

"Setting Before the Eyes"

Post by "Don" of January 30, 2022 at 12:06 AM

I realized I could get online access to Philodemus's On Anger (Philodemus, On anger / by David Armstrong and Michael McOsker. Atlanta: SBL Press, 2020) through one of the university libraries. What I've done is copy Columns 1-5 and then highlight where the phrase in question shows up. I apologize for the disjointed text. There are lengthy passages of each papyrus leaf that are intact for the most part, allowing long texts, but they are broken up at the top of the rolls. So, here is what I have so far. All text is copied. I haven't included any commentary of my own. There are also mentions of the therapeutic technique in On Frank Criticism but I don't have an English translation for that one, so I may have to puzzle through the Greek on my own. For now, here are the passages mentioning the "setting before the eyes" explicitly in On Anger, keeping in mind the book goes on for 357 pages with only a small introduction. Most of it is Greek on one page, English translation on the other. There are a lot of details in dealing with the patient/student that I haven't included here which could flesh out the technique but simply do not use that phrase:

From Column 1: From this point on, the papyrus unrolled very cleanly, and there are no major problems with stratigraphy or order, except for the fragments of tops pasted in above the columns (frags. A- H), some of which cannot be securely placed.

Column 1

[circa seventeen lines missing or untranslatable]

"...[nor do] I [deny?] this. For it is obvious to all that, just as that is an evil, so is this." [7] By such arguments, indeed, he (sc. Timasagoras) undertook (to prove) that "blaming (anger) is ridiculous," but idly, as is his custom. [12] Now, if he were rebuking those who only blame (anger) and do little or nothing else about it, like Bion in his On Anger and Chrysippus in the Therapeutikos Logos of his On Emotions , he would be taking a reasonable position. [20] As it is, in supposing that the general idea, (i.e.,) putting the consequent evils before one's eyes, is ridiculous and raving, he him[self is rav]ing and ri[diculous]....

Column 2

[circa sixteen lines missing]

... natural (angers?) ... by feeling com[es about (?)] ... of his reasonings. [6] [When]ever he (sc. the philosopher censuring anger) inf[ers] what is hidden from him —what is external is obvious, especially to a person who can reason about emotions —he has not m[isled] us, and it is "obvious to all" (66*) that things [are] as he has said. [15] And that element of their disposition, from which they (angry people) become distraught, through which (they are) afflicted by

numberless evils, we know begets new evils all over again, in most cases. [21] ... philosophical reasoning ... [from belief?] (can change this disposition?),

66*. *Philodemus sarcastically paraphrases Timasagoras's words πᾶσι ... φα | νερόν (see 1.5- 6 above), as he will do yet again in 5.22 and in lines 9- 10 of this column (and see n. 70).*

Column 3

[circa seventeen lines missing or untranslatable]

... [5] for which reason, [by describ]ing some things that are completely unknown (sc. to the patient), some that have been forgotten, others that are being left unappraised— at least with respect to their seriousness, if in no other regard—[11] and others that he never contemplated as a whole, and by putting all this in his sight, he (sc. the therapist) creates a great fright, so that (the patient), now that he has also been reminded that it is up to him, can escape it with ease. [18] For this is what even ordinary philosophers present to him, but the really good ones also sketch out the behaviors by which we might fall prey to angry passions as little as possible. [25] That is, in fact, why, in saying that it is quite “obvious” to everyone ... (sc. that Timasagoras is mistaken?) ...

Column 4

[circa nineteen lines missing or untranslatable]

... [4] although some?] of the doctors (sc. point out?) the seriousness of the disease, the sufferings that happen because of it, and its other difficulties, and sometimes also its dangers, these things escape the sick men's notice— some generally, others by (failure of) rational appraisal, [12] which is why they become too careless of their escape (sc. from these dangers), as if moderate (evils) were afflicting them, but these (evils), once put before their eyes,*74 render them attentive to their treatment. [19] In fact, in this case (i.e., philosophical therapy), because they do not consider some of these at all and others not clearly, they do not even want to commit themselves to therapy, but once they have learned ... according to (?) ...

*74. *Putting the consequences of evil-doing before one's eyes for rational appraisal (τιθέναι πρὸ ὀμμάτων ; cf. 1.21- 23 and 3.13- 14), is key to Epicurean therapy; it also appears at Lib. [On Frank Criticism] frag. 26.4- 5; cf. frag. 78N.1- 3 (ἐπιδεικνύναι πρὸ ὀμμάτων) and col. 17a.4- 14. Here it is defended as a paramedical virtue of the right kind of diatribe. See further Tsouna 2003.*

Column 5

[circa sixteen lines missing or untranslatable]

... [7] and others call (on them) to pay attention more carefully to this therapy and not to pass over lightly the seriousness and the evils attached to their diseases and to their fits of anger, since the reasons why it is indispensable for doctors to use blame are no less unknown (to Timasagoras?), or at any rate equally as unknown. [17] So the misfortunes that were going to

follow from his anger toward Basilides and Thespis were not “obvious” (sc. to him), even though, as he thought, he had s[e]t limits to his bitterness. [25] He is so blind that, though it is much more profitable ... (to pay attention to?) reputable [sages] ... easi[ly] ...