that he sings nothing "well worn" (*Aet.* fr. 1.25–8).[28] A marginal character associated with Aristippus affords intriguing possibilities: linking Cleombrotus with the *Phaedo* would evoke a minor philosophical scandal—a scandal, moreover, concerning the founder of the Cyrenaic tradition, which took its name from the poet's own home. More generally, the very occasion marked a critical moment in the history of all the Socratic schools. The death of Socrates inaugurated a new era in philosophy, as his companions drifted apart in pursuit of divergent interests;

[26]For a survey of early testimony, see Carlini 3–30. Westerink (7) points out that no rival account of Socrates' death is attested (contrast his trial) and infers that the dialogue "must have been a classic from the moment of its appearance."

[27]Plato's detractors could have derided his own absence, though he names himself only twice in his work and appears in no dialogue; and Euboulides later rebuked Aristotle for being absent when Plato died (Euseb. *Pr. Ev.* 15.2.5).

[28]Damascius (ps.–Olympiodorus), on *Phd.* 65d, points out that this adapts a Pythagorean principle (see Pfeiffer ad fr. 1.25); cf. n. 13 above. Callimachus exploits the motif again in *Ep.* 7 for Theaetetus; compare fr. 1.18 and Socrates' epigram (Diog. Laert. 2.42).

many acquired followings of their own and labels soon arose to indicate their differences. A key factor in these developments, in fact, was debate about the essential nature of Socrates' life and thought. This debate was vitally important for the first Socratics and directly influenced the early formation of what we now call the Hellenistic schools (Long 1988). In short, an epitaph for someone moved to suicide by reading the *Phaedo* addresses pivotal events both in the course of philosophy in general and in the origin of Cyrenaic philosophy in particular.

It cannot be proven, of course, that Callimachus intended an allusion to the companion of Aristippus. The *Phaedo* records the home of everyone present but mentions nothing about the missing pair except their absence. We cannot be sure, therefore, that Plato's Cleombrotus was an Ambraciot, let alone the one in the epitaph. The name is not rare. Only five—four Spartans and the father of Erasistratus—are discussed in Pauly–Wissowa; but Fraser and Matthews record fourteen for the Aegean, about half dating to Callimachus' lifetime or earlier. The Suda even credits Aratus (s.v.) with an ἐπικήδειον Κλεομβρότου, perhaps for a contemporary. (The father of Erasistratus is clearly a possibility.) None of these, however, is likely to hail from Ambracia, and there is no sign that any ever associated with Socrates or Aristippus. Chronology, on the other hand, poses no problem: the *Phaedo* was probably composed less than two decades after Socrates died, well within the lifetime of Aristippus and hence Cleombrotus (Bostock 1–4). Further, a companion of Aristippus and Socrates would be exceptionally well suited for the role described in the epitaph. The Ambraciot's reading demonstrates interest in philosophy, and his reaction to what he read shows the intensity of his interest. Few if any others of the multitudes who have read the *Phaedo* ever leapt to their death. But the suicide of a companion of Aristippus would be especially memorable, either for the paradox of an avowed hedonist forsaking the pleasures of the flesh, or given the Cyrenaic reputation for pessimism, for the poetic justice of a companion of Aristippus being driven to take his own life.

Or is the tale too good to be true? Does the epitaph recall a minor celebrity or simply invent a provocative fable? In favor of the latter is the absence of any other mention of a suicidal or philosophical Cleombrotus.[29] But arguments from silence are worth little where so much evidence is lost. Callimachus, moreover, had good reasons for adding details missing from Plato. Specifying

[29]Riginos 181; but I fail to see how "if he were alluding to a well-known story, the epigram would lose much of its point and impact." Cicero accepts the story in *Tusc.* and, as argued in § 1 above, the suspicion he voices in *pro Scauro* 4 (*fingunt*) is only a rhetorical ploy.

that Cleombrotus was an Ambraciot satisfies the epitaphic norm of naming the home of the deceased. Indeed, by recounting something not recorded in the *Phaedo*, the poet enhances both the stature of his subject, since he implies that the departed is remembered elsewhere, and also his own authority, since he shows superior knowledge of the departed, whether personal or scholarly. Callimachus, finally, claims not only that he avoids well–worn tales, but conversely that he also recounts nothing "unattested" (fr. 612). Provided these proclamations are trustworthy, the burden of proof falls on any who would contend that he simply invented either the story or its details.

Name and theme alike conspire to evoke a companion of Aristippus. But where could Callimachus have learned about Cleombrotus? Any number of works may have recorded the suicide, but one likely source was the philosophical literature that Callimachus addressed in his scholarship and exploited elsewhere in his poetry. Anecdotes about earlier philosophers were abundant, not least about the interactions of Plato and Aristippus (Giannantoni IV A frs. 15–43; cf. Riginos 101–8). This lore, whether studiously collected or maliciously purveyed, enjoyed popularity from the start (Podlecki; Riginos 204–6; Owen). One of the more scurrilous scandal–mongers was Aristippus' own grandson (Giannantoni IV A frs. 152–7), who ascribed eight epigrams to Plato (Diog. Laert. 3.29–32).[30] Somewhat more reliable was Neanthes, whose biographies of "eminent men" included Plato (*FGrH* 84 F 20–2) and described the deaths of Heraclitus (F 25), Empedocles (F 28), and Timon the misanthrope (F 35). Most worthy of note here, perhaps, is Hermippus, the younger colleague of Callimachus, who composed lives of numerous philosophers, major and minor, from the earliest to the recent. He naturally recounted how they died, and a high proportion of the surviving fragments describe outlandish deaths (frs. 5–61 Wehrli). Callimachus, then, could have found stories about Cleombrotus either in earlier dialogues or tracts, or in a more recent biography. Struck by the strange anecdote, he could easily construct a pointed epitaph around details that Plato omits, much as he evidently did in an epitaph for Menander—allegedly also a student of philosophy (Diog. Laert. 5.36)—whose death he situated in Athens (fr. 396).

The story might also have appeared in Attic comedy, where philosophers were a favorite target. Most infamous is the *Clouds*, which Plato held partly

[30]The current consensus is that Plato did not compose the epigrams: Ludwig; Page 161–81. But (*pace* Wilamowitz 1881: 48–53) the Aristippus who quoted these epigrams is probably the Cyrenaic's grandson (see Gianantoni IV B): his work mentions no figures later than the early third century.

responsible for Socrates' death (*Apol.* 19bc), and which Callimachus definitely knew (fr. 454). He also catalogued Middle and New Comedy (Pfeiffer 1968: 128–30) and is cited as an authority on the works of Alexis (fr. 439) and Diphilus (fr. 440). Middle comedy spoofed Cyrenaic hedonism: Alexis pokes fun at Aristippus in his *Galateia* (fr. 37 K–A); and Epicrates' *Anti-Lais* mocks the famous courtesan whose affair with Aristippus was notorious (frs. 2–3 K–A).[31] Philosophical asceticism was also caricatured, as poets repeatedly capitalized on popular stereotypes of philosophers as lean and ragged and eager to die—a stereotype humorously acknowledged in the *Phaedo* (64ab) and exploited also by Callimachus (fr. 191.61–3: West 1971; cf. Cameron 1991, for similar jokes about poets). Several plays with titles alluding to Pythagoras—including two by Alexis, *Pythagorizer* (frs. 201–3 K–A) and *Tarantines* (frs. 222–4 K–A)—suggest that philosophers promote starvation. The *Tarantines*, in fact, parodies Pythagorean views about the afterlife (fr. 222) that sound remarkably like ideas found in the *Phaedo* (cf. 61e, 63bc). Cleombrotus, then, was an apt target for satire either for associating with hedonists, or like Chaerephon (Arethas sch. *Ap.* 20e) and Apollodorus (*Symp.* 173c–e; cf. Ath. 11 507ab) before him, for practicing and preaching austerity. Whether or not he actually killed himself, little imagination would be needed to satirize him as ready to die and to link him with Plato, whose Academy had a reputation for asceticism (Alexis fr. 25 K–A, Aristophon *Plato* fr. 8).

Still another plausible source for the story, finally, is local history. The very next case in the *Ibis* after Ovid alludes to Cleombrotus and his fellow leapers is the lurid death of another Ambraciot, Phalaecus (501–2). A scholium on the lines reports that Ovid took the tale from Callimachus (fr. 665). He in turn probably found it in local chronicles. At least, that is where Nicander found it (fr. 38), according to Antoninus Liberalis, who traces the tale back to the "Ambracica" of Athanadas (*Met.* 4=*FGrH* 303). As a native Ambraciot, Cleombrotus might have appeared there too, perhaps in connection with the celebrated Leucadian cliffs, from which Sappho and many other more or less legendary characters supposedly leapt to their deaths (Strabo 10.2.9, quoting from Menander's *Leucadia*, frs. 255–62 Körte; cf. Phot. *Bib.* cod. 191 153a7–b22). Although I find this possibility less likely—where Cleombrotus died is nowhere recorded—it illustrates the immense range of material on which Callimachus drew, and from which he could have devised *Ep.* 23.

[31] Cf. Hermesianax fr. 7.95–9, and Giannantoni IV A frs. 86–100. Cleombrotus and Epicrates were both native Ambraciots (Ath. 10 422f). For Alexandrian use of Attic comedy, see Pfeiffer 1968: 105, 132, 224.

To see where Callimachus could find a story, however, is not to understand how he uses it or to appreciate what he does with it. For that, we need to return to the Cyrenaics and Cicero's report of the attempt to muzzle Hegesias. Like the ambiguous title of his book, his ideas were widely misunderstood. Suicidal philosophers had become almost proverbial. Legend had it that Empedocles leapt into Aetna, and that first Pythagoras (Diog. Laert. 8.40), then Democritus (9.43; cf. A 28–9 D–K) died by refusing to eat.[32] Starving to death, in fact, was philosophically fashionable in the third century: Menedemus (Diog. Laert. 2.143) and the Stoics Zeno and Cleanthes (Lucian, *Macrob.* 19; cf. Diog. Laert. 7.176) all ended their lives by fasting (van Hooff 41–7), as did the infamous Dionysius of Heraclea, dubbed "the convert" for deserting Zeno to join the Cyrenaics (7.166–7). The untutored or credulous would readily mistake asceticism for total abstinence (cf. Leonidas 55 GP), and it must have been easy for polemicists and critics to depict Hegesias and his followers as a wretched lot longing to escape this world. But his hedonism, though paradoxical, was no misnomer. He dwelt on suffering not to induce depression or encourage suicide but to lower people's expectations; for the Cyrenaics maintained that sorrow results solely from *unforeseen* ills, and they tried to minimize suffering by eliminating the influence of surprise. As Cicero explains, reflecting on all *possible* misfortunes was their preferred method for reducing the pain of any that *actually* occur (*Tusc.* 3.28–34). In sharp contrast with the pessimism of archaic poetry, this Cyrenaic "premeditation of ills" (as Cicero calls it) was supposed to induce fortitude, not despair.[33]

Callimachus depicts a Platonic dialogue inspiring a companion of the first Cyrenaic to end his life; some of the poet's contemporaries thought the disquisitions of another Cyrenaic would induce others to do the same. Are the parallels fortuitous? Cicero thought not. He cites both cases to indicate that philosophy can eliminate the fear of death; fortitude, not suicide, is what he com-

[32]The tale that Empedocles leapt into the volcano, though probably untrue, was discussed in the lifetime of Callimachus: Diog. Laert. 8.67–72 reports that Hermippus (fr. 27 Wehrli) and Hippobotus accepted but Timaeus (*FGrH* 566 F 6) rejected the tale told by Heracleides (frs. 83–5 Wehrli); it appears in some of the same contexts as Cleombrotus does: Ovid *Ibis* 597–8, Lactantius *Div. Inst.* 3.18.5, Greg. Naz. 35.581 (Migne); see Chitwood. How Pythagoras died was also a topic of scholarly dispute: Diog. Laert. 8.39–41.

[33]The grim Archaic saying "best not to be born—or to die very soon" (Theognis 425–8 and often elsewhere) recurs in Hellenistic writers: Epicurus denounces it (*Ep. Men.* 126); Posidippus composed an elegant variation (22 GP); and Cicero, echoing Crantor's celebrated *Consolation* (fr. 5 Mette), concludes his discussion of death in *Tusc.* 1 with a gallery of exempla on the same theme (1.112–16; cf. *Phd.* 62a).

mends. But why does he applaud both, when Cleombrotus died and both Hegesias and his spokesman in "Persevering" lived on? Recalling the fatal effect of reading Plato justifies an edict against Hegesias only if Plato also deserves censure—a verdict utterly unimaginable for Cicero, who ranks Plato, and especially because of the *Phaedo*, highest in the pantheon of philosophers (cf. *Fin.* 5.7). Hence, if the tale of Cleombrotus offers any moral for Hegesias, it is the reverse: silencing the Cyrenaic was absurd, since Plato is far more dangerous, and banning his books would be outrageous.

The same topical point may also play a part in the epigram. Callimachus emphasizes that Cleombrotus experienced no grave ill before committing suicide (ἄξιον οὐδὲν ἰδὼν θανάτου κακόν). This and the explanation that the *Phaedo* drove him to his end suggest that he expected an afterlife better than this life (cf. 63bc). That in turn implies that he had a dim view of human life, and in the absence of *actual* ills, the most plausible reason for his pessimism is *reflection* on ills, exactly as Hegesias advocated. Though no companion of Aristippus lived to read Hegesias, anyone who read the *Phaedo* encountered similar ideas there. But since the motives Callimachus implicitly ascribes to Cleombrotus match at least in part the ideas Hegesias espoused, *Ep.* 23 can be read as an indirect appeal for intellectual liberty and freedom of expression.

Ptolemy Soter and Philadelphus after him sought to recreate in Alexandria the cultural ambiance of the leading Greek πόλεις, and whatever their motive, be it solidifying their power, enhancing their prestige, or simply procuring amenities they enjoyed, both devoted significant effort and expense to attracting leading intellectuals and poets to their frontier court. Yet the silencing of Hegesias, like the early expulsion of Theodorus, shows that their interest in free expression had its limits.[34] The Ptolemies could of course point to precedents elsewhere. Even Athens had taken measures over the years to inhibit the expression of unconventional ideas. Yet recent moves by two of Soter's arch–rivals may have added political significance to the issue of censorship. When Demetrius Poliorcetes gained control of Athens in 307, the city passed a decree all but stifling higher education, apparently with his approval (Alexis fr. 99 K–A).[35] Lysimachus as well, at some point before his death in 281, reportedly

[34]Only distantly related is the case of Sotades of Maroneia, who was put to death not for intellectual license but for obscene remarks about the royal family itself (Ath. 14 620f–21b); his slander posed a direct threat to political authority, whereas Hegesias was at most a hazard to public health.

[35]The decree was rescinded in 306, probably after Poliorcetes left for Cyprus, where he crushed Soter's troops; see Lynch 103–4, 116–18; Habicht 7–10. This was presumably the chain of events that brought Demetrius of Phaleron to Alexandria; for what he may have

banished philosophers from his realm (Ath. 13 610e). To champion Hellenic traditions of παρρησία would at least be a strategic ploy that could enhance Ptolemaic prestige and win favor throughout the Greek world.

If attacks on Hegesias and Theodorus were at all recent, open defiance or proclamations would be risky and probably futile. After all, if Alexandria imitated Athenian censorship, it could also repeat its mistakes. A more cautious way to affirm the advantages of tolerance would be to recall misinterpretations of earlier philosophers who by then enjoyed wide renown. Especially potent would be parallels with the infamous prosecution of Socrates and his celebrated death as recounted by Plato. Socrates had come to be viewed by many as a martyr to philosophy, and his condemnation was widely considered a blot on his city's reputation. But the counts on which he had been convicted, impiety and "destroying the young" (*Ap.* 24bc), were exactly those revived by the Ptolemaic court, the former against Theodorus, and the latter, in the most literal sense, against Hegesias. Thus, by evoking the *Phaedo*, Callimachus recalls the nobility of its occasion and subject; and by depicting its effect on an earlier Cyrenaic reader, he suggests that talking to Socrates or reading Plato poses dangers at least as great as those of listening to lectures by Hegesias.

4. Callimachus and Plato

I do not mean to suggest that the epigram is a diatribe against censorship or that topical allusions exhaust its themes. But its density of reference makes it more than a memorial for a victim of philosophy. What stands out is nothing personal—no intimate detail about the departed as in the epitaphs Callimachus composed for Crethis (*Ep.* 16) and Nicoteles (*Ep.* 19)—but rather, as in his lines on victims of the sea (*Ep.* 17, 18), the strange cause of death, which is withheld until the closing line. A dramatic opening creates a mood of grave misfortune and establishes a tragic tone. Callimachus, in effect, casts Cleombrotus as a Euripidean martyr. His apostrophe to the Sun echoes the parting words of Alcestis, whose first word is Ἄλιε (244, cf. 206) and whose last is χαῖρ' (*Alc.* 391; cf. 179, 625–7, 741–6, and 1003–4); and his leap into darkness recalls the suicides of Phaedra and others (*Hipp.* 828–9, *Supp.* 1038–40). An exalted tone is sustained throughout the first distich by crasis (ὠμβρακιώτης), elision (ἦλατ'), Ionicism (εἶπας, τείχεος, Ἀΐδην), metonymy (Ἥλιε), and personification (if Ἀΐδην for Ἄιδος is sound). But altering the mood abruptly, the second distich forsakes lofty diction for a plain style

contributed to discussions of censorship, and for evidence of earlier Athenian decrees against intellectuals, see Dover 1976: 37–40.

and describes Plato's role in utterly colorless terms. So radical a shift in tone intensifies the paradox disclosed at the end: Cleombrotus plunged to his death not to escape any suffering—as underscored by ἰδών for παθών—but because he read a philosopher's book.

Most modern critics find these contrasts sardonic. But the epitaph, while certainly far from ponderous, is hardly derisive, least of all toward Plato. The sequence of presentation focuses attention on his dialogue: whereas Cleombrotus promptly departs from life and thereby from our view, the *Phaedo* enters graced with a periphrastic title and survives its reader. Callimachus uses similar devices to magnify other works: he emphasizes his admiration for the *Capture of Oichalia* by presenting a formulaic summary of its contents instead of simply naming its title (*Ep.* 6);[36] he amplifies his compliment to Aratus by alluding to the art and learning displayed in the *Phainomena* but leaving the work itself unnamed (*Ep.* 27; see Bing 1990); and the "nightingales" in *Ep.* 2 quite likely allude to the graceful music of Heraclitus' poetry (Hopkinson 249). In all these epigrams, Callimachus implies that the work enjoys sufficient renown to be recognized without being named. Moreover, the language he uses in each case reflects the tenor of the work he praises. Like the epic periphrasis for an epic and the learned pun about a poem of vast learning, the shift in tone midway in the epitaph for Cleombrotus actually imitates the dialogue it describes. As in the *Phaedo* itself, which opens with Xanthippe weeping but quickly attains serenity when Socrates begins to converse with his friends (60ab), the opening pathos of Cleombrotus leaping to his death promptly gives way to calm with the advent of philosophy, and the epitaph ends in repose. The transition from grandeur to simplicity, then, reflects the philosopher's triumph over mortality and his attainment of tranquility after death. Instead of praising Plato directly, as Simias of Rhodes does in an epitaph (6 GP) that rivals the veneration of Aristotle's elegiacs for his teacher (fr. 673 Rose) and was supposedly inscribed on the philosopher's tomb (Diog. Laert. 3.43), Callimachus devised an epigram that demonstrates dramatically the power of Plato's work and, in its implicit praise of Plato, belongs with what Wilamowitz (1920: 57) called "book epigrams."[37]

[36] *Ep.* 6, of course, extols a poem at some expense to its poet, though one whom Plato also spoofed somewhat less delicately (*Rep.* 600b); cf. fr. 397, which credits Callimachus with an admiring epigram on the *Margites* as well.

[37] Cf. Cicero's *graviter et ornate scriptum librum* (*Scaur.* 4). Evidence that Callimachus read Plato is scarce and indirect; but he probably catalogued his works (Pfeiffer 1968: 131), and Hunter suggests that the prologue of the *Aetia* was influenced by the *Ion* and *Phaedrus*.

Quite apart from its effect on Cleombrotus, the *Phaedo* provides the perfect focus for this praise. Both in its arguments for immortality and in its depiction of Socrates meeting death with absolute equanimity, it provides a powerful exhortation to philosophy. And in its blend of dramatic art and theoretical reasoning, it handles subjects of the most profound urgency with a restraint that achieves a literary masterpiece equalled, if at all, only in the *Symposium*. But the *Phaedo* also recounts, particularly in its initial stages, some remarkable details about the exemplary philosopher that Callimachus could hardly have failed to notice. Especially striking is the report that Socrates composed poetry: the first thing his friends ask is why he has turned to poetry while in prison (60d). His venture into verse, he explains, is to ensure that he does not die without obeying a recurring dream that long ago bid him "compose music and make it your work" (μουσικὴν ποίει καὶ ἐργάζου, 60e). This dream he had previously interpreted as referring to philosophy, "greatest art of the Muses"; but imminent death convinces him to take the precaution of "making music" in more conventional forms as well (60e–61b). In describing philosophy as a divine vocation enjoying the patronage of the Muses, of course, Plato adapts traditional motifs that Callimachus himself exploits to characterize his own poetic impulse (*Aet.* fr. 1.21–9; cf. 1.37–8). Both Socrates and Callimachus disavow any spirit of rivalry in heeding their call (60de; *Hymn* 2.105–13, *Ep.* 21.4), and they devote themselves to some of the same subjects, each composing a hymn to Delian Apollo and each setting fables by Aesop to verse (60d, 61b, cf. Socrates' new fable at 60bc; *Hymn* 2, and esp. fr. 192).[38] Even Socrates' lifelong avoidance of "popular poetry" (τὴν δημώδη μουσικήν, 61a) finds an echo in Callimachus' proclamation, in the programmatic *Ep.* 28, that he "abhors all things popular" (πάντα τὰ δημόσια; cf. fr. 1.25–9). Despite their very different callings, finally, both proclaim themselves sacred servants of Apollo (84e–85b; fr. 1.21–8).

It is hard to believe that Callimachus was unimpressed by these parallels to his own career and vision of the poet's vocation. What displays the literary power of Plato, however, is the effect his work had on Cleombrotus. As any

[38]Even if Plato invented the story of Socrates composing poetry, which I find very unlikely, many believed it: see Dio *Orat.* 43.10, Plut. *quo. adul.* 16c; according to Diog. Laert., who records the opening lines of two compositions (2.42), Socrates addressed his hymn to both Apollo and Artemis, and he set Aesop into elegiacs. Callimachus uses Aesop repeatedly in his *Iambics*: in addition to fr. 192 (esp. 15–17; from *Fab.* 240 Perry), see the allusion to the same legend in fr. 191.26–31 (see *Dieg.*; cf. Test. 20–32 Perry), fr. 194 (cf. *Fab.* 213 Perry), and fr. 196.22 (cf. *Fab.* 226 Perry); Hutchinson 51–4 detects further use of fables in frs. 197, 199, 201, 203.

reader of the *Phaedo* could recall, its discussion of immortality repeatedly proclaims the attractions of the afterlife for the wise and pious, not least in a vivid myth that depicts death as a release for the virtuous (114bc). In recounting a reader's suicide, then, Callimachus singles out an event comparable with effects achieved by the masters of archaic iambic. Unlike Hipponax and Archilochus, of course, who drove their enemies to suicide with stinging abuse, Plato inspired an avid student of philosophy to seek the purification of his soul.[39] Yet all three, despite their very different work, possessed the artistic power to convince people to flee this life. Although the *Phaedo* has Socrates forbid suicide explicitly (61c, 62bc), it also has him jest that the poet Evenus should follow him to the grave as soon as possible (61bc); and he is so emphatic about philosophy being a preparation for death that two of his companions question whether suicide may not be warranted for some (61d–62a). Readers like Cleombrotus thus deserve pardon for finding Plato's explanation as unconvincing as Simmias and Cebes found Philolaus' (61de), or for being more impressed by Plato's lengthy argument for immortality and the prospect of eternal salvation he discloses in the concluding myth.[40] There is no patent folly in the resolution Cleombrotus made after reading the *Phaedo*. On the contrary, the dialogue offers strong incentives for responding the way he did, and his resolution bespeaks devotion to philosophy, as he hastened where the dialogue said he could expect "to attain the object of his life–long love" (οὗ διὰ βίου ἥρων τυχεῖν, 68a).

The eulogy for Plato is reinforced by another point of diction. The epitaph owes its survival primarily to collections of epigrams and philosophical debates, but also to ancient grammarians. The culprit, aptly enough, is γράμμα, which several authorities casually glossed as σύγγραμμα (e.g. *Sch. Dion. Thr.* 163.31–164.4; cf. *Parm.* 128a3). But the words are not always equivalent, and Callimachus does more than exercise the poet's license to drop prepositions. He and contemporary poets reserved the word primarily for poetic works, typically epic or elegiac, and usually in praise: *Ep.* 6 extols Homeric epic; fr.

[39]Callimachus, though he explicitly renounces their deadly animus, was certainly familiar with the tales of Hipponax driving Bupalus to suicide (see fr. 191.1–4; cf. Leonidas 58 GP, Theocritus 13 GP, test. at Hippon. fr. 1 West) and of Archilochus attacking Lycambes and his family (see frs. 380 and 544; cf. Dioscorides 17 GP, test. preceding Archil. frs. 30 and 172 West).

[40]Interest in Pythagorean ideas about suicide persisted at least into the third century; see Clearchus fr. 38 Wehrli. The key passage in the *Phaedo* was problematic in antiquity, and the ban on suicide remains puzzling (Taran; cf. Bostock 16–20). Plato cites divine compulsion to excuse Socrates for "killing himself" (62c).

64.7 refers to Simonides' epitaph; fr. 532 probably commends Philitas; fr. 468 mentions scrolls of arcana; fr. 398 criticizes the *Lyde*, which Asclep. 32 GP praises; Leonidas 101 GP admires Aratus; and Posidippus 24 GP claims the Muses' favor. In using γράμμα, then, Callimachus exploits the literary connotations of the term to imply that Plato's dialogue ranks among the works of eminent poets. He also highlights the role of written texts, as he does again by postponing the final participle to make ἀναλεξάμενος the last word. Both choices of diction emphasize that Cleombrotus was profoundly moved not by direct encounters with Socrates but rather, in accord with the motif of Peter Bing's "well–read muse," by *reading* Plato's *writing*.[41] Despite the philosopher's own worries about the dangers inherent in interpreting anything written, Callimachus here ascribes the power of his ideas not to oral dialectic but to his artistic recreation of arguments. The homage to Plato is redoubled: his eloquence, the poet implies, enables his thought to transcend mortality.

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[41]Bing 1988. I think it unlikely that Callimachus envisioned a *cursory* reading: though ἀναλεξάμενος could mean "perused," it is often equivalent to ἀναγνούς; cf. Asclep. 32 GP, where "perused" would undermine praise of the *Lyde*.

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