

Dating the Works of Epicurus

Post by “Eikadistes” of October 26, 2024 at 5:57 PM

I was wondering if anyone had come across any material related to **dating** Epicurus' works.

I found a few references from Sedley and Arrighetti:

On Nature, <i>Book 1</i>	c. 311-310 BCE
On Nature, <i>Book 2</i>	c. 311-306 BCE
On Nature, <i>Book 4</i>	c. 311-306 BCE
On Nature, <i>Book 11</i>	c. 311-306 BCE
On Nature, <i>Book 12</i>	c. 311-306 BCE
On Nature, <i>Book 13</i>	c. 307-306 BCE
On Nature, <i>Book 14</i>	c. 301-300 BCE
Epistle to Herodotus	c. 301-300 BCE
Epistle to Menoikeus	c. 300 BCE
On Nature, <i>Book 15</i>	c. 300-299 BCE
On Nature, <i>Book 25</i>	c. 299-295 BCE
On Nature, <i>Book 28</i>	c. 296-295 BCE
Epistle to Pythocles	c. 295-290 BCE
Last Will	c. 270 BCE
Epistle to Idomeneus	c. 270 BCE

[Sedley, *On Nature XXVIII 14-16*](#)

[Arrighetti, *La struttura dell'Epistola di Epicuro a Pitocle 127e*](#)

Post by “Don” of October 26, 2024 at 6:27 PM

It seems important to remember that he is reported to have moved to Athens and founded the Garden in 306 BCE, so he was composing *On Nature* while still teaching in Asia Minor.

Post by “Bryan” of October 26, 2024 at 10:38 PM

[Quote from Eikadistes](#)

On Nature, Book 26, c. 296-295 BCE

I think you intended this to say book 28, which ends:

"Epíkouros' *On Nature Book 28*, from the early writings... written in the period of Nicias, who followed Antiphátēs."

Nicias was eponymous archon in 296/295 BC, following Antiphátēs who was eponymous archon in 297/296 BC. Therefore, book 28 was probably written in 295 BC, when Epíkouros was 45 years old. As Sedley points out, it is possible instead that 295 BC is the date of the republication of this particular edition (and Book 28 was originally written earlier).

Thank you for the list!

Post by “Eikadistes” of October 26, 2024 at 11:01 PM

While we can't date the more popular publications, [Philodemus provides an unusually-well-documented list of Epistles](#), dated per each Archon. [Clay preserves this list \(51-54\)](#):

(forgive the formatting errors)

YEAR/S - **Archon Name**

- **Epistle No.** Common name (reference).

307/6 - **Anaxikrates**

The date of Epicurus' move to Athens, Diogenes Laertius, X.2.)

300/299 - **Hegemachos**

- **No. 1.** Peri phuseos Book XV (Arrighetti, p. 292).

296/5 - **Nikias**

- **No. 2. *Peri phuseos*** Book XXVIII (Arrighetti, p. 321).
- **No. 3.** A letter written eri Nikíov, Philodemos, On Epicurus II, fr. 1.7 (Vogliano, p. 59).

294/3 - **Olympiodoros**

- **No. 4.** A letter to a person unknown, from Philodemos, Πραγμα XIV.11

292/1 - **Philippos**

- **No. 5.** A letter to Polyainos and Leonteus of Lampsakos on the Stoics in Athens, Pap.Herc. 176, fr. 5, XXIV. 14-15 (Vogliano, p. 50; Arrighetti, [67]).
- **No. 6.** To Themista of Lampsakos reporting on the young Pythokles, Philodemos, Πρα MOTEiaL IV.8-10 (Arrighetti, [501]).
- **No. 7.** To friends in Lampsakos on poverty, Philodemos, On Wealth XXXV.38 (Tepedino Guerra, p. 67; Arrighetti, [96]).

291/0 - **Charinos**

- **No. 8.** Letters sent to Polyainos, Charino magistratu, Seneca, Epistulae 18.9 (Arrighetti, [831]).
- **No. 9.** A letter to Polyainos, Philodemos, On Epicurus, fr. 5.1 (Vogliano, p. 65; Arrighetti [841]).
- **No. 10.** A letter to a person unknown, Philodemos, On Piety, Pap. Herc. 1098, X. 12 (Gomperz, p. 125; Arrighetti, [106] [lines 938-939 Obbink]).
- **No. 11.** To a person unknown, Philodemos, On Piety, Pap. Herc. 1077, X.1 (Gomperz, p. 105; Arrighetti, [107] [lines 840-841 Obbink]).
- **No. 12.** To Polyainos on poverty, Philodemos, On Wealth XXXIV.8 (Tepedino Guerra, p. 66; Arrighetti. (1081)).
- **No. 13.** A letter to a person unknown, Philodemos, On Wealth XXXV.8 (Tepedino Guerra, p. 67; Arrighetti, [109]).

290/289 - **Telokles**

- **No. 14.** To Mithres, on a reversal of fortune, Philodemos, On Wealth XXXVI.9 (Tepedino Guerra, p. 67; Arrighetti, [791]).

289/8 - **Aristonymos**

- **No. 15.** To Mithres, acknowledging a contribution to the school, Philodemos, Πρααα XXXIV.1 (Diano, p. 32; Arrighetti, [74]).
- **No. 16.** To Phyrson of Kolophon on the piety of a certain Theodotos. Philodemos. On Piety, Pap. Herc. 1098, XII. 15 (Gomperz, p. 127; Arrighetti, [93] [lines 797-801 Obbink]).

286/5 **Diokles**

- **No. 17.** A letter to Anaxarchos and Leontion, Pap. Herc. 176, fr. 5, XXV.31-32 (Vogliano, p. 51).

285/4 **Diotimos**

- **No. 18.** To Phyrson, Philodemos, Πραγата XV.1-2 (Arrighetti, [94]).
- **No. 19.** If the name Diotimos is that of the archon; cf. No. 11. A Diotimos appears in Pap.

Herc. 1780, VIII, fr. 1 [On Piety, lines 841-842 Obbink]. If he is Diotimos Euvóotov EnuaxiSns he cannot be the recipient of a letter from Epicurus; cf. W. Croenert, Kolotes und Menedemos, Leipzig 1906, pp. 82-83.

284/3 **Isaios**

- **No. 20.** To a person unknown, Philodemos, Πραυρατε XXXII. 14 (Diano, p. 19; Arrighetti, [110]).
- **No. 21.** To a person unknown, apparently on the education of the sons of Menoikeus, Philodemos, adv. [Sophistas], fr. 16 (Sbordone 1947, p. 78; Arrighetti, [111]).

283/2 **Euthios**

- **No. 22.** On a setback of the Macedonians to a person unknown, Philodemos, On the Stoics, Pap. Herc. 339, V.9 (Arrighetti, [112]) [****Gli Stoici" VI.9 Dorandi**].

281/0 **Ourios**

- **No. 23.** To Leonteus, Philodemos, layatr XXXII.15-16 (Diano, p. 19; Arrighetti, [68]).

279/8 **Anaxikrates**

- **No. 24.** To a person unknown, Philodemos, On the Stoics V.13, En'] 'Avatuk[p]á[rous (cf. Croenert [under No. 19], p. 54, n. 259) [***Gli Stoici" VI.13 Dorandil**].

278/7 **Demokles**

- **No. 25.** To Kolotes of Lampsakos, possibly on the death of Metrodoros, Pap. Herc. 176, fr. 5, XXVIII.3-4 (Vogliano, p. 54 [cf. Gomperz in Hermes 5, 1871, pp. 387-388]; Arrighetti,[62]).
- **No. 26.** To Mithres, Philodemos, Maya XXIX. 17 (Diano, p. 15; Arrighetti, [75]).

274/3 **Euboulos**

- **No. 27.** To Idomeneus of Lampsakos, Philodemos, Πραυρατ XXVI.14 (Diano, p.12; Arrighetti, [601]).
- **No. 28.** To Mithres on frugality, Philodemos.Πραυρατῖα XXX.16-17 (Diano, p. 16; Arrighetti, [76]).
- **No. 29.** To a person unknown, asking for somebooks of Demokritos, Philodemos, adv. [Sophistas], fr. 13 (Sbordone 1947, p. 75; Arrighetti, [113]).

271/0 **Pytharatos**

- **No. 30.** To Mithres on his approaching death, Philodemos, Πραυρατεα XXXI.3-4 (Diano, p. 17; Arrighetti, [77])

I note that Epicurus maintained a correspondence with Mithres for over two decades.

Post by “Eikadistes” of October 26, 2024 at 11:22 PM

From *Philodemus and the New Testament World*:, approximations from Marcello Gigante:

Table 1: *Philodemus' Ethical Works*1. *Treatises on Character and Life* (Περὶ ἠθῶν καὶ βίων)a. *those attested with Περὶ ἠθῶν καὶ βίων in the title*

PHerc. ^o	TITLE	HAND	SCRIBE	DATE*
1471	Π. η. καὶ β., ὅ ἐστι Περὶ παρρησίας (<i>On Frank Criticism</i>)	M	?	75–50
168	Π. β. καὶ η., ἢ Περὶ τοῦ μὴ (<i>or μάτην?</i>) κατὰ τὰ τυχόντα ζῆν ὑπομημάτων α' (<i>On Not Living according to Chance</i> , book 1)	?	?	75–50?

b. *probably part of the same work*

Paris 2	Περὶ διαβολῆς (<i>On Calumny</i>)	?	?	post 48 ¹
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c. *others related works on ethics*

1050	Περὶ θανάτου δ' (<i>On Death</i> , book 4)	I	?	post 40 ²
189	Περὶ θανάτου ?	?	XXXIII	50–25?
807	Περὶ θανάτου ?	L	XVIII ?	ca. 50±
873	Περὶ ὀμιλίας (<i>On conversation</i>)	L	XVIII	ca. 50±
163	Περὶ πλούτου α' (<i>On wealth</i> , book 1)	I	?	post 40
97	Περὶ πλούτου (<i>On wealth</i>)	O	XXIV	ca. 50±
312	Περὶ γάμου (<i>On marriage</i>) ?	?	?	?
1251	Περὶ αἰρέσεων καὶ φυγῶν (<i>On Choices and Avoidances</i>)? [also known as <i>The Comparetti Ethics</i>]	N	?	50–25
346	[A Protreptic Treatise: <i>Tractatus (on Epicurean Ethics)</i>]	?	?	?

^o All reference numbers and titles for Herculaneum papyri are taken from Marcello Gigante, *Catalogo dei Papiri Ercolanesi* (Naples: Bibliopolis, 1979); cf. Mario Capasso, *Manuale di papirologia ercolanese*, Studi e Testi 3 (Lecce: Congedo Editore, 1991).

* The columns for Hands, Scribes, and Dates are based on Guglielmo Cavallo, *Libri scritte scritte a Ercolano*, Supplements to *Cronache ercolanesi* 13 (Naples: Gaetano Macchiaroli, 1983), 28–46, for all cases where Cavallo offers analysis or unless otherwise noted. The Date refers to the production of the scroll itself. All dates are B.C.E.

Post by “Eikadistes” of October 27, 2024 at 11:58 AM

I'm organizing the information here: <https://twentiers.com/2024/10/27/dates-of-epicurean-works/>

Post by “Eikadistes” of October 28, 2024 at 3:43 PM

One other discovery (I think) I've made is this:

By the Archonship of Sosistratus, beginning July of 270 BCE, Epicurus was already dead.

When he celebrated his 71st birthday in February of 270 BCE, he was still alive.

Most likely, Epicurus died in the Spring of that year.