

Epigram on the Twentieth

Post by "Joshua" of December 10, 2020 at 10:11 PM

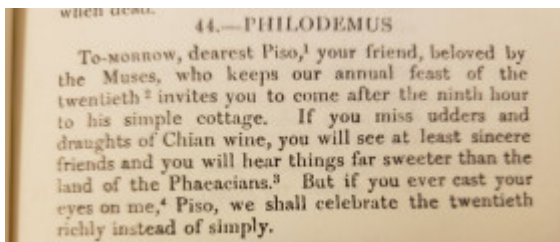
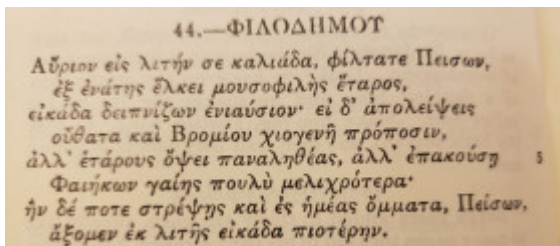
Book XI - Convivial and Satirical Epigrams

No. 44 - Philodemus

Quote

"To-morrow, dearest Piso, your friend, beloved by the Muses, who keeps our annual feast of the twentieth invites you to come after the ninth hour to his simple cottage. If you miss udders and draughts of Chian wine, you will see at least sincere friends and you will hear things far sweeter than the land of the Phaeacians. But if you ever cast your eyes on me, Piso, we shall celebrate the twentieth richly instead of simply."

Translated W. R. Paton



Post by "Cassius" of December 10, 2020 at 11:11 PM

That reminds me that DeWitt says the Phaeacian analogy was of considerable interest to Epicurus as an example of the best life being focused on pleasure.

Post by "Don" of December 11, 2020 at 7:13 AM

[Joshua](#) what a service you're providing by posting all these! I just made it through all your current threads. I was going to like and thank every one, but I thought that might be overkill. Please take this post as a virtual pan-thank-you! 😊 I especially appreciate your including the original texts!! 👍👍 I may go through and pick out a few favorite lines or words. For example, line 3 has εικαδα δειπνιζων (eikada deipnizōn) is "the feast of the twentieth". The fact that it's the ενιαυσιον "annual" is a little surprising but maybe they had one big one a year where everyone was invited in addition to monthly smaller events.

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 Philodemean 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 ενιαυσιον: Sider rightly suggests that it does not modify εικαδα (which would be ungrammatical) but *ce* 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 dissension from Epicurus' doctrines was a crime equal to that of homicide (cf.

Which I find in this JSTOR article;

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

Post by "Joshua" of March 18, 2022 at 6:30 PM

[Don](#) and [Cassius](#), the above will hopefully allay an concerns we have with this epigram, which is otherwise very fine.

Post by “Cassius” of March 18, 2022 at 6:58 PM

Amazing that we would question that AND find a reputable solution!

Post by “Kalosyni” of May 20, 2022 at 5:21 PM

Just yesterday found this interesting article, which [Don](#) will likely appreciate (given that touches on the Greek words).

Here is an excerpt:

Quote

2Commentators have so far discussed the complex intertextual relationship between the epigram and similar poems, especially Catullus 13 (invitation of Fabullus)³ and the whole sub-genre of Latin invitation poems which seems to be inspired by the epigram. Others have focused on the poem’s implications for our understanding of the social interactions between *client* and *patronus* in Roman society of the first century BCE.⁴ Its content also invites comparison with a group of Hellenistic epigrams dealing with dinner-invitations, dinner-preparations or feasting. Less well noticed are the epic ramifications of the poem and the way they might further our interpretation of its content.⁵

3The poem’s tension rests on the contrast between the simple meal in a simple setting and the exquisite entertainment provided by faithful friends.

[Phaeacians at the birthday party: A.P. 11.44 \(Philodemus\) an...](#)

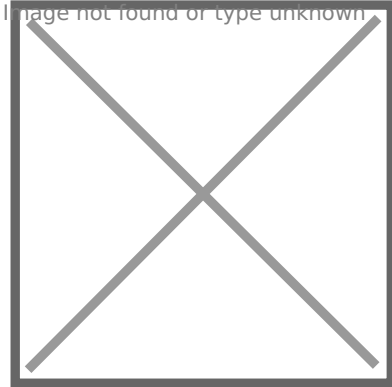
One of the most discussed epigrams by Philodemus is his famous invitation poem (A.P. 11.44). The speaker asks his friend Piso to attend a...

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Post by “Don” of May 21, 2022 at 8:30 AM

Thank you! Ευχαριστώ!

Here's one of the papers in that paper's bibliography:



[The Epicurean Philosopher as Hellenistic Poet](#)

The Epicurean Philosopher as Hellenistic Poet

www.academia.edu

I haven't read it yet, but if the current one is any indication, it may be interesting.

PS: [Joshua](#) may be particularly interested in this one.

Post by “Kalosyni” of June 19, 2025 at 1:08 PM

This is the translation at [Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy](#):

Quote

Tomorrow, dearest Piso, your cultured companion drags you
To his humble shack at three o'clock
To feed you your annual dinner on the Twentieth. If you'll miss
Sow's udders and Bromius' Chian wine,
Still you'll see your faithful companions and hear
Things far more sweet than the Phaeacians' land.
And if you ever turn your gaze on us too, Piso,
We'll have a richer Twentieth, instead of a humble one.

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But did they take poetic license with the phrase "your cultured companion"? (I prefer Paton's translation, as in post one above).

When he says "hear things far more sweet than the Phaeacians' land... possibly he was referring to Lucretius De Rerum Natura ...(especially the opening which speaks of Venus and Nature)...just a thought.

I am thinking now about the possibility that there was a custom for Epicureans to speak about pleasure and pleasurable things at their symposium/feasts...just another idea to ponder.

Link to the ancient Greek text:

[Greek Anthology, Volume IV, book 11, chapter 44](#)

Post by “Joshua” of June 19, 2025 at 1:22 PM

Thread

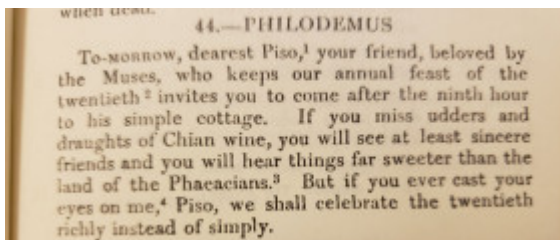
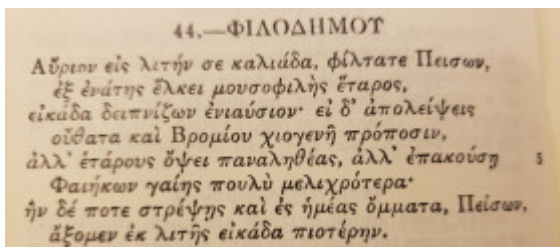
[Epigram on the Twentieth](#)

Book XI - Convivial and Satirical Epigrams

No. 44 - Philodemus

[...]

Translated W. R. Paton



Joshua

December 10, 2020 at 10:11 PM

Edit; I had no idea I just linked to this thread, sorry about that!

Post by “Joshua” of June 19, 2025 at 1:26 PM

[μουσοφιλής](#), "beloved of the Muses", or something similar.

[ἔταρος](#) means companion.

I would say the translation is good; Philodemus is emphasizing his work as a poet: that is, a 'darling of the Muses'.

Post by “Don” of June 19, 2025 at 1:49 PM

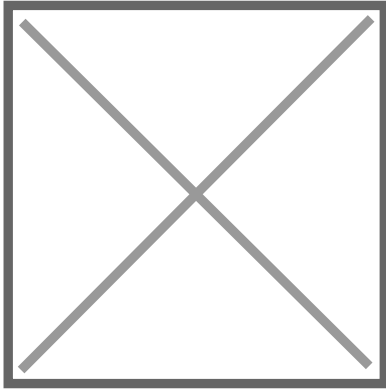
[Quote from Kalosyni](#)

When he says "hear things far more sweet than the Phaeacians' land... possibly he was referring to Lucretius De Rerum Natura ...(especially the opening which speaks of Venus and Nature)...just a thought.

The Phaeacians refers to Odysseus's stay in their land, and, if I remember, was used by Epicurus or another early Epicurean as support for the school's position on pleasure from Homer (THE authority in ancient Greece) since other schools used Homer as well.

A quick note on Βρομίου χιογενῆ (Bromiou chiogenē): the Bromiou refers to another name for Bacchus and hence "wine" so something like "the drink of Bacchus"; chiogene literally means "made in Chios" (prized for its wine) or "the drink of Bacchus" having its "genesis" (-genē) in Chios (chio-)

Post by “Don” of June 20, 2025 at 6:25 AM



[Phaeacian Dido: Lost Pleasures of an Epicurean Intertext](#)

Commentators since antiquity have seen connections between Virgil's Dido and the philosophy of the Garden, and several recent studies have drawn attention...

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