

Philodemus of Gadara - Main Biography

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[Philodemus - Wikipedia](#)

Philodemus of Gadara ([Greek](#): Φιλόδημος ὁ Γαδαρεύς, Philodēmos, "love of the people"; c. 110 – prob. c. 40 or 35 BC) was an [Epicurean philosopher](#)[1] and [poet](#). He studied under [Zeno of Sidon](#) in [Athens](#), before moving to [Rome](#), and then to [Herculaneum](#). He was once known chiefly for his poetry preserved in the [Greek Anthology](#), but since the 18th century, many writings of his have been discovered among the charred papyrus rolls at the [Villa of the Papyri](#) at [Herculaneum](#). The task of excavating and deciphering these rolls is difficult, and work continues to this day. The works of Philodemus so far discovered include writings on [ethics](#), [theology](#), [rhetoric](#), [music](#), [poetry](#), and the history of various [philosophical schools](#). Ethel Ross Barker suggested in 1908 that he was owner of the Villa of the Papyri Library.[2]

Life

Philodemus was born c. 110 BC, in [Gadara](#), [Coele-Syria](#) (in present-day [Jordan](#)).[3] He studied under the Epicurean Phoenician philosopher, [Zeno of Sidon](#), the head ([scholarch](#)) of the [Epicurean](#) school, in Athens, before settling in [Rome](#) about 80 BC. He was a follower of Zeno, but an innovative thinker in the area of [aesthetics](#), in which conservative Epicureans had little to contribute. He was a friend of [Lucius Calpurnius Piso Caesoninus](#), and was implicated in Piso's profligacy by [Cicero](#),[4] who, however, praises Philodemus warmly for his philosophic views and for the elegans lascivia of his poems.[5] Philodemus was an influence on Horace's [Ars Poetica](#). The [Greek anthology](#) contains thirty-four of his [epigrams](#) - most of them, love poems.