

Philodemus' Poetry

Post by "Pacatus" of October 26, 2022 at 6:45 PM

I found this site with Philodemus' epigrammatic poetry in translation:
<http://www.attalus.org/poetry/philodemus.html>

"Philodemus was an Epicurean philosopher as well as a poet, but his poems seem to have had a greater reputation than his philosophical works in ancient times."

I was surprised at the tone of erotic gaiety in many of them - they reminded me of, say, Sir John Suckling or Robert Herrick (both 17th century) in English poetry; or of the more modern e.e. cummings.

Apparently the original Greek was in stanza form of no more than eight lines, and I attempt to re-render them that way (albeit my lines may not match up with the Greek - which you can read by clicking the "G" that accompanies the epigram). The following, for example, reminds of Herrick's "To the Virgins, to Make Much of Time" (here: <https://poets.org/poem/virgins-make-much-time>) -

Your summer's flower hath not yet burst from the bud,
the grape that puts forth its first virgin charm is yet green,
but already the young Loves sharpen their swift arrows,
Lysidicē, and a hidden fire is smouldering. Let us fly,
we unlucky lovers, before the arrow is on the string:
I foretell right soon a vast conflagration.

(Maybe [Don](#) can provide a better line-by-line translation from the Greek.)