

Discussion on Philodemus Fragments

Post by “Kalosyni” of February 8, 2024 at 10:35 AM

[Bryan](#) I noticed you posted some fragments on your profile Timeline, and so I wanted to repost them here, and also bring up the questions: What are good sources of Philodemus fragments - translators, books, websites? Recommendations or thoughts on determining accuracy of sources?

Here are the two that Bryan quoted:

(Philodemus - On the Stable Conduct of the Gods - P.Herc. 157 col. 7) "complete happiness is achieved when one keeps their burdens under control and can manage their life in a beneficial way for themselves, and thus attains everything they wish for -- because they harbor no desires or intentions that conflict with nature."

(P.Herc. 152 fr. 9) "External needs contribute to the community's role in fostering interactions, as it is impossible to maintain a sense of community without some level of engagement. This is particularly relevant for us, those who rely on the essential aspects of friendship, with the implication that our lives heavily depend on this communal support."

Post by “Bryan” of February 9, 2024 at 12:16 AM

Thank you for the question!

It is still complicated and disorganized. Large parts of the available transcribed Papyri have not been translated. A few recent good publications have come from the Society of Biblical Literature. By way of Janko and Obbink, Oxford is still publishing. Bibliopolis has an English translation by Tsouna ([link](#)).

For those translations you mentioned above, I mostly relied on Walter Scott's Fragmenta Herculanesia, from 1885, ([link](#)) which has been helpful recently (and also is filled with many very amusing critiques of his colleagues), but this type of work is mostly just fussing over which Greek word is correct. I supplement with any recent articles I can find on whichever P.Herc. that I am looking at.

Post by “Don” of February 9, 2024 at 6:35 AM

Much of the library still lies unexcavated.

I've read one theory that says there could be a whole Latin section of the library that remains to be found since it was a custom in libraries then to have a Greek collection and a Latin collection. Although, from my perspective, the Villa was a private collection so it doesn't necessarily have to follow that pattern.

But the possibilities of what remains untranslated and even undiscovered - not to mention what was burned and discarded before they knew what they had! - boggle the mind.

Post by “Kalosyni” of February 9, 2024 at 11:20 AM

Here is a list of Philodemus works, on Wikipedia:

Quote

This is a list of the major works of Philodemus found so far at Herculaneum.

Historical works

- *Index Stoicorum* (PHerc. 1018)
- *Index Academicorum* (PHerc. 164, [1021](#))
- *On the Stoics* (PHerc. [155](#), [339](#))
- *On Epicurus* (PHerc. [1232](#), [1289](#))
- *Works on the Records of Epicurus and some others* (PHerc. [1418](#), [310](#))
- *To Friends of the School* (PHerc. [1005](#))

Scientific works

- *On Phenomena and Inferences* (PHerc. [1065](#))

Theological writings

- *On Piety* (PHerc. [1428](#))
- *On the Gods* (PHerc. [26](#))

- *On the Way of Life of the Gods* (PHerc. [152](#), 157)

Ethics [edit](#)

- *On Vices and Virtues, book 7 (On Flattery)* (PHerc. 222, 223, 1082, 1089, 1457, [1675](#))
- *On Vices and Virtues, book 9 (On Household Management)* (PHerc. [1424](#))
- *On Vices and Virtues, book 10 (On Arrogance)* (PHerc. [1008](#))
- *Comparetti Ethics* (named after its first editor; PHerc. 1251)
- *On Death* (PHerc. [1050](#))
- *On Frank Criticism* (PHerc. 1471)
- *On Anger* (PHerc. [182](#))

On rhetoric, music, and poetry

- *On Rhetoric* (on many papyri)
- *On Music* (PHerc. [1497](#))
- *On Poems* (on many papyri)
- *On the Good King according to Homer* (PHerc. 1507)

Unpublished Fragments

- [PHerc. Paris. 4](#)

Editions

- Fleischer, Kilian Josef (2023). *Philodem, Geschichte der Akademie: Einführung, Ausgabe, Kommentar*. Leiden; Boston: Brill. [ISBN 9789004546530](#).

English translations

- Philodemus: *On Anger*. (2020), David Armstrong & Michael McOsker. SBL. [ISBN 1628372699](#)
- Philodemus: *On Death*. (2009), W. Benjamin Henry. SBL. [ISBN 1-58983-446-1](#)
- Philodemus: *On Frank Criticism*. (1998), [David Konstan](#), Diskin Clay, Clarence, E. Glad. SBL. [ISBN 1-58983-292-2](#)
- Philodemus: *On Methods of Inference*. 2nd edition. (1978). Phillip Howard De Lacy, Estelle Allen De Lacy. Bibliopolis.
- Philodemus, *On Piety*, Part 1. (1996). Critical Text with Commentary by [Dirk Obbink](#). Oxford University Press. [ISBN 0-19-815008-3](#)

- Philodemus, *On Poems, Book 1*. (2001). Edited with Introduction, Translation, and Commentary by [Richard Janko](#). Oxford University Press. [ISBN 0-19-815041-5](#)
- Philodemus, *On Poems, Book 2, with the fragments of Heracleodorus and Pausimachus*. (2020). Edited with Introduction, Translation, and Commentary by Richard Janko. Oxford University Press. [ISBN 9780198835080](#)
- Philodemus, *On Poems, Books 3-4, with the Fragments of Aristotle, On Poets*. (2010). Edited with Introduction, Translation, and Commentary by Richard Janko. Oxford University Press. [ISBN 0-19-957207-0](#)
- Philodemus, *On Property Management*. (2013), Voula Tsouna. SBL. [ISBN 1-58983-667-7](#)
- Philodemus, *On Rhetoric Books 1 and 2: Translation and Exegetical Essays*. (2005). Clive Chandler (editor). Routledge. [ISBN 0-415-97611-1](#)
- David Sider, (1997), *The Epigrams of Philodemos. Introduction, Text, and Commentary*. Oxford University Press. [ISBN 0-19-509982-6](#)

Source link:

[Philodemus - Wikipedia](#)

Post by “Don” of February 9, 2024 at 1:33 PM

FYI

[PN Search](#)

I didn't realize how that link would display. This is a link to Philodemus's works at Papyri.info.

Post by “Bryan” of February 9, 2024 at 9:42 PM

This is the type of thing that I avoid - making up Greek words. (This is about P.Herc. 152 col. 13)

The previous history of lines 20, 21 is worth recording. Scotti, reading in his facsimile *νοητεον δε κατα του 'Ερμαρχου και . . . Π . Ε \) \ . ΑΚΙ ΕΜΕΝΟΥΣ τους θεους*, develops this in his text into *νοητεον δε κατα του 'Ερμαρχου, και (του) Π(υ)θ(οκλη) (τα κλισια), και (περιθ)εμενους τους θεους*: which he translates, with his

usual contempt for the niceties of grammar, 'Cogitandum est autem ex Hermarchi, et Pythoclis sententia *esse tabernacula, et circumpositos Deos.*' So far, we have nothing more than an average specimen of Scotti's scholarship. But it is more surprising that Zeller, disregarding the red ink in which Scotti's conjectures are printed, writes (*Epicureans*, Eng. tr. p. 468), 'They (the Epicurean Gods) also need dwellings,' and in a footnote, 'The κλίσια discussed by Hermarchus and Pythocles, cols. 13, 20, had reference to these, and not to ordinary feasts.' Thus tabernacles for the Gods have been evolved out of a single *a*. Unfortunately, this is by no means the only case in which inventions of the Naples editor have passed as authentic portions of the text.

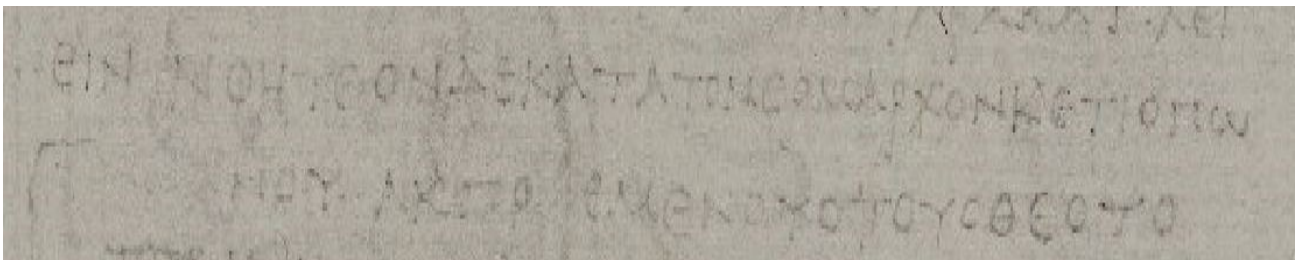
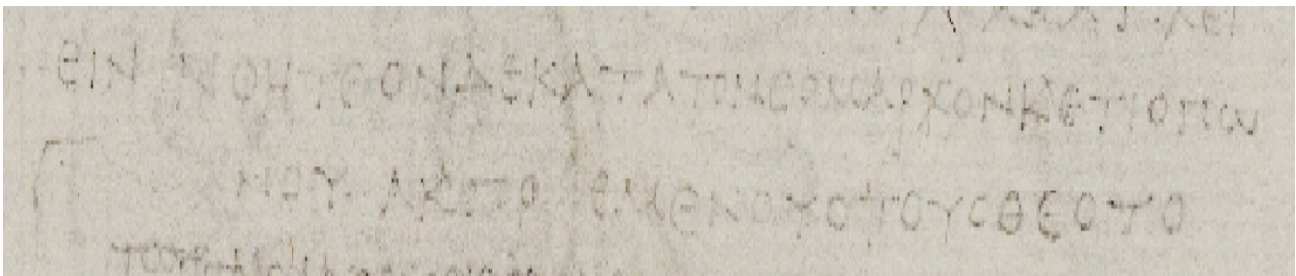
Post by "Don" of February 9, 2024 at 11:28 PM

The column in question as sketched in the early 1800s. Trying to get something out of line 21 seems well nigh impossible to me:

Post by “Bryan” of February 10, 2024 at 2:09 AM



Giuseppe Casanova version is a bit more filled out (MS Gr. class. c. 1 94, Oxford):



Duke Databank has:

-πειν; νοητέον δὲ κατὰ τὸν Ἑρμαρχὸν κ(αὶ) ἐπισπω-
μ[ένους π]νεῦ[μα] κ(αὶ) προϊεμένους τοὺς θεοὺς·

Which seems to mean “It must be understood, according to Hermarchus, that the gods draw in and send out air.”

Post by “Don” of February 10, 2024 at 2:38 AM

[Quote from Bryan](#)

Giuseppe Casanova version is a bit more filled out

And then you have to ask... Who's closer to the reality of the physical scroll? Does one have better eyesight than the other? Is one more wishful thinking than the other?

Post by “Bryan” of February 10, 2024 at 3:45 AM

It seems the other version was made around seven years after the first -- and by then the papyrus had further broken down.

facsimile only. The original, though now more defective in many places than either of the copies, is still sufficiently well preserved to decide the question in numerous cases where the copies differ, and sometimes gives the true reading where both are wrong. Of the copies, Hayter's (Ox.) has the advantage of having been taken immediately after the unrolling, and before the papyrus had suffered much from exposure. This copy is, therefore, more complete than either the original in its present state, or the Naples published facsimile. It probably gives correctly the impressions of a

draughtsman ignorant of Greek. It is full of mistakes which could not have been made by any one acquainted with the language; but the very existence of these mistakes is in one respect a security, as it proves that the facsimile has not been tampered with by other hands.

The Naples published facsimile was not made till seven years later, and it is evident that the original had suffered much in the interval. While for this reason more defective than Ox., the Naples facsimile contains fewer *obvious* mistakes, and has probably therefore been revised by some one with a knowledge of Greek. It is valuable as a check on Ox., and where both agree, the text may usually be considered certain; while of the heads of cols. (pap. 157), Nap. is the only copy in existence.

Post by “Bryan” of February 11, 2024 at 5:08 PM

On the topic of *adding* something that is not there, there is another problem of *removing* what is there. This is my reservation regarding the scroll project -- they have already admitted that they do not care about Epicurean texts -- given this, will they even provide us, the public, all that *is* found? What if Philodemus says something that offends them? It is not written in stone -- so they *could* just brush away whatever they want. They are the providers of our gold plates and they can bowdlerize as they wish.

[Quote from Kalosyni](#)

On the Stoics (PHerc. [155](#), [339](#))

On a much lighter note, looking at the list [Kalosyni](#) shared, I realized I had never looked at *On the Stoics* -- and, now having seen it, I can also see why this has not found eager publishers. Philodemus points out the influence, which everyone admits, of Diogenes of Sinope upon Zeno of Citium. This allows him to point to the sordid details of the Cynics as the origins of Stoicism. The description of the Cynic lifestyle -- which Philodemus introduces with some apologies and a promise to move past quickly -- would be out of bounds for some times/cultures.

Post by “Kalosyni” of February 17, 2024 at 2:52 PM

I'm reading the introduction of Voula Tsouna's "The Ethics of Philodemus" (published in 2007) and found this regarding their fragmentary nature:

Quote

As mentioned, I have kept down the technical aspects of Philodemus' texts and have treated them as philosophical writings to the extent that this is possible. However, there are limitations to that effort which are set by the peculiar nature of the evidence and, especially, by the fact that many passages are fragmentary, and their restorations partly conjectural. I have tried to avoid the phenomenon that David Sedley was the first to characterize as 'bracket blindness': i.e., the tendency to overlook the brackets surrounding editorial restorations of a word or passage and thus develop interpretations based on slim or even non-existent evidence. But sometimes I have taken the liberty to interpret heavily supplemented passages when the interpretation that I propose finds support in the context.

I have used square brackets in my translations to indicate those places in which a given passage has been heavily restored, and hence its translation and interpretation are largely conjectural. On the other hand, I have not marked with square brackets supplementations where I have a high degree of confidence in their correctness. Overall, I have indicated that not everything in Philodemus is at the same level of certainty, and, moreover, I have demarcated places in which the evidence is particularly precarious. But I have not undertaken to show systematically here the special difficulties and pleasures of working with the texts of the Herculaneum papyri, although I hope that I have conveyed to my readers some sense of that too.

Post by “Kalosyni” of February 17, 2024 at 2:57 PM

And this:

Quote

When we deal with texts belonging to the Herculaneum papyri collection, we usually move from passages which are better preserved to those that are least well preserved. However, it has seemed best for systematic reasons to begin several chapters at or near the beginning of the extant texts that they discuss, although beginnings are typically more damaged than the columns that follow. When I proceed in this manner, I try to remain aware of the highly conjectural parts and, if possible, I interpret them in the light of better-known passages. Finally, my discussion of extremely fragmentary works—for instance, *On Flattery*—is informed by my understanding of texts which are in better shape and preferably belong to the same ensemble: for example, several continuous columns of *On Arrogance*. Even so, I should stress once more the tentative character of such interpretations.

Post by “Kalosyni” of February 19, 2024 at 7:53 AM

This brings up a question of are these unreliable sources still out in publication (which ones are they) and what is a trusted source.

Quote

Nonetheless, numerous editions of Philodemus’ works, especially early ones, are unreliable. Many were not based on a reading of the papyri themselves, but rather on the *disegni*, which are frequently wrong, and this led editors to be bolder about changing the texts presented in these copies, filling in gaps, and interpreting the results than they might have been had they read the papyri instead. In many such cases, better reading of the papyrus has shown that the text ran very differently indeed from the conjectures that have commonly served as the basis of reconstructions of the views of Philodemus and others. One common problem has been the mistaking of what turns out to be a citation of an opponent for something Philodemus himself maintains (and *vice versa*).

[Philodemus \(Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy\)](#)

Post by “Cassius” of February 19, 2024 at 8:51 AM

<http://www.epicureanfriends.com/thread/3705-discussion-on-philodemus-fragments/>

Yes I think that's a very big problem. I don't see any reason to suspect that Philodemus himself intended to deviate from Epicurus in major ways, so when something that is attributed to Philodemus would appear to deviate significantly from Epicurus, I personally disregard it. However we have to keep in mind that we may not fully understand what Epicurus himself was saying, so statements that can be reconciled probably should be reconciled rather than just set aside.

Post by “Don” of February 19, 2024 at 8:56 AM

Quote

Nonetheless, numerous editions of Philodemus' works, especially early ones, are unreliable.

I believe she's referring to one's from the 1800's and early 1900's. There's quite a few on Internet Archive.

Quote

Many were not based on a reading of the papyri themselves, but rather on the *disegni*, which are frequently wrong, and this led editors to be bolder about changing the texts presented in these copies, filling in gaps, and interpreting the results than they might have been had they read the papyri instead.

And this is exactly why those digitized papyri online are SO valuable. We all have access unimagined by earlier authors/scholars right at our fingertips.

Post by “Kalosyni” of February 19, 2024 at 12:33 PM

[Quote from Don](#)

And this is exactly why those digitized papyri online are SO valuable. We all have access unimagined by earlier authors/scholars right at our fingertips.

In post 5 above [Don](#) you linked to a site but it doesn't have translations.

Then I also wonder if books written in later part of 20th century used old translations or their own translations.

Post by “Don” of February 19, 2024 at 12:53 PM

Right. We have access to digitized papyri and other resources, but they're not all going to be translated (unfortunately).

BUT we can still verify scholars' readings and, with the help of people like [Bryan](#) and @Nate , get translations literally right from the source. This is another incentive for *everyone* having at least a rudimentary understanding of the ancient Greek, at least the alphabet (and paleography... And grammar... And... And... And 😊).

That second question is a good one, and would have to be answered on a case by case basis. Hopefully, books and papers and websites cite what translation they're using or if it's original.

LOL. None of this is easy. And taking translations at face value and without question is fraught with pitfalls!

Post by “Kalosyni” of February 20, 2024 at 9:00 AM

Thank you [Don](#), and this is especially relevant because we have five more Wednesday nights until we will be finishing up with the Vatican Sayings....and then we will be moving on to study fragments, which I am very much looking forward to because I haven't spent much time on them yet. Cassius is putting together a study list, and it will include various significant fragments from Usener's collection...and it will include some Philodemus fragments.

It appears that we will begin our new Wednesday night study focus on March 27th (if I have calculated correctly). More info will be coming out as that approaches.

Post by “Kalosyni” of February 20, 2024 at 9:35 AM

And also thank you [Bryan](#) too!