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CONSIDERATIONS ABOUT PARTNERS
IN DIALOGUE IN CICERO'S *PARADOXA STOICORUM*

In memory of Prof. David Konstan

Introduction

Some scholars¹ have pointed out that Cicero's anti-Caesarian opposition emerges clearly from his philosophical works of 46-44 BC: philosophical and political concerns intermingle in diverse and nuanced ways across this literary production. In discussing philosophical topics, Cicero launches veiled attacks at the Caesarian dictatorship and at its views of ethics and Roman society.

Concerning Cicero's *Paradoxa Stoicorum*, Wassmann was the first to study the ways in which the treatise orchestrates pointed attacks against Caesar under the surface of the philosophical discussion²: op-

¹ Cf. Bringman 1971, 9-12; Heilmann 1982; Habicht 1990, 84-104, especially 90. G. Strasburger was among the first to discuss in a posthumous work (cf. Strasburger 1990) how Cicero's philosophical writings of 46-44 BC reveal a systematic polemic against Caesar. Carlos Lévy (1992) explored this idea in relation to Cicero's *Academica* and recognized in this writing «the noble and silent opposition of the last defendants of the Roman Republic against Caesar's tyranny». Wassmann (1996) remarks that Cicero's philosophical writings between 46-44 BC reveal a clear opposition to Caesar's dictatorship: the dedicatees of the writings, as well as the examples introduced by Cicero, are of opponents to Caesar. See also Lefevre 2001; Arweiler 2003; Steel 2005, especially 136-140. Gildenhardt 2007, 2, focused on *Tusculan Disputations* stating that «it is only in the *Tusculans* that Cicero manages to confront the challenges posed by Caesar to the senatorial tradition of republican government in a way that is equally compelling from an intellectual and literary point of view. The work, through its very design, registers an outraged protest against the dictator and offers a practical ethics for a Rome in which the Republic has been lost and a despot reigns supreme». Therefore, this writing represents an incitement and call to rebellion against Caesar's tyranny, which subverted the state. E. Lefèvre (2008) returned to the same topic, offering a more nuanced analysis. For a different interpretation cf. E. Malaspina 2013, 57-69: according to Malaspina Cicero's attitude towards Caesar always (i.e. in the same year and even in the same writing) swings between opposition and admiration for his clemency as well as desire to be accepted.

² Wassmann 1996, 96-138. At p. 75 Wassmann states: «Anfang Juli 46 hatte Cicero bereits den Brutus und die *Paradoxa Stoicorum* niedergeschrieben und herausgegeben, beides Schriften mit starken politischen Angriffen gegen Caesar». See also 131: «Die Vielzahl der Textstellen in der Abhandlung mit Bezug zur Zeitgeschichte ist ein Beleg dafür, daß



position to Caesar is evident in the choice of the dedicatee Brutus, in the mention of Cato at the very beginning of the work, and in the example of Clodius introduced in the fourth *paradoxon*, which sounds like an attack directed against Caesar.

Alongside Wassmann, other scholars³ have argued that Cicero's *Paradoxa* is not just a rhetorical exercise discussing for amusement six paradoxical statements of the Stoics, but it is a «fighting work»⁴, rich in allusions and references to contemporary Rome. However, the anti-Caesarian opposition in the *Paradoxa* has not received further study: this lack of attention is due also to the scarcity of publications concerning Cicero's *Paradoxa*, which remains a neglected treatise among Cicero's philosophical writings.

Although Cicero's attitude towards Caesar was not always the same and varied significantly, for instance, in the autumn of 46 BC compared to the spring of that same year, some elements of anti-Caesarian opposition seem to appear in *Paradoxa*⁵. This criticism is never direct but is disguised under the pretext of discussing Stoic paradoxical statements. Therefore, what Fiori noted in his book *Bonus vir* is also true in the case of the *Paradoxa*: opposition to Caesar is mediated through philosophical analysis⁶.

I will add to Wassmann's analysis that even the choice of interlocutors in Cicero's *Paradoxa* underscores his opposition to Caesar.

der Konsular mit der Schrift eine gegen Caesar gerichtete politische Demonstration verbinden wollte – allerdings in verhüllter Form. An keiner Stelle wird der Machthaber selbst genannt; alle Bezüge zu ihm müssen durch den Leser geknüpft werden. Gleichwohl sind die Anspielungen für jeden, der sachkundig liest, unübersehbar. In ihrer politischen Absicht sind daher die *Paradoxa Stoicorum* dem Brutus an die Seite zu stellen».

³ See, for instance, Gelzer 1969, 272: «Auch die *Paradoxa Stoicorum* halt er für eine Caesarfeindliche Äußerung». See also Kumaniecki 1957, 113-134; Michel 1968, 223-223.

⁴ Cf. Molanger 1971, 24: Molanger defines Cicero's *Paradoxa* as «une œuvre de combat»; MacKendrick 1989, 91: «The rhetorical devices are not merely décor: this is a *fighting work*» (emphasis in the original). See also Lévy 1992, 125: «Et pourtant les œuvres de l'année 46 ont déjà leur spécificité, elles témoignent des événements récents et préparent la vaste production philosophique. [...] cette même année a été celle de la rédaction des *Paradoxes*, que Cicéron a présentés comme des exercices d'école et dont la recherche récente a montré qu'ils étaient en fait une méditation profonde sur les bouleversements de la réalité romaine et la première tentative de l'Arpinate pour transmuier son désarroi devant ceux-ci en œuvre philosophique».

⁵ Concerning this aspect see, for instance, Pardo 2008 and the sensible considerations on the problem in Malaspina 2013.

⁶ Cf. Fiori 2011, 32 ff.

The dialogical structure in Cicero's Paradoxa Stoicorum

In Cicero's *Paradoxa* the discussion of each *paradoxon* has a dialogical structure⁷: two interlocutors having opposite views debate the topic of the Stoic paradox.

In the preface it is Cicero himself who explains the method he plans to employ in his discussion of the Stoic paradoxes: *Accipies igitur hoc parvum opusculum [...] et degustabis genus exercitationum earum quibus uti consuevi, cum ea quae dicuntur in scholis θετικῶς ad nostrum hoc oratorium transfero dicendi genus* (PS 5). Through the expression *ad nostrum hoc oratorium transfero dicendi genus* Cicero hints at the Aristotelian teaching of the *argumentum in contrarias partes*, based on which each topic should be analyzed from opposite points of view⁸. Cicero explains he will apply to his discussion on the Stoic paradoxes the methodology of the New Academy, which he uses to structure most of the philosophical works written between 46-44 BC⁹, where he stages debates between opposite points of view on a topic. Cicero adopted this method because it gives his readers the opportunity to exercise their own judgement upon reflecting on systematically articulated opposite positions¹⁰.

⁷ Cicero's use of the dialogic form in his philosophical works has come to be appreciated far more in recent years. The pathbreaking article on Cicero's use of dialogue is Schofield, 2008, 63-84: he argues that Cicero's dialogic form in the philosophical works is a commitment to a method of inquiry and dialectical exchange which Cicero traced back to Socrates. See also E. Narducci 2005: «il metodo neoaccademico della *disputatio in utramque partem* perde nelle opere filosofiche ogni aspetto di tecnica sofistica per ritrovare piuttosto la sua vera vocazione, quella della ricerca di una verità non assoluta, ma probabile».

⁸ Aristotle trained young men in the discussion of both sides of a question: cf. Cic. *off.* 2, 8, *contra autem omnia disputantur a nostris, quod hoc ipsum probabile elucere non posset nisi ex utraque parte causarum esset facta contentio. Sed haec explanata sunt in Academicis nostris satis, ut arbitror, diligenter; Tusc.* 2, 9, *itaque mihi semper Peripateticorum Academiaeque consuetudo de omnibus rebus in contrarias partes disserendi non ob eam causam solum placuit, quod aliter non posset, quid in quaeque re veri simile esset, inveniri, sed etiam quod esset ea maxuma dicendi exercitatio; fin.* 5, 10, *ab Aristoteleque principe de singulis rebus in utramque partem dicendi exercitatio est instituta, ut non contra omnia semper, sicut Arcesilas, diceret, et tamen ut in omnibus rebus, quicquid ex utraque parte dici posset, expromeret; de Orat.* 3, 107 *ancipites disputationes, in quibus de universo genere in utramque partem disseri copiose licet, quae exercitatio nunc propria duarum philosophiarum putatur.*

⁹ Cf. Lockwood 2020, 49-59.

¹⁰ Woolf 2015, 15: «The follower of the skeptical Academy argues on both sides of a given question to achieve his aim to go the closest one can get to the truth». See also Brittain 2006, XI: «Cicero's choice of the adversarial dialogue as the appropriate form for the exposition of philosophy to his fellow-citizens was at least partly influenced by his own philosophical position as an Academic sceptic. [...] Each side is subjected to a critical

In the discussion of each *paradoxon* Cicero pits a character who shares the Stoic view put forward (generally Cicero himself) against another who lives according to principles opposite to what Stoic teaching recommends. The names of these characters are never mentioned directly by Cicero in the text. Likely Cicero trusted that the small circle of his readers should have been able¹¹ to infer the identity of these interlocutors through indications given in the text¹². However, these indications are less easily understandable for modern readers of the Ciceronian writing, and in some of the cases this has given rise to different interpretations.

My analysis will focus on the choice of partners in dialogue. The figures chosen as partners in dialogue in Cicero's *Paradoxa* are all closely related to Caesar; even Caesar himself makes an appearance. Cicero suggests through his philosophical analysis that men belonging to Caesar's circle and Caesar himself live according to values that are the opposite of the Stoic ethical principles discussed. The aim is not to establish or even outline any definitive anti-Caesarian position taken by Cicero. Nonetheless, underpinning this study is the consideration that Cicero wavered in his view of and relationship to the figure of Caesar in the different phases of Caesar's rise to power¹³.

Paradoxon 1

In the first *paradoxon* Cicero discusses the Stoic principle that virtue is the highest good. Cicero confronts this teaching with the view of some

examination, and the debate is left unsettled by the interlocutors. One implication of this method is that Cicero takes both the sides seriously and invites his readers to do the same. This means that we should be cautious in inferring Cicero's views directly from the arguments he presents as an interlocutor. The purpose of the dialogue is to investigate the arguments for and against Academic skepticism, not to show that one side is right».

¹¹ Cf. Wassmann 1996, 21: «Wenn allgemein vorausgesetzt wird, daß jede Opposition gegen den Diktator während des Bürgerkrieges mit hohem Risiko für Leben, Stellung und Vermögen verbunden war, dann sind nur Aussagen zu erwarten, die auf indirekte Weise die Meinung des Verfassers zu den politischen Verhältnissen und zum Machthaber ausdrücken. Gleichwohl mußten die Meinungsäußerungen so deutlich abgefaßt werden, daß ihr *Sinn* von den Adressaten verstanden werden konnte. Der Leserkreis der philosophischen Schriften kann in den Jahren des Bürgerkrieges nicht allzu groß gewesen sein».

¹² In some of the letters he wrote in 46 BC Cicero hints at issues concerning freedom of speech when navigating Caesarian society. Concerning these letters see McConnell, 2014, 181-183. At p.182 McConnell notes: «At 9.19.4 [Cicero] stresses to Paetus that any attempt to get past the limits on frank speech with humour and allusion is problematic, noting that Caesar is exceptionally skilled at identifying his jokes and barbs and that he requests reports on his comments and conversations daily».

¹³ I am indebted to the observations of an anonymous referee for this clarification.

unidentified characters whose values he doesn't share: *numquam mercule ego neque pecunias istorum neque tecta magnifica neque opes neque imperia neque eas quibus maxime adstricti sunt voluptates in bonis rebus aut expetendis esse duxi*. These characters who value such things as money, luxurious dwellings, power and pleasures are referred to in the text only by the pronoun *istorum* without any further specification. Therefore, it is not clear to whom Cicero is referring¹⁴. I believe that Cicero is referring to the newly rich men who could find in Epicureanism a philosophy able to justify their dissipation and who were the most fervent supporters of Caesar. It is well known that various men close to Caesar were followers of Epicureanism¹⁵.

¹⁴ Munno *ad loc.* just remarks that *istorum* is disparaging, Stella *ad loc.* believes that *istorum* refers to «i ricchi del tempo di Cicerone», while Marinone *ad loc.* explains: «riferito genericamente agli oppositori piuttosto che ai ricchi del tempo». So Lee *ad loc.* «referred to Cicero's imaginary opponents». According to Ronnick 1991 *istorum* is «a derogatory reference to Cicero's wealthy but anonymous opponents who are in actuality Epicureans, the chief rivals of the Stoics at that time». Badali remarks: «Ci si riferisce – con una connotazione spregiativa – a coloro che sostengono la causa avversa. Alcuni interpreti intendono che il riferimento sia agli Epicurei». However, *isti* without any further specification is used by Cicero also in other passages from the first book of the Republic (cf. *Rep.* 1, 1, *sed homo demens, ut isti putant, cum cogeret eum necessitate nulla, in his undis et tempestatibus ad summam senectutem maluit iactari*; 1, 2, *usus autem eius est maximus civitatis gubernatio et earum ipsarum rerum quas isti in angulis personant reapse non oratione perfectio*; 1, 3, *quae est enim istorum oratio tam exquisita, quae sit anteponenda bene constitutae civitati publico iure et moribus?*; 1, 6, *isti enim palam dicere, atque in eo multum etiam gloriari solent, se de rationibus rerum publicarum aut constituendarum aut tuendarum nihil nec didicisse umquam nec docere*) as well as in the *Hortensius*, which is chronologically close to the *Paradoxa*: cf. *Hort.* frg. 55 Grilli *Profecto omnis istorum disputatio, quamquam uberrimos fontes virtutis et scientiae continet, tamen conlata cum horum actis perfectisque rebus vereor ne non tantum videatur utilitatis adtulisse negotiis hominum quantam oblectationem otio*. Also, the interpretation of *isti* in all these passages from the *De re publica* and from the *Hortensius* is controversial. T. Maslowski (Maslowski 1974, 55-78) believes that Cicero is here alluding to the Epicureans, while some other scholars (Grilli 1962, 122-123; Grilli 1971, 15 ff.; Perelli, 1971, 390; Boyance, 1970, 185) believe that the identification of *isti* with the Epicureans is not as obvious as Maslowski thinks: they prefer to believe that *isti* in the passages from the Ciceronian Republic must be referred to all the philosophers who wanted to limit or eliminate participation in political life. On the issues of this identification see also Gargiulo 1980, 292-332.

¹⁵ On the association of the Epicureanism with the Caesarian entourage cf. Fiori 2011, 22-26: «È vero che tra i cesariani vi era la maggioranza dei più autorevoli politici romani di fede epicurea – benché non sia certo quale fosse il credo filosofico di Cesare». Fiori 2011, 22 n. 85, mentions various men linked to Epicureanism and belonging to the entourage of Caesar. For Cicero's opposition to Epicureanism charged with his opposition to Caesar in general see, for instance, Lefevre 2008, 259: «Schließlich sind Caesars Epicurean leanings für Ciceros ausgesprochene Abneigung gegen den Epikureismus verantwortlich gemacht worden – ein bemerkenswertes Argument»; Fiori 2011, 202: «Epicureanism and its political expression, the party of Caesar»; Maso 2015, 32-33: «Perché mai, pur vicino all'ambiente epicureo fin dalla giovinezza, egli sembra mantenere sempre un atteggiamento».

Paradoxon 2

In the second *paradoxon* Cicero discusses the Stoic idea that virtue is enough to achieve happiness: Cicero argues that virtue is sufficient for happiness in circumstances of incredible sufferings, such as threats of death and exile.

He develops his considerations by addressing an interlocutor (not directly named in the text) who made threats of death and exile against him¹⁶.

Cicero argues that, although facing threats of death and exile, he is happy thanks to his virtue. His addressee, however, is never happy because he has no virtue. Cicero accuses him of not knowing even the real meaning of the word virtue and using just its name: *nescis, insane, nescis quantas vires virtus habeat, nomen tantum virtutis usurpas*. This is perhaps a criticism of the use of the word *virtus* by the Epicureans who believed that virtues were all purely instrumental goods, valuable solely for the sake of the happiness they can bring to a person. Cicero's addressee is instead always tormented by infinite worries because of all his misdeeds¹⁷.

The identity of Cicero's interlocutor is unclear, although it is certainly one of Cicero's political enemies: according to some scholars it is Publius Clodius Pulcher¹⁸. For instance, Anthon believes the discussion of this second *paradoxon* to be an excerpt from a speech against Clodius Cicero had written earlier¹⁹. According to others, Cicero is here addressing Mark Antony: V. S. Tomelleri underlines that the Slavic translation of this second *paradoxon* by Cicero presents the annotation «Answer to Marcus Antonius»²⁰. Anthon remarks that the reference to Marcus Anto-

mento di netto rifiuto della prospettiva epicurea? [...] Può esser spia di qualcosa il fatto che gran parte dei cesaricidi appartenesse all'entourage epicureo?».

¹⁶ PS 17, *nescis insane nescis quantas vires virtus habeat; nomen tantum virtutis usurpas, quid ipsa valeat ignoras [...]; eum tu hominem terreto, si quem eris nactus, istis mortis aut exilii minis [...]. Mortem mihi minitaris ut omnino ab hominibus, an exilium ut ab improbis demigrandum sit?*

¹⁷ PS 17, *te miseriae te aerumnae premunt omnes, qui te beatum qui florentem putas, tuae libidines torquentur, tu dies noctesque cruciaris, cui nec sat est quod est et id ipsum ne non diuturnum sit futurum times, te conscientiae stimulant maleficiorum tuorum, te metus examinant iudiciorum atque legum, quocumque aspexisti ut Furiae sic tuae tibi occurrunt iniuriae, quae te suspirare libere non sinunt.*

¹⁸ Molager 1971, 27: «son exposé est dirigé contre P. Clodius et ceux qui lui ressemblent».

¹⁹ See Anthon 1848, 260: «It is better, however, to regard the whole piece as a fragment from an oration against Clodius, who had attacked Cicero on account of the alleged illegality of the condemnation of the followers of Catiline».

²⁰ Tomelleri 2013, 159-189.

nius recurs also in some of the manuscripts: «Some mss add “*O Marce Antoni!*” [...] the addition just mentioned (appears) to be a mere gloss»²¹.

I would argue that Cicero is not addressing here Clodius, but Mark Antony.

First of all, Clodius is the interlocutor of Cicero's fourth *paradoxon* where Cicero insists on his madness and mentions events and circumstances that clearly identify him. The topic of madness recalled by Cicero in the second *paradoxon* through the vocative *insane* should not necessarily be linked to Clodius: also, Mark Antony is often represented as mad (*furens, amens, demens*), and rage is one of the traits often associated to him²².

Mark Antony was notoriously a man under the protection of Caesar²³: for a decade he had been Caesar's lieutenant and Caesar's most trusted second in command²⁴. It was Caesar's money and backing that helped Antony to be elected as tribune in 49 BC and then praetor²⁵. After victories in 49 BC Caesar designated him *magister equitum* and assigned to him the control of Italy, so while Caesar was away in Egypt, Antony remained in Rome to govern Italy and maintain order²⁶. In 46 BC Caesar designated him as *flamen*, i.e. a priest devoted to his cult.

Paradoxon 3

The discussion of the Stoic *paradoxon* that all the faults are equal is developed by Cicero as a dialogue between a fictitious (Roman) interlocutor who has good common sense and an unidentified character who, however, seems to speak as a Stoic philosopher.

In this case it is not possible to say much about the identity of this fictitious (Roman) interlocutor because he is identified only by the verb *inquit* without any expressed subject. This kind of dialogical structure seems to be an element taken by Cicero from the Stoic-Cynic diatribe: cf.

²¹ Cf. Anthon 1848, 260.

²² Cresci Marrone 2013, 2.

²³ Cristofoli 2008, 23: «Antonio fu abile a comprendere che, mentre a Roma in quegli anni la situazione era convulsa [...], un personaggio stava conquistando ulteriori e vaste porzioni di dominio e legando il proprio nome ad un incipiente nuovo corso della storia: Giulio Cesare, cui Antonio aveva guardato con favore anche all'indomani del triumvirato, quando si era legato a Clodio e a cui lo avvicinavano il fatto che lo stesso Cesare era stato un legato di suo padre nel 73-71 e che aveva con lui una pur lontana parentela».

²⁴ Huzar 1978, 80.

²⁵ Goldsworthy 2010.

²⁶ Cf. Cristofoli 2008, 85-105.

Oltramare 1926, 11: «Il dibattito con un interlocutore fittizio è il più evidente di tutti i caratteri formali della diatriba: non viene precisata la personalità dell'interlocutore che apostrofa il filosofo in modo veemente. C'è un tratto che differenzia la diatriba e i dialoghi socratici: il fatto che l'avversario è vagamente designato dal pronome *τις*, o meno esplicitamente ancora, dal soggetto sottinteso dell'incidentale *φησὶ* che esprime l'opinione popolare che condanna il maestro filosofo». The use of elements coming from the Stoic-cynic diatribe in Cicero's *Paradoxa* has been documented by Oltramare²⁷.

Paradoxon 4

In the fourth *paradoxon* Cicero discusses together two Stoic ideas: all fools are mad, and every fool is in exile. In his discussion Cicero mentions just briefly the Stoic *paradoxon* on insanity, while after what seems to be a lacuna²⁸, the remaining extant part is focused on the Stoic *paradoxon* that every fool is in exile.

Cicero develops his discussion of this Stoic *paradoxon* as a sort of invective against the tribune Publius Clodius Pulcher²⁹. Scholars agree that the addressee of Cicero in the discussion of these two Stoic paradoxes is Publius Clodius Pulcher based on the references in the text³⁰. Cicero claims that the wicked man is in exile because he is bereft of law and his way of life is the opposite of one lived in accordance with the law—and he begins his discussion with his own experience of exile in 58-57 BC. In

²⁷ Oltramare 1926, 117-119.

²⁸ Some manuscripts indicate the presence of a lacuna after *dementem*: a lacuna is indicated clearly by a manuscript *recentior* belonging to the same family of A and the lacuna is accepted by Plasberg and many other editors. I believe that the existence of a lacuna is corroborated also by the unexpected change of topic in Cicero's discussion: there must have been something Cicero introduced in order to link the discussion of the Stoic *paradoxon* on insanity with the other Stoic *paradoxon* affirming that all the fools are in exile.

²⁹ PS 4, *ego vero te non stultum ut saepe, non improbum ut semper, sed dementem *****; [...] *quae est enim civitas? omnisque conventus etiam ferorum et immanium, omnisque etiam fugitivorum ac latronum congregata unum in locum multitudo? Certe negabis. Non igitur erat illa tum civitas, cum leges in ea nihil valebant cum iudicia iacebant cum mos patrius occiderat, cum ferro pulsus magistratibus senatus nomen in re publica non erat; praedonum ille concursus et te duce latrocinium in foro constitutum et reliquiae coniurationis a Catilinae furiis ad tuum scelus furoremque conversae, non civitas erat.*

³⁰ Molager 1971, 35: «Il n'est pas impossible, c'est même probable, que le texte de la phrase, qui sert d'exorde à tout ce IV^e Paradoxe s'applique également à P. Clodius»; Ronnick 1991, 122; Galli 2019, 217-218.

fact, in 58 BC Clodius introduced a law that threatened with exile anyone who executed a Roman citizen without a trial and this law was legislated to target Cicero specifically, likely as revenge for Cicero's execution of the ringleaders of Catiline's conspiracy in 63 BC. As a consequence of this law, Cicero had to go into exile in 58BC.

Cicero develops his discussion on this Stoic *paradoxon* by stating that bad people are always in exile even if they have never changed their land, while the sage cannot be exiled. Cicero attacks his addressee Clodius telling him that a fool is always in exile even if he never leaves his hometown. On the contrary, since the wise man cannot be in exile, he cannot be considered an exile even when he was forced by law to leave Rome. Cicero states that what makes a collection of people into a *civitas* is law: at the time when he was sent into exile, there was no state, since there were no trials and law was not respected. Therefore, he was not banished from a *civitas* which did not exist anymore, since it remained without laws and was full of thieves.

Wassman³¹ has already remarked that the attacks directed at Clodius in this *paradoxon* are in effect directed at Caesar.

Clodius had been notoriously protected by Caesar. At the time when Clodius was charged with sacrilege due to the *Bona Dea* scandal, a charge which carried a death sentence, Clodius was absolved thanks to the fact that he had been deferred for judgement to the college of the pontifices, and Caesar at that time was *Pontifex Maximus*. It was again Caesar's decision in March 59 BC as *Pontifex Maximus* to grant Clodius permission to be adopted into a plebeian family in order to allow him to run for tribune of the plebs³². In 58 BC Clodius became tribune of the plebs: throughout, Clodius remained loyal to Caesar (cf. Dio 38,12) and defended Caesar's interests.

³¹ Cf. Wassmann 1996, 123: «Die politischen Bedingungen der Abfassungszeit führen zu der Folgerung, daß er mit seinen Invektiven nicht eigentlich auf Clodius zielte, sondern auf den, der bei Ciceros Verbannung hinter dem vordergründig Agierenden gestanden hatte: Caesars»; 125: «Cicero führt zwar das Beispiel des Clodius an – wofür es gute Gründe genug gab – richtet seine Angriffe aber eigentlich auf Caesar».

³² Cf. Fezzi 2008, 47: «Cesare aveva aiutato Clodio quando voleva passare alla plebe: nel 59 Cesare con una legge presentata di persona ai 30 littori che facevano le veci dell'antica assemblea delle *curiae*, sotto lo sguardo vigile dell'augure Pompeo, permise al senatore Publio Fonteio, in realtà più giovane, di adottare Clodio. Clodio poi rifiutò la patria potestà di Fonteio, mantenendo invece lo status di plebeo, l'unica cosa che gli interessava veramente».

Cicero understood that Caesar was behind the machinations to facilitate Clodius's election as tribune of plebs; Cicero also felt that Caesar planned and indirectly brought about his exile, since Caesar wanted to neutralize his enemies³³.

Paradoxon 5

In the fifth *paradoxon* Cicero discusses the Stoic idea that only the wise man is free because he is free from any enslavement to passions, while everybody else is a slave. Cicero begins his discussion by addressing an unnamed interlocutor telling him that he is unworthy of the title of *imperator* because he is a slave to his passions: *Laudetur vero hic imperator aut etiam appelletur aut hoc nomine dignus putetur: imperator quo modo, aut cui tandem hic libero imperabit, qui non potest cupiditatibus suis imperare? Refrenet primum libidines, spernat voluptates, iracundiam teneat, coerceat avaritiam, ceteras animi labe repellat, tum incipiat aliis imperare cum ipse improbissimis dominis dedecori ac turpitudini parere desierit* (PS 5).

There is controversy over the identity of the person Cicero is addressing in this *paradoxon*. Molager believes that Cicero doesn't target a single person: «Ce paradoxe, à cause des traits multiples qu'il contient, ne semble pas viser qu'une seule personne. Cicéron pensait probablement à L. Licinius Lucullus ainsi qu'à Q. Hortensius. C'est l'avis de S. Stella (ed. *Paradoxa Stoicorum* Milan 1956, p. 52)»³⁴. Instead, according to other scholars, Cicero is here addressing Mark Antony. However, Ronnick in her commentary on Cicero's *Paradoxa* has convincingly pointed out: «Some scholars suggest that Mark Antony is the target of this *paradoxon*.

³³ Caesar certainly wanted to limit Cicero's influence and consequently he did nothing even when Clodius boasted that he would use his law *de capite civis Romani* to drive Cicero into exile, claiming that in his enterprise he had the endorsement of Caesar. In those years, both Cicero and Cato the Younger were Caesar's political enemies. Cf. Fezzi 2008, 48: «Ottenute dunque le province che desiderava, nella primavera del 58 a.C. Cesare si accinse a lasciare Roma per raggiungere i territori della Gallia. Prima, però, volle liberarsi di due avversari politici che in sua assenza avrebbero potuto tramare contro di lui. Il primo era Cicerone, il quale era stato console l'anno della congiura di Catilina e probabilmente conosceva i retroscena di quel fallito colpo di stato, compresa la sua complicità: un segreto che scottava, uno "scheletro nell'armadio", che Cicerone poteva tirare fuori al momento opportuno e usare contro il suo avversario. Cesare non agì personalmente contro i due avversari e affidò invece la faccenda a Publio Clodio, un nobile passato dalla parte dei popolari e dotato di largo seguito fra gli strati più bassi della plebe urbana. Clodio, eletto tribuno della plebe in quello stesso 58 a.C., riuscì a mandare in esilio Cicerone».

³⁴ Molager 1971, 37.

There are no clear indications that this is correct»³⁵. I have argued in an article recently published in *COL*³⁶ that Cicero's interlocutor is not Mark Antony but Caesar: the titles *imperator* and *princeps civitatis* identify him clearly³⁷. Other identifiers include his boast of descending from a distinguished family³⁸, his bragging about military conquests, the tyranny exercised over him by a demanding mistress, who could be identified as Egyptian queen Cleopatra, and other passions (for moray eels, for luxury resembling that of an oriental monarch and for artworks) he is enslaved to. These are all things suggesting the identification of Cicero's addressee in this *paradoxon* with Caesar. Wassmann acknowledged that sometimes in his philosophical writings of 46-44 BC Cicero introduces (without directly naming him) the character of Caesar, who can be recognized by the readers through hints scattered in the text³⁹.

Paradoxon 6

In the sixth *paradoxon* Cicero discusses the Stoic idea that the wise man alone is rich. Cicero develops his discussion by addressing an interlocutor who is very wealthy: scholars agree that this interlocutor is M. Licinius Crassus, who was renowned for his wealth⁴⁰. Crassus had extensive real estate holdings, owned silver mines, and possessed a huge number of slaves. However, in Cicero's view, Crassus is poor. In fact, at the

³⁵ Ronnick 1991, 128.

³⁶ Galli 2023, 59-67.

³⁷ PS 37, et «*sumus – inquit – principes civitatis*».

³⁸ Cf. PS 36, *ego vero istum non modo servum sed nequissimum servum, etiam si in amplissima familia natus sit, appellandum puto*.

³⁹ Wassmann 1996, 21-22: «Die Hauptindizien für eine konsequent durchgeführte politische Grundabsicht in Ciceros philosophischen Spätschriften faßt er in zwei Gruppen zusammen: 1 prosopographisch in Form der gegen Caesar gerichteten Personenwahl [...]. Es kommt darüber hinaus auch vor, daß Caesar selbst oder einer seiner Anhänger erwähnt wird».

⁴⁰ Cf. Molager 1971, 38: «D'après le paragraphe 45, il semble que le personnage visé soit ici M. Licinius Crassus, l'un des triumvirs de l'année 60»; Wassman 1996, 130; Ronnick 1991, 134. It was well known that there was hostility between Crassus and Cicero: Cicero disliked Crassus intensely for many reasons. First, there was the suspicion that Crassus was involved in the Catilinarian conspiracy of 63 BC. Furthermore, Cicero's dislike of Crassus was intensified by Crassus's connection to Clodius. Cicero recognized that Crassus was behind Clodius's moves to banish him in 58 BC: at the time of Cicero's exile Crassus was at Clodius' side. We also know that in a writing meant to be published after his death Cicero assigned openly to Crassus the responsibility for his exile, with Caesar's complicity: cf. Dio 39, 10, 1, ἐκείνος γὰρ τοῦτό τε οὐκ ἀπὸ γνώμης σφᾶς πεποιηκότας εἰδώς, τῆς φυγῆς αἰτιωτάτους γεγονέναι νομίζων; 10, 2.

beginning of his discussion, Cicero asks with a real paradoxical intent: *solusne dives? quid si ne dives quidem, quid si pauper etiam?* Sarcastically Cicero remarks that Crassus himself exhibits every day this anxiety of poverty because he is always looking for ways to increase his wealth⁴¹. Cicero accuses openly Crassus of having become wealthy thanks to the Sullan proscriptions and by extorting wills⁴².

Cicero insists on the idea that Crassus is poor by arguing from Crassus's own statements. Crassus himself used to say that he could not maintain his own army: *multi et te audiverunt cum diceres neminem esse divitem nisi qui exercitum alere posset suis fructibus, quod p. R. tantis vectigalibus iam pridem vix potest* (PS 45).

In Cicero's view, Crassus feels poor because he lacks the only real wealth which is virtue. According to the teaching of the Stoics, real wealth is to have something of genuine worth, which is only virtue⁴³. Virtue cannot be lost, be burnt or sunk in a shipwreck; therefore, it is the only real possession.

It is well known that Crassus was the political and financial patron of Caesar: he financed Caesar's election campaigns and supported Caesar's efforts to win command of military campaigns in Gaul⁴⁴. He was also behind Caesar's successful election to *pontifex maximus*⁴⁵. Once Crassus had helped Caesar to obtain his military commands, he helped his protégé to become a useful counterweight to Crassus's lifetime rival, Pompey. Caesar's mediation between Crassus and Pompey led to the creation of the First Triumvirate in 60 BC, consisting of Crassus, Pompey and Caesar. Then Crassus helped Caesar get elected to the consulship in 59 BC.

⁴¹ PS 43, *sin autem propter aviditatem pecuniae nullum quaestum turpem putas, cum isti ordini ne honestus quidem possit esse ullus, si cotidie fraudas decipis poscis pacisceris auferes eripis, si socios spoliis aerarium expilas, si testamenta amicorum expectas, aut ne expectas quidem atque ipse supponis, haec utrum abundantis an egentis signa sunt?*

⁴² PS 46, *qui possessiones vacuas qui proscriptiones locupletium qui caedes municipiorum qui illam Sullani temporis messem recordetur, qui testamenta subiecta.*

⁴³ Cf. SVF 3, 593 (= Stob. *ecl.* 2, 101, 14), τὸν δὲ κατ' ἀλήθειαν πλούτον ἀγαθὸν εἶναι λέγουσι, καὶ τὴν κατ' ἀλήθειαν πενίαν κακόν. Καὶ τὴν μὲν κατ' ἀλήθειαν ἐλευθερίαν ἀγαθόν, τὴν δὲ κατ' ἀλήθειαν δουλείαν κακόν. Δι' ὃ δὴ καὶ τὸν σπουδαῖον εἶναι μόνον πλούσιον καὶ ἐλεύθερον, τὸν δὲ φαῦλον τοῦναντίον πένητα; SVF 3, 589 (= Stob. *ecl.* 2, 100, 7), καθόλου δὲ τοῖς μὲν σπουδαίοις πάντα τὰγαθὰ ὑπάρχειν, τοῖς δὲ φαύλοις πάντα τὰ κακά; SVF 3, 603 (= Phil. *sobr.* 2, 56), οὐ πλούσιος, ἀλλὰ πᾶμπλουτος, ἐν ἀφθόνοις καὶ γνησίοις, οὐ χρόνω παλαιουμένοις, καινουμένοις δὲ καὶ ἡβῶσιν ἀεὶ τρυφῶν ἀγαθοῖς μόνοις; SVF 3, 600 (= Cic. *re p.* 1, 28), *quis vero divitiorem quemquam putet quam eum cui nihil desit, quod quidem natura desideret?*

⁴⁴ Cf. Marshall, 1976; Ward 1977.

⁴⁵ Cf. Gray 2013.

In my view, the intention of attacking Caesar through the choice of interlocutors could explain some incongruities in Cicero's *Paradoxa*.

For instance, at the time when Cicero was writing *Paradoxa* in the spring of 46 BC⁴⁶, both Clodius and Crassus were dead (the former had been killed in 52 BC, the latter died in 53 BC at the Battle of Carrhae). However, Cicero's tone in *paradoxon* 4 as well as in *paradoxon* 6 is of a vehement invective, as if Clodius and Crassus were still alive. Mackendrick underlined that, although Clodius and Crassus seem alive in Cicero's *Paradoxa*, that should not let the reader think that Cicero composed *Paradoxa* before 53-52 BC. This impression is due to the fact that Cicero is using the apostrophe, a standard rhetorical device⁴⁷.

But, why in the spring of 46 BC Clodius and Crassus, who had died a long time before, still bothered Cicero so much as to justify the vehement tone of his invective?

In my view, Cicero feared the consequences of Caesar's unlimited power: in April 46 BC Caesar was appointed dictator for 10 years and the dictatorship granted him near absolute power in both theory and in practice. For his discussion on the Stoic paradoxes Cicero recalls events taken from the past involving Clodius, Mark Antony and Crassus as cases that demonstrate with concrete evidence the moral values according to which prominent figures close to Caesar lived. Those examples allow Cicero to show that Caesar and his entourage are dangerous from an ethical point of view. Therefore, using the cover of the philosophical discussion on Stoic paradoxes Cicero launches attacks on Caesar and the men around him, even if these are long since gone.

⁴⁶ Concerning the *Paradoxa*'s date of composition cf. Malaspina 2004: «Kumaniecki 1970a, 170 i *Paradoxa* furono composti e pubblicati nella primavera del 46; Häfner 1928, 98 l'opera fu finita al più tardi a metà aprile 46; Molager (BL), 14-15: opera composta ad inizio primavera (probabilmente febbraio/marzo); D in DG 6, 246: Inizio aprile. Nel proemio dei *Paradoxa* Catone è presentato come ancora in vita, ma questo non basta per datare tutta l'opera all'anno 46, poiché Cicerone ha a disposizione vari proemi tra i quali scegliere per le sue opere: *Att.* 16, 6, 4. Decisivo è invece il fatto che Cicerone si avvicina a M. Bruto, dedicatario dell'opera, solo nell'anno 46; il contenuto, infine, per la sua affinità con il *De finibus*, fa pensare che sia stato scritto durante l'inizio delle ricerche per quell'opera, nell'anno 46: *Att.* 12, 6a; Büchner 1964, 349: Opera anteriore al *Cato*, che è composto probabilmente in estate».

⁴⁷ Mackendrick 1989, 333 n. 5: «Clodius was murdered in 52. His being addressed here as though he were living is apostrophe, a standard rhetorical device; it does not prove that C. wrote *paradoxon* 2 in 52 or earlier. The same reasoning applies to the allusion (6.45) to Crassus who died in 53».

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