

# Epigram on the Twentieth

Post by "Joshua" of March 18, 2022 at 6:28 PM

Starting with the Invitation to Piso, Sider reveals the key to the understanding of Philodemian epigrams: as it happens with other Hellenistic poems, their full appreciation is achieved through recognition of their allusions to other literary works. Philodemus' originality that sets him apart from the Hellenistic tradition is that he alludes to philosophical literature instead of earlier poetry. So he creates a new kind of *topoi*, which are carefully chosen to underscore Epicurus' doctrines. Philodemus' audience, on the other hand, like any other Hellenistic audience, was expected to be able to understand his poetic allusions and reconstruct the real meaning of his epigrams.

As an added bonus to Sider's analysis of the Invitation to Piso, comes his clarification of a universal misinterpretation of the usage and meaning of the word *ἐννέοσιον*: Sider rightly suggests that it does not modify *εἰκόνα* (which would be ungrammatical) but *καὶ* of

ising matter of the "annual" feast of the Twentieth:

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line one, i.e. Piso, so that the meaning here is not the "annual Twentieth" but "your (i.e. Piso's) annual visit to the Twentieth."

Michael Wigodsky in "The Alleged Impossibility of Philosophical Poetry" (chapter five) considers Philodemus' aphorism that "no poet has ever written or is ever likely to write poems containing good thoughts and actions or ones that aim at education" (*On Poems* 5 col. xiv (xvii) 14-24) in his effort to answer the question whether Philodemus would have condemned Lucretius' poem in particular (had he known it) and philosophical poetry in general on the basis of this dictum. Granted that for an Epicurean dissemination from Epicurus' doctrines was a crime equal to that of parricide (cf.

Which I find in this JSTOR article;

<https://www.jstor.org/stable/24519291?read-now=1&seq=6>