

New "TWENTIERS" Website

Post by "Don" of December 16, 2024 at 11:13 AM

FYI...

[DCLP/Trismegistos 62661 = LDAB 3847](#)

Fwiw, here's a review of a critical edition of Polystratus' work (again, Google translate from the French)

[Polistrato, Sul disprezzo irrazionale delle opinioni popolari. Edizione, traduzione e commento a cura di Giovanni Indelli - Persée](#)

This work by Giovanni Indelli, which appears in a new collection of texts from the School of Epicurus contained in the Herculaneum papyri, is worthy of attention and interest for several reasons.

First of all, it gives us a global and nuanced overview of the identity, work and role of Polystratus within the School of Epicurus, most of whose texts have been lost, at least as far as the earliest period is concerned.

Then we have here a very careful critical edition, carried out using the most reliable techniques, and accompanied by a clear and faithful Italian translation, a documented introduction and a commentary written in an authentically philological and philosophical spirit.

Finally, the very content of Polystrate's text has an undeniable historical interest, and shows well, as Mr. Indelli emphasizes, the state of the discussions between the different post-Aristotelian schools. The Περί ἀλόγου καταφρονήσεως "is addressed to those who, while they despise popular opinions, nevertheless defend opinions even less acceptable, because they are not based on λόγος" (p. 28). The disciple of Epicurus, for his part, has no weakness for the ideas of the masses, but his criticism of their errors and superstitions is based on a knowledge of nature finalized by practical life. Indeed, to free oneself from the unhappiness that ignorance and prejudice cause and to lead a happy life, one must refer to the φρόνησις and the ὀρθὴ φυσιολογία which are taught to us by the doctrine of Epicurus and which allow us to attain perfect pleasure.

In this context Polystratus develops an articulate critique of a skeptical objection to the fundamental principles of the Garden: his opponents are suspicious of the effective existence of ethical concepts, whose validity is clearly changeable among individuals and peoples. Polystratus' solution to this problem, which Epicurus had not dealt with explicitly, is based on the difference between "relative" and "absolute" concepts. Even "relative" concepts, such as those of δυνάμεις and πράξεις, nevertheless have an effective validity and existence. On the

other hand, a critique of popular opinions based on obscure principles and obvious falsehoods, such as that developed by his opponents, has no value, becomes dangerous and dishonest and, ultimately, is irrational.

Fabio CIARAMELLI.