The breadth of Dieter Lührmann's learning is revealed in his bibliography. Two of his articles especially drew my attention when they first appeared, for they confirmed the work done by David L. Balch, one of my students at Yale, that theretofore unexplained ancient philosophical treatments of household management provided the context for the NT household codes.¹ Balch and Lührmann had worked independently of each other, but both demonstrated the importance of looking at ancient philosophy beyond Stoicism, whose relevance to the study of the NT has been well established.² It was sheer joy, a little more than a decade later, to welcome Dieter Lührmann to Yale, where he spent the spring semester with us in 1989.

In this homage to our honoree, I wish to draw attention to some Epicurean elements in Paul’s first letter to the Thessalonians. This letter is shot through with moral philosophical traditions,³ but its contacts with the Epicureans have so far mostly escaped notice.⁴ This contribution is an ἄρραβών on the fuller treatment in my Anchor Bible commentary on the letter, which will soon appear. Epicureanism was once thought to be of

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³ See the various discussions in my Paul and the Popular Philosophers (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1989).

importance to the study of Paul, but then fell out of favor, partly because of a perceived excess in the drawing of parallels, but mostly, one suspects, because the Epicurean materials are more difficult for NT scholars to work with than are the more familiar Stoic sources. The situation has begun to change, partly because of the renewed interest in ancient discussions of friendship and in the practice of psychagogy.

With the Epicureans now having caught the eye of scholars, perhaps bringing them into the conversation about 1 Thessalonians will not appear more incongruous than the Peripatetic, Epicurean, Neopythagorean, Middle Platonic and other texts that Balch, Lührmann and Klaus Thraede introduced into the conversation about the NT Haustafeln. In this article I shall draw attention to Paul’s use of Epicurean elements in two contexts, the discussions of eschatology and social morality.

### An Epicurean Slogan

Paul’s eschatological discussion in 1 Thess 4:13–5:11 makes use of Jewish apocalyptic traditions, and the history of the interpretation of the letter shows that attention has been almost exclusively focused on Paul’s application of those traditions to the situation in Thessalonica. In 5:3, however, it has been thought, εἰρήνη καὶ ἀσφάλεια is the equivalent of *pax et securitas*, a political slogan that described conditions produced by the *Pax Romana*.

Situating the slogan in political propaganda is made easier by the fact that it does not appear in apocalyptic writings nor in the OT passages (Jer 6:14; 8:11 [not in the LXX]; Ezek 13:10) of which commentators are reminded.

The political interpretation of the slogan, however, is dubious, and is not supported by the unlikely derivation of παρουσία (4:15) and ἀπάντησις (4:17) from language describing, respectively, the arrival and meeting of

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5 E.g., by Norman W. De Witt, St. Paul and Epicurus (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1954).

