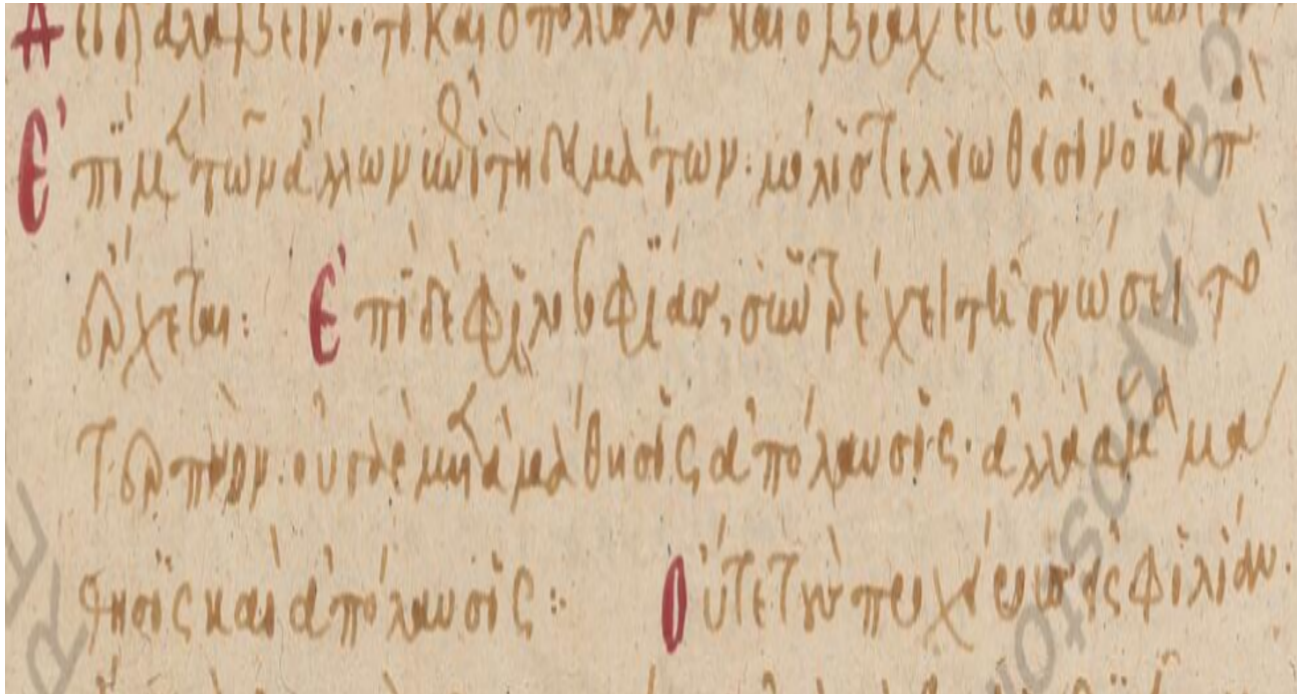


VS27 - Source in Vat.gr.1950 with some commentary

Post by "Don" of October 24, 2023 at 11:57 PM

Manuscript:



[DigiVatLib](#)

Well, well... This is interesting.

Take a look at Saint-Andre's translation and transcription:

Whereas other pursuits yield their fruit only to those who have practiced them to perfection, in the love and practice of wisdom knowledge is accompanied by delight; for here enjoying comes along with learning, not afterward.

ἐπὶ μὲν τῶν ἄλλων ἐπιτηδευμάτων μόλις τελειωθεῖσιν ὁ καρπὸς ἔρχεται, ἐπὶ δὲ φιλοσοφίας συντρέχει τῇ γνώσει τὸ τερπνόν· οὐ γὰρ μετὰ μάθησιν ἀπόλαυσις, ἀλλὰ ἅμα μάθησις καὶ ἀπόλαυσις.

Now, look at the manuscript...

VS27 is actually split in two in the manuscript! Those two big red Epsilons split what we know as VS27 into two pieces:

27A: Ἐπὶ μὲν τῶν ἄλλων ἐπιτηδευμάτων · μόλις τελειωθεῖσιν ὁ καρπὸς ἔρχεται

27B. Ἐπὶ δὲ φιλοσοφίας συντρέχει τῇ γνώσει τὸ τερπνόν · οὐ γὰρ μετὰ μάθησιν ἀπόλαυσις, ἀλλὰ ἅμα μάθησις καὶ ἀπόλαυσις.

which translates to:

27A: On the one hand, in the case of other pursuits, they yield their fruit only to those who have practiced them to perfection

27B: On the other hand, in the case of the love and practice of wisdom, knowledge (τῇ γνώσει) is accompanied by delight; for here enjoying comes along with learning, not afterward.

Note that this saying uses ἀπόλαυσις, which is the same word used in the letter to Menoikeus when talking about taking pleasure in something. Here it's a positive, in Menoikeus it's not as positive. How the same word can be used in so different ways is still beyond me for now. ἀπολαύσει, at its most basic meaning, is the "act of enjoying, fruition" or the "result of enjoying, pleasure." This implies enjoying the benefit of something, as discussed in Menoikeus 124 and 130 with the additional meaning of "advantage got from a thing." All those meanings are at play here in VS27.

Bailey's translation and commentary (and [Cassius](#) talks about this in the other thread in this section on VS27):

In all other occupations the fruit comes painfully after completion, but in philosophy pleasure goes hand in hand with knowledge; for enjoyment does not follow comprehension, but comprehension and enjoyment are simultaneous.

I don't see anything to justify "painfully" at least at first pass.

τοῦ τοῦ φιλοσοφίᾳ ὅτι τὸ τερπνόν

XXVII. An ingenious claim for the superiority of philosophy over other pursuits, which brings out its close connexion with the Epicurean ideal of pleasure. Bignone compares Diog. Oen fr xxvi for the general idea of pleasures, in which the action and enjoyment are simultaneous.

3 ἅμα: μετά (V) must be a mere mistake, a repetition of μετά above.

Again, Bailey is trying to claim a status of a higher pleasure for philosophy, a superiority.

For Diogenes of Oenoanda, it must be referring to:

Examples of coincident causes are [solid] and liquid nourishment and, in addition to these, [sexual acts:] we do not eat [food] and experience pleasure afterwards, nor do we drink wine and experience pleasure afterwards, nor do we emit semen and experience pleasure afterwards; rather the action brings about these pleasures for us immediately, without awaiting the future.

even though this is not fr. xxvi., at least in [the website translation](#).

Post by “Cassius” of October 25, 2023 at 12:20 AM

Yes Don it sure looks like Bailey is trying to claim a higher status for philosophy because he is disposed in that direction.

It in fact looks at least as much that they were concerned about asserting how some pleasures come as a result of excitement or stimulation (eat and drink and sex) while others accompany the natural functioning (of body or in this case the mind) even when stimulation or excitement is absent.

Given the nonstandard manner of speaking I could well imagine that from start to finish the Epicureans were regularly coming up with illustrations of how to think of pleasure as *every* experience of life which is not painful. That's not the normal way of thinking, but if you do take that attitude then it transforms the vocabulary and leads to all sorts of new constructions.

It's pretty easy to see that pleasure has to arise coincidentally with the activity in many cases (but not all) for this approach to work.

Post by “Don” of October 25, 2023 at 6:44 AM

Here's my very literal translation of 27A/B:

27A: Ἐπὶ μὲν τῶν ἄλλων ἐπιτηδευμάτων · μόλις τελειωθεῖσιν ὁ καρπὸς ἔρχεται

μὲν and δὲ connect two phrases, with a very clunky translation being "on the one hand... On the other hand ...". Sometimes these can be untranslated or paraphrased. Here I'm going clunky to be very literal

ὁ καρπὸς (ho karpos) "the fruit, harvest, grain". This word is related to the word that shows up in Latin in "carpe diem."

τῶν ἐπιτηδευμάτων pursuits but also vocations, work, practices, habits, etc.

τελειωθεῖσιν (teleiōtheisin) is related to τέλος (telos) as in bringing something to its ultimate goal or end, hence bringing something to perfection. So, in this case, it means something like practicing other crafts or pursuits to perfection. The thing that comes immediately to my mind (for whatever reason) is playing the guitar. Seeing YouTube videos on music theory breaking down complicated rock pieces shows how much it takes to really perfect the technique of playing guitar.

27A. On the one hand, in the case of other pursuits, the fruit comes for one only just upon complete perfection.

27B. Ἐπὶ δὲ φιλοσοφίας συντρέχει τῇ γνώσει τὸ τερπνόν · οὐ γὰρ μετὰ μάθησιν ἀπόλαυσις, ἀλλὰ ἅμα μάθησις καὶ ἀπόλαυσις.

γνώσει (gnōsei) knowing, understanding. Where we get gnosis, Gnostic, prognosis, etc. in English.

συντρέχει literally means "run together" as in a race. To get this across, I'm going to use "teams up" in my translation.

τὸ τερπνόν is enjoyment, delight. This is a new word for me.

ἀπόλαυσις is the enjoyment of delight in having the advantage of the fruition of something, echoing the ὁ καρπὸς in the previous section without repeating it.

27B. On the other hand, in the case of loving and practicing wisdom, the enjoyment teams up with knowing (understanding); for enjoyment of the fruition is not after learning, but learning and enjoyment of the fruit is simultaneous.

If one wants to run them together:

On the one hand, in the case of other pursuits, the fruit comes for one only just upon complete perfection. On the other hand, in the case of loving and practicing wisdom, the enjoyment teams up with knowing; for enjoyment of the fruition is not after learning, but learning and enjoyment of the fruit is simultaneous.

This blog entry has a good take on this/these saying(s):

[Why knowing things is good](#)

I've been thinking about some uplifting Epicurean sayings about pleasure and philosophy [1]. Here's the first, Vatican Saying 27: Ἐπὶ μὲ...

kenodoxia.blogspot.com

Post by “Kalosyni” of October 31, 2023 at 9:33 PM

[Quote from Don](#)

On the one hand, in the case of other pursuits, the fruit comes for one only just upon complete perfection.

[Don](#) you are translating it as perfection, not completion?

Post by “Don” of October 31, 2023 at 11:43 PM

[Quote from Kalosyni](#)

[Quote from Don](#)

On the one hand, in the case of other pursuits, the fruit comes for one only just upon complete perfection.

[Don](#) you are translating it as perfection, not completion?

I suppose I'm translating it as "complete perfection," but let's look again at the text. The key word where I'm getting "complete perfection" from is τελειωθεισιν:

[Quote from Don](#)

τελειωθεισιν (teleiōtheisin) is related to τέλος (telos) as in bringing something to its ultimate goal or end, hence bringing something to perfection. So, in this case, it means something like practicing other crafts or pursuits to perfection. The thing that comes immediately to my mind (for whatever reason) is playing the guitar. Seeing YouTube videos on music theory breaking down complicated rock pieces shows how much it takes to really perfect the technique of playing guitar.

Continuing with that playing guitar metaphor. You can't really "complete" learning the guitar. You can "perfect" your technique. My use of "perfection" should in no way be interpreted as some kind of sneaking in Platonic Ideal Forms or anything like that. The word is a form of τελειόω:

[Henry George Liddell, Robert Scott, A Greek-English Lexicon, τελει-όω](#)

which means "to make perfect, complete; of things, acts, works, time, make perfect, complete, accomplish; to be made perfect, attain perfection; bring fruit to maturity, come to maturity."

The whole idea is that for other pursuits, you have to wait for the pleasure. There is a certain goal that must be reached, something must be brought to maturity, to a certain point of perfection or completion, before the "fruit" can be obtained.

I think this might also be a play on words with connotations like picking fruit/harvest ὁ καρπὸς and maturity τελειωθῆσιν coming into play.

I would say that the "fruit/harvest/καρπὸς" doesn't even *necessarily* have to refer to pleasure. It's simply the benefit (the fruit) of other pursuits. But the enjoyment of something does seem to make more sense given the context.