On the Good Poem According to Philodemus

by

Michael F. McOsker

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
(Classical Studies)
in the University of Michigan
2015

Doctoral Committee:

Professor Richard Janko, Chair
Professor Victor Caston
Associate Professor Francesca Schironi
Professor Ruth S. Scodel

Dedicated to my grandmother,
Leota Lyne (Brower) McOsker
* 9 May 1929 Alva, Oklahoma
† 10 Dec 2009 Cincinnati, Ohio

Acknowledgements

This work has been rather long in the making, and I'm afraid that I've accumulated quite a lot of substantial debts in the course of it. I first read Philodemus' epigrams in a seminar on the *Garland* of Philip with Ewen Bowie and wrote a paper on the relationship between Philodemus' epigrams and his *On Poems* that was the germ of this dissertation. That paper was no good at all, but apparently it showed that there was something interesting in the topic.

Richard Janko then took me on as a student and was an excellent teacher, supervisor, mentor, and, eventually, champion; to him is owed the lion's share of my gratitude for his instruction and example, willingness to talk out ideas and read innumerable drafts quickly, not to mention the many times he helped me in more quotidian ways, with research assistantships, political advice, and pizza dinners in Naples.

It is a deep pleasure to thank Victor Caston, Ruth Scodel. and Francesca Schironi for helpful discussions, constant mentorship, rigorous but kind correction, and the good examples they set. Thanks as well to Francesca Schironi for her reality checks. My committee as a whole deserves great thanks for their hard work and patience. Ben Acosta-Hughes was a helpful critic in earlier stages of my work, and has always been a good friend.

In Naples, the *Centro internazionale per lo studio dei papiri ercolanesi* awarded me a fellowship and then renewed it; beyond financial and technical aid, I found many new friends: le professoresse Longo Auricchio and Leone, i professori Indelli and Del Mastro, as well as Matilde Fiorillo, Antonio Parisi, Grazia Squillante, and especially Mariacristina Fimiani. The

Table of Contents

List of Abbreviations

(See bibliography for complete publication information about modern works and the end of the introduction for details about Epicurean texts.)

CA = *Collectanea Alexandrina*, ed. J. U. Powell

GE = *Glossarium Epicureum,* ed. H. Usener

LGPN = *Lexicon of Greek Personal Names*

LSJ = *A Greek-English Lexicon,* Liddle, Scott, and Jones, 9th ed. with Revised Supplement (1996)

Smyth = *Greek Grammar*, H. W. Smyth

SVF = *Stoicroum Veterum Fragmenta* ed. Von Armin.

Abstract

This dissertation handles the poetics of Philodemus of Gadara, a first century BCE Epicurean philosopher and poet. His views are recoverable from several of his treatises, which are primarily polemical and without positive exposition. However, his views are recoverable from careful readings of the debates, rare direct evidence, and attention to his commitments, which as a loyal member of the school, he could not contradict.

The first, introductory, chapter treats Philodemus' biography, the history of scholarship on the topic, and introduces some technical matters (often editorial) and conventions.

The second chapter treats the history of the Garden's engagement with poetics. Epicurus did not write an *On Poems* but Metrodorus did. Other early Epicureans, as well as Zeno of Sidon, Demetrius Laco, and Siro and other Epicureans are examined as well.

In chapter three, "The *Prolepsis* of the Poem," I discuss what counts as a poem for Epicureans. Philodemus indicates that there were *prolepseis* of "poetry" and "poem;" the Epicureans meant basically what we mean by the terms.

In chapter four, "Poetry as *Techne* and the Uses of Poetry," I argue that poetry counts as an art for the Epicureans, but not a useful one.

In my fifth chapter, "The Form, Content, Judgment, and Purpose of Poems," I examine Philodemus' views as what form and content are, and the ways in which they interact. They are interdependent: the content depends on the words used to describe it, but there cannot be

flanguage without a topic. He values form above content in judging poems. The poem has an strange effect: it produces "additional thoughts" in the audience, by which they are entertained. It seems clear that Philodemus expected good poets to arrange form and content suggestively, so that the poems could exert a lasting pull on the minds of the audience.

My sixth chapter collects a miscellany of topics which Philodemus handles but which do not fit neatly into another chapter. I discuss his views on genre, mimesis, "appropriateness," utility, and various technical terms.

The seventh chapter contains a concluding summary.

Chapter One

Introduction

§1 Orientation

It is perhaps a measure of how poetry-focused Classics, or at least the Hellenic half of it, is that Philodemus' *On Poems* is the best studied work from Herculaneum, beating out even Epicurus' *On Nature*, which one would reasonably have guessed would win the lion's share of attention. There are a few causes; obvious among them are lack of specialist training in the several fields required and, before air travel, difficulty of access to the material. Philodemus' epigrams provide another motive, as does his interest for students of the poetics of Aristotle and Horace.

This dissertation continues the trend of neglecting Epicurus in favor of his *epigonos*, Philodemus of Gadara. The bulk of it is dedicated to explaining Philodemus' poetics and situating them generally in the realm of Epicurean philosophy. This can finally be done with some security, since the texts are well edited and unlikely to cause seismic disturbances under the feet of future scholars. But just because they are well edited does not mean that they are straightforward or easy to read. On the contrary, Philodemus' prose is not simple at the best of times and he does not honor modern scholarly conventions of citation and clarity in argumentation, which makes simply sorting out who claimed what a good deal of work for the modern reader. It is here that I hope to make my main contribution: to put future students of

Philodemus' poetics on a reasonably solid footing by putting forward a complete, coherent picture of his views. If along the way I can say something of interest to students of ancient literary criticism, Epicurean philosophy, or ancient poetry, all the better.

The rest of this introduction will be taken up with more detailed discussions of several topics: a thumb-nail biographical sketch of Philodemus (§2), a discussion of the modern scholarship on the topic (§3), a general introduction to his aesthetic works (§4), the structure of the *On Poems* (§5), the difficulty of reconstructing Philodemus' positions (§6), the sources used (§7) and some more technical introductions about the editions used and conventions for printing Greek (§§8-11).

§2 Biographical Sketch

Philodemus was born probably c. 110 BCE[1] in what is now Umm Qais, Jordan.[2] Across the Yarmouk Valley, in the modern Hammat Geder, Israel (ancient Emmatha or Amatha, not to be confused with Amathūs, which is further south in Jordan), is a naturally occurring hot spring with a building complex that dates back to the second century CE.

Gadara seems to be a semitic name, cf. Hebrew גדר, (*gadār*) "to build a wall of stones" or, as a noun (*géder*), "stone wall," possibly referring either to terrace farming or fortification

---

[1]   Our dates for Philodemus' lifetime depend on references in Cicero's *In Pisonem* and in his own works, especially the *De Signis*. Cicero presents him as somewhat older than Piso, who was consul in 58, ergo 42 or 43 in that year, so born in 100 or 101. If Philodemus were much older than Piso, Cicero probably would have used that fact in his polemic. At *De Signis* 2.15-18, Philodemus mentions pygmies which Antony brought from Hyria (ἐξ Ὑρίας). Antony was in Hyria in 40. If the sequence of letters is interpreted to mean ἐκ Cυρίας, the event took place in either 54 or 40. In any event, it was in the quite recent past when Philodemus wrote, since he says νῦν ... ἐκομίσατο. 40 BCE (trusting the orthography of the papyrus) is a reasonable *terminus post quem*; Philodemus would have been about 70. He probably did not pass 80, since that is the age at which [Lucian] in the *Makrobioi* considers someone old enough to be worth recording. Sider (1997: 3-12) has a full discussion.

[2]   The site was excavated under the auspices of the Deutsches Archäologische Institüt. The Arabic name is variously transliterated: Um(m) Qais, Qays, and Qes are most common. The Hebrew name sometimes lacks one m. An excellent summary with bibliography can be found in Fitzgerald (2004), on whom my account relies, and see also Hoffmann and Bührig (2013). The first volume of the site report is Weber (2002).

walls. Aramaic has the same words, but additionally גדירה (*gadīráh*) meaning "harvest" (possibly specifically of dates). The name *Geder* is used in the Talmud to refer to this city and its associated hot springs, the latter still known today as חמת דגר (*Hammat Geder*, "Hot Springs of Geder"). A "High Place" for Semitic-style sacrifice has been found just north of the city, but there are, as of yet, no certainly pre-Hellenistic finds that indicate settlement. The cult place may have been used by nomads.[3] Stephanus of Byzantium and George Syncellus are probably mistaken to record that it was a Macedonian settlement, unless they mean that it was founded by descendants of Macedonians. It seems to be a Ptolemaic (re)foundation.[4] Stephanus also records that it was called Antiochia, which may date to the period of Seleucid domination.[5]

Finds from the late third century BCE indicate a fairly wealthy, but small, town; according to Polybius (V.71.3), it was well fortified and close to the Ptolemaic Skythopolis (Beit Shean, Israel), and could have been garrisoned from there.[6] This is probably to be connected with the Fourth Syrian War or its aftermath.

After a period of passing back and forth between Seleucid and Ptolemaic control, Gadara passed definitively to the Seleucids in 195 as a result of the Fifth Syrian War; this may mark the beginning of intensive Hellenization of the populace, which seems to increase through the second century, as a matter of Seleucid policy.[7] A peristyle court which may (or may not) have served as a palaestra has been found at the site, to the west of the city, and a theater which is

---

[3]   Hoffmann (8-9).
[4]   See Fitzgerald (2004 : 350-1 n. 31)
[5]   Hoffman (17) records an inscription which he takes to support this opinion; see Fitzgerald in the previous note
       for a more cautious view.
[6]   Hoffman (9).
[7]   Fitzgerald (2004) is a clear summary of what is and is not known about Gadara.

probably of early imperial date (a second theater is much later, probably 2ⁿᵈ or 3ʳᵈ century CE).[8] A late inscription mentioning a ξυϲτάρχηϲ exists, indicating the existence of a gymnasium, but the building itself has not been found, and there is no trace of an *ephebeion*.[9] Additionally, there are two theaters (though only one would have been standing in Philodemus' day), a hippodrome, and several Greek-style temples.[10] The impression is that the city was thoroughly hellenized and probably had good educational facilities. Further excavations may reveal more hellenistic buildings, however.

The city, as Josephus and Stephanus relate, was conquered by Alexander Jannaeus (Yannai), possibly as early as 100 but perhaps as late as 82.[11] Josephus seems to overstate the damage done to the city, as a Greek temple, probably dedicated to Zeus, survived the Jewish fundamentalist's reign apparently undamaged. The city walls were damaged in two phases, which may indicate that Alexander Jannaeus had to retake the city from rebels at some point. Hasmonean policy was to make life as uncomfortable as possible for pagans by land confiscations and other means, thereby encouraging them to flee. Pompey's conquest of the city in 64/3 ended Hasmonean rule and, in his honor, the dating system was reformed and new coinage issued.

The city already had several famous sons by the time of Philodemus' birth; most famous to us are Menippus, founder of the brand of satire which bears his name, and the epigrammatist and anthologist Meleager, an older contemporary of Philodemus, who shows off his facility in

---

8   Palaestra: Weber (2002: 146-8, possibly associated with a bath complex, discussed on 144-5); theater: Weber (2002: 134).
9   Weber (2002: 138 with n. 1068, 141-2). The inscription is from the "mittlere oder späte Kaiserzeit," but the institution may have been older.
10   Weber (2002: 133-139, 110-124).
11   There is debate over which of two Gadaras is meant by Josephus: this one, of the Decapolis, or one further south near Pella and Amathus. I agree with Fitzgerald (2004: 360-363) that ours is meant. Fitzgerald follows the earlier date; Hoffman (17) the later one.

three languages (Greek, Phoenician and "Syrian"[12]) in an epigram (*AP* vii.419). Meleager and Philodemus' family may have fled, along with many other Greek inhabitants, as a result of Alexander Jannaeus' conquest of the city. If so, he (and his family?) may have gone to Athens, where Philodemus certainly received training in the Garden under Zeno of Sidon. It is possible that Philodemus was raised Epicurean; the philosophical sect was popular in Syria and its founder's name survives in the form אפיקורוס (*epikoros*) as a Hebrew word for heretic.[13] Maimonides, in the 12th century, was to define it more specifically as one who denies the existence of prophecy, divine revelation, or divine knowledge of human affairs.[14] This bears obvious similarities to some of the more notorious doctrines of the Epicureans.

Athens may also have been where Philodemus met a young Gaius Calpurnius Piso Caesoninus, whose house-philosopher he eventually became. They are intimately linked by Cicero in his speech *In Pisonem*, and Philodemus dedicated at least one treatise to Piso, as well as an elegant epigram inviting him to an Epicurean dinner. Philodemus may have accompanied him to the provinces in the early 50s BCE. Association with Piso at the highest ranks of Roman government guaranteed him his living, which Cicero (*In Pisonem* §§68-72) travesties, though it was surely luxurious.

He seems to have worked in the area of Naples on three grounds: (i) a very fragmentary Herculaneum papyrus (*PHerc.* 312[15]) seems to mention Siro, who is located in Naples by the

---

[12] Probably either Aramaic or one of the dialects that make up the Canaanite group of Northwest Semitic (Hebrew is the most famous, Phoenician/Punic is another).

[13] On Epicureans in Syria, see generally Crönert (1907). The Talmud Yerushalmi (*Sanhendrin* 10:1, 27d) and, following it, Jastrow (s.v.) connect the Hebrew usage to the Aramaic word פקר (*p'kār*) "to break out," or in the passive "to be abandoned," but this etymology is not generally accepted.

[14] *Yad*, Teshuvah 3.8.

[15] The only edition of this papyrus is Crönert (1906: 125-7).

testimonia related to Vergil,[16] (ii) his books were found nearby, in Herculaneum, and (iii) there are some mentions of Parthenope in the Oxyrhynchus incipit list (*POxy*. LIV 3724) and Naples was thought to be founded on the place where the Siren of that name drowned herself in grief over Odysseus. Philodemus is more securely associated with Vergil, to whom (along with Plotius Tucca, Varius Rufus, and Quintilius Varus) he dedicated the work contained in *PHerc. Paris* 2 (probably *On Flattery,* Περὶ κολακείας).[17] Incidentally, Philodemus can be associated with Siro through Vergil.

It is commonly assumed that Philodemus lived in Herculaneum, more precisely in the Villa dei papiri, because this is where so many papyri of his authorship were found. But there are reasons for caution: Fourth Style frescos are found in the peristyle of the villa, putting its date after Philodemus' probable death, i.e. after c. 40 BCE (though of course this could be remodeling). We should note that nothing other than the papyri connects the villa to the Piso family. Additionally, the collection of papyri contains mostly Philodemus' own works. Rare indeed is the scholar whose library is made up mostly of books she herself wrote. At the same time, works that appear in draft and clean copy indicate that the library really does descend, at least in part, from Philodemus' own books. Other explanations are possible; for example, a collector wanted Philodemus' own books and got an odd miscellany in addition, or the Villa collection is descended from Philodemus' own books but Caesoninus' descendants only systematically kept Philodemus' books while getting rid of the others. We must remember also the nearly 120 years between Philodemus' death and the eruption of Vesuvius.

Philodemus seems to have been reasonably well known outside Epicurean circles. Cicero

---

[16]   Crucial are *Catalepton* 5 and 8, in which Siro is mentioned; additionally, Servius mentions him twice, in his comments to *Ecl.* 6.13 and *Aen*. 6.264.
[17]   See Gigante (2004) for fuller discussion of the reading and the topic.

mentions him as a *familiaris* in his *De Finibus* (II.119) and tells us that his epigrams circulated in Rome and were well regarded there; they were anthologized by Philip some time later, and an Oxyrhychus papyrus (*POxy.* LIV 3724) has a list with many certain Philodemean incipits. A papyrus from Soknopaiou Nesos mentioned both Philodemus and Seneca, but unfortunately it was destroyed before it could be edited and published.[18] Diogenes Laertius cites him as an authority on the history of philosophy.[19]

§3 Modern Scholarship

Scholarly engagement with ancient philosophers', especially Hellenistic philosophers', views on poetry, rhetoric, and music has been limited both by the paucity of ancient evidence and by modern interest in different topics. Nonetheless, good, interesting work has been done on Stoic rhetoric (Atherton[20]), Epicurean and Stoic musicology (Delattre[21]), and especially Epicurean rhetoric (Blank[22] and Longo Auricchio[23]). Pride of place has long belonged to Epicurean poetics, however, in large part because so much of Philodemus' treatise *On Poems* survives in the Herculaneum papyri. The problems presented by the papyri are well known by now,[24] but for the *On Poems*, at least, an end in within sight: Richard Janko has published editions of three of the five books (1, 3, and 4); a fourth is nearing completion (2), and the fifth book, already available in a reliable edition, is being reedited with the aid of infrared

---

[18] Capasso (1996). Most of the papyri found there are dated to the 1st CE; none are later than Hadrian, according to the dig diary of Zucker (who was assisted by Schubart), cited by Capasso in his article..
[19] Diogenes Laertius 10.3 cites the tenth book of his *Syntaxis of Philosophers*.
[20] Atherton (1988).
[21] Delattre (2007) discusses both.
[22] Blank (2003) and (2007); we await his editions of several books of Philodemus' *On Rhetoric*.
[23] Longo Auricchio (1977) is an edition of the the first two books of the treatise; among her many other contributions, see especially (1985), (1990) and (2009).
[24] See the introduction to almost any edition of a Herculaneum text for details; Janko (2003) is particularly detailed and widely available.

photography and new techniques for arranging fragments. The newly achieved textual security allows certain opinions to be firmly rejected and others to take their place in the debate.

The usual sources for the debate over Epicurean poetics, until recently, were a passage of Cicero's *De Finibus*, which I discuss again in the next chapter, Diogenes Laertius' comments in book ten of his work, and Lucretius' practice in writing his poem. Philodemus' texts were unavailable or poorly edited, and there were worries about his orthodoxy until 1928 (and sporadically thereafter),[25] and so he only played a supporting role in the debate. It seems as if the evidence from Diogenes Laertius, who was understood to deny the possibility of Epicureans writing poetry, and that from Lucretius, who wrote it, were felt to balance each other out and it was left to Cicero to decide between them. Consequently, much of the debate on the continent was over the interpretation of Cicero and took place in the context of debates over Lucretius. Following Jensen's epoch-making edition of *On Poems* V in 1923, some new life was injected into the debate, but trends in Lucretian scholarship moved away from Epicureanism, and Philodemus' *On Poems* was often studied more for the fragmentary remains of earlier critics than for Philodemus' own views,[26] so work on the problem was never particularly intense. Scholars have identified a variety of positions and attitudes as belonging to Epicurus and his followers.

Crönert (1906: 8) thought that early Epicureans tried to turn their students away from study of the poets; later Epicureans permitted it under the influence of Stoics.[27] At least as far as

---

[25] Castaldi (1928) argues strongly in favor of Philodemus' loyalty. Sedley (1997), e.g., argues for a faithfulness which did not exclude doctrinal innovations.

[26] Jensen led the way here; none of his appendices treat Philodemus' own views, only those of his opponents, and he dismisses Philodemus' contributions: "Nichts ist so erbärmlich und töricht wie die Wortklauberei diese Graeculus, der die Anschauungen anderer aus zweiter Quelle übernimmt und sie verhöhnt und lächerlich zu machen sucht, weil sie nicht in sein enges Schulsystem hineinpassen" (1923: 121).

[27] Crönert (1906: 8): "Daß aber weder er (i.e. Kolotes) noch Metrodoros in den Schriften des Demetrios und Philodemos Περὶ ποιημάτων erscheinen, erklärt sich daraus, daß der spätere Epikureismus unter dem Einfluß der Stoa seine ablehnende Stellung in vielen Punkten aufgab."

our sources inform us, there is indeed a change in focus from the earlier Epicureans (Epicurus, Metrodorus, Colotes) and the later ones (Zeno, Demetrius, and Philodemus). Too little is known, however, both about later Epicureans' approaches to education and about earlier Epicureans' actual views about poetry to reveal how much this is real or just a mirage, and there is no evidence that it is due to Stoic influence specifically.

Tescari (1935 and 1939) concluded that Epicurus had completely banned poetry but later followers relaxed the rule and allowed light, pleasant poetry, and that the original condemnation was on the basis that every poem treats mythology, which leads to mental disturbance and confusion.[28] Schmid (1944: 12-15) in his review of Tescari (1939) suggested that any poetry which served ἡδονή or ἀταραξία was acceptable.[29] Giuffrida in turn modified Tescari's views; in his view, Epicurus issued only a limited ban and allowed light poetry with the goal of pleasure.[30]

Tescari (1939) and later Giancotti (1959: 52) were of the view that Epicurus' remark (fr. 20, cf. fr. 593), that the sage can watch Dionysiac spectacles was to test their own impassivity rather than because they really did enjoy them and derive pleasure from them, which is what the fragment actually says. Similarly, Giancotti held the strange view that only entertaining poetry was banned, but that which was useful was permitted. Ronconi, in his criticism of Giancotti, developed the view that Epicurus condemned poetry *tout court* and admits that later Epicureans were inconsistent with this view under the compulsion of History (quasi-personified) as a force: "[c]hi doveva sentire più vivo il disagio di una posizione teorica fuori della storia, doveva essere, abbiamo già detto, un Romano. Questo romano fu Lucrezio..." He says much the same about

---

[28]   Tescari (1935: 69-82), which is reprinted with modifications and omissions in Tescari (1939: 47-64).
[29]   Schmid (1940: 14).
[30]   Giuffrida (1940: i 20-21).

Philodemus as well (1963: 17).

Boyancé (1963: 57-68), attributes a great deal, like Giancotti, to Lucretius' historical setting and thinks that poetry is, for Lucretius, light and charm (*lumière et charme*), i.e. fully capable of argumentative clarity (even better than prose!) and of providing real *hedone* which attracts our non-rational parts. Waszink thought that simple poetry by early men, of the sort described by Lucretius at V.1379-1411, was acceptable, but not ambitious poetry (e.g. of Lucretius), because the pleasure from it is "too complicated to be the truly Epicurean ἡδονή" (1954: 2, and n.b. Lucretius V.1412-1435). Despite this bizarre view, he did make some perceptive comments about Lucretius, which will be discussed below.

Philip and Estelle De Lacy (1941: 140) take Colotes to be following Epicurus' position, which they take to be a total ban on poetry, because poetic language is unclear and confusing, and therefore ill-suited to expressing philosophical argumentation. Later (1978: 190), they changed their minds and claim that Colotes objects to the use of the phrase "good poet" at *Lysis* 206b8 because it is an opinion and not evident (κατὰ δοξαζόμενον, and not κατὰ τὸ ἐναργές).

Robert Philippson (RE s.v. Philodemos 2479) points out that Epicurus' line ποιήματα δ᾽ ἐνεργείαι οὐκ ἂν ποιῆcαι is not a total ban, and thinks that Epicurus thought that the sage simply had more important things to do. Classen (1968: 110-1) summarized the debate and pointed out the difference between study of poetry as part of the ἐγκύκλιος παιδεία and its enjoyment as part of the pleasant life, and its use to publicize or publish Epicurean doctrine.

Now we turn specifically to Philodemus, rather than Epicurean views generally. Augusto Rostagni[31] deserves credit for being one of the first to be interested in Philodemus' own views and for making a variety of perceptive comments. Unfortunately, and despite perceptive editions

---

[31]   The relevant papers are collected in Rostagni (1955, esp. chapters 6 and 8).

and commentaries on Aristotle's *Poetics*, Horace's *Ars Poetica,* Suetonius' *De poetis*, and the *On the Sublime*, his project was vitiated by his dedication to finding a Crocean aesthetics of intuition in Philodemus.[32] He did correctly understand Philodemus' position about the utility of poetry, and was right to emphasize that what makes poetry is not the contents, but the form.

Nathan Greenberg's dissertation (Harvard 1955, under Werner Jaeger) should have been a milestone, but unfortunately it ended as a goal, nearly out of reach, that, with one exception, was not attained again until the 1990's. He first turned the study of Philodemus' *On Poems* to Philodemus' own views, and prosecuted the task without bringing in evidence from other ancient literary theorists or philosophers. He systematically analyzed the texts, beginning with those most firmly ascribable to Philodemus and in the best condition, and working from there outwards. His judgment was sober, and he was aware that his texts can only be pressed so far, and he translated all the texts he used, which amounts, *inter alia*, to nearly a complete translation of book V and would have rendered the material more accessible. Unfortunately, his dissertation languished unpublished until 1990, nearly unread outside specialist circles (G. M. E. Grube is the exception), and it was not able to exert the influence it ought to have.[33]

Greenberg proceeds by investigating the papyri in Crönert's hands alpha, beta, and

---

[32] Croce's views on art are complicated and heavily dependent on his broader commitments. The most important part for our purposes is as follows: in short, an intuition (i.e. a mental representation, but one without any added judgments) is complete in itself and is provoked by a perception. Intuitions are handled by the aesthetic (here "perceptual") part of the mind. Every intuition has some of the qualities of a work of art, since for him, intuition is expression; the difference between a "normal" intuition and an "artistic" one is of degree, not kind. The physical instantiation of the work of art (e.g. the painting or written copy of a poem) comes after, and is dependent on, the intuition of the artist. When the audience perceives the (so-called) "work of art," they recreate it in their minds, according to their own perceptions of it. The work of art only really exists in the minds of the artist and the audience. Accordingly, there is no content apart from the form of a piece of art. The last statement is deeply reminiscent of a view of Philodemus', which provoked Rostagni's attempt to find an antecedent for Croce in Philodemus..

[33] There were two spin-off articles (Greenberg [1958], on *metathesis* in Greek literary criticism, and [1961], on Neoptolemus' use of the terms *poema* and *poesis*) and the dissertation was summarized in the unsigned "Summaries of Dissertations for the Degree of Ph. D. 1954 and 1955" published in *HSCP* in 1957.

gamma;[34] hand alpha contains the best preserved sections (book V) which are also the most securely attested. Hand gamma contains what we now know to be much of book II and is in the correct order. Hand beta contains disorganized fragments and was treated last. He used the clearer and better studied material to illuminate the more fragmentary and less well studied texts.

In their general outlines, his conclusions about the contents all stand.[35] He found that Philodemus' approach to poetry was intellectual, i.e. that he assigned the judgment of poetry and its parts and aspects to the mind rather than the senses, that form and content are closely interrelated and exert mutual influence (and he correctly, in my view, based this opinion in Epicurean positions about language), and the *Kritikoi*'s views, that language and/or sound alone matter, are misguided. Poetic form is the job of the poet, but intelligent thought of some sort is also required. Poetry is judged with reference to a preconception (which Greenberg calls an *ennoia* but which is the *prolepsis* by a different name).[36] Poetry need not be useful, and the rigid division of poetry into genres is discarded in favor of a more holistic judgment.

Grube (1965:192-206 on Philodemus generally, 195-199 on poetics specifically) worked primarily as a summarizer of Greenberg. Beyond the points mentioned above, however, he correctly recognized that utility was only secondary to poetry, and accordingly detailed knowledge of the *realia* of the subject matter is not required of the poet, who has free choice of his topics. The discounting of utility and detailed knowledge show that Philodemus was not interested in doctrinal poetry like that of Lucretius. He recognized the close relationship of form and content, a position which Grube attributed to the poet in Philodemus, rather than the

---

[34] The labels are now out of date, but were used by Croenert to differentiate between hands that seemed to have written parts of the *On Poems*. See individual editions for discussion of the paleography and Cavallo (1983) for an overview of all the hands in the library.

[35] His hypotheses about the organization of the work have been vindicated in a few particulars.

[36] For discussion of these terms, see the beginning of chapter three.

philosopher. This position, Grube thinks, Philodemus maintained against the Stoic and Peripatetic traditions, as well as the euphonists and the *Kritikoi*.[37] Philodemus also ridiculed views that good poetry was an imitation of earlier poets. Grube's over-all judgment is notably positive:

> All this, and much else, is doubtful, but we have enough definite evidence of the critical theories discussed above to show that Philodemus was a critic of considerable originality and of highly unorthodox views … [t]his criticism is found nowhere else in extant sources; practically no notice was taken of it; his contemporaries, Cicero, Dionysius, and Horace, contradict him at every turn and expound the orthodox views without mentioning him. This is no way diminishes his importance.

Nicola Pace made the most recent major contribution to our understanding of Philodemus' poetics with his 1995 dissertation, published as a lengthy article in *Cronache Ercolanesi*. He worked in the wake of Greenberg, and so treated mostly topics that Greenberg had not covered. However, the editorial situation of of the texts had not greatly improved—Mangoni had published her edition of book V (1993) which was an improvement over Jensen (1923), and some work of more limited scope on the other books of the *On Poetry* and other works had been done. Heidmann (1971) on (what we now know is) book II and Janko's first attempt at book IV (1991) are the major editorial achievements other than Mangoni..

Pace's dissertation is divided into eleven sections, some of which do not focus on Philodemus directly. His focus is on larger issues, relationships between positions rather than single topics, and shows admirable methodological caution. Accordingly, he often limits himself to noting points of difficulty that other scholars had overlooked or ruling out proposed solutions. Unfortunately, many of his discussions are vitiated by a misunderstanding of the terms *poema*

---

[37]   A consensus now seems to have emerged that the *Kritikoi* and the euphonist critics are the same group, but this was not clear when Grube wrote. They held a constellation of views that privileged, to varying degrees, the sound of poetry over its meaning or content. Janko (2003: 120-189, with corrections in [forthcoming]) gives a detailed overview of individuals and their particular doctrines.

and *poesis*, and poorly edited texts cause other problems as well.[38]

Pace correctly found that the ethical content of poetry is irrelevant to its quality as poetry. According to Pace, Philodemus thought that meter was a source of pleasure in poetry, and that it only pleased the hearing, but that the primary source of pleasure was the thoughts and plot and their connection with the language. He found that working out the plot was prior to the language, but that these are not easy to separate: language is the instrument by which the plot is related, so the plot cannot be understood without the language.

He also expands on Greenberg's recognition that form and content are deeply intertwined with each other, and correctly notes that the content is valued less than the form. The ἴδιον, "particularity," "defining feature," of the poet lies in *synthesis*, i.e. literary form.[39] However, the thought is not to be discounted, though it is to be of middling quality. The "conceptual component (i.e. thoughts and their organization) are fundamental for both the poetic expression and the effect of poetry (i.e. *psychagogia*), but it is only in fusion with the language that the conceptual component can have this effect.

Despite a great deal of initial involvement and interest in the Herculaneum papyri on the part of a few British scholars, British and American scholars did not really engage with the papyri and questions of Epicurean poetics until about the 1970's. Philip and Estelle De Lacy, Eric Turner, and David Sedley deserve credit for turning Anglo-American eyes back to the papyri. Greenberg (1955) and in his wake Grube (1965) deserve credit for anticipating the trend.

Epicurean distaste for poetry had, by 1995, become an almost unquestioned doctrine

---

[38] The difficulties of these terms, which Neoptolemus of Parium (not Philodemus) used, and Philodemus', discussion of them have still not been completely sorted out; Neoptolemus may mean something like "the formal aspect of a poem" for *poema* and the "contents-related aspect" for *poesis*, but this is not clear. Philodemus does not use them as strictly defined technical terms. See chapter five, §6 for discussion. Pace also misunderstands Philodemus' demand for originality, however—another mistake due to poorly edited texts.

[39] However, due to the bad state of his texts, he misattributes many views of the *Kritikoi* to Philodemus.

among English language scholars.[40] Lucretius was a marvel: how could an Epicurean write poetry? Philodemus was generally ignored (epigram was considered a trivial genre and not worth consideration, and his prose output is still not well-known), but his poetic output was a cause for confusion as well.[41] The answer is that the doctrine that Epicureans had nothing to do with poetry actually had no basis in genuine, Epicurean sources; we had absorbed not only the actual anti-Epicurean polemics written by Cicero and Plutarch, but internalized them to the point of misreading authentic Epicurean sources. The qualification ἐνεργείαι in Epicurus' dictum was forgotten and the fragment understood to say "the sage will not write poetry (at all)." So the matter stood for two millennia.

In 1995, the volume *Philodemus & Poetry* marked a thaw, especially Elizabeth Asmis' contribution. It came at a critical moment: work on Philodemus' *On Poems* had advanced far enough that the evidence of serious Epicurean engagement in the field of literary criticism had become unavoidable, at least to those who cared to track down Jensen's 1923 edition or Mangoni's 1993 edition of book V.[42] In 1997, David Sider published a commentary on Philodemus' epigrams notable not only for its philological rigor and literary taste, but also for its concerted attempt to link Philodemus' poetry to his philosophy. The attempt is not always successful: Sider was working before most of the editing of the *On Poems* and of other relevant

---

[40] The attitude lived on even after Asmis: e.g. Sedley 1998 notes "[t]here has been much debate about Lucretius' orthodoxy or heterodoxy as an Epicurean choosing to write poetry" (66), Rengakos in his review of Arrighetti 2006 "As is well known, Epicurus himself urged the wise man to eschew poetic composition" (http://bmcr.brynmawr.edu/2007/2007-12-20.html), Arrighetti had written, *inter alia*, that Epicurus had "una particolare avversione" (315), and for a popular audience, Woolerton in *The Guardian* comments that "Epicurus didn't like poetry" (http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/belief/2013/mar/18/lucretius-part-9-calculating-poet).

[41] Wilkinson's attitude is indicative: "Philodemus, though an ardent Epicurean, was not insensible to the charms of the Muses" (1933: 144, cf. Phld. *Ep*. 27, where he describes himself as μουσοφίλης).

[42] It must be said that the *On Poems* has received the lion's share of editorial and interpretive work. The *Rhetoric* and *On Music* have received some, but not nearly as much. Even so, students of Philodemus' aesthetic theories are at a comparative advantage over students of his ethics, since most of the ethical works have not received more than a single edition from 1800 on (the *On Death* is a notable exception).

texts had been done, and not all of his ideas are borne out in the texts as they now stand.

New, better founded, editions have brought Philodemus to a wider audience, and interest has grown. The best editions draw on generations of scholarly work, and each generation of scholars has new techniques and equipment to help them: Jensen was the first editor of Book 5 to examine the papyri in Naples; Mangoni's edition has the advantage of microscopes over Jensen's edition. The forthcoming edition of Philodemus' *On Poems* V of Fish, Armstrong, and Porter uses infrared photographs and benefits from our understanding of the complicated stratigraphy of the papyri. There was earlier work, most of which was based on the unreliable lithographs published in the Neapolitan *Collectiones*[43] or occasionally from the 18th and 19th century sketches (*disegni*) preserved at Oxford and in Naples. The growth in understanding, as well as textual reliability, is clear to see.

Now Philodemus, as a literary theorist, has finally made it to the banks of the mainstream (as a poet, he was always well-esteemed, for an epigrammatist). Fantuzzi and Hunter,[44] Müller,[45] Halliwell,[46] and Bartsch[47] for instance all discuss him in general works dedicated to literary interpretation. In some cases they synthesize others' work; in others, they present their own interpretations, but no recent work has yet gone thoroughly through Philodemus' texts to establish his own positions on such questions as "is poetry a *techne*?," "how is poetry to be judged?," and "how does poetry affect the audience?" These questions have occasionally been treated incidentally or piecemeal but the whole is greater than its parts and, by considering them together, we can recover an understudied branch of Epicurean and literary-critical thought and

---

[43] The *collectio prior* included copperplates of the Neapolitan *disegni*, faced by an edited text, Latin translation, and commentary. The *collectio altera* contained solely copperplates.
[44] 2004: 449-461.
[45] Passim, see his index s.v. Philodemos.
[46] 2002: 249-59 and 280-6; 2012: 304-327.
[47] *Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics*, s.v. Classical Poetics.

gain a firm landmark in the gulf between Aristotle and Horace in the history of literary criticism.

§4 General Introduction to Philodemus and his Aesthetic Works[48]

Philodemus' surviving philosophical works are primarily ethical, of two sorts. The first is theoretical or protreptic, on how to make correct decisions generally, e.g. "[*On Choices and Avoidances*]" (*PHerc.* 1251);[49] the second practical, focused on removing vices and replacing them with virtues. Here the ten book series "On Vices and their Corresponding Virtues" is the major work. Voula Tsouna has explored Philodemus' ethics at length in her 2007 book "The Ethics of Philodemus." He wrote several books on epistemology (the *On Signs* in multiple books[50] and the [*On Sensations*]), the history of the Epicurean school (*On Epicurus* in at least two books and the "*Pragmateiai*" or "Memorie epicuree") and a general history of philosophy (the *Syntaxis* mentioned by Diogenes Laertius at X.15, of which several books survive). Additionally, he wrote extensively on aesthetic topics: *On Poems, On Music, On Rhetoric*. Of these, the *On Poems* will be the primary focus, but many other works will be mentioned and discussed in the course of the investigation.

The aesthetic works are about beliefs and attitudes towards their topics rather than technical manuals. For example, among the topics under discussion in the *On Music* are the definition of music, which is separated from the lyrics of a song, the role of hearing in the

---

[48] See Asmis (2000) for a broader view.
[49] The square brackets indicate that the title is a restoration; it does not survive on the papyrus, but seems likely. We know that Philodemus wrote a book by this title and it describes the contents accurately. It was edited most recently by Tsouna and Indelli, and is often called the Comparetti Ethics (or *L'etica Comparetti*), since Domenico Comparetti was the first to edit it.
[50] *PHerc.* 1065, the work edited by De Lacy and De Lacy (1978[2]) under the title "Philodemus: On Methods of Inference" turns out to be book III; Delattre successfully read the subscription and so we now know the title was "On Signs and Sign-Inferences" and that this was book three. Fragments probably belonging to book IV have now also been published.

experience of music, whether music is educational, and whether it adds to the experience of divine worship. Nowhere are instructions for writing music given, and it is not Philodemus' intent to give them (nor, as Delattre [2007: 11] points out, was it the purpose of Diogenes of Babylon, Philodemus' Stoic opponent, either).[51] Similarly, the *On Poems* contains discussions of rhythm and meter, but no listing of meters nor any discussion of how to write metrically. Examples are used from time to time to illustrate points.

Philodemus' *On Poems* almost certainly consisted of five books, of which much survives (three books quite substantially and some remains of the other two).[52] The work is a polemical refutation of other theoreticians of poetry and poetics. Philodemus proceeds by summarizing his opponents' positions, then systematically refuting their arguments in a variety of ways. The larger organization of the work is not clear; it is not chronological (see below for more details).[53] Opponents include the *Kritikoi*, or euphonic theorists (Megaclides of Athens, Andromenides, Heracleodorus, and Pausimachus, as well as Crates of Mallos to a certain extent), who thought that good sound was the sole criterion of good poetry, and come under attack in books one and two. Books three and four are poorly preserved, but Aristotle's lost dialogue *On Poets* is apparently the object of part of the surviving section of book IV and Crates reappears in book III. Book V evidently contains a miscellany; opponents included Heraclides of Pontos, Crates again, an anonymous Stoic (his name does not survive; formerly he was thought to be Ariston), Neoptolemus of Parium (possible source for Horace's *Ars Poetica*) and brief doxographies collected by an unknown Philomelus and a Zeno, perhaps Zeno of Sidon, Philodemus' teacher and head of the Garden in Athens.

---

[51] See Delattre (2007: 1-20) for a summary of Diogenes' views.
[52] The initial reconstruction was laid out in Janko 1991 (see also Janko [1995]); it has been continuously updated. See the introductions to the various editions for details.
[53] A theory is mooted below.

Evidently similar was Philodemus' *On Music*, of which only book IV survives. It is a rebuttal of the opinions of Diogenes of Babylon, an early Stoic who theorized about the importance and benefits of music. Originally, the term *mousike* included both music and poetry. Philodemus draws a distinction between the instrumental music and the "lyrics" of a song, in the modern sense of that term. He also denies, in accordance with Epicurean physics and epistemology, the ability of the irrational hearing to judge what it hears. Both physics and epistemology are fundamental for his theory of poetry, since they contribute to his definition if poetry and his discussion of how best poetry is to be judged.

The *On Rhetoric*, of which a great deal survives,[54] started from a discussion of the technicity of rhetoric, that is, the questions "What is rhetoric?" and "Is rhetoric a *techne*?" Philodemus' discussion of the question is very interesting from a methodological point of view, especially since he links poetics and rhetoric quite closely; hence this work will be discussed as well. Additionally, his attitudes towards rhetoric provide a useful and interesting set of comparanda for his views on poetry, since, for him, technical rhetoric is limited to *sophistike*, that is, the art of writing well and giving speeches successfully, and does not include persuasion (which is the duty of philosophical argument).

Many other works come under consideration as well. The *On Household Management* is valuable generally as a treatment of Epicurean economics and a discussion of the role of money in the life of the sage, but specifically for its discussion of *techne*, which supplements and expands, for our purposes, on that in the *On Rhetoric*. The poem of Lucretius and the inscription of Diogenes of Oenoanda are also cited at times; for discussion of them, see below.

---

[54] The ensemble has been variously reconstructed and we do not know the total number of books I-IV and VIII are firmly attested (books II-IV in multiple copies) and several additional books survive.

Philodemus' argumentative strategy is now reasonably well understood.[55] It is clear enough from the reconstructed works that he first summarized the views of an opponent or opponents, then refuted them; there may have been a transitional passage, perhaps a resume, between them. It is safe to assume that the opponent and his treatise were clearly identified at the beginning of the summary; no such indication survives, however.[56] In his refutations, he accuses opponents of making errors of fact or logic, as well as misunderstanding or misrepresenting real phenomena. Furthermore, he makes some objections based on Epicurean standards. Once he has refuted one part of an opponent's argument, further aspects which depend on that first part may also come in for mockery. Further, for Philodemus, because of the Epicurean doctrine of *prolepsis*, the statement "this is not what people mean when they say X," if true, is a valid refutation of any argument or assertion, since it reveals that the opponent is discussing something imaginary or off-topic.

Generally, there is a very brief concluding section at the end of each book; these are usually less than a single column in length. It may be absent when the discussion continues across the book boundary. In some cases, it clearly signals a transition to the next topic (e.g. *On Signs and Sign-Inferences* III, which signals the transition to a discussion of the Empirical school of physicians, presumably the topic in book IV); in other, the conclusion of the whole ensemble

---

[55] The briefest introduction to Philodemus' argumentative strategy is Neubecker 1983, who focuses on arguments in the *On Music*; more expansive is Delattre 1996 on the *On Music* as well as the *On Signs and Sign-Inference*. He discusses the organization of the whole book with special attention to matters of punctuation and sign-posting in the text. Discussions of the structures of individual works can generally be found in the introductions to their editions.

[56] The beginnings of works, because they were at the outside of the rolls, are far more damaged and fragmentary than later parts of the same books; additionally, because editorial work has focused on the *midolli* at the centers of rolls, outer portions of texts (i.e. the parts towards the beginning) have been recognized only rarely. For example, only nine words survive complete from the first 10 columns of *On Poems I*. Therefore, anything discussed at the beginning of a work is lost to us. Noteworthy are the three instances in *On Poems* V when Philodemus cites τὰ ἐν Φιλομήλωι, τὰ ἐν Ζήνωνι, and τὰ παρὰ τῶι Κράτητι, though these instances come late in the text. In these cases, the works were probably more explicitly named earlier in the text or were well-known enough that full citation was not thought necessary.

(e.g. *On Music* IV and *On Poems* V).

§5 On the Structure and Contents of the *On Poems*

In 1955, Nathan Greenberg put forward a very tentative reconstruction of the work, which turns out to be correct in many particulars: specifically, book II is concerned with the euphonists, book IV with a criticism of Aristotelian theories of genre as irrelevant in the search for the good poem, and V with the division between form and content and the judgment of poems.[57] His survey was vitiated by incomplete information, but it was remarkably perceptive, especially given the terrible state of the editions at that point.

I put forth, by way of working hypothesis, the following summary of the structure:

- Books I and II are concerned with euphony, specifically the euphonies of letter, word, and phrase. That they come as a pair is guaranteed by the fact that a group of critics is summarized in book I and Philodemus' refutation begins there but continues into book II.

- Book III appears to be about the relationship between euphony and sense and about poetic and prosaic words.

- Book IV is about genre, and the discussion of Aristotle's views on the matter seems to continue into book V.

- Book V is about how poetry works and the judgment of poems; it ends with brief rebuttals of poorly-thought out positions and a single, exhausted sentence by way of conclusion: "As for the rest, you can easily figure out how they erred from what we've already said."

Subscriptions to books IV and V survive, and the number of book II is guaranteed by a

---

[57] Greenberg (1990: 269-70). See also Janko (2012: 228-9).

back-reference later in the work, at V.29.7-23, and says that book II was appropriate διὰ τὸ καὶ περὶ ποιήματος εἶναι κοινῶς, which I take to mean "since it is about verse generally," i.e. primarily phonic qualities of verse.[58] Continuity of contents strongly suggests that I and II are in that order, and book III is left by elimination. Book V ends by mopping up a wide array of unrelated opinions, which suggests the end of the work, though there is no formal conclusion or wrap-up.

A movement from small to large, or most detailed to most global, is easily discernible. Books I and II are not about "poems generally" as Greenberg thought, but "verses" generally, and in a limited sense: verses treated as linguistic and sonic phenomena. Book III moves towards the larger concerns of book IV but still has connections with the discussions of euphony in the earlier section; sadly, this book is the worst preserved and it is extremely difficult to draw secure conclusions. Book IV leaves individual verses behind entirely and discusses the classification of poems; book V leaves even these divisions behind. Therefore, *On Poems*, as a title, is an accurate description of the contents. However, the extensive damage to the beginnings of books (and the generally poor state of III and IV especially) makes it impossible to be certain about this organizational scheme, but it has the benefit of explaining the double discussion of Crates of Mallos, whose doctrines about letters are refuted in book II, whereas his interpretation of poems is mentioned in book V.

It is an interesting fact that very few of Philodemus' opponents in the *On Poems* are other philosophers. I do not think that Crates of Mallos was a Stoic, but he did use Stoic terminology.[59] Other *Kritikoi* used Peripatetic terminology, but it is not clear that this means that they were

---

[58] Jensen translates "weil dieses [sc. das zweite Buch] auch über das Gedicht im allgemeinen handelt" and Porter (1989: 161 with n. 67) translates "since it [our treatise] is a general work on poems."

[59] Broggiato, the editor of his fragments, considers him one, but see Barnes' (2005) attack on the evidence in his review.

Peripatetics. Aristotle is handled in book IV, and Heraclides of Pontus in book V, but the majority of the opponents are not philosophers.

§6 Why is Reconstructing Philodemus' Thought So Hard?

It is clear that some of Philodemus' own formulations are subject to some of his own criticisms: he is not as clear or explicit as he demands from his opponents. This is due, at least in part, to the nature of the work: it is a critical "anti-commentary," in which opponents' views are systematically demolished but the author does not put forward his own views. Plutarch's *Against Colotes* is probably the most famous example of this genre, and Colotes himself seems to have specialized in it: beyond the *On the Proposition that it is Impossible to Live According to the Doctrines of Other Philosophers*, he wrote works *Against Plato's* Lysis and *Against Plato's* Theaetetus. There are several possible audiences for anti-commentaries: people within the author's school (to reinforce their beliefs), members of the criticized school (to get them to convert), or the general public. It may have varied on a case by case basis. In Plutarch's case, the dedicatee is Saturninus, a Roman nobleman interested in fine and old things (φιλόκαλον καὶ φιλάρχαιον), who considers it a very worthy activity to have the discourses of the ancients in hand as much as possible (καὶ διὰ χειρῶν ἔχειν ὡς μάλιστα δυνατόν ἐcτι τοὺς λόγους τῶν παλαιῶν βαcιλικωτάτην διατριβὴν ἡγούμενον). This implies that Saturninus may be interested in philosophy, but he need not be to be flattered by the dedication. The work seems aimed towards those who would be interested in reading anti-Epicurean polemic, rather than Middle Platonists specifically or Epicureans specifically. Plutarch does not espouse doctrine in this work, however. The converse of the anti-commentary is defense of a view or practice, like that found in the first part of Philodemus' *On Piety*, where Epicurean theology and Epicurus'

religious practice are defended against critics.

This genre may have been a major mode of philosophical engagement, especially since no particular philosopher needed to recapitulate school teaching on a particular subject each time they discussed it. We are probably safe in assuming that this treatise was not intended to be Philodemus' only word on the matter, either because his own views were espoused elsewhere or because he was following a previous authority, perhaps Zeno of Sidon or Metrodorus of Lampsacus.[60] If so, his phrasing could be elliptical but still intelligible, because it would only need remind his audience of the fuller formulation. However, Porter (1993, esp. pp. 625-8), Mangoni (1993: 31 and n. 25), and Pace (2000: 73-4) thought that there was never a formal expression of the Epicurean position on literary criticism, because they simply relied on the *prolepsis*. This seems overly reductive to me: the Epicureans thought that there was an easily enunciable and clear *prolepsis* of the gods, but this never stopped them from writing several books through the centuries *On the Gods* and on related topics, like *On Piety*: both Epicurus and Philodemus wrote books with those titles, and Demetrius Laco wrote on theology. Hermarchus, for instance, covered theological topics in his *Against Empedocles* (also an anti-commentary?), according to citations of that work in Philodemus' *On Piety*. These discussions occasionally descend into such trivia as what language the gods spoke, so there is no reason to think that Epicurean discussions of poetry would be impossible simply because of the *prolepsis*.[61]

In the other partially extant Epicurean work on poetry, Demetrius's *On Poems*, there is similarly no lengthy discussion of the Epicurean position.[62] The rolls are in bad condition,

---

[60] On this topic, see the next chapter.
[61] I suspect the real cause of scholarly skepticism to lengthy and detailed treatment of poetry on the part of the Epicureans is due to the same mistaken assumptions about their relationships with poetry and education that I outlined above.
[62] See Romeo's edition, pp. 58-9.

however, and book I in particular is represented by very few fragments.[63] Demetrius may have set it out in a lost part of the book, or he too may have been relying on a previous authority.

Finally, it is possible that no Epicurean ever systematically set forth school doctrine on the matter. This seems unlikely, in light of how many treatises *On Poems* (vel sim.) Epicureans actually wrote, but it may be the case. There are at least four: Metrodorus, Demetrius Laco, and Philodemus all wrote *On Poems* (all in several books) and Zeno wrote an *On the Use of Poems*. Finally, Epicurus himself commented several times on poetry, as we know from fragments from unknown works. These fragments had to have come from somewhere, and they may stem from a full discussion which was a digression in a work dedicated to a different topic; for instance, he may have discussed poetry fully in a letter, or he may have lectured on it and allowed Metrodorus' treatment to stand as the written statement of the school's position.

In light of the fact that Zeno of Sidon, Philodemus' own teacher, wrote a treatise Περὶ χρήσεως ποιημάτων (*On the Utility of Poems*), I suspect that Philodemus assumed knowledge of that work on the part of his readers. Further, Zeno's work may have been an update to Metrodorus' *On Poems* to meet more recent criticism, and Philodemus may have written his book as a complement, in order to criticize competing theories. Unfortunately, since Zeno's and Metrodorus' books no longer exist (and Demetrius' is poorly preserved), certainty is impossible.

§7 Guide to the Other Sources

A) Other Epicureans:

---

[63] Book I is in terrible condition; hardly a single complete sentence is reconstructable, but col. 9 (in my forthcoming edition) is intriguing. Book II is in much better condition, but we only have the end of the text, which deals with individual problems rather than theory and judgment. For details about the condition and topics of book I, see my forthcoming article; for book II, see Romeo's edition (1988).

Οἱ ἄνδρες ("The [Great] Men," or "the founders")[64] is the term used by Philodemus to refer to the Epicurus and the other three founders of the school: Metrodorus of Lampsacus, Hermarchus of Mitylene, and Polyaenus of Lampsacus. They are also called οἱ καθηγέμονες, or "the leaders." It is not clear to us now why these four were selected from the first generation of Epicureans, which included Epicurus' brothers, as well as his slave Mys and evidently some women as well (polemically, and probably dishonestly, referred to as courtesans in the tradition[65]), but the grouping was canonical for Philodemus. He cites their opinions with obvious reverence and once, memorably, accuses any Epicurean who disagrees with them of assaulting their own father (*On Rhetoric* I, *PHerc.* 1427.7.24-29 = p. 21 LA).

In nearly every case, however, their works survive only in fragments; the only exceptions are three letters of Epicurus himself and his composition αἱ κυρίαι δόξαι, or "The Authoritative Opinions," which are preserved in Diogenes Laertius' tenth book. Taken together with his wide excerpting from other Epicurean texts, Diogenes thought that they provided a firm introduction to Epicurean thought.

Herculaneum has not been unkind to the Founders, either. There seem to have been multiple copies of Epicurus' Περὶ φύσεως in the library (two copies of some books have been identified, and three copies of at least one).[66] More often, Philodemus quotes them, as e.g. in the *De Pietate* and *Rhet.* II. All this serves to put our knowledge of the early Garden on much firmer footing. Unfortunately, very little of the new material directly bears on poetics, though there are some relevant parts.

---

[64] See Longo Auricchio (1978) for a complete discussion of the term.
[65] On women in the Garden and the polemics about them, see Gordon (2004).
[66] See Houston's chapter on the library as well, in which he estimates its original size at 600-1,000 rolls (2014: 87-129).

Philodemus' rhetoric guarantees his fealty to them and their opinions. He is willing to modify lightly their views as, for example, in the case of the [*On Choices and Avoidances*],[67] but in each case he preserves the main thrust of the original formulation. I do not think that we can assume that orthodox Epicureans absolutely followed the literal words of the Founders, or even Epicurus, in the light of such modifications of doctrine and the reports of Diogenes Laertius, discussed above. However, this is not to call Philodemus unfaithful; on the contrary, he may reargue and slightly modify original formulations, but remains firmly committed to the system as set out by the Founders. It is safe to assume that he would not lightly contradict an explicit statement and that he would try to remain firmly within the spirit of the original formulation. Therefore, I consider it safe to cite opinions of Epicurus and the others as evidence for what Philodemus thought.

Demetrius "nicknamed 'the Spartan'" (ἐπικληθεὶς Λάκων, D.L. X.26) was another Epicurean philosopher, probably roughly contemporary with Zeno of Sidon, teacher of Philodemus and Cicero.[68] Among other works, some notably on mathematics as well as a treatise on textual problems in Epicurus, he wrote an *On Poems*, probably in two books, which deals especially with *lexis* and style. Philodemus uses him as a source in *On Signs and Sign-Inferences III* (mentioned at col. 28.13) and Diogenes Laertius and Sextus Empiricus mention him; we have no reason to believe that Philodemus disagreed with him on anything substantive.

---

[67] See Tsouna-Indelli (1995: 39-53, esp. 42-46), where they discuss several instances of such slight modification to answer critics.

[68] For biographical discussion and a collection of testimonia, see Gigante in Puglia (1988). Based on how Diogenes refers to him, I do not think that he was actually a Laconian, but was given a nickname for some reason. His papyri do show consistent, odd spellings, most notable are τἀτό (etc.) for ταὐτό and η instead of ει before vowels, e.g. ἀλήθηα (neither seems to be particular to a specific dialect). His language shows other peculiarities, particularly in diction (the various editions should be consulted for details).

Therefore, Demetrius' *On Poems* is particularly interesting. Since he writes about the same topic from the same perspective, we have both a new source of evidence and a check on our conclusions. For example, Philodemus endorses an opponent's claim that the job of a poet is to write about topics in non-prosaic language; Demetrius says the same thing in different words at Poems II.14.6-8: [ἡ] κ[ατάc]κευοc πε|φ[ε]υγυῖά [ἐcτι τὸ λ]ογ[οει|δέc ("[sc. the poetic style] is the one which avoids the prosaic style"). On its own, this is not a particularly profound or insightful statement, but it is confirms that this is what Epicureans saw as important about the style of poetry.

Titus Lucretius Carus wrote a poem *De Rerum Natura* in Latin epic verse in the first century BCE; he was more or less contemporary with Philodemus. The work concentrates on physics, though there are some extensive sections dealing with ethics and other topics. Lucretius' orthodoxy has never been questioned and so what he says can be safely taken to represent Epicurean positions. Sedley[69] has argued that Lucretius was in fact working only from Epicurus' own *De Natura* and that later Epicurean thinkers do not enter into the picture. This seems probable to me, but it is not an essential point. Furthermore, it is *possible* that a copy of the poem was in the library of the Villa dei Papiri, but I consider the evidence inconclusive and it is in any case irrelevant for my arguments[70].

Lucretius' poem is useful for providing a full, if not complete, overview of Epicurean physics as well as treatments of other topics which are not covered in the extant texts of Epicurus

---

[69]   Sedley (1998, esp. chapters three, five, and seven), and updated in Sedley (2010).
[70]   In question are *PHerc*. 1829 and 1831. See Kleve (1989), Capasso (2003), Delattre (2003), and finally Obbink (2007), who comes out in favor of some of Kleve's original identifications. If Lucretius' poem was in fact in the villa, it may have gotten there after Philodemus' death, and so it is unsafe to draw conclusions from the mere fact of its presence there.

or other Epicureans. For example, his account of the invention of human society provides some supplements to the fragmentary text of Diogenes of Oenoanda. The poem itself is in six books and covers the first 15 books of Epicurus' work[71], but is generally considered unfinished, though just lacking the *ultima manus*, rather than lacking major sections. It is nevertheless possible that Lucretius intended to finish a complete version of the 37 book original.

It is not clear whether there was a connection between Lucretius and Philodemus. On the one hand, it seems unlikely that two Epicureans of such devotion and spatial proximity would not know each other. On the other, Sedley[72] has pointed out that there were two camps of Epicureans in Italy, a Roman one which focused more on physics and, in Cicero's opinion, was not very learned, and the Bay of Naples Greek circle including Philodemus and Siro, whom Cicero through a character in the dialogue calls *familiares nostros...cum optimos viros tum homines doctissimos*, "our good friends... just as excellent as they are very learned" (*De Fin.* 2.119). The combined reference suggest that they were on good terms with each other and possibly worked together. Owing to this split between Greek and Latin philosophizing, even if Philodemus and Lucretius knew each other, they may have been at odds.[73]

Diogenes of Oenoanda (probably 2nd, perhaps 3rd CE), a wealthy man in Oenoanda in Lycia, set up an inscription in the town agora which expounded Epicurean philosophy, both in Diogenes' own words and with quotations from Epicurus and perhaps other earlier Epicureans. According to Smith's reconstruction, the standard version, it is the largest inscription known from antiquity. Smith dates it to the second century CE on the basis of the inscriptional style of

---

[71] According to Sedley's reconstruction (see above, n. 69).
[72] Sedley (2009: 39-40).
[73] Kleve (2011) suggests that the famous epigram inviting Piso to dinner implies that Lucretius will be giving a recital.

the letters; others put it in the third century. As far as Diogenes' opinions are concerned, he appears to be completely orthodox, although he seems to have focused on physics and ethics. Happily, textual discoveries continue to accrue as survey work at Oenoanda continues.

A final note about Epicureans: At the end of Philodemus' life, there were a variety of Epicurean groups—the Roman one, working in Latin, concentrating on physics, the Neapolitan one, working in Greek, working widely, but evidently not on physics, as well as the original Garden in Athens, Demetrius Laco's group (possibly located in Miletus), and the group on Rhodes and Cos (perhaps the same as the group whom Philodemus sarcastically calls φασκοβυβλιακοί),[74] who disagreed with Philodemus (and, as Philodemus presents it, with Zeno, who spoke on behalf of the Athenian *Kepos*). Additionally, Diogenes Laertius mentions at X.26 that orthodox Epicureans called heterodox Epicureans "sophists" and ascribes one opinion to Epicurus and a modification of that view to (evidently orthodox) Epicureans at X.31 (we know that this later group includes Philodemus).[75] I mention all this to call attention to the geographic and doctrinal variety possible among Epicureans in the first century BCE and to suggest that making categorical claims in the absence of evidence of both the opinions of the founders and the opinions of these other groups is futile; it is quite impossible, in many cases, to know whether Philodemus, or any other Epicurean, is innovating, rephrasing, or only slightly modifying the work of the school founders, and, to judge by the passage of Diogenes Laertius mentioned above, it does in fact seem possible that Epicureans innovated or revised the school

---

[74] See Del Mastro (2014: 184-7).
[75] The point at issue is a detail of epistemology: Epicurus recognized πάθη, αἰσθήσεις, and πρόληψις as criteria of truth. Diogenes adds that "Epicureans" add the φανταστικὴ ἐπιβολὴ τῆς διανοίας, to which Philodemus subscribes at *De Signis* fr. 1.

founders without being labeled heterodox. My work focuses quite narrowly on Philodemus' own opinions, and so I hope to avoid these perils by presenting the views of only this one Epicurean with careful supplementation as necessary.

§8 From Papyrus to Edition

Owing to the fragmentary and damaged condition of the papyri, an extended note on the editions used is warranted. All Herculaneum papyri suffered greatly in the eruption of Mt. Vesuvius in 79 CE, but they were also preserved by the same forces, which turned them into carbon. They suffered further when discovered and unrolled, and have been very slowly disintegrating ever since their discovery.

First, the rolls were cut into, lengthwise, so that they were divided into three sections: the middle of the roll, which was still rolled up (called *midollo* or "marrow" in Italian), and two "halves." The halves, called *barchette* "little boats," or *scorze* "bark," were sometimes subject to a process called *scorzatura* ("de-barking") in which the visible layer was drawn by a *disegnatore* or draftsman, then scraped off from the front or top of the stack, so that only the outer layers and occasional fragments from the inner layers remain intact. In many cases, the outermost layers, which were the most burned, could not be separated, so that, between burning and disintegration, the first columns of a given work are always extremely fragmentary, illegible, or missing entirely. Other times, they were subject to a process called *sollevamento* or "lifting-off," in which layers of papyrus were lifted off the outside of the stack of *scorze*. Sometimes, in a process called *scorzatura totale*, the *midollo* was completely destroyed. In other cases, widthwise cuts were made, so that tops and bottoms of columns were separated.

The drawings made from the *scorze*, two sets of which were made, are called *disegni*

(singular: *disegno*) and are now stored at Oxford in the Bodleian Library and in Naples at the *Officina dei papiri*. The Oxford *disegni* were made first, when the papyri were in a better condition. In many cases, they are the only witnesses to the text; even when the papyri still survive but have become more damaged, they may be valuable sources of information. Multispectral images taken of the surviving papyri by the Brigham Young imaging team are invaluable for showing more than can be seen with the naked eye, but because the papyri are not flat, sometimes they misrepresent the papyrus, particularly when the papyrus is especially cracked, bent, warped, or has holes. Both infrared photograph and natural light autopsy are required.

Whole book rolls, more or less, were found, but when these were divided into fragments and unrolled, parts of the same roll were given different inventory numbers. Within inventory numbers, the fragments were numerated in series, but the series goes forward in the cases where *sollevamento* was used, and backwards in cases of *scorzatura*. E.g. *On Poems* I, as reconstructed by Janko, includes *PHerc.* 444, 460, 466, 1073, 1074a, and 1081a, each of which is in fragments. No *midollo* has been found, so the roll was probably subject to *scorzatura totale*, hence the last column extant, 213 according to Janko's reconstruction, is unlikely to be the final column of the work.[76] For comparison, the *midollo* of *On Music IV* (*PHerc.* 1497) contains 39 columns, whereas the entire work contains 152 columns divided between nine separate *PHerc.* numbers.

Grouping the parts of a single book requires careful paleographic work on the papyri themselves, as well as historical research into the numbering systems used by those who unrolled

---

[76] There are no internal, textual grounds for determining if the end of col. 213 was in fact the end of the papyrus. The end of book III is missing, Philodemus indicates that book V is ending, but books two and four end at the conclusion of a line of argumentation, without a "sign-off" or internal indication that it is the end of the book (the *subscriptio* of book IV is present, but that of two is not, although there is a *coronis*), so we should not expect the ending for book I to be clearly marked in the text of the book. The lack of *subscriptio* and *coronis* at the end of col. 213, however, is in favor of this not being the real end of the book.

them. Once the *midollo*, the *scorze,* and the *disegni* are gathered, the order of the columns in the

roll is reconstructed using what is called the "Delattre-Obbink method," in which the *scorze* are

interleaved backwards, and so the true order of columns is obtained.[77]

The first parts of rolls, and therefore of books, are very poorly preserved, since they were

exposed when the eruption occurred and so were charred more severely. Consequently, our

knowledge of the beginnings of Philodemus' works is very limited. It is safe to assume that he

identified his opponents and the works he cited, and probably gave a brief general overview of

his project. The summaries and résumés are in bad shape as well, though they are better

preserved. It seems that they are simple extracts, paraphrases, or epitomes of the opponents'

work, with minimal comment by Philodemus himself. Since the summaries are sometimes

quoted again or paraphrased in the refutation, correspondences between the two are a valuable

way to join fragments and reconstruct whole rolls.[78]

Refutations are linked to arguments throughout. First Philodemus will quote a opponent's

statement, then refute it. Quotations are often discernible through punctuation, asyndeton

between the end of Philodemus' previous section and the beginning of the quotation, and through

prospective (rather than retrospective) particles at the beginning of Philodemus' refutation (μέν is

common). Regularly, Philodemus speaks in *oratio recta* and quotes his opponents in *oratio

obliqua*. Unfortunately, it is not clear that Philodemus always quotes, *stricto sensu*, especially

later in books, and paraphrases can evade the usual techniques. Non-Philodemean stylistic

---

[77] See Janko (2003: 3-119) for a detailed description of a particular case with bibliography of the theory and history of the methods involved. Janko (forthcoming) will be more up-to-date. In general, see Obbink (1996: 37-61), Delattre (1989) and (2007: cii-cvii). and Janko (1992) and (1993).

[78] A related method is to use the internal column numeration and line numeration of works to place fragments identified as belonging to the same roll. Similarly, the mathematics of Archimedean spirals provides a method which does not rely on content (and so subjective judgment) for reconstruction on physical grounds. See Essler (2008).

features, such as hiatus, can also betray quotations or close paraphrases. Of course content and context also help one to decide.

§9 Typographical Conventions

The Greek printed is quoted from the editions named above; any changes to text or punctuation are noted *ad loc*. Leiden conventions for printing papyrological texts are followed with the following adjustment: any letter, clearly transmitted (whether on the papyrus, in a digital image, or in a *disegno*), which is nevertheless changed by an editor is marked by an under-asterisk, like so: τ̤ὴν will be printed when the papyrus or other source clearly reads πην. This is because the papyri were copied so recently after their composition that many feel that even minor editorial interference ought to be signaled to the readers.[79] I agree with them and so follow the convention. Note also that under-dots are used only in cases when the reading is doubtful, that is, it could be a different letter, not in cases of a damaged, but obvious letter. The test is purely paleographic: I print e.g. τὴν even when the only other possible reading is τμν, even if τμν provides complete nonsense. I have silently eliminated *vacat* marks as well as signs for space-fillers.

I have represented the texts as they are on papyri, and so I respect line divisions from the papyri, rather than running the text together. I find this easier to read and it makes patterns of damage more apparent, which is useful for judging possible supplements and corrections. When words are divided across lines, I note this with a hyphen, which does not correspond to anything

---

[79] In so doing I follow the practice of, e.g. Richard Janko and Giuliana Leone. The specific siglum varies by time and publisher (e.g. Leone's edition of *On Nature* II, from Bibliopolis, uses ⌜α⌝ to mark that a letter has been changed into an alpha). Further, precise conventions for the use of the under-asterisk vary by editor, e.g. Dirk Obbink only uses it to mark a changed *disegno*.

on the original text and is purely editorial. For complete details as to constitution of the text and readings, as well as citations for emendations, see the editions. αβγ mark text supplied from a parallel source, either a second manuscript of the same text (in the case of e.g. *On Rhetoric* II) or a quotation that survives more completely in another source. I have freely repunctuated texts (usually simply adding commas); deeper interventions have been signalled in footnotes.

I use these conventions in all quotations of Herculaneum papyri, both to present clearly the state of the text and to use a uniform system. Vogliano's[80] quite extensive and detailed system for precise notation is overly burdensome and, I believe, unhelpfully subjective, but not flagging editorial intervention or editorial doubt seems irresponsible.[81] Note that this causes some slight changes to the presentation (but not the texts) of some newer editions and quite extensive changes to older editions, especially those published before the Leiden conventions were adopted. In all cases, recourse should be had to the editions, especially because I make no attempt to reproduce any kind of *apparatus criticus*.

§10 List of Editions

The five books of Philodemus' *On Poems* have been edited a number of times in a variety of different forms. For this work, I cite the editions of Janko (2003: revised edition of book I;

---

[80] Set out on page xx of his edition. It includes different sigla for letters preserved only in one or the other *disegno*, letters in both, and rates his confidence in a reading from damaged but certain, to uncertain, to very uncertain, as well as the usual marks of editorial intervention (addition and deletion) and the specialized papyrological sigla (e.g. additions and deletions by the ancient scribe). A damaged but clear letter inserted above the line and preserved only in one *disegno* would have, therefore, three different marks in his edition. Under the system here adopted, it will only have one (that of supralinear insertion).

[81] I admit some disquiet at not marking letters preserved only in *disegno* or only visible in infrared photographs differently from those preserved visibly on the papyrus. However, since the *disegni* constitute in effect a manuscript tradition different only in historical circumstance from more familiar ones, I am content not to mark the differences. Most modern editors are scrupulous about noting the sources of their readings in their apparatus (cf. the practice of noting "MS deficit usque v. 100, and similar notes in the apparatus of texts with medieval traditions), so the information is generally readily available. Furthermore, the welter of dots and brackets renders already difficult texts more difficult, to no real gain.

2010: books III and IV), as well as his edition of book II (forthcoming), which revises Sbordone (1976) and other works.[82] For book V, I use the unpublished edition of Fish, Armstrong, and Porter, which revises Mangoni 1993 (to which reference will also be made; their column numbers are the same) and incorporates several other Herculaneum papyri which she did not know belonged to book V, but which were edited separately by her and others. References to the *On Poems* take the form I.2.3, in which the capital Roman numeral is the book number, the first Arabic numeral is the column number, and the second Arabic numeral is the line number. All citations of the *On Poems* are to Janko (books I-IV) and Fish, Armstrong, and Porter (V) unless otherwise noted.

Of the four books (almost certainly) of the *On Music*, only book IV remains. Citations are of Delattre's edition of 2007, and are in the form IV.2.3. The column numbers of Neubecker's edition match those given for van Krevelen (IA - XXXVIII) and Kemke's book IV (IV,IA – IV,XXXVIII), so the table of concordances given in Delattre is usable for her edition as well. N.b. the three aforementioned editions have columns IA and IB, which count as two separate columns in Delattre. Rispoli edited part of the text, then thought to be book I, but now known to be part of book IV.

The *Rhetoric* is cited from the edition of Longo Aurrichio (1977) for books I and II, and follows the same conventions as the *On Poems*. Her text has been corrected in places by later scholars; their readings will be cited as necessary. Book III will be cited from Hammerstaedt's edition, book VIII from Blank's.

---

[82] Janko (pers. comm.) informs me that much of the material assigned to Pausimachus in book I has been reassigned to Heracleodorus on the basis of new readings in book II. Pausimachus' section begins now at I.82 and Philodemus' rebuttal of his views around I.152. Precise details will be available in Janko (forthcoming).

The following are used throughout this dissertation; translations are generally indebted to the editors' versions, but have been freely changed throughout.

Epicurus	Letters, *Vatican Sayings* (= *VS*),	
	and *Kyriai Doxai* (= *KD*)	Von der Muehll (my translation)
	De Nat. xxviii	Sedley
Philodemus	*On Poems* I-IV	Janko
	On Poems V	Fish, Armstrong, Porter (my translation with reference to Armstrong 1995b)
	Econ.	Jensen (usually Tsouna's translation)
	On Rhet. I-II	Longo Auricchio (my translation with reference to Chandler)
	On Rhet. III	Hammerstaedt (my translation)
	On Rhet. IV	Sudhaus (my translation)
Lucretius		Bailey (1947, edition and commentary)
Diogenes of Oenoanda		Smith (Fragments are numbered according to his publications, including NF ("new fragments").

Chapter Two

Epicurean Poetics Before Philodemus

§1 Introduction

Epicureans engaged with poetry from the beginning; Epicurus got his start, so the story goes, out of frustration with an interpretation of Hesiod, and the school never escaped the reputation for being unlettered that came from their rejection of poetry.[83] The purpose of this chapter is to trace the views of individual Epicureans, in chronological order, from Epicurus down to Philodemus. In so doing, I will try to individuate each philosopher's contribution or innovation (or lack thereof) to school doctrine.

Epicurus clearly held that poetry was not a source of knowledge or good opinions about the world, and the school never deviated from this opinion. More controversial is to what degree he limited his followers' involvement with poetry more generally. I hold, following Asmis (1995a), that the ban was rather limited and aimed at writing poetry as a lifestyle or source of income rather than writing poetry at all. There never seems to have been any restriction on reading poetry (or hearing it) so long as the Epicurean understood the potential dangers and knew how to avoid them.

This does not mean that there were not changes of emphasis and targets over time. On the contrary, it would be very surprising if Philodemus were fighting the same battles that Epicurus

---

[83] The story was told by Apollodorus the *Kepotyrannos* ("Tyrant of the Garden") in book I of his *Life of Epicurus* and cited by Diogenes Laertius x.2.

did over two hundred years earlier. But a change in emphasis does not necessarily mean an innovation in doctrine. My view here is that Epicurus' teaching about poetry is divisible into two discrete doctrines: (i) the thesis that "poetry is not a source of truth about the world," and (ii) an explanation of how poetry works. Our fragmentary evidence tell us that Epicurus was more concerned with (i) and Philodemus with (ii), but this does not mean that (ii) is Philodemus' innovation. I argue that this is implausible, given what we know about the history of Epicurean engagement with poetry and poetics.

§2 Epicurus

Epicurus wrote about both poetics and poetry, at least in a certain sense. His primary goal, it seems, was to prevent his followers from thinking that poetry was a source of truth about the world, i.e. that it was educational.[84] He devalued it in comparison with his own philosophy, but the extent to which this is true is usually overstated. Fragments 568 and 569 say only that the sage will discourse correctly about poetry (and music) and that he will not write it ἐνεργείαι.[85] We will return to the meaning of *energeia* in a moment.

It is apparent from his writings that his actual complaint was with liberal education in general, not with poetry specifically or *per se*. A line from his letter to Pythocles calls a student blessed for not being corrupted by the liberal education of the day: fr. 163 παιδείαν δὲ πᾶσαν, μακάριε, φεῦγε τἀκάτιον ἀράμενος ("O blessed one, set sail on your skiff and flee all education"). He expressed similar sentiments to Apelles in fr. 117: μακαρίζω cε, ὦ Ἀπελλῆ, ὅτι

---

[84]   Arrighetti (2006: 315) overstates the case by calling it "una particolare avversione."
[85]   I will argue that it means "activity involving serious engagement," and thus that the dative here means "the sage will not write poetry *as a serious engagement* (vel sim.)." The MSS read ἐνεργεῖν; the emendation is Usener's. Sider (1995) suggested ἐνεργείως.

καθαρὸϲ πάϲηϲ παιδείαϲ[86] ἐπὶ φιλοϲοφίαν ὥρμηϲαϲ ("Apelles, I call you blessed, because free of all education you set off for philosophy"), and at *VS* 58: ἐκλυτέον ἑαυτοῦϲ ἐκ τοῦ περὶ τὰ ἐγκύκλια καὶ πολιτικὰ δεϲμωτηρίου ("we must free ourselves from the prison of liberal education and politics"). We should remember that liberal education at the time, above the primary level, was primarily literary and oriented towards participation in elite culture and politics; neither of these were goals for Epicureans. Hence, to mistake a literary education for an education in values and truth is a serious error in the eyes of Epicurus. Poetry did make up a large part of that education, but it was not poetry that Epicurus objected to; rather, the goals of those who studied poetry for social gain were the problem. That ethics and social mores were taught *through* literature were the reason, for Epicurus, to avoid such instruction. But literature itself could be innocent of the misuse; the intentions and attitudes of the student and teacher are important. After all, the sage can correctly discuss poetry and music.

Epicurus was indeed polemical about education and poetry, but, when judging his polemic, we should keep in mind his treatment of his teacher Nausiphanes, as well as other philosophers, a sample of which is preserved in the *Letter to the Philosophers in Mytilene* summarized by Diogenes Laertius X.7-8 (= frr. 236, 238, and 172) and is worth quoting at length:

> πλεύμονά τε αὐτὸν ἐκάλει καὶ ἀγράμματον καὶ ἀπατεῶνα καὶ πόρνην τούϲ τε περὶ Πλάτωνα Διονυϲοκόλοκαϲ καὶ αὐτὸν Πλάτωνα χρυϲοῦν καὶ Ἀριϲτοτέλην ἄϲωτον, ⟨ὃν⟩ καταφαγόντα τὴν πατρῴαν οὐϲίαν, ϲτρατεύεϲθαι καὶ φαρμακο- πωλεῖν φορμοφόρον τε Πρωταγόραν καὶ γραφέα Δημοκρίτου καὶ ἐν κώμαιϲ γράμματα διδάϲκειν, Ἡράκλειτόν τε κυκητήν καὶ Δημόκριτον Ληρόκριτον καὶ Ἀντίδωρον Ϲαννίδωρον τούϲ τε Κυζικηνοὺϲ ἐχθροὺϲ τῆϲ Ἑλλάδοϲ καὶ Διαλεκτικοὺϲ πολυφθόρουϲ, Πύρρωνα δὲ ἀμαθῆ καὶ ἀπαίδευτον.

---

[86] παιδείαϲ is the universally accepted emendation of Schweighäuser and Wachsmuth for the αἰτίαϲ of the MSS. It is guaranteed by the contexts in Athenaeus (who says ἐγκυκλίου παιδείαϲ ἀμύητοϲ) and Plutarch, who mentions μαθήματα.

He called Nausiphanes a jellyfish,[87] unlettered, a cheat, and a whore, and the students of Plato Dionysiac[88] ass-kissers and Plato himself gilded[89] and Aristotle a dissolute who, after having blown through his inheritance, became a mercenary and peddled snake-oil,[90] and Protagoras a lumberjack[91] and copy-cat[92] of Democritus who taught elementary school out in the boonies, and Heraclitus a botcher and Democritus a shit-stirrer and Antidorus "Cockodorus" and the Cyzicenes enemies of Greece and the Dialecticians ravagers and Pyrro unlearned and uneducated.

To all this abuse, we should add fr. 93, probably from the same Letter to the Mytilineans: ἀλλ' ἴτωσαν· εἶχε γὰρ ἐκεῖνος ὠδίνων τὴν ἀπὸ τοῦ στόματος καύχησιν τὴν σοφιστικήν, καθάπερ καὶ ἄλλοι πολλοὶ τῶν ἀνδροπόδων ("but let them drop: he has a painful case of sophistic running-at-the-mouth, just like many other slaves") and fr. 114: καὶ γὰρ πονηρὸς ἄνθρωπος ἦν καὶ ἐπιτετηδευκὼς τοιαῦτα ἐξ ὧν οὐ δυνατὸν εἰς σοφίαν ἐλθεῖν ("indeed, the man was a bastard, and practiced in the sort of things from which is it impossible to arrive at wisdom"), which Brescia (1955: 41) considers a reference to Nausiphanes,[93] and his comment about Leucippus—οὐδὲ Λεύκιππόν τινα γεγενῆcθαι...φιλόcοφον ("nor was there any philosopher Leucippus," fr. 232 from D.L. X.13)—which is not to be understood as a historical comment but a polemical one: Leucippus existed but does not deserve the title "philosopher."[94]

---

[87] As Warren (2002: 191) points out, this draws both on Plato *Phlb*. 21c6 in which humans who cannot reason are compared to jellyfish, as well as Aristotelian biology, which says that jellyfish, since they have no perceptions, are like plants (PA 681a19), and so unable to reason or argue. "Vegetable" comes close for us, though it is used mostly of victims of accidents rather than idiots.

[88] By "Dionysiac" does he mean unrestrained, drunken, effeminate, or "queer" (in either sense), or all of the above?

[89] Implying either that he was "all shine and no substance" (i.e. well-spoken but with bad ideas) or, if synonymous with κατάχρυcοc, that he was specious or a fake, cf. Janko (2011: 285 n. 2).

[90] The reference is surely to Aristotle's family relationship: Aristotle himself was tutor to the young Alexander; Aristotle's father Nicomachus had been a courtier or friend and doctor (so Suda, N 399) of Philip's father Amyntas. So, according to Epicurus, Aristotle, after having wasted his inheritance, had to join Alexander as a mercenary and misuse his father's lessons in medicine to make a living dishonestly.

[91] This seems to be a reference to the anecdote, related by Aullus Gellius (*N. A.* V.iii) that Protagoras was taken as a student by Democritus when he discovered a better way to haul logs.

[92] Literally "secretary;" the insult is that Protagoras just copied out what Democritus claimed without adding his own ideas.

[93] There is a reference to him just before this fragment, so the identification seems likely.

[94] In an unknown book of Epicurus *On Nature*, partially edited and discussed by Sedley (1973), Epicurus seems to talk about his atomist forefathers in the plural, thereby including Leucippus. He later switches to the singular to

In short, Epicurus treated other philosophers far more ferociously and obscenely than he did poetry or liberal education.

Why Epicurus' position on poetry has been misunderstood in this way is worth a moment's consideration. Even before the Greeks began to write, they held poetry in high esteem; even in Homer, a bard is entrusted to watch over Clytemnestra in her husband's absence (*Od.* 3.276-7). Soon, thinkers began criticizing the poets, often Homer (possibly because he was particularly their object, but more probably, I think, as an emblem for "poetry" or "poets" generally) usually on ethical grounds. Heraclitus (B42 DK) and Xenophanes (B11-16 DK) are good examples. Eventually, there grew to be a standing contrast between poetic myths and historical truth: see, for example, Thucydides' statements in his *History*[95] and Livy's *Praefatio*.[96] Plato was able to frame the issue as an "ancient feud" (παλαία τις … διαφορά, *Resp.* 10, 607b) and, indeed, philosophers had been criticizing poets for more than a century by the time of the *Republic*.

But most philosophers valued poetry, like the Stoics (who thought it had a variety of helpful effects on its audience[97]), or else, like the Peripatetics, they valued the traditional liberal arts curriculum, in which poetry played a large role. This is the historical setting for Epicurus' statements about poetry, and, in light of the great cultural value put on poetry, criticisms of it were bound to be controversial. But in fact, his position is actually *less* extreme than that put

---

focus on Democritus as the major expositor of the doctrine. See especially Sedley (1973: 29-30) for discussion of the rhetoric and interpretation of this passage.

[95] A skeptical attitude towards Homer's account is noticeable at 1.9-10, and at 1.21 he explicitly distinguishes his sober history from the elaborations and exaggerations of poetry.

[96] At *Praefatio* §§6-9, Livy says that the founding of history is more "poetic stories" (*poeticae fabulae*) than reliable fact and mentions his rather lenient position, which allows such a mix of fact and admitted fiction in a work of history.

[97] See especially Delattre (2007: 11-20). N.b. that at this time, μουσική, "music," covered not only instrumental music (i.e. music in our sense) but also poetry. See chapter four.

forward by Plato:[98] the wise can discuss poetry, as long as they do not write it ἐνεργείαι. In fact, he may have even said that the Sage would enjoy poetry, inasmuch as it was part of the Dionysiac spectacles mentioned in fr. 20: ...φιλοθέωρον μὲν ἀποφαίνων τὸν coφὸν ἐν ταῖc Διαπορίαιc καὶ χαίροντα παρ᾽ ὁντινοῦν ἕτερον ἀκροάμαcι καὶ θεάμαcι Διονυcιακοῖc ... (" ... demonstrating in the *Diaporiae* that the sage will be a lover of spectacles and will rejoice like anyone else in Dionysiac recitals or spectacles ..."). I take it that this means that the Epicurean sage is not at risk of taking a false cue from poetry and so can listen to and enjoy it without risk.[99] Furthermore, examples from poetry can be put forward to adorn a philosophical argument, as Epicurus himself did (e.g. in the letter to Pythocles, quoted above in §2, which is a reference to the *Odyssey*), but the *argumentum ad auctoritatem poetarum* is not valid and should be avoided.

The role that poetry played in the liberal arts curriculum is important here. Since Epicurus did not demand such an education of his followers, he was open to the attack that his followers were uneducated, and by extension, that he was uneducated (or that, because he was uneducated, he demanded that his followers also be uneducated).[100] This is manifestly unfair, but ancient polemics were vicious and *ad hominem* to an extent that we have difficulty appreciating (as were the polemics of Epicurus himself, as I discussed above). The case finds a distant parallel in Cicero's oratory: much of it deals with the characters of the persons involved in the trial, a much greater proportion than we expect from modern courtroom oratory, and the rules of

---

[98] Later Platonists would have to play down, explain away, or otherwise grapple with Plato's hard line on poetry.
[99] So Asmis (1995a: 20 and n. 26), contra Boyancé (1963: 91-2). Specification of "Dionysiac recitals or spectacles" seems to indicate public artistic performances (under the auspices of Dionysus, to be sure) rather than religious rituals, and Plutarch, our source for the fragment, understood Epicurus to be referring to art rather than religion in it (*Non Posse* 1095c).
[100] So Sextus Empicus *Adv. Math.* I.1 = Epicurus fr. 227, and note that Quintilian makes similar statements at *I.O.* II.17.15 = fr. 42 and XII.2.24 = fr. 156.

evidence seem to be fewer and weaker than we might be comfortable with. So too in polemics among philosophers leaps of association, condemnation of the company one keeps, and purposeful misrepresentation of doctrine were common. A good example is the role of women in the Garden.[101] I should say at the outset that we have almost no idea of the truth of the matter, except that there were, apparently, women involved in the philosophical life of the Garden and that there was at least one marriage (technically concubinage, in accord with the laws of Athens) between one of these women philosophers and a male Epicurean (i.e. Leontion and Metrodorus).[102] But so long as the women were there, mixing with the men, they could be presented as prostitutes, the men as débauchés who enjoyed them, and Epicurus' whole philosophy as pure hedonism, like that of the Cyrenaics, and effeminate to boot. Epicurus was not a Cyrenaic hedonist, and the rest of the report is very likely to be slanderous as well. In a similar way, Epicurus' antipathy towards the ἐγκύκλιος παιδεία in favor of his own philosophy could be willfully misunderstood as outright hatred of poetry and education broadly (in turn polemically taken to mean that Epicurus himself was uneducated, as discussed above). This antipathy towards the liberal arts continued in the Epicurean tradition, as Demetrius Laco's advice to a youth in *PHerc.* 831 indicates, in which he denigrates it in favor of *physiologia*, the study of nature.[103]

An excellent example of the kind of teachings inculcated by the liberal arts education can

---

[101] For this example, I draw heavily on Gordon (2004).
[102] See D.L. x.23.
[103] See Parisi (2012: 112-14) for discussion of the work, and p. 116 for the following passage, *PHerc.* 831.8.4-10:
ᾧ δ᾽ ἐν τῷ κατὰ φύcιν πέρατι κατακέκλειται τἀγαθὸν κ(αὶ) τὸ κα[κ]όν, τούτῳ πᾶcα αἰώρα ψυχῆc [γ]ε (ego : [ ]ε papyrus) πέφυκται. cυνεχίζωμέν [τ]ε ἐν τῷ κατὰ φιλοcοφίαν `ἐν´εργήματι καὶ μάλιcτα τοῖc κατὰ φυcιολογίαν θεωρήμαcιν ("But for whom the good and the bad are enclosed within the limit according to nature, for him every fluctuation of the soul has been avoided. And let us continue in the practice of philosophy and especially in the studies of natural science.") N.b. the scribe does not write iota adscript and καί is abbreviated.

be found in Plutarch in his essay *Non Posse,* at 1095a, where he says that old men (in this case, they are specifically Epicureans, but Plutarch's point is general) would not be bothered by lust if they had only learned to write about Homer and Euripides and followed the example of Sophocles, who considered himself lucky to have escaped his sexual urges, like a slave who escaped a harsh master. The lifestyle promoted by this course of study is at odds with Epicurean philosophy and therefore wrong and without value (the Epicureans had no objections to the enjoyment of sex *per se* and they probably would have mocked the naïveté of Plutarch's argument). However, simply reading poetry can be a very enjoyable endeavor, which Plutarch, in the same passage, admits that Epicurus recognized, when he reports that Epicurus suggested reading poetry and history as substitutes for sex for those unable to enjoy it any longer. We should note that this did not mean that Epicurus recommended sex generally. He did not deny that poetry was enjoyable and so he did allow his followers to read poetry for their own enjoyment.

However, he did deny that poetry was, *qua* poetry, useful. Sextus Empiricus preserves a series of four arguments against the utility of poetry which are due to others "and especially the Epicureans."[104] They are as follows:

1. Poetry contains both useful and harmful statements and it is not the role of grammar but of philosophy to distinguish what is useful from what is harmful. In the lack of such a guide, the audience will misunderstand the poetry.

2. Poets do not have any special access to the truth or particular knowledge of what is useful;

---

[104] Sextus Empiricus *Adv. Math*. I.299: τὰ μὲν οὖν τῶν ἄλλων λεγόμενα κατὰ τὸν τόπον, καὶ μάλιστα τῶν Ἐπικουρείων, ἐςτὶ τοιαῦτα. The arguments are at I.279-98. Blank (1998): 286 and introduction §6 suggests that Sextus' source is a treatise by Zeno of Sidon; that the arguments treated here are genuinely Epicurean is argued by Blank on pp. 296-7. For other treatments of these arguments, see Asmis (1995a: 25-6) and Beer (2009: 77-8). If Sextus' source is Zeno, it will be his Περὶ ποιημάτων χρήςεως "On the Use of Poetry."

only philosophers do.

3. Poets do not aim at providing any use in their poems, unlike prose authors, but aim solely at entertainment, which is better accomplished with fiction than truth.

4. Poetry is not only useless but actually harmful since it encourages the passions.

The first three of these arguments attack the usefulness of poetry as a source of truth, for it is either ambivalent or has no legitimate claim to authority; the fourth attacks it on the basis that it is positively harmful. It may be, as Blank suggests, that only the Epicurean sage can safely read poetry: "since only he is immune to being taken in by its bad sentiments, he alone can allow himself the lesser good of pleasure without running the risk of losing the greater good of freedom from the pain caused by false beliefs."[105] It need not be only the sage, however. Any sufficiently advanced Epicurean, who knows that poetry is no source of truth and may be the source of injury, can read it without distraction or harm. The situation would be parallel to others, according to the principle set out in *KD* 8: οὐδεμία ἡδονὴ καθ' αὑτὴν κακόν· ἀλλὰ τὰ τινῶν ἡδονῶν ποιητικὰ πολλαπλασίους ἐπιφέρει τὰς ὀχλήσεις τῶν ἡδονῶν ("No pleasure is *per se* a bad thing, but some things which cause pleasures bring also disturbances many times more than the pleasures"). Epicurus said that we should not have sex while overfull from eating or drunk because of possible damage to our atomic constitutions, but sex, food, and drink were counted among the pleasures.[106] Luxurious food and drink as well are pleasant so long as we do

---

[105] Blank (1998: 300).

[106] *V. S.* 51 (an extract from a letter from Metrodorus to Pythocles): πυνθάνομαί σου τὴν κατὰ σάρκα κίνησιν ἀφθονωτέραν διακεῖσθαι πρὸς τὴν ἀφροδισίων ἔντευξιν. σὺ δὲ, εἰ μὴ τοὺς νόμους καταλύεις μήτε τὰ καλῶς ἔθει κείμενα κινεῖς μήτε τῶν πλησίον τινὰ λυπεῖς μήτε τὴν σάρκα καταξαίνεις μήτε τὰ ἀναγκαῖα καταναλίσκεις, χρῶ ὡς βούλει τῇ σεαυτοῦ προαιρέσει. ἀμήχανον μέντοι γε τὸ μὴ οὐχ ἑνί γέ τινι τούτων συνέχεσθαι· ἀφροδίσια γὰρ οὐδέποτε ὤνησεν, ἀγαπητὸν δὲ εἰ μὴ ἔβλαψεν ("You tell me that the movement of your flesh is too inclined towards sexual intercourse. So long as you do not break the laws or disturb proper and established conventions or distress any of your neighbors or ravage your body or squander the necessities of life, act upon your inclination in any way you like. Yet it is impossible not to be constrained by at least one of these. For sex is never advantageous but a fine thing if if it does no harm"). I follow the text and translation of

not become accustomed to them and therefore pained when we cannot have them.[107] Likewise, the fact that poetry could be damaging under certain situations does not mean it necessarily warranted a total ban. Indeed, there is evidence that this is so.

That Epicurus was not hostile to poetry, *qua* poetry, is demonstrated by a variety of sources. For example, Plutarch misunderstands Epicurus' attitude when he remarks on the strangeness of some Epicurean statements: (fr. 20, *apud* Plut. *Non Posse* 1095c) ἀτοπίαν ὧν Ἐπίκουρος λέγει φιλοθέωρον μὲν ἀποφαίνων τὸν σοφὸν ἐν ταῖς Διαπορίαις καὶ χαίροντα παρ᾽ ὁτινοῦν ἕτερον ἀκροάμασι καὶ θεάμασι Διονυσιακοῖς, προβλήμασι δὲ μουσικοῖς καὶ κριτικῶν φιλολόγοις ζητήμασιν οὐδὲ παρὰ πότον διδοὺς χώραν (" … the strangeness of what Epicurus claims, who demonstrates in the *Diaporiai* that the sage likes spectacles and rejoices just like anyone else at recitals and Dionysiac spectacles but who does not grant a place to musical questions and the philological problems of literary critics even accompanied by wine"). Plutarch cannot understand how Epicurus held this opinion because, for him, enjoying poetry and the study of poetry are inseparable. Not so for Epicurus; the sage can go to recitals and performances at festivals of Dionysus and enjoy them *just like any other person* (*scilicet* who is not a scholar). What he will not do is waste his time studying the grammarians only to score points in eristic symposium table talk.[108]

Long and Sedley (1987): ii.120 and i.116), except the last clause, which I understand following Purinton (1993) and Brennan (1996).

[107] Fr. 181 shows his practice and reason: βρυάζω τῷ κατὰ τὸ σωμάτιον ἡδεῖ, ὕδατι καὶ ἄρτῳ χρώμενος, καὶ προσπτύω ταῖς ἐκ πολυτελείας ἡδοναῖς οὐ δι᾽ αὐτὰς ἀλλὰ διὰ τὰ ἐξακολουθοῦντα αὐταῖς δυσχερῆ ("I revel in bodily pleasure using only water and bread, and I spit on the pleasures that come from extravagance – not on their own merits but because of the troubles that follow on them"). Of course, if he could come by something extravagant without trouble, he would not hesitate to enjoy it (fr. 182, to a follower): πέμψον μοι τυροῦ κυθρίδιον ἵν᾽ ὅταν βούλωμαι πολυτελεύσασθαι δύνωμαι "send me a small pot of cheese, so that I can feast when I want." See also fr. 464 about eating meat.

[108] *V. S.* 45: οὐ κόμπου οὐδὲ φωνῆς ἐργαστικοὺς οὐδὲ τὴν περιμάχητον παρὰ τοῖς πολλοῖς παιδείαν ἐνδεικνυμένους φυσιολογία παρασκευάζει, ἀλλ᾽ ἀσοβάρους (Leopold: ἀλλὰ σοβαροὺς MSS) καὶ αὐτάρκεις καὶ ἐπὶ τοῖς ἰδίοις ἀγαθοῖς, οὐκ ἐπὶ τοῖς τῶν πραγμάτων μέγα φρονοῦντας ("the study of nature does not

A revealing summary of all this can be found in Cicero's *De Finibus*, when he makes

Lucius Torquatus say

> [sc. Epicurus] qui quod tibi parum videtur eruditus, ea causa est, quod nullam eruditionem esse duxit nisi quae beatae vitae disciplinam iuvaret. an ille tempus aut in poetis evolvendis … consumeret, in quibus nulla solida utilitas omnisque puerilis est delectatio? aut se, ut Plato, in musicis geometria numeris astris contereret, quae et a falsis initiis profecta vera esse non possunt et si essent vera, nihil afferrent quo iucundius, id est quo melius viveremus? eas artes persequeretur, vivendi artem tantam tamque operosam et perinde fructuosam relinqueret? non ergo Epicurus ineruditus, sed ii indocti, qui quae pueros non didicisse turpe est, ea putant usque ad senectutem esse discenda.

> [sc. Epicurus] who seems to you hardly educated, for the reason that he thought that it was not an education unless it would aid the practice of a happy life, or should he waste time in perusing poets in whom there is no solid utility but pure, childish delight? Or wear himself down as Plato did in the study of music, geometry, mathematics, astronomy, all of which, because they set out from false premises, cannot be true, and even if they were true, bring no help by which we might live more pleasantly, that is, better? Should he pursue those arts and neglect the large and so difficult, but therefore fruitful, art of living? Therefore, Epicurus was not uneducated, but they are, who think that what was not shameful to learn as boys, should be studied straight through until old age. (*De fin.* I.71-2)[109]

What always mattered to Epicurus was the good life, and the only means to get there is his philosophy. The liberal arts, poetry chief among them, cannot accompany a student on the way; indeed, they can be a waste of time, if not damaging. But, importantly, poetry can still be a pleasure—*paideia* was not necessary for wisdom, and could often be a hindrance, but that does not mean that pleasure cannot be gotten (sometimes, perhaps, or only under certain circumstances) from some or all of its parts.

---

make people skilled producers of boasts or their own voice nor show-offs of the education which is much fought over among the hoi polloi, but instead humble and self-sufficient and proud of their own good qualities rather than their own possessions").

[109] Giancotti and Boyancé argued over the exact interpretation of the phrase *in poetis evolvendis … in quibus nulla solida utilitas...est*. I side with Boyancé in thinking that it means "in reading poets, in whom (generally, as a rule) there is no solid utility" rather than "in reading [sc. only those] poets, in whom there is...," which would require ⟨iis⟩ *poetis*. For discussions of Epicurean opinions about music, see Delattre (2007), esp. pp. 91-113 and for geometry and mathematics, see Sedley (1976). Cosmology and quite a few astronomical phenomena are handled at length in the *Letter to Pythocles* §§88-98: the constitutions of the sun, moon, and stars, their movements (including the solstices) and apparent changes (the phases of the moon, eclipses) and the changing length of days and the seasons. In short, to say that the Epicureans did not care at all about these topics is a misrepresentation.

Now we return to the question of ἐνεργεία, specifically, what does it mean to do something ἐνεργείαι?[110] In fr. 219, Epicurus defines philosophy: φιλοcοφίαν ἐνέργειαν εἶναι λόγοιc καὶ διαλογιcμοῖc τὸν εὐδαίμονα βίον περιποιοῦcαν ("philosophy is an *energeia* which aims at the happy life by debate and argument"). As Herodotus' troubles with Epicurus' *On Nature* demonstrate (§35), his philosophy was intellectually demanding and he required much from his students. In fact, in his letter about meteorology to Pythocles, he says μάλιcτα δὲ cεαυτὸν ἀπόδοc εἰc τὴν τῶν ἀρχῶν καὶ ⟨τῆc⟩ (addidi) ἀπειρίαc καὶ τῶν cυγγενῶν τούτοιc θεωρίαν, ἔτι δὲ κριτηρίων καὶ παθῶν, καὶ οὗ ἕνεκεν ταῦτα ἐκλογιζόμεθα ("most of all, give yourself over to the contemplation of principles and the unlimited and the ideas related to these, and further, of criteria for judgement, and of emotions, and the reason why we consider these topics," §116). Whatever "giving one's self over" means, it is surely a more time consuming process than writing poems in one's free time, and the term ἐνέργεια seems to mean "full-time occupation" rather than just "activity."[111]

Also relevant is a section of Philodemus' *On Epicurus*, which one of its editors, Achille Vogliano, called "queen of the columns preserved in the Herculaneum papyri." The topic is the feasts held in memory of Epicurus.

Philodemus, *On Epicurus* (*PHerc*. 1232, fr. 8.1.10-20):[112]

| 10 | ... ὅcοι τ[ὰ]c [εὐ]νοίαc [καὶ | ... who are well disposed both to him and |

---

[110] Asmis (1995a) reaches a similar conclusion to mine, though my formulation is stronger. I do not accept Arrighetti's (2006: 319-322) criticisms of Asmis' arguments: although her parallel for the translation of ἐνεργείαι as "being busy at, making a practice of, practicing energetically" (22) disappeared when Delattre published his new edition of *On Music*, I provide several more in this discussion. Further, Arrighetti's assumption that we should translate the term according to Aristotle's usage is not acceptable, since the parallels I give provide evidence for a specifically Epicurean usage. Arrighetti understands Epicurus' dictum to mean that poets will not expound the results of new research in poetry, but does not provide any support for his assertion. That view was first put forward, so far as I know, by Giancotti (1959).

[111] ἐνέργεια also appears in fr. 2, where however ἐνάργεια should probably be read with Ritter.

[112] I follow Tepedino Guerra's edition (1994) with Clay's translation (1986), except at the end of the excerpt, where I follow Bignone and Festugière's understanding of the word μακαρία, which is discussed in Clay's commentary.

τὰς] ἑαυ[τ]οῦ [κα]ὶ τὰ[ς τ]ῶν ἑαυ-
τ]οῦ φίλων ἔχουσιν· [ο]ὐ γὰρ δη-
μαγωγήσειν, τοῦ[τ]ο πράττον-
τας, τὴν κενὴν καὶ ἀφυσιο[λ]ό-
15   γη[τ]ον δημαγ[ωγ]ίαν, ἀλλ᾽ ἐν
τοῖς τῆς φύσεω[ς οἰ]κείοις ἐνερ-
γοῦντας μ[ν]η[σθ]ήσεσθαι πάντων
τῶν τὰς εὐν[οίας] ἡμῖν ἐχόν-
των, ὅπως συ[γκαθ]αγίζωσιν τὰ
20   ἐπὶ τῆι αὐτ[ῶν μα]καρίαι

his friends. In doing this [Epicurus says], they will not be engaged in gathering the masses, something which is a form of meaningless pandering and unworthy of the natural philosopher; rather, in practicing what is congenial to their nature, they will remember all those who are well disposed to us so that they can join in the appropriate rites for their happiness …

Clearly, occasional feasts and religious rites were not meant as a full-time occupation, but "practicing what is congenial to our nature" should be, and the memorial feasts are one aspect of what is congenial.

Diogenes Laertius records (§136) a quotation of Epicurus in which he held that ἡ μὲν γὰρ ἀταραξία καὶ ⟨ἡ⟩ (add. Usener) ἀπονία καταστηματικαί εἰσιν ἡδοναί· ἡ δὲ χάρα καὶ ἡ εὐφροσύνη κατὰ κίνησιν ἐνέργειαι βλέπονται ("*Ataraxia* and *aponia* are static pleasures, but *chara* and *euphronsyne* are considered to be *energeiai* in movement").[113] There is debate about the text: the MSS are divided between ἐνεργεία (sic, probably representing the dative) and ἐνεργείαι; the plural is Long's emendation on the grounds that "the dative has never been satisfactorily explained."[114] What special force the word has here has not been explained either.[115] "Activities" does not seem an appropriate term for states of the soul, but it is supported by a comment by Diogenes of Oenoanda (noted already by Arrighetti).

Diogenes of Oenoanda fr. 34 VI 2-6 (Smith):
2   _ἡμ[εῖς δὲ ζη]τῶμεν ἤδη
πῶς ὁ βίος ἡμεῖν ἡδὺς

Let us now investigate how life is to be made pleasant

---

[113] The four are states of pleasure: *ataraxia* is stable mental pleasure, *aponia* is stable physical pleasure (they consist primarily, but not entirely, in the lack of disturbance, hence their formation as negatives), *chara* and *euphrosyne* are kinetic mental and physical pleasures, respectively. See Gosling and Taylor (1982), especially chapter 19.

[114] Discussion in Long and Sedley (1987: II.125) to their 21R.

[115] Diano (1946: 138, the commentary to his [37]) tries to explain it by glossing *eo quod movendi vim habent* ("the means by which they have the power of movement"), which seems to make it a property or quality of *chara* and *euphrosyne*.

	γένηται καὶ ἐν τοῖς κα- ταστήμασι καὶ ἐν ταῖς πράξεσιν.	for us both in states and in actions.
5		

A discussion of things that disturb one's peace of mind, like fears of death and the gods, followed; a discussion of the *praxeis*, activities, seems to be lost.[116] Additionally, philosophy is called a *praxis* at fr. 29 I 5-13, just as Epicurus had called it an *energeia* in fr. 219, quoted and discussed just above.[117] This implies, however, that it was simply appropriate to talk of *chara* and *euphrosyne* as activities, though further evidence is lacking. It seems reasonable to suspect terminological looseness, like that in the case of the different words for *prolepsis* (and it is notable that *energeia* does not appear in the fragments of Diogenes' inscription). Nonetheless, though *chara* and *euphrosyne* are not the goal for Epicureans, they are no small thing and, depending on the view of Epicurean pleasure adopted, may be important constituent parts of it.

The verb ἐνεργέω continued to be used by later Epicureans. Additionally, Polystratus,[118] Carneiscus,[119] and Philodemus[120] use ἐνέργεια to mean "action" or "course of action, policy" and ἐνεργέω to mean "to enact an ἐνέργεια," that is, to act habitually or deliberately. Only once does it appear in an Aristotelian sense: in Polystratus' *On Irrational Contempt* 15.2 it appears with δύναμις, which is not a typical Epicurean pairing.[121]

Ἐνεργέω and ἐνεργεία, then, are fairly strong words: to act, to practice regularly, to act as a result of a policy. The connotations of this are important for the question of the Epicurean

---

[116] For the reconstruction of the inscription and its argument, see Smith (1993: 473-5).

[117] However, eating, drinking and sex are also called *praxeis* in fr. 33 VII1-9, in what is clearly not a technical use.

[118] *On Irrational Contempt* 31.12.

[119] *Life of Philistas* 2.6.

[120] *On Arrogance* 21.15, *[On Choices and Avoidances]* 14.14 and 22.10, *Against Those Who Claim to be Literalists (PHerc.* 1005) 102, and *On Anger* 26.17 are interesting cases, where the word refers to acting or not acting on the basis of strong emotional states and mistaken beliefs, respectively. While not exactly parallel, they tend to support my view that the word should not be taken in its Aristotelian sense.

[121] There are no examples of the pairing listed s.v. in Usener's *Glossarium*, nor do Epicureans seem to use it in its Aristotelian sense.

view of poetry: you can write it all you like, as long as you do not mistake it for The Real Thing, for philosophy, for a source of truth. To write poetry ἐνεργείαι is to engage in that activity as if it were on par with philosophy, which is simply impossible for Epicurus or an Epicurean.

So the Epicurean sage can also be a poet, probably in the same way they can be said to be a household manager: they can use a *techne* to achieve the proper end of that craft, so long as their practice of the craft is subordinate to the overarching goals and practices of Epicureanism.[122] The only proper profession for an Epicurean sage is of course professing Epicureanism, but there is no obstacle to their writing some verses as a diversion. That is to say, for Philodemus to write epigrams and for Lucretius to write the *De Rerum Natura* are not necessarily problems, when viewed in an Epicurean framework.[123] What matters are their own attitudes, needs, and circumstances, about which we are in no position to speak.

As for the correct discourses about poetry and music, the discussion of Menander probably by Epicurus preserved in *PHerc.* 1570 (probably Philodemus' *On Wealth* II), and Philodemus' own Περὶ τοῦ καθ᾽ Ὅμηρον ἀγαθοῦ βασιλέως and the criticism of the poets in the second half of his Περὶ εὐϲεβείαϲ are examples of such treatments. However, the poetry itself is not morally useful; rather it is the philosopher's reading and analysis of it that highlights the correct and incorrect actions of the characters in the poems, or correct and incorrect statements on the part of the narrator. In the criticism of the character of Wealth in Menander's *Georgos*, Epicurus points out that the statements made by the goddess Poverty are simply false and damaging. He treats the poem as a competing instructor whose doctrine needs to be refuted

---

[122] So already Asmis (1995a), and see chapter three.

[123] Lucretius' poem, however, does seem to violate Philodemus' statement at *On Poems* V.17.20-24 that no one has ever, nor will ever, write useful poetry. I suspect he would have defended himself on the grounds that his poem could function as a protreptic and he may have taken a different view of the possible utility of poems from Philodemus'. I intend to consider this problem in greater detail elsewhere.

for the good of the students.[124] In the *On the Good King*, Philodemus points out good and bad actions by the characters for instruction (but it is his reading of the poems, not the poems themselves, that is educational);[125] in the *On Piety*, he points out false theological statements so that they might not confuse the audience.[126] By claiming that the philosopher will be able to discourse correctly about these topics, Epicurus indicates that well-trained Epicureans will not be damaged by the contents of poetry both because they can recognize harmful statements and because they will have the correct attitude about it in the first place. Less well-trained Epicureans might mistake poetry for a convincing source of truth about the world or take characters, actions or attitudes praised in the poem to be actually praiseworthy. In short, Epicurus merely meant that Epicurean philosophers will have correct attitudes towards poetry and will be able to criticize it or draw on it for useful lessons. That is, they will write it, or not, as their personality and circumstances dictate, but they will never mistake it for an authoritative source of information about the world and can criticize what they find in it.

§3 Metrodorus

No extensive discussion from the pen of Metrodorus, the second in charge of the Garden while Epicurus was alive, survives, but he did write an *On Poems* in at least two books, of which some fragments are preserved in Philodemus' *On Rhetoric* II.[127] These discuss what types of rhetoric could be considered to be *technai*. It seems certain that this topic was brought in as a

---

[124] On this work, see Armstrong-Ponczoch (2011).
[125] See Fish (2011b).
[126] See Obbink (1995b).
[127] They start at B.49.27 (p. 145 Longo Auricchio) and B[1].21.10 (p. 215 Longo Auricchio; this part of Philodemus' *On Rhetoric* II is preserved in two rolls, which are given the arbitrary designations B and B[1] and their columns are numbered sequentially within each papyrus, so B[1] col. 21 comes from later in the work than B col. 49). Metrodorus' fragments were collected by A. Körte (1890); frr. 20-23 are from the *On Poems*.

comparandum for an analogous discussion of poetry, i.e. was it a *techne* or not, and on what grounds? We know Philodemus' answer: yes, but not very much of one.[128]

The most famous and important fragment, however, is in Plutarch's *Non Posse* (1094e = fr. 24 Körte): ὅθεν μηδ᾽ εἰδέναι φάσκων, μεθ᾽ ὁποτέρων ἦν ὁ Ἕκτωρ, ἢ τοὺς πρώτους στίχους τῆς Ὁμήρου ποιήσεως ἢ πάλιν τὰ ἐν μέσωι, μὴ ταρβήςῃς ("for which reason do not be upset to say that you do not know on whose side Hector was or the first lines of Homer's poetry or what happened in the middle"). Plutarch quotes it to abuse the Epicureans for ignoring the pleasures of the liberal arts, but he misrepresents the point: you do not need to know Homer's poetry, or anything about it, to live a pleasant life according to Epicurus. Put differently, once you are freed from the fear (n.b. ταρβέω) that you *need* to know Homer's poetry and the mistaken belief that Homer teaches the truth, you are free to enjoy his poetry as poetry (or to ignore it as irrelevant).

We can gather from a fragment preserved in Philodemus' discussion of political rhetoric in the third book of his *On Rhetoric* that the limits of what was included under the *techne* of poetry were a topic.[129]

On Rhetoric III, *PHerc*. 1506.18-3:

18	[ὅ]τι δὲ τῆι ῥη-
	το]ρικῆι τῶν σοφιστικῶν
20	ο]ὐ ϲυμβέβ[ηκ]εν εἶναι πο-
	λι]τικῆι, καθὸ ῥητορική, ἐϲ-
	τ]ίν, οὐδὲ τῶι ῥήτορι τῶι
	τ[ο]ιούτ[ωι], καθὸ ῥήτωρ, ἐϲ-
	τιν τὸ [ὐ] πολιτικῶ[ι] εἶναι,
25	οὐδὲ πάλιν τῶ[ι πολιτι-
	κ]ῶι τὸ ῥήτ[ορι, πολλῶ]ν

That it was not characteristic of the rhetoric of the sophistic (rhetors), *qua* rhetoric, to be political rhetoric, nor is it for such a rhetor, *qua* rhetor, to be a politician, nor in turn is it for a politician to be a rhetor, is clear from many passages:

---

[128] See *On Rhetoric* II, *PHerc*. 1672.22.28-39 (p. 219 L.-A.); at *On Rhetoric* III, col xlviii.33-5 (Hammerstaedt) lessons in poetry are mentioned.

[129] Metrodorus fr. 23 Körte = Philodemus, *On Rhetoric* III (*PHerc*. 1506 col 44.17-33 = II 247 Sudhaus). Hammerstaedt (1992) is the most recent edition and I follow his text (with simplified editorial sigla). -εν in l. 20 is an emendation by the proof-readers of the *disegni* for -ην which is read on the papyrus.

φανερὸν ἐκ τόπων· Ἐ[πί-
κουρός φησιν ἐν [τ]ῶι Περὶ
ῥητορικῆς καὶ Μ[η]τρόδω-
30 ρος ἐν τῶι πρώτωι π[ερ]ὶ
ποιημάτων καὶ Ἕρμαρ-
31 χος ...

Epicurus says so in his *On Rhetoric*, Metrodorus in *On Poems* I, and Hermarchus ...

The point is simply that a rhetorician is not, by dint of being such, a politician and vice versa. These are separate spheres of inquiry.[130] In an *On Poems*, a discussion of the technicity and bounds of rhetoric is out of place; so why was Metrodorus discussing them? He must have been using what Epicurus established in his *On Rhetoric* to provide analogies for the case of poetry. I would cautiously suggest that his discussion gave rise to certain claims in Philodemus, such as that the good versifier is not necessarily a good poet (*On Poems* V col. 11.23-29), and that if poets aid their audiences, they aid them by means of arguments, not by the poetic form in which they are expressed (*On Music* IV.134.7-16 and 143.27-38). Both of these topics handle the distinctions between poetry *qua* poetry and poetry *qua* vehicle for words or *qua* verbal form. This is, admittedly, a somewhat weak chain of inferences.

§4 Hermarchus, Polyaenus, and the other 3rd and 2nd century Epicureans

Unfortunately, very little is known about these figures, and from what we do know, they were more interested in rhetoric than poetry. Their works are fragmentary, usually preserved because they were cited as authorities by Philodemus or another author in the Herculaneum collection.

Hermarchus' language is notably poetic, however, and shows points of contact with

---

[130] For Philodemus, only "sophistic rhetoric" was really a *techne*; political, forensic, and panegyric oratory were knacks, but political and forensic oratory have need of practice, instruction, and empirical inquiry: see Phld. *On Rhetoric* II, *PHerc.* 1674 col 54.15-27), the fragments of Epicurus' *On Rhetoric* (frr. 46-55 Usener), and Blank (1995).

Aeschylus and Pindar, among others.[131] Bignone conjectured that Hermarchus might have written poetry as a youth, before becoming an Epicurean. We need not go as far as Bignone did and find Hermarchus in *PHerc*. 1040, which contains a description of an unknown scholar, probably an Epicurean philosopher.[132]

However, that text is worth consideration. It describes an extremely learned young man who, in his youth, studied rhetoric, poetry, and music,[133] as well as γράμματα, which I take to be "literature," i.e. poetry and perhaps classic works of oratory and prose. The appearance of Epicurus' name guarantees an Epicurean setting, but nothing more than that. Hermarchus is a possible topic, but there are many others. It is notable, however, that youthful excellence in the liberal arts was apparently praised in this young man.

§5 Colotes

Colotes was a first generation folower of Epicurus and was a favorite student.[134] He is primarily known for his polemical treatise "*On the Proposition 'That it is Impossible Even to Live according to the Doctrines of Other Philosophers*,'" which was refuted at length by Plutarch.[135] The Herculaneum papyri preserve fragments of two other works of his: the anticommentaries "*Against Plato's* Euthydemus" (*PHerc*. 1032) and "*Against Plato's* Lysis"

---

[131] Longo Auricchio (1988: 37-39). In the two reliably verbatim fragments, 23 and 24, he strictly avoids hiatus and engages in word play as well.

[132] See Longo Auricchio (1988: 48-53 and ad fr. 24). The papyrus is published in Crönert (1906: 97-100, with second thoughts on 183); Longo reread the papyrus and publishes a more conservative, reliable edition, and a sober discussion, to which I am indebted. The numeration is Crönert's. Several instances of hiatus rule out Philodemus or Demetrius Laco as author.

[133] So I understand "harmonies and rhythms" in II.1.

[134] As the pet names Κωλωταρᾶς and Κωλωτάριον suggest, both attested by Plutarch (*Adv. Colotem* 1007e).

[135] See Kechagia (2011) for a recent treatment of this essay.

(*PHerc*. 208). In the latter, he discusses the *prolepsis* (preconception) of the good poet.[136] His discussion is occasioned by a remark of Socrates at the beginning of the *Lysis,* during a discussion of how best to seduce an *eromenos.* One of the interlocutors was so enamored that he even wrote poetry. Socrates rounds off the discussion by warning him to not make his lover too haughty or arrogant lest he come to spurn him, and finishes by saying καίτοι οἶμαι ἐγὼ ἄνδρα ποιήσει βλάπτοντα ἑαυτὸν οὐκ ἄν σε ἐθέλειν ὁμολογῆσαι ὡς ἀγαθός ποτ' ἐστὶ ποιητής, βλαβερὸς ὤν ἑαυτῶι "And yet I think that you would not be willing to agree that a man who harms himself with poetry is a good poet, since he is harmful to himself." It is this conclusion that Colotes discusses:

T. IV, p. 10b (p. 164 Crönert):[137]

3	οὗτος παρ' ἑ- αυ]τῶι καλεῖν ἀγαθὸν
5	πο]ιητ[ὴν] ἐδόξαζεν α]ὑτὸν ἀγαθὸν ποιη- τὴν εἶναι. καὶ τῶι Ἱπ- ποθάλ[ε]ι ἐχρῆ[ν] μάχεσθαι ὅς διατεταγμ[έ]νος παρ' ἑ-
10	αυ]τῶι [κ]αλεῖ[ν] κατὰ τὸ ἐν]αργὲ[ς] καὶ μὴ [δ]οξαζό- μ]ενον ἀγα[θὸν] ποι[η-
13	τὴν τ]ὸν τ[οιοῦτο]ν...

This man, on his own, thought it best to claim that he was a good poet. And it was necessary to contradict Hippothales who, being charged on his own to define such a man as a good poet according to what is clear and not a matter of opinion …

T. IV p. 10d, ll. 2-11 (p. 165 Crönert):[138]

2	⟨ὅ, τι⟩ βού- λει σημή[[ο]]νηι ὁ φθόγ- γος. [ἀ]λὰ μὴν ἤ γε κοι-
5	νὴ πάντων ἡμῶν ὁμι- λία ἦν τ[η]ρεῖν τοὺς φ[θ]όγ- γου[ς] κα[τ]ὰ τὸ ἐν[α]ργές, οὐ] τὸ δοξαζόμενόν

What do you want that the statement should mean? Well, the common way of speaking among all of us (Epicureans) was to preserve the utterances in accordance with what is clear, not that which is a matter of

---

136 Their editions are to be found in Crönert (1906), in the Nachtrag, pp. 163-167, and to be read with the notes of Concolino Mancini (1976). Michael Erler is currently reediting them.

137 Crönert read μὴ ⟨τὸ⟩ in line 11, which I consider unnecessary: "what is clear and non-conjectural," taken together as one idea, makes sense, since what is clear for Epicureans is not conjectural. Hippothales is a character in Plato's *Lysis*. ὅς] in line 9 is mine; Crönert printed ὁ.

138 Janko conjectured ὅ,τι in line 2; σημήνηι is my correction for Crönert's reading σημηνονην; the construction is a deliberative subjunctive after βούλει, see Smyth §1806. Perhaps read [μὴ] at the beginning of l. 8 instead of [οὐ]

γ' ἐκ[ε]ῖνο καὶ οὐχὶ ὃ ο[ὗ-
10 τό]ς φ[ηςι]ν.

opinion and not what this man says.

T. IV p. 10 e, ll. 2-13 (p. 165 Crönert):[139]

2   κατὰ τὸ ἐν]αργὲς
κα[ὶ οὐ τὸ δοξαζό]μενόν
π[ο]τε, καὶ προςδιαλε-
5   γόμενός μοι τοὺς φθόγ-
γο[υ]ς. ἐν δὲ τοῖς κατὰ
μέρ[ο]ς περὶ ποιητῶν
ἤδη ἀντιλέγωμεν. κα[ὶ]
ὃ μέν φας[ι] εἴτ' ἐναργ[ὲς εἶ-
10 να[ι] τὸ γ[νω]ριζόμ[ε]ν[ον
π[ερὶ] ποιητῶν ἀγαθῶν
τ]ῆι [διανοίαι τρ]όπον
13 [τινά...]

According to what is clear and not ever what is a matter of opinion, also addressing his utterances to me. But in the sections partially about poets let us refute then what they claim, whether what is known about good poets is clear in his mind in some way (?)...

Concolino Mancini pointed out that Colotes speaks as if there was a *prolepsis* of the good poet, founding it on τὸ ἐναργές, i.e. what is clear.[140] We know from Philodemus that the Epicureans did think there was such a *prolepsis*, and the discussion about calling such a person a good poet confirms that Colotes had such a *prolepsis*: how could he name someone "good poet" without reference to a *prolepsis* guaranteeing meaning to that phrase?[141] It is worth noting also that Colotes uses the opportunity to discuss Epicurean views on language, which is closely connected to epistemology for them.

In this connection, Colotes mentions Archilochus.[142] Because he was a famous, widely-read and canonical poet, he is used as a test case in Philodemus' *On Poems*; he appears at II.34 alongside Semonides, Hipponax, and Euripides; in IV.104 as a poet who is good despite using bad diction, and in V.18 as a poet who is considered good "only with indulgence" by a Stoic

---

[139] Perhaps we should read κα[ὶ μὴ at the start of l. 3.
[140] Concolino Mancini (1976: 62), developing suggestions by Körte (1907: 253-4) and Long (1971). Crönert (1906: 8) thought that Colotes was reflecting Epicurus' ban on poetry; Philippson (RE 2479-80) points out that this is not necessarily the case.
[141] For Philodemus' statement, see *On Poems* V.30.29-33 and 33.33-6.
[142] At T. IV p. 10b* line 7 (p. 164 Crönert), which is a *sovrapposto* conserved only in in the Oxford *disegno* of the text. It reads αρχιλοχα, which is probably to be emended to Ἀρχιλόχωι[ι (ego, cf. Archilochus fr. 301 West).

literary critic who could not find intellectual contents of value in his poetry. The discussion here is surely similar: is Archilochus, who slandered others and admitted shameful things about himself in his poems, thereby a *bad* poet?[143]

Obviously, given the discussion, it was not Colotes' goal to explain what the *prolepsis* of the good poet is, but he felt free to invoke the idea, which shows that it had already been discussed in the school. The most obvious place for such a discussion is in Metrodorus' *On Poems*, which seems to have been less concerned with the status of poetry in Epicurean education, but rather with understanding it as a human endeavor: is it a *techne*? What makes a good poet? This last question hints that, even among the first generation of Epicureans, there was a complete "theory of poetry," in which quality and judgment were discussed as well as the ethical import of the contents. That some of these questions were handled by later Epicureans is not an argument against their treatment here: school doctrine had to be defended in the face of criticism, if not developed over the course of the centuries to meet new challenges.

§6 Demetrius Laco

Demetrius was probably active in the late second and early first centuries BCE; his dates are not secure. He mentions Zeno and is probably a rough contemporary.[144] His treatise, in contrast to the others discussed so far, actually survives in some extensive parts. *PHerc*. 1014 contains book II and *PHerc*. 188, much less extensive, is agreed to contain the first book and

---

[143] Concolino Mancini suggests two possibilities: (i) Archilochus is cited because he damaged himself by being hateful to everyone or (ii) his verse κηλ έ̣ εται δ᾽ ὅτις [βροτ]ῶν ἀοιδαῖς (εε is Treu's emendation of the ω in the Neapolitan *disegno*; West prints a more fragmentary text as fr. 253) "whichever mortal is enchanted by songs" (Phld. *On Music* IV.49.38-9 = fr. 352 West) is compared with the discussion in Plato (206b1-2) that poetry should κηλεῖν, enchant, and not ἐξαγριαίνειν, enrage. My position develops her first option.

[144] For his biography, see Gigante *ap*. Puglia (1988). For the reference to Zeno, see below n. 161.

59

treats the rôles of the hearing (ἀκοή) and mind (διάνοια) in the judgement (κρίνειν) of poetry.[145] Neither work contains a positive exposition of school doctrine in the surviving parts, but Demetrius seems to have been interested in problems rather than the systematic refutation of opponents (like Philodemus) and so, potentially, there is much to be learned from him.

The remains of book I are very scanty and difficult to control. The topic seems to be whether the hearing or the mind judges the quality of poetry.[146] The second book discusses questions of genre (the Pythian nome is handled in some detail) and some, more technical, aspects of *lexis* and poetry: the definitions of *lexis* (col. 36), metaphor (col. 40), and cτεναὶ φωναί, sounds that are difficult to pronounce (col. 27).

Of greater interest is his identification of a πραγματικὴ ζήτηcιc, or "investigation into the facts," which philosophers interested in poetry can perform.[147] At this point, the idea that poetry could be an object of research should not be surprising, and that poems are considered things rather than pure language is not, after a moment of reflection, particularly surprising either: poems can be analyzed for their propositional contents (as hinted at above) or for their verbal beauty, but even verbal beauty is not "pure language."

Demetrius has several other very interesting but, as yet, poorly understood positions about genre and perhaps the intelligibility of poems. A phrase of his, ἐντροχάζουcα κοινότηc "commonality that obtains," picks out the feature, or collection of features, which grants a poem

---

[145] For book II, see Romeo (1988) which includes both books along with introduction, Italian translation and commentary, but whose reconstruction of the second book is faulty in some particulars. McOsker (forthcoming) will reedit the text. References here are to Romeo's column and line numbers. Book I has been reedited in McOsker (2014).

[146] See McOsker (2014) and (forthcoming) for discussion of the topic and adversaries, who are Andromenides (also known from Philodemus) and possibly Crates of Mallos.

[147] For discussion of the term, see Romeo (1988a: 162), which is her note to II.15.4ss. I follow Longo Auricchio's suggestion for the translation (in Romeo). The term probably indicates one of the two avenues of Epicurean research, namely, research into facts; the other was research into pure language (Diogenes Laertius X.34).

its belonging to a genre. In Demetrius' example, it is the Pythian Nome:

On Poems II col. 49.1-10:[148]

<table>
<tr><td>1</td><td>[ἐ-]
πὶ διάτασιν [̣ ̣]η[̣ ̣]ν
καὶ ἐπὶ τὴν ἔνκλι ̣σι ̣ν ἢ
τοιαύτην κατάστα-</td><td>… for tension (*modifier missing*) and for vocal modulation or such a situation, on account of the commonality that obtains. Thence such poems too the *grammatikoi* either write or discover …</td></tr>
<tr><td>5</td><td>_σιν ͮ δι ̣ὰ ̣ τὴν ἐντρο-
_χάζου ̣σαν κοινότητα.
ὅθεν δὴ καὶ τὰ τοιαῦ-
τα τῶν ποημά[τω]ν,
ἃ ἢ γράφουσιν οἱ γραμ-</td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td>10</td><td>μα[τικοὶ] ἢ εὑρίσκου[σι]ν</td><td></td></tr>
</table>

and col. 51.4-8:

<table>
<tr><td>4</td><td>[λέ-]
γεται ποήματα διὰ
τὴν κατὰ τ[ὸν ν]όμον
ἐντροχαζού[σ]α[ν κοινό-</td><td>… they are called poems on account of the commonality that obtains throughout the Nome genre.</td></tr>
<tr><td>8</td><td>τητα.</td><td></td></tr>
</table>

The previous editor, Costantina Romeo, took κοινότης to mean ambiguity or vagueness (in contrast with ἰδιότης "precision" or specificity). But the word in the sense of "commonality" (derived from a set of features or characteristics in common) is equally Epicurean, and when Demetrius wants to say "the ambiguity or lack of clarity that occurs," he says so.[149] Demetrius even discusses the parts of the Nome at some length.[150]

There are a series of terms which, owing to the poor quality of the text, are difficult to comprehend: ἀνυπότακτος, however, is surely to be understood in reference to Epicurean linguistic practice, especially the demand at *Ep. Hdt.* §37 that we understand what is arrayed

---

[148] The text is substantially the same as Romeo (1988) though I succeeded in reading several more traces which make the text more secure. The major differences are that Romeo prints [χρ]η[στὴ]ν at the end of line 2, which seems too long for the space, and that I read τῶν ποημά[τω]ν, | ἃ at 49.8-9 for her τῶν ποημά[τω] | ν.

[149] Cf. *On Poems* II col. 61.5-10: διὰ γὰρ τὴν ἐντροχάζουσαν ἀδηλότητα περὶ τοὺν γλ[ως]σήμασίν εἰσιν Ἀλ ̣καῖος τε καὶ Σαπφὼ κ[α]κ[ο]ύμ ̣ε ̣ν ̣οι ("for on account of the lack of clarity which obtains, regarding the aspect of rare words, Alcaeus and Sappho have both been abused"). For κοινότης see LSJ and Usener *GE* s.v. and note that it is used three times in Epicurus *Ep. Hdt.* §§58-59, and only in the plural to mean "common features" as at, e.g., *De Ira* 24.28 and *De Morte* 24.8.

[150] See Romeo (1988b).

beneath (τὰ ὑποτεταγμένα) our utterances (φθόγγοι). Only in this way will we be able to

make reliable, well-founded judgments about the world:

On Poems II.45.2-11:[151]

2	[ἀ- νυπότακτα ποή[μα- τα δύϲκολον μ[̣ διαι-	… it is difficult to understand *anhypotakta*
5	ρεῖν. καὶ ˋ[γ]ὰρˊ τὰ Π[ολυδεύ- κουϲ καὶ τὰ Εὐφρονίδου διηρτημένα μέν τι-	poems. In fact, the poems of Polydeuces and Euphronides, signify some incoherent and
	να καὶ ψευδῆ προφα- νῶϲ] ϲημαίνει, ˅καθό-	false things, but generally they are not *anhypotakta* …
10	λ]ου δ᾽ οὐκ ἔϲτιν ἀνυ- πο̣τακτ[ὰ ̣ ̣ ̣ ⌣]ο̣.[̣]α	

The term ἀνυπότακτοϲ is to be connected with the mention of τὰ ὑποτεταγμένα in Epicurus'

Letter to Herodotus §37, which stand for the *prolepseis* which are subordinated to our utterances.

Here, the *anhypotakta* poems are perhaps those without any meaning derivable from the text.

The context is broken, but Demetrius may be saying that, however difficult their poems are,

Polydeuces and Euphronides wrote poems which correspond in some way with our notions of

reality and that they signify. This is not a demand for historically or factually accurate poetry, but

rather poetry that means something and is not nonsense.[152]

A similar term is ϲύνδεϲμοϲ, which should be understood in connection with the

rhetorical use of "reasonable connection" rather than the grammatical use "word other than a

---

[151] The passage is extremely difficult and of uncertain meaning. [διαι]ρεῖν (ll. 4-5) is uncertainly restored and of uncertain meaning. The sense here may be similar to that at *On Piety* pt. 1, col. 16, line 438-9: εἰ μὴ τὰϲ ἀνωτάτω{ι} διαιρούμενοϲ κοινότητ[ο]αϲ ἔμελλεν ἔνφρων {η} τιϲ ⟨τῶν⟩ ἐν ταύταιϲ προειλημμένων εἰδῷ[ν] μνημονεύ[ϲειν … (where Obbink translates "unless any rational person distinguishing the highest general classes were going to mention types already included in them … ") and at Herodotus 7.103.1 or Plutarch, *Life of Ti. Gracchus* §2. The meaning "explain," "interpret," "define" (i.e. "attempt to explain") generally should probably be recognized for this verb, which usually means "articulate" or "punctuate" in literary contexts. N.b. Romeo's note ad loc. actually refers to δύϲκολον, not διαιρεῖν as written. In l. 4, Romeo had printed μ[ὲν, which would be late in the sentence, or have to correlated with a δέ missing in the lost remainder of the column. Janko suggests (pers. comm.) μ[ὴ. The translation follows the suggestions of Ruth Scodel (pers. comm.).

[152] It is plainly connected with Philodemus' term ἡ ὑποτεταγμένη διάνοια, on which see below.

noun or verb" or "conjunction."[153] This makes, I think, better sense of Demetrius' definition of "metaphor:"

On Poems II.40.2-7 Romeo:[154]

2   ἐνθέν-
δε] παρά τιϲιν ἐπιτο-
μὴ τοῦ ὁ]μοίου λέγεται
5   ἡ μετ]αφορά· ᵛ τὸ γὰρ μ[η-
δ’ ἐκ τ]ῶν ϲυνδέϲμων
- - -] . [.]οιδ τικων ε[

> For which reason metaphor is said by some to be an abbreviation of a simile. In fact, the [noun missing] from the connections...

Mention of the connections, whether natural or linguistic, between two things may better fit a discussion of metaphor than technical linguistic details.[155]

§7 Zeno of Sidon

Zeno of Sidon was the scholarch in the early first century BCE and taught Philodemus and Cicero (apparently at different times, otherwise Cicero probably would have mentioned it). His treatise Περὶ ποιημάτων χρήϲεωϲ, "On the Use of Poems," is not extant.[156] It is possible that a section at the end of Philodemus' *On Poems* V is indebted to it; unfortunately, the section is identified solely as αἱ παρὰ Ζήνωνι δόξαι "The opinions in Zeno" (*On Poems* V.29.29). The opinions deal with judgment of quality rather than utility, which perhaps tells against identifying the Zeno with Philodemus' teacher. In light of Philodemus' loyalty to his teacher, and his statement at *On Poems* 25.30-34 that poems *qua* poems do not aid either in language or in thought (i.e. contents), it seems impossible that Zeno radically reevaluated the Epicurean

---

[153] For the latter sense of the term, see Romeo *ad loc*.

[154] The text is somewhat different from Romeo's edition. The major difference is that she restored μ[ετα|βαίνειν at ll.5-6, which is too long. Janko suggests (pers. comm.) μη|δ’.

[155] These discussions fill out an Epicurean theory of language, though we do not know if Demetrius is recapitulating or actually innovating.

[156] Its title is mentioned in a list at *PHerc*.1005, col. 10.19-20 (= fr.12 Angeli-Colaizzo): περὶ ποιημάτων χρή|[ϲεωϲ. In the same context, works Περὶ γραμματικῆϲ ("On Grammar"), Περὶ ἱϲτορίαϲ ("On History" or perhaps "On Grammatical Inquiry," as Sbordone [1947: 144] suggested), Περὶ παροιμιῶν καὶ ὁμοίων ("On Proverbs and Similes") and Περὶ λέξεωϲ ("On Language" or "On Style") are mentioned.

position, either to meet the new demands of a Roman context[157] or under the influence of Stoic thought.[158]

The title of the work suggests that it was concerned with claims that poetry could be educational or otherwise useful. One thinks of Stoic or Peripatetic opponents, who claimed that verse and music had certain psychological effects. However, it does not seem likely that it dealt with questions of how poetry works or is to be judged, that is to say, poetic theory on its own terms.

Several doctrines in other works have been ascribed to Zeno. See above (§2) for a discussion of Sextus Empiricus' Epicurean arguments against the utility of poetry. Additionally, Armstrong (1995: 228 n. 41) has suggested that Zeno introduced Democritus' analogy between atoms and letters to Epicurean theorizing about poetry. Lucretius, in turn, developed this analogy as a main aspect of his poetic style.[159] It is quite possible that Sextus drew on Zeno, but the atom-letter analogy seems to lie further afield.[160] Further, two references to a Zeno in Demetrius Laco's *Textual Problems in Epicurus* may indicate some work in that field by Zeno of Sidon, but this would be the only indication of it.[161]

---

[157] So, e.g., Philippson (1938) and Erler (1992).

[158] So Crönert (1906: 8).

[159] See generally Snyder (1980) and Holmes (2005).

[160] I consider it an innovation by Lucretius, who drew directly on Democritus rather than the Epicurean tradition. Zeno's only known work on poetry focused on its potential utility, which he probably denied.The analogy is only useful insofar as poetry is considered a valid medium for philosophy. I intend to take up this issue in another venue.

[161] The name appears at coll. 44.2 and 50.6; in the first he is called ὁ φίλτατος Ζήνων, which makes it all but certain that the Zeno in question is the scholarch, since φίλτατος was almost a technical term for referring to fellow Epicureans. The work is published under the title *Aporie testuali ed esegetiche in Epicuro* by Puglia (1988).

§8 Siro

Siro was the teacher of Vergil,[162] and he seems to be mentioned in *PHerc.* 312.[163] The testimonia reveal nothing related to poetry and it is not certain that he wrote anything in the first place. However, he may have been in a circle with Philodemus (the latter's dedication of at least one work to Vergil suggests as much), so the two probably shared the same, or had similar, opinions. Besides Vergil, he was also the teacher of either Varus[164] or Varius[165]. If the latter, the possibly Epicurean-inflected poem *De Morte* may be testamony to the impact of his teaching.[166]

§9 Conclusion

Epicurus did not himself write an *On Poems*, but Metrodorus did, and Epicurus did discuss poetry at length in several of his works. Certain Epicurean doctrines, specifically that poetry is useless educationally and that it is a *techne*, are clearly datable to this phase of the school. That Metrodorus put forward a positive doctrine about poetry's technicity is important, because it meant that his engagement with poetics was not merely criticism of its ethics and utility, but he attempted explanations of how it worked. He also said that people should not worry about not knowing the contents of Homer. This is in line with the concern with ethics and utility in the early Garden, but does not rule out a more technical discussion of poetry as such, especially since Metrodorus' work was in multiple books.

In the next generation, Colotes seems to rely on his readers' familiarity with a reasonably fully fleshed out Epicurean theory of poetry. Since the work in which his discussion appears (his

---

[162] Cf. *Catalepta* 5 and 8, and Servius *ad Ecl.* VI.13.
[163] His testimonia are collected by Gigante (1990).
[164] So the editions of Servius.
[165] So Cairns (317 n. 8).
[166] Hollis (1977).

anti-commentary *Against Plato's* Lysis) is an inappropriate venue for such a discussion, and he is not known to have written about poetry elsewhere, we can reasonably, if not certainly, state that he relied on his teachers.

Zeno of Sidon's work *On the Use of Poetry* is an obvious locus for innovation (and indeed, many scholars have ascribed various doctrines to it). Despite its being lost, however, it seems all but certain that he did *not* innovate on the important point of poetry's utility. His motivations for writing are obscure, but two are easily within reach. The first is that he was updating Epicurus' or Metrodorus' arguments to meet newer or more sophisticated attacks. The second is that he was rebutting heterodox Epicureans like the group on Rhodes, which was known to hold divergent opinions on several points of ethics.[167]

Demetrius Laco may have presented a new theory in the badly mangled book I of his *On Poems*. The extant part begins with an argument against an unknown critic and Andromenides about the judgment of poems, namely, whether the hearing is responsible for it or not. Demetrius' view agrees with Philodemus, but Philodemus does not cite Demetrius as a source for the *On Poems*, as he does in the *On Signs and Sign-Inferences*. Unfortunately, there are no points of overlap with what we can infer from Colotes.

Philodemus' own treatise contains no positive exposition of his poetics. I take this to mean that he was relying on his audience already being familiar with it from other authoritative works. It is possible that he had Demetrius Laco in mind, but Epicurus and Metrodorus are just as possible, if not more so.

It seems certain that the Epicureans never wavered in their view that poetry was useless educationally. The question of when they developed a full theory of how poetry worked is still

---

[167] It seems that Philodemus continued his teacher's polemic against them in the topics of rhetoric and anger, at least.

66

open, but I hope to have given good reason to believe that it should be dated early in the school, probably to Metrodorus' *On Poems*. This is, of course, not the only possible solution, but it seems to me to be most likely.

Philodemus' overlap with Demetrius can be explained in several ways. He may not have known of Demetrius' work when he wrote, or he may have found it insufficient or unsatisfactory in some way. The overlap may also be less than it appears: Andromenides, at least, does not play a very large role in Philodemus' work.

This has several implications for our understanding of Philodemus and his project. First of all, his work was purely polemical, devoted fully to criticism of opposing views, without any interest in explaining or adapting doctrine. We need not therefore conclude that he was completely unoriginal or just a *pedisequens* of his teachers; other works show much greater flexibility and generosity towards other schools. Second, he is located firmly within the context of his school tradition, as he himself claims with repeated protestations of loyalty, not only to Zeno, but to the Founders as well.

Chapter Three

The *Prolepsis* of the Poem

§1 *Kanonike* and the Canon

As we will soon see, Philodemus considered poetry primarily as language organized in a particular way and for a particular reason. That a poem is language has important implications and, in fact, is the basis of many Epicurean positions about poetry, with consequences for their positions about what poems are and how to judge them. Because language relies fundamentally on human senses (usually, for the Greeks, hearing), it is well to consider how the senses work, because they are our access to the world outside our own minds. The section of Epicurean philosophy devoted to epistemology was called κανονική (canonic), from κανών, a measuring rod. Canonic undergirds the system of Epicurean physics, which in turn supports their ethics. In this case, we will see that fundamental concepts in Epicurean canonic reappear in Philodemus' discussion of poetry. It is only by a happy accident of shared etymology that the term "canon" came to be used for the recognized set of great authors which are the classics of a given society.

Epicureans held that humans experience the world more or less directly, through our senses. Outside matter impacts our sense organs and the sense-impressions are interpreted by our minds. This chain of events—αἴcθηcιc, πάθη, πρόληψιc (sense, feeling, preconception)— makes up our criteria for determining the truth of something.[168] Our primary source of knowledge is our senses, which transmit information about the world to us, to our souls, in a

---

[168] See Diogenes Laertius X.31; n.b. that later Epicureans, including Philodemus, added the φαντacτικαὶ ἐπιβολαὶ τῆc διανοίαc; cf. *KD* xxiv and Philodemus *De Signis* fr. 1.11-5.

reliable fashion.[169] By "feelings" (πάθη), Epicureans mean pleasure and pain (fr. 260 Usener = D. L. X.34), and similarly, they are always true, because they are completely internal to the subject feeling them. We judge propositions about the real world by reference to our perceptions ("does this proposition match my perceptions of reality?") and feelings ("does this sensation or proposition make me feel good or bad?") in order to conduct research about reality and decide what to do (*Ep. Hdt.* §63).

The last of the original three criteria is the *prolepsis*, or preconception, a thought, idea, and/or memory of repeated experiences of the same thing which can be called to mind at will or is called to mind when provoked from without the person.[170] Diogenes Laertius' definition is worth quoting in full (D. L. X.33):[171]

> τὴν δὲ πρόληψιν λέγουσιν οἰονεὶ κατάληψιν ἢ δόξαν ὀρθὴν ἢ ἔννοιαν ἢ καθολικὴν νόησιν ἐναποκειμένην, τουτέστι μνήμην τοῦ πολλάκις ἔξωθεν φανέντος, οἷον "τὸ τοιοῦτόν ἐστιν ἄνθρωπος·" ἅμα γὰρ τῷ ῥηθῆναι "ἄνθρωπος," εὐθὺς κατὰ πρόληψιν καὶ ὁ τύπος αὐτοῦ νοεῖται προηγουμένων τῶν αἰσθήσεων. παντὶ οὖν ὀνόματι τὸ πρώτως ὑποτεταγμένον ἐναργές ἐστι· καὶ οὐκ ἂν ἐζητήσαμεν τὸ ζητούμενον, εἰ μὴ πρότερον ἐγνώκειμεν αὐτό· οἷον "τὸ πόρρω ἑστὸς ἵππος ἐστὶν ἢ βοῦς;" δεῖ γὰρ κατὰ πρόληψιν ἐγνωκέναι ποτὲ ἵππου καὶ βοὸς μορφήν, οὐδ' ἂν ὠνομάσαμέν τι, μὴ πρότερον αὐτοῦ κατὰ πρόληψιν τὸν τύπον μαθόντες. ἐναργεῖς οὖν εἰσιν αἱ προλήψεις.

They mean by "prolepsis" a sort of apprehension or correct opinion or idea or general

---

[169] Epicurus said that all sense impressions are true, but does not say *how* they are true. The most probable explanation is that they are true because, due to the atomic physics of *eidola*, all of our sense perceptions have some real, physical correspondence with the actual object; see, e.g., Asmis (2009: 85). This is open to objection because Epicurus admitted that a square tower, if seen from a distance, would appear round and explained the phenomenon on physical grounds: the *eidolon* of the tower had lost its sharp edges in transit. If the sense impression of the round tower is to be true, however, it must be true in the sense that the observer really is noticing it. That is, our sense impressions are true because they constitute mental awareness of physical realities which actually obtain. That is, the tower *really is* square, but we *really do* perceive it as round because the *eidola* which reach us really are so. The obvious problem of the unreliability of our senses is minimized in practice by demanding clear (ἐναργής) sensory impressions and by withholding consent until we have those clear impressions. For discussion of the primary sources, see Asmis (1984: 153-4) and (1999: 284-5), as well as (2009).

[170] The fourth criterion, added by later Epicureans, are the φανταστικαὶ ἐπιβολαί, or acts of mental attention, which are not relevant to this discussion. See Long-Sedley i.90 with commentary on their passage 17a2.

[171] I follow Dorandi's text, except that I accept Gassendi's correction of the MSS' ἐπιτεταγμένον into ὑποτεταγμένον.

thought which has been stored up within, that is, a memory of something which has often appeared from without, e.g. the statement "such a thing is a human;" for at the same time the word "human" is said, an outline of one is called to mind in accordance with the *prolepsis*, because the senses have led the way. So, the first referent to every word is clear, and we would not even try to ask about a difficulty if we did not previously recognize it. For example, the question "the thing standing a ways away—is it a horse or a cow?" For [sc. to ask this question,] it is necessary to have learned at one point the shapes of a horse and a cow, nor could we name something if we had not previously known its outline by preconception. And so preconceptions are clear.

The senses lead the way because, without seeing humans several times previously (or hearing them described in some detail), we could not call to mind a mental image of one. We have *prolepseis* of very many aspects of human experience, both of simple things in the real world, like horses and cows, but also have more complicated concepts, like the goodness of a poem, which Philodemus explicitly mentions at *On Poems* V.33.34-6: [π]λὴν οὔτε παρεφάπτεται τ̣[ῆϲ] κ̣οινῆϲ ἐννο[ίαϲ οὔτε] προειλήφαμεν ταύτην ἀρετὴν ποιήματοϲ ("but neither has he alluded to the common idea nor have we preconceived this to be the virtue of poetry"). κοινὴ ἔννοια (common idea) is a common synonym for "preconception" in Epicurean writings, and the verb προλαμβάνω is used technically to refer to the idea.[172]

When Philodemus, as an Epicurean, discusses poetry, he is discussing the *prolepsis* of poetry, and when he discusses the judgment of poems, he judges them in accordance with the *prolepsis* of good poetry. At stake in his discussion then is a point of Epicurean canonic: what people think are good poems must actually be good poems. Any theory or interpretive scheme which flies in the face of that commitment must be false.

---

[172] Epicureans are free with technical terms and do not firmly hold to only one term for one concept. ἔννοια without κοινή means simply "idea," but κοινὴ ἔννοια is used generally in philosophical discourse to refer to the same thing that *prolepsis* refers to (κοινὴ νόηϲιϲ is used as a synonym for *prolepsis* at *Ep. Men.* §123, as is πρώτη ἔννοια at *Ep. Hdt.* §38, as well as τὸ πρώτωϲ ὑποτεταγμένον (if we accept Gassendi's correction at D. L. X.33); κοινὴ φήμη may be used in this sense at *PHerc.* 1428.10.25, in Philodemus' discussion of Stoic monotheism. προλαμβάνω is used to refer to the *prolepsis* several times in Philodemus' corpus; see Mangoni's note to *On Poems* V.33.32-6.

Near the beginning of the *midollo* of book V of the *On Poems*, Philodemus refutes Heraclides of Pontus, who has made several demands of poetry: that it benefit and delight the audience, and demonstrate excellence of some kind. He evidently also claimed that poetry which did not live up to these standards was to be banned or censored in some way.

On Poems V.4.1 and 10-18:

1	[ἄθ]λιος ...	[sc. he is] wretched...
10	κ[αὶ] διότι τὰ κά[λ-	and because he expels from
	λιcτα ποιήματα τῶν [δο-	excellence the most
	κιμ[ω]τάτων ποητῶ[ν	beautiful poems of the most
	διὰ τὸ μηδ᾽ ἡντινοῦν	famous poets, the majority
	ὠφελίαν παρασκευά-	of poems by some poets
15	ζειν· ἐνίων δὲ καὶ [τ]ὰ	and all the poems of others,
	πλ[εῖ]cτα, τινῶν δὲ πάν-	because they provide no
	τα [τ]ῆc ἀρετῆc ἐκρι[πτ]ά-	benefit whatsoever.
	ζει.	

Two other objections have preceded this one,[173] but the interesting claim is that the literary canon, once Heraclides of Pontus is done with it, will be bereft of many of its finest works, because they will have been expelled from the ranks of excellent poetry.[174] This is the entirety of Philodemus' objection to Heraclides' claim about the excellence of the poem, which indicates that this result is *per se* unacceptable and would be obvious as such to Philodemus' audience.

Therefore, Philodemus recognized a literary canon and had a method by which it was constituted. But what was he talking about when he talked about poetry?

§2 Philodemus' Definition of Poetry

---

[173] The objections were that Heraclides demanded benefit, delight, and "excellence" (ἀρετή) from the poem, but did not specify in any case of what sort or how it was provided. I infer that the excellent poems, that is, those with ἀρετή, were those that both delighted and benefitted the audience, but the phrasing does suggest that it is a third quality alongside the other two, rather than a general term of commendation.

[174] No examples are named at this point, but Homer, Archilochus, and Euripides are common examples of high quality poets who write about bad topics (Hipponax is less commonly used in this connection); cf. e.g. *On Poems* V.17.32-35 for Homer and Archilochus's poems being good only "with indulgence" (μετὰ cυγγνώμηc).

ἡ μουσικὴ τέχνη, the art of the Muses, is the term in classical Greek for a group of arts taken all together, including music (instrumental and sung) and poetry (the words sung) in their contemporary English senses.[175] Aristotle, in the *Poetics*, considers ποιητική, the art of poetic composition, separate from that of musical composition and the other aspects of dramatic composition and staging. He divides tragedy into six parts: μῦθος (plot), ἤθη (characters), λέξις (diction), διάνοια (thought), ὄψις (spectacle), and μελοποιία (music), and appears to have been the first explicitly to do so (50a7-10); Aristophanes' *Frogs* presents criticism of Aeschylus and Euripides on metrical and lexical grounds, but without explicitly separating the words from the music (Aristophanes does not actually seem to consider their music, but the issue is not raised *per se*). Philodemus follows them in this respect and divides μουσική into lyrics and music in our senses of the words, and leaves music out of his consideration of poetry, since it is a different thing. It follows that musicians and poets are different professions, though one person may fulfill both tasks, and indeed he makes this claim. For Philodemus, music is only decorative, in a way; it serves to please the ear, but does not make a bad argument strong, nor can it fulfill any of the weighty claims made on its behalf by the Stoics.[176]

The *On Music* comes into consideration here for its important testimony to the basic division between poetry and music maintained by Philodemus, and because it examines poetry in its role as lyrics in a song. This fundamental distinction is not explicitly made in the *On Poems* (though it could of course be lost in a damaged part of the work), but it underlies his treatment of poetry as a verbal phenomenon. Without the precision afforded by this separation, his whole

---

[175] Cf. Koller (1963: 5-24, esp. 8-9), and [Pl.] *Alc.* I. 108a12 – d3. For clarity's sake, *mousike* refers to the earlier Greek sense of the word, whereas "music" will be used for instrumental music, "lyrics" for the words of a song, and "song" for a piece of music constituted from lyrics and/or music; "poem" is reserved for a poem in our sense or for the lyrics of a song considered without reference to their accompanying music.

[176] See Delattre (2007: 1-20) for Diogenes of Babylon's views (and see the next footnote). I intend to discuss Stoic views generally in a different work.

theory would be open to attack on the grounds that he is ignoring the effects of the music on the audience of the poem. Furthermore, the distinction is in line with Epicurean thought on language, sensation, and decision-making. The ear, being a sense organ, cannot make decisions; it cannot judge. It can transmit sensory data to the mind, which then judges them, but delight of the ear is not a criterion of truth for the Epicureans. The data transmitted by a song or poem are the words and their form; it is only on these bases that a poem can be judged. The distinction drawn by Philodemus in *On Music* IV clarifies the relationship between the music and the words and so lays the groundwork for the rest of his analysis of poetry.

Beyond the distinction between music and poetry, Philodemus also makes several statements about the role of the poet. Since the poet is responsible for the verbal content of a song, or for the entirety of a poem, he (not the musician) *can* influence people, but one gathers that Philodemus does not think this is a common occurrence, since it is not necessary that the poet have a positive impact, or any influence at all, on his audience. This point will be taken up in greater detail below.

Towards the end of the fourth book, Philodemus takes Diogenes of Babylon[177] to task for confusing the effects of music and lyrics on the audience of a song. In this section, he is giving a definition of music, and so separates poetry from it. He is engaged in a larger polemic against Diogenes' argument that music is useful for worship because it brings the worshiper closer to god, since poetry can describe divinity in a way that prose cannot. In the previous column, Philodemus refutes this view on pragmatic grounds (how could music at a festival, with so many

---

[177] A Stoic philosopher, who was born c. 240 and died c. 150; he was scholarch of the Stoa in Athens and participated in the embassy of the three philosophers (along with Carneades and Critolaus) to Rome. He may have been a founding figure in the Middle Stoa. For a general introduction to his life and theories of music, see Delattre (2007: 1-20). His fragments are collected in *SVF* III 1-126, among which are extracts from *On Music* IV, as well as *Rhetoric* III. N.b. the addenda to *SVF* noted in Delattre (2007: 1 n. 3); fragments drawn from the *On Music* were reedited in Delattre's edition.

distractions, work better than an argument in prose?); now he builds on the distinction implied in his division of poetry from music to define his terms more closely, after some brief observations *en passant* about music's effect and utility for its audiences. Some of these arguments will be examined later, as for now they are not relevant.

On Music IV.143.39-43:[178]

39   εἰ δ' ἔ[τ]ερόν τις καλεῖ
40   μ[ουсι]κὴν πα[ρ]ὰ τὸ πᾶν ποη-
    τι[κὸ]ν γένος, ἀποδιαλαβὼν
    τ]ὰ μέ[λ]η ψιλὰ καὶ τοὺς ῥυ-
43   θμούς, π[ο]εῖν φη[ιϲ]μὶ εὐπ[ρ]επῶϲ.
	But if someone says that music is something other than the whole genus of poetry, once he has set aside the melodies that are bare and rhythms, I say that he does well.

Philodemus says that fundamentally music and poetry are different things and stem from different *technai*.[179] By Philodemus' day, this was not a radical statement to make, but it demonstrates that his poetics starts from first principles, in this case, a definition of the scope of the field of study, just as in the case of Aristotle's *Poetics*. It is true that, because of the form of Philodemus' work, the systematic nature of his thought is hidden, but it nevertheless relies on carefully thought out positions.

Philodemus makes clear in other passages that rhythm and melody are adornments for the lyrics, rather than essential to them. Being adornment, they do not contribute to the meaning of the text. Although the argument is earlier in the work, the topic of discussion is the same: the proper worship of the gods. As part of his refutation, he dismantles claims that song is the most appropriate way to worship the gods, because it makes a greater impression on the worshiper. The first section repeats the claim made by Diogenes; the following sections are Philodemus' various objections to it.

---

[178] In line 42, τὰ μέλη ψιλά are bare melodies, i.e. melodies without lyrics. See Delattre *ad loc*.

[179] On the technicity of poetry, see below.

On Music IV.124.1-36:[180]

1   καὶ τὸ μόνον
λέγει]ν ὅτι "τὸ τοῦ Κρέξου ποή-
μα, καίπερ οὐκ ὂν ἀνάρμο-
cτον, πολὺ cεμνότερον φαίνε-
5   ται [τ]οῦ μέλουc προcτ[ιì]`ε´θέν-
_τοc,ᵛ καὶ τοὺc ὕμνουc τοὺc ἐν
Ἐφέcωι καὶ τ[ο]ὺc ὑπὸ τῶν ἐν
Λακεδαίμον[ι] χορῶν ἀιδο-
μένουc μηδ[ἐν π]οήcειν πα-
10   ραπλήcιον, ἀφαιρεθέντοc,"
ἀποχρῆν ἐ[νό]μιcεν πρὸc ἀ-
πόδειξιν τ[οῦ] μᾶλλον κ{ε}ι-
νεῖν, οὐθὲν π[ρ]ολο{γα}γιcάμε-
νοc ὅτι [ρ]αιδίωc πρὸc αὑτὸν
15   ὁ μὲν ἐρεῖ μηδὲ ἓν πρὸc cε-
μνότητα καὶ λογιcτικὴν
ἔ[μ]φαcιν ποιεῖν τὸ μέλοc δι-
αφορώτερον, ἀλλὰ τέρψιν
ἀκοῆc προcτιθέναι μόνον,
20   ὁ δὲ διὰ τὴν [π]ρ[ο]cυπολαμ-
βανομένην τιμὴν τῶν
θεῶν καὶ τῶν ἀνδρῶν, ο[ὐ
δι[ὰ] τὸ μέλο[c, ἐ]μφαίνεcθαι
_τὴ[ν] κα[τ]αλλ[α]γήν, ὁ δ[ὲ τ]ά-
25   χ' [ἴcωc] τοῦτο [μ]ὲν γίνεcθαι,
τὴν δ]ὲ διά[νο]ιαν τοῦ ποή-
μ]α[τ]οc ἀιδο[μέν]ου καὶ προc-
_διακ]νᾶcθ[αι.ᵛ τ]ὸ δ' "ὑπὸ τῶν
ἀρχ]αίων [τετι]μῆcθαι τὴν
30   μου]cικὴν" ἰδ[ι]ώτη μὲν καὶ
ἀπαι[δεύτωι τ]εκμήριον ἡ-
γεῖcθα[ί γ' εὐχ]ρηcτίαc, cυγ-
γ]νωc[τόν, πε]παιδεύμε-
ν]ῳ δὲ κ[αί, μ]ᾶλλον ἔτι, φι-
15   λοcοφ[οῦντι π]ᾶν ὄνειδόc
ἐ]cτι·

He thought that merely claiming that "the poem of Crexus, although it [i.e. the lyrics] is not unharmonic, appears to be far more majestic when the melody has been added, and that the hymns in Ephesus and those sung by the choruses in Lacedaemon will create no similar effect if the melody is removed from them" would suffice for a demonstration that they are rather moving, since he did not foresee at all that one critic will easily say against him that the melody does nothing at all superior for the majesty and the logical force other than adding only the delight of the hearing, that another critic would say that the difference appears, because of the additional honor for gods and men, not because of the music, and that a third would perhaps say that this [i.e. what Diogenes claims] occurs, but that the thought of the poem, since it is sung, is effaced. The claim that "music was honored by the ancients is a proof of its utility" is forgivable in the case of a foolish or uneducated person, but for an educated person, a philosopher even more so, it is completely blame-worthy.

This is an excellent example of Philodemus' style of argumentation. First he reports the

opponent's opinion, namely that music added to lyrics adds power and majesty to the praises of

---

[180] We might have also expected *paragraphoi* at ll. 15 and 20, but none are recorded by any of the editors (Neubecker also neglects the one in l. 6). Delattre in his apparatus notes that the space left in l. 6 might have contained a letter or two, and suggests γε. I accept Delattre's suggestion of προc[διακ]νᾶcθ[αι in l.27 (and see his note).

For the use of ἀλλά in l. 18 instead of ἤ after comparatives, see LSJ s.v. A.I.3. In l. 23, perhaps "gives force" is a better translation than "appears" for ἐμφαίνεcθαι; cf. the translation of ἔμφαcιν ποιεῖν in l. 17 of this passage.

the gods, then he gives three criticisms of it, all of which are on point and represent possible

avenues of attack, keeping in mind that, for Epicureans, only argumentation was convincing.

Appeals to emotion or sensation held no sway, and music affects only the ear, which is irrational

and so not a decision-making organ. After the criticisms, Philodemus forcefully and polemically

sums up his position.

The next passage follows a little further on in the text, and similar claims are at stake.

On Music IV.125.14-24:

14 οὐ μὴν ἀλλὰ τὸ 15 ποιητικόν ἐστιν πρόσφο- ρον, καὶ τὴν μουσικὴν τὰ c]υμπλ[ακ]έντα περίc[κ]επτον ἐποίηc[ε]ν· καὶ διὰ τὴν τέρ- ψιν ὁμο[ί]ωc [κ]αὶ τὴν ψυχα- 20 γωγία[ν, ἀλλ'] οὐ διὰ τὰ πρὸς τούτω[ν ἀξι]ούμεν' ἀπεδε[ί- χ]θη π[ροcληφθε]ῖc', οὐδ' ἄλλωc ἢ κ]α[τα]cκευὴ [τ]οῦ κεφαλαί- 24 ου.	Nevertheless, the poetic is suitable [i.e. for symposia?], and the complex makes the music into something admirable. Both for the sake of enjoyment and of enthrallment, but not for sake of what is claimed by those people [i.e. the Stoics], it [sc. music] was demonstrated to have been added in, and no differently from artistic elaboration of the main point.

Only for pleasure, and not for any other reason, was music included. Thus, it can hardly be an

essential part of the mental work of a song, which (as the passage quoted just before this one

states) is proper to the lyrics.

What is meant by τὰ cυμπλακέντα ("what has been interwoven" and thence "the

complex") is not entirely clear at first glance. The plural neuter participle is used similarly in

several other places in *On Music*: at IV.131.25, where Philodemus claims that variety of

enjoyment is brought about by the complex, not the harmonies (or nuances[181]) of the music;

132.18, where he claims that not music and rhythm but "the thoughts that are interwoven with

them" cause relaxation and joy; and 148.15, where he claims that it is on account of the complex

---

[181] ἀρ[μονιῶ]ν and χρ[ωμάτω]ν are the two possibilities mentioned by Delattre, whose reading of the rho rules out earlier suggestions. Since the alpha is clear on the *disegno* (Delattre admits as much in his note), I prefer the former.

that they have preferred music so much, as well as col. 140, quoted and translated just below. At 141.35, the finite verb ϲυμπλέκω is used to refer to the music which is interwoven with words. If this is so, then Philodemus claims at ll.16-17 of the current passage that the lyrics make the song worthwhile, because they are the only part of the song not included in its music. This interpretation is supported by his statement at ll. 22-4, that the relationship between words and music is comparable to that between the topic of a speech (τὸ κεφαλαῖον, the "head" part, i.e. the topic) and its rhetorical elaboration (καταϲκευή), since the two combine to form the finished product of the speech.

This passage comes at the end of a critique of the Stoic unity of virtue and the Stoic position that music can teach the virtues.[182] Philodemus, after his rebuttal, sums up his position as follows:

On Music IV.140.1-14:[183]

1	εἴ]ρηται περὶ πάϲηϲ ἀρε- τῆϲ καὶ χυδαῖα καὶ φατικὰ κᾆτα μαχόμενα, καὶ πολ- λῶι μᾶλλον παρ᾽ ἐν[ί]οιϲ. οὐ
5	μὴν ἀλλ᾽ οὐδὲ καθὸ ποιη- ταὶ ταῦτ᾽ εἰδεῖε̣[ν] ἄν, οὐχ ὅτι καθὸ μουϲικοί, καὶ τοῖϲ δια- νοήμαϲιν, οὐ τοῖϲ μέλεϲι καὶ ῥυθμοῖϲ, ὠφελοῦϲι· παρέλ-
10	κεται δὲ ταῦτ᾽ ἄλλωϲ, {μ} μᾶλ- λον δὲ καὶ περιϲπᾶι ϲυμ- πλεκόμενα [πρ]ὸϲ τὸ τ[ο]ῖϲ δι- ανοήμαϲιν π[α]ρακ[ο]λου-

...commonplaces and bare assertions and, even worse, contradictory statements have been said about each virtue, and far worse than that in some authors. Nevertheless, not even as poets could they know such things, to say nothing of [their knowing it] as *mousikoi*, and they aid by means of thoughts, not by means of melodies and rhythms; these later are added in pointlessly, or rather, *because*, when they [i.e. the music and lyrics] are intertwined, they distract the hearer with regards to

---

[182] Neubecker (1986: 179-181) is a useful summary of this section.

[183] The end of the previous column is missing and there is no connective particle preserved; so we begin in the middle of a sentence. Nevertheless, the sense seems complete enough, so it is unlikely that much is missing. The end of the passage is difficult. The most obvious translation, "they distract the hearer towards paying attention to the thoughts," is in fact diametrically opposite to what Philodemus has been arguing the whole time and somewhat awkwardly phrased. Delattre's summary of Philodemus' position is as follows: "pour lui, la musique est un art exclusivement sensuel – source de plaisirs non nécessaires (col. 151), sans être pour autant négligeables, au même titre que ceux de la rhétorique et ceux de la poésie – et sans liaison aucune avec la raison, en tout cas (col. 115)" (104). The translation I have given follows the suggestions of Ruth Scodel (pers. comm.), which solve the difficulties.

_θεῖν.   attention to the thoughts.

Of importance is the explicit distinction drawn at ll. 4-9 between the poets and *mousikoi*, who are

actually the same group of people acting in different roles, that is, as composers of lyrics in the

first case and composers of music in the second. Philodemus makes several points. The first is

that the two types of composition are different activities and so poetry and music are different

things. The second is that the thought contained in poetry does not necessarily aid the reader or

listener, since the poet does not necessarily know anything useful about his topic. Music has no

positive impact on the audience, and possibly just distracts them from paying attention to the

content of the lyrics.

   The forked *paragraphos* at 140.14 marks the end of the section of the book dedicated to

rebutting Diogenes. Philodemus then takes up a defense of the Epicurean position.[184]

On Music IV. 140.14-24:[185]

14   ἤκουϲα δέ τινων λε-
15   γόντων ὡϲ ἀγροικ[ιζ]όμε-
       θα τὰ μέλη καὶ τοὺϲ ῥυ[θ]-
       θμοὺϲ ἄνευ ϲημαϲίαϲ οἰό-
       μενοι λέγειν τινὰϲ φ[ι]λο-
       ϲόφουϲ ἢ τοὺϲ ἔμφροναϲ
20   μουϲικοὺϲ ἐπ' ἀρετὴν προ-
       τρέπειν, τῶν Ἀ[ν]δρῶν τοὺϲ
       ἐμμελεῖϲ καὶ ἐνρύθμουϲ
       λόγουϲ ἀ[ξ]ιούντων τοῦτο
24   _προ`ϲ´φέρεϲθα[ι.

I heard some people saying that we are uneducated rustics for thinking that some philosophers and the intelligent music theorists claim that songs and rhythms without signification turn the audience towards virtue, while the Great Men claim that melodic and rhythmic arguments contribute this.

Philodemus' opinion clearly is that ϲημαϲία (signification, l. 17) and λόγοι (arguments, l. 23)

are what actually influence people's decision-making, rather than the music. He adds, as if an

afterthought, that the *kathegemones*, the leaders of the Epicurean school, claim that arguments,

---

[184] Neubecker (1986: 181-186) and Delattre (2007: 277-279) give slightly differing interpretations.
[185] The Stoics (for these are most likely the unidentified opponents) are merely abusing the Epicureans for denying the Stoic view of music's effect on its audience. The Great Men (οἱ Ἄνδρεϲ) are Epicurus, Metrodorus, Hermarchus, and Polyaenus. For the use of the term, see Longo Auricchio (1978).

here described not entirely seriously as "melodic and rhythmic," lead to truth.[186]

The same point is made later in the same treatise with reference to stories told about how Simonides and Pindar had rescued cities from civil disturbances through their music.[187]

On Music IV.143.27-39:[188]

27   _   καὶ τοὺς περὶ Cιμωνί-
     δ[ην] καὶ Πίν[θ]ˈδˊαρον γεγονέ-
     ν[αι μ]ὲν καὶ μουcικούc, γεγο-
30   ν[ένα]ι δὲ καὶ ποˋιˊητάc, καὶ κα-
     θὸ [μ]ὲν μουcικοὶ τὰ ἀcήμαν-
     τα, κ[α]θὸ δὲ ποιηταὶ πεποιη-
     κέν[α]ι τοὺc λόγουc, ὠφελεῖν
     δ᾽ — ἴcω[c] μηδὲ κατὰ τοῦτ᾽, ἢ παν-
35   τελῶc ἐπὶ μικρόν — οὐδὲ μό-
     νουc τοὺc μουcικούc, οὐδὲ
     μᾶλλον, ἀλλὰ πάντας ὁ-
     μοίω[c] τοὺc πεπαιδευμέ-
39   _νου[c.

[sc. I assert] that both Simonides and Pindar were both musicians and poets, and, inasmuch as they were musicians, they composed works that do not signify anything, but inasmuch as they were poets, they composed texts and they aided (perhaps, not even in this regard, or only a very tiny bit) neither the musicians alone, not even [sc. them] more [sc. than other people], but all educated people alike.

Composers of songs are both *mousikoi* and *poietai* but they only aid their audiences *qua* poets, because only poets compose *logoi*, probably best rendered in this case by "texts," that is, the lyrics of their songs. These texts signify (i.e. make intelligible statements), which the music does not do (cf. l. 31 in this passage and IV.140.17, quoted above.), and could possibly make philosophical arguments, but Philodemus is pessimistic about poets' ability to do so.

So far, the discussion has focused on the *On Music*, since it provides an important fundamental distinction between music and poetry, as well Philodemus' assertions that only the words can bear meaning and make an argument sufficient to change someone's mind or behavior.

We now turn to the *On Poems* itself, to book two, where Philodemus gives a *hypographe*,

---

[186] Delattre *ad loc*. takes the passage differently: the Founding Fathers of Epicureanism stated that arguments in songs, even if clothed in melody and rhythm, lead us to truth. I understand the arguments to be "melodic and rhythmic" because they harmonize with Epicurean thought and lead to happiness (and because Philodemus would not describe prose as "melodic").

[187] On Simonides, see Σ Pindar *Ol*. 2.29d. On Pindar, see Delattre (2007: 76 n. 6) with the citations there, and n.b. frr. 110 and 109 Maehler.

[188] In line 34, Janko (pers. comm.) conjectured μηδὲ⟨ν⟩, which would mean "not at all." The word μουcικοί seems to mean "musicicans" in the first instance and "the musically inclined" in the second.

a sketch-definition, of poetry.[189] There is a major problem with this definition as stated, however, which will be handled below.

On Poems II.32.5-15:[190]

5   _   τίνα γ[ὰρ τ]//ρόπον, ὦ
         Κορύβαντεc, ε[ἰ τ]//ὸ πόημα
         πάντεc οὐχ ὡ[c] // τερέτιcμα
         καὶ κροῦμα νο//οῦμεν', ἀλ-
         λὰ λέξ`ε´ιc ἐκ τοῦ [π]//ωc cυντί-
10   θεcθαι διανόη//μα cημαι-
         νούcαc, οἷον ὁ [λό]//γοc οὐ πέ-
         φυκεν, ἂν "ὄλωₗc ἀₗ//γνοῆται
13   τὸ νοούμενₗονₗ";

How is it so, O Corybants, that, if we all think that what is a poem is not rattle and hum, but language which, as a result of some kind of composition, signifies a thought, of the sort which speech does not do naturally, if the contents happen to be completely unknowable?

The "Corybants" are euphonist critics who held that the meaning signified by the words of a poem is irrelevant to the judgment of the poem as good or bad; in their opinion, only the sound of the poem mattered. Philodemus' mockery is pointed: the corybants worshiped ecstatically with loud drums and cymbals. Philodemus rebuts them on the grounds that no one actually thinks that the words of a poem do not mean anything. Arguments from consensus are not part of Epicurean epistemology, but the argument is clearly from some sort of commonly held view, in this case, the *prolepsis* of a poem, which, Philodemus implicitly asserts, contains "makes sense" among the attributes of "poem."[191] All of this follows neatly from what Philodemus said in the *On Music* about the effect that music can have on its audience. There, the intellectual impact stemmed only from the lyrics, and here he maintains that poems must make sense.

    The terms used in this quasi-definition deserve further investigation. *Lexis* is used in con-

---

[189] Despite the Epicurean refusal to use definitions, Philodemus feels no compunction about discussing the aspects of the *prolepsis* of poetry, which is what he does here.

[190] For "speech" (ὁ λόγοc l. 11), "prose" (so Janko, pers. comm.) is also possible. I take Philodemus' point to be communication more generally: poetry presents thoughts dressed up in language that no one would use or communicate under normal circumstances, not just that no one would communicate in prose. For the translation of πέφυκεν, see LSJ s.v. II.2 and supply cημαίνειν from the previous clause (the perfect indicates that the speech is in a state of having been formed). More literally: "of what sort speech/prose is not formed by nature [sc. to signify]."

[191] The majority of people can be wrong, as Epicurus thought they were in the case of theology. See Obbink (1992).

temporary authors to mean "word" or "phrase,"[192] but as early as Aristotle means "language" in the sense "words and sentences used in a text." Aristotle joins it with *diathesthai* in a discussion of style and speech-writing (*On Rhetoric* III, 1403b20). The first thing is finding the persuasive parts of the matter at hand, δεύτερον δὲ τὸ ταῦτα τῇ λέξει διαθέσθαι "Second is their organization in language," third is delivery and the emotions which the orator can produce by skilled delivery. That is, after deciding on the arguments, the orator has to compose his speech, to arrange the matter in language. A little later, Epicurus himself, in book 28 of *On Nature*, uses *lexeis*, in the plural, to denote language and usual linguistic usage.

Epicurus, *On Nature* xxviii, *PHerc.* 1479/1417 fr. 13 col. V sup ll.2-13:[193]

2   κ]αὶ μαλ' ὀρθῶς [γε, ὦ
    Μητρόδωρε· πάνυ γὰρ οἶμαί
    σε πολλὰ ἂν ἔχειμ προε[ν]έγ-
5   κασθαι ἃ ἐθεώρεις γελοίως [π]ώ[ς
    τι[να]ς ἐγδεξαμένους καὶ π[άν-
    τ[α] μᾶλλον ἢ τὸ νοούμενον
    κατὰ τὰς λέξεις, οὐκ ἔξω τῶν
10   ἰθισμένων λέξεων ἡμῶν
    χρωμένων οὐδὲ μετατιθέν-
    των ὀνόματα ἐπὶ τῶμ φανε-
13   ρ]ῶν.
	Quite so, Metrodorus. For I do not doubt that you could cite many cases, from your own past observations, of certain people taking words in various ridiculous senses, and indeed in every sense in preference to their actual linguistic meanings, whereas our own usage does not flout linguistic convention, nor do we alter names with regard to the objects of perception.

Epicurus, in dialogue with his student and friend Metrodorus, mocks philosophers who use words in strained and unaccustomed senses. He further claims that his own usage does not violate linguistic norms. Here, *lexeis* appears twice, both times with the meaning "language" or "usage" (once specified as "customary usage").

     σημαίνω is used in a general linguistic sense as "to signify, to mean;" in this sense it is

---

[192] Cf. LSJ s.v. II and n.b. the citations of Epicurus and Polybius there.

[193] Note that Sedley's edition follows the spellings on the papyrus, so for normal orthography, read in line 4 ἔχειν, in l. 6. ἐκδ-, in l.10 εἰθισμένων, and in l. 12 τῶν.

not found in Epicurus or Diogenes of Oenoanda, but it is in Philodemus' *On Rhetoric*.[194] It reflects the relationship between physical thing and word from the perspective of language, whereas, in the *Letter to Herodotus*, Epicurus uses different terminology to show the relationship from the perspective of physics (§37):[195]

πρῶτον μὲν οὖν τὰ ὑποτεταγμένα τοῖς φθόγγοις, ὦ Ἡρόδοτε, δεῖ εἰληφέναι ὅπως ἂν τὰ δοξαζόμενα ἢ ζητούμενα ἢ ἀπορούμενα ἔχωμεν εἰς ταῦτα ἀναγαγόντες ἐπικρίνειν, καὶ μὴ ἄκριτα πάντα ἡμῖν ⟨ἦι⟩ εἰς ἄπειρον ἀποδεικύουσιν ἢ κενοὺς φθόγγους ἔχωμεν·

First of all, Herodotus, it is necessary to grasp what is subordinate to our utterances, so that we might have a reference point for judging what we think or seek or do not know, and so that everything not be unjudged by us as we draw inferences in an infinite regress or so that we not have vain utterances.

Here, the real world objects are subordinate to the utterances and the whole system is seen from the perspective of physics and canonic, as the mention of ἀπόδειξις, demonstration, indicates.[196] From the linguistic perspective, however, the φθόγγοι, utterances, refer back to real things, and the verb used for this is cημαίνω. Further evidence for this interpretation is provided by Demetrius Laco in a work whose title is not known, but which is on textual problems in Epicurus' text.[197] In column 40 of that work, he quotes lines from an epigram of Callimachus and one of Empedocles' poems to demonstrate the ἀπὸ κοινοῦ construction.

---

[194] E.g. *On Rhet*. II.38.31-39.9. The verb used in Epicurean discussions of sign-inference is cημειόομαι and it seems that the terms were not interchangeable. cημαίνω does appear three times in the *de Signis*, but in twice in its linguistic sense and once in a context too broken for certainty. Diogenes of Oinoanda does have cημεῖον, which is limited to its meaning in sign-inferences ("sign" or "evidence").

[195] ⟨ἦι⟩ is Roeper's conjecture; most MSS have nothing, one reads ἢ and another ἤ. Von der Muehll prints it in brackets because most MSS have no reading, so he thinks that it counts as an insertion rather than an emendation. Usener conjectured ἴηι. Both conjectures are open to the objection that they cause hiatus before εἰς, which Epicurus normally avoids in this letter.

[196] For an excellent discussion of this passage from the perspective of Epicurean physics and epistemology, see Asmis (1984: 20-24). See also Barnes (1996) and Hammerstaedt (1996).

[197] *PHerc*. 1012 was published in 1988 by Puglia who called it *Aporie testuali ed esegetiche in Epicuro*. The papyrus lacks a subscription, but Demetrius' authorship is certain due to spelling peculiarities found only in texts by him, especially η for ει before another vowel; the title lacks authority but accurately describes the content. That volume contains testimonia and a discussion of Demetrius' biography by Gigante. For details of the ascription and discussion of the contents, see the introduction to Puglia's edition.

Demetrius Laco, *Aporie testuali*, PHerc. 1012.40.1-14:[198]

a	[“ἄλλων μὲν κήρυκες ἐπὶ]	“Of other poets, heralds shall declare
b	[βραχὺν οὔνομα καιρὸν φθέν-]	the names for a short time, but
c	[ξονται, κείνου δ’ Ἑλλὰς ἀεὶ]	Hellas always shall declare his
1	ϲοφίην.” δῆλ[[ογ]]ον γὰρ ὡς οἱ	skill.” For it is clear that, on one
	μὲν κήρυκες φθένξονται,	hand, the heralds will give voice
	ἡ δ’ Ἑλλὰς φθένξεται, μία	and, on the other, Hellas will, but the
	δ’ ἡ δύναμις τοῦ ϲημαινομέ-	force of the signified is one. Then
5	νου. [εἶ]τα τόδε κα[ὶ] παρ’ Ἐμ-	this happened also in Empedocles
	πεδ[οκ]λεῖ γέγονεν ὅτε λέ-	when he says “Him may neither the
	[γ]ε[ι τὸ·] “τὸν δ’ οὔτ’ ἄρ τε Διὸϲ	palace of Zeus cover over...northe
	τέγεοι δόμοι αἰγ[ιόχοιο οὔ-	roof of Hades receive …” The force
	τε [ ] ο Ἄ`ι´δου δέ[χεται	of the signified is one, for it is clear
10	κ[ ]ηϲ τέγοϲ [ ]δ[.” μία	that, on one hand, the palace
	δ’ ἡ τ]οῦ ϲημ[αινομένου δύ-	receives, and on the other, the roof
	[ναμις. δῆλον γὰρ ὡς οἱ μὲν]	receives.
	δόμοι] δέχοντα[ι, τὸ δὲ τέ-	
14	γος δέχεται.	

The first quotation is from an epigram by Callimachus, the second from one of the two poems of Empedocles.[199] In both cases, the verb is taken *apo koinou* with different nouns that appear in their own clauses: in the first case, the heralds and Hellas both proclaim; in the second, the palaces of Zeus and Hades both do not receive someone or something. But the meaning of the phrase μία ἡ δύναμις τοῦ ϲημαινομένου, "the force of what is signified is one," has seemed more obscure. I explain it as referring to the nouns used in each clause, both of which, in each case, refer to the same thing. This is clearer in the second case, since the roof is necessarily part of the palace. Hellas itself, in the first case, cannot actually proclaim, so heralds (or everyone, or everyone relevant) must be doing the action of the verb in both clauses. Readers could say that the overstatement of all Hellas making the proclamation is "poetic," but Demetrius' point is that, if anyone is going to declare the poet's skill, it must be heralds, and so heralds are actually doing

---

[198] I read δ’ ἡ in lines 4 and 11 in place of δὴ (Puglia) and the reading of line 11 generally is due to my autopsy of the papyrus.

[199] Only the last word of the quotation from Callimachus (7 Pfeiffer = lxii GP = *AP* IX.565) is legible on the papyrus; however, Diels restored it securely on the basis of the ensuing discussion. The fragment of Empedocles is B142 D-K.

the proclaiming in both clauses. So, in both clauses in both quotations, the subjects are the same, though different words are used, and the verb is the same, even though it is not repeated in both clauses. The same state of affairs obtains in both cases in each poem, so the force, i.e. "meaning," of what is signified is the same, that is, there is only one state of affairs being signified. In both cases, then, the φθόγγοι, though poetic, match up to the intended content.[200]

διανόημα is the final problem in the passage from book II. The word is uncommon in Epicurean philosophy; its earliest occurrence is in an Epicurean context seems to be *PHerc*. 176 fr. 25.[201] It does not appear in Epicurus or any of the *kathegemones*, as far as we can tell, nor did Usener include it in the *Glossarium Epicureum*. The obvious meaning, derived from the use of *dianoia* to refer to the part of the soul which aids in perception but which also perceives atomic structures too fine for the sense organs to perceive, is "the object of perception by the *dianoia*," that is to say, a thought.

This is supported indirectly by arguments that Philodemus makes in *On Music* IV regarding the benefit and harm provided by songs, in response to Diogenes' assertions that youths were harmed by the lascivious songs of Ibycus and Anacreon.

On Music IV.128.8-13:

8 ＿ οὐδὲ τοὺς νέους τοῖc μέλεcι διαφθείροντας 10 παρέδειξεν τὸν ῎Ιβυκον καὶ τὸν Ἀνακρέοντα καὶ τοὺc ὁμοίους, ἀλλὰ τοῖc δια- 8 ＿νοήμαcι.	Nor did he demonstrate that Ibycus and Anacreon and similar poets were corrupting the youth by their songs, but by their thoughts.

Very similar is another passage:

On Music IV.132.2-19:

---

[200] Note also the use of cημαcία at *On Music* IV.140.17 above.

[201] Printed by Vogliano among the "fragmenta ad pap. 176 pertinentia." See his notes on pp. xvi and 55. The text is not by Philodemus or Demetrius Laco, since it exhibits hiatus (it also does not show Demetrius' distinctive orthography). Dorandi (1983) hesitantly suggests that it might be by Philonides.

2	_ τὸ δὲ μό- νον τέλος αὐτῶν εἶναι φι- λοφροσύνην οὐ τιθέντες,	Since we do not set friendliness as the only goal of them (sc. of symposia), but

τὸ δὲ μό-
νον τέλος αὐτῶν εἶναι φι-
λοφροσύνην οὐ τιθέντες,
5   ἀλλὰ καί τιν’ ἕτερα, πρὸς τὴν
ἡδονήν, οὐ πρὸς ἐκείνην, χρη-
cιμεύειν ὁμολογήσομεν, ὥc-
τ’ οὐδὲ πρὸς φιλίαν, καὶ τούτων
ἐναργὲc ἑκάτερον εἶναι, τό γε
10   ἐπιτερπῶc ἡμᾶc ἀκροωμέ-
νουc τῆc μουcικῆc διατίθε-
cθαι καὶ τὸ μηδέποτε μηδὲν
αὐτοῖc cυνιcτορηκέναι πρὸc
φιλοφροcύνην καὶ φιλίαν ἐ-
15   πιcτατικὸν ἐκ μελῶν καὶ ῥυ-
_θμῶν ἐcχηκόcιν. οὐδ’ ἀν-
⟦ε⟧ίηιcι δὲ ταῦτα καὶ ἀφιλαροῖ,
τὰ δὲ cυμπεπλεγμένα αὐ-
19   _τοῖc διανοήματα.

Since we do not set friendliness as the only goal of them (sc. of symposia), but also some other goals as well, we will admit that it is useful for pleasure, not for that (sc. friendliness), and so not for friendship, and either of these two is clear proof, the fact that once we have heard music we are disposed agreeably, and the fact that never have we been aware of our taking anything from melodies and rhythms which provides an impulse towards friendliness and friendship. Nor do these things (sc. melody and rhythm) relax us and cheer us, but rather the thoughts that are intertwined with them.

Philodemus points out that the experience of listening to music disposes the audience well, that is, they are simply happier and on that account friendlier people afterward, not that music provides a particular impulse towards friendship. If anything, it is the thoughts that move us in a particular way.

These two passages indicate that Philodemus is skeptical that even the thoughts of the lyrics of a song do in practice move the audience in a particular direction, though he admits the possibility. Note also *On Music* IV.143.27-39, quoted above in this section, where Philodemus doubts that poems provided any benefit. For the Epicureans, only argument could be convincing, since it was λογικόc, and pleasure could not be convincing, since it was ἄλογοc; only the διανόημα, thought, which can be an argument, could convince an audience of anything.

Though Epicureans eschewed definitions,[202] Philodemus is not above partially describing the *prolepsis* of a concept to clarify it for his readers. In this case, he has given such a partial

---

[202] See the quotation of Epicurus in an anonymous commentary on Plato's *Theaetetus* in Sedley's edition in the *Corpus dei papiri filosofici greci e latini*, vol. 3, col. 22.39-47 (= Usener fr. 258). The *editio princeps* was in BKT II.

description, stating that a poem is language which communicates some idea or thought. He indicates that poetic form is required with the phrase ἐκ τοῦ πως cυντίθεcθαι "as a result of being somehow composed" (*On Poems* II.32.9-10). Philodemus' views about poetic form will be discussed later, in chapter five, except for one particular, since it is more useful for distinguishing poetry from prose but otherwise does not play a large role in Philodemus' poetics: meter.

§3 The Problem of Meter

Philodemus does not explicitly state in any extant passage that poems are defined in part by their meter. Nevertheless, such an opinion is deducible from statements that he does make about the relationship between prose and poetry, and between prose authors and poets. One such passage occurs near the end of book V of the *On Poems*, when Philodemus discusses briefly some theorists found "in Philomelus."[203] The first of these unnamed opponents claims that consistency in style is the most important part of composing a poem. Philodemus objects that this requirement is not specific to poetry and is equally true of a prose author.

On Poems V.12.10-27:[204]

10	τῶν το[ί]νυν παρὰ τῶι Φι-	Of those who are recorded in
	λομή[λω]ι [γ]εγραμμέ-	Philomelus' handbook, some,
	νων, οἱ μὲν οἰόμενοι	who think that the poet who
	τὸν ἐν τοῖc μύθοιc καὶ	keeps a consistent level in his
	ταῖc ἄλλαιc ἠθοποιίαιc	choice of topics and depiction
15	κἀν τῆι λέξει μαραπλη-	of characters and in style is

[203] Probably in a handbook written by Philomelus. For discussion, see Mangoni (1993: 47-52).

[204] At l. 22, I read [κἄλλ]ου intead of [ἤ π]ου because the disjunctive particle seems out of place after the preceding conjunctions. [ἤ τ]ου is also possible. Mangoni notes that Jensen's [ἤ ἄλλ]ου is *spatio* longius, to which objection my supplement may also be open. Janko hesitantly suggests [ἤ ὅλ]ου, but ὅλοc in the sense of πᾶc is extremely rare: Sophocles, *Ajax* 1105, Menander, *Perik.* 295 (Sandbach; LSJ uses an out of date numeration) and LXX *I Ki.* 14.23 are the only literary examples before it becomes somewhat more common in later poetry. However, use in Menander and the Septuagint may indicate that it was more common in colloquial use than in literary. The theorists in Philomelus are unknown and, because so little is known of their theory, unknowable.

```
         cίω[c] ὁμαλ̣[ί]ζ[ο]ντα ποη-
         τὴν ἄριστον εἶναι λέ-
         γουcι μὲν ἀληθέc
         τι, τὸν δὲ ποιητὴν τὸν ἀ-
   20    γαθὸν οὐ διορίζουcι. καὶ
         γὰρ μιμογράφου καὶ ἀρε-
         τ[ά]λογου [κἄλλ]ου cυνγρα-
         φέωc ἀρετὴν ἄν τιc ἐκ-
         θεῖτο ταύτην. καὶ τὸ
   25    παραπληcίωc ἀναγκαῖ-
         α τήν τε λέξιν εἶναι καὶ
   27    τὰ πράγματα λόγον ἔχει.
```

the best, say something true, but they do not define the good poet. In fact, someone could set that as the goal of a *mimographos* or a *aretalogos* or any prose author. Also, it is reasonable to say that both style and subject matter are equally necessary.

Mimes were in prose (at least originally),[205] and *aretalogoi*, composers of marvelous or miraculous tales, were also evidently prose authors.[206] Philodemus is belittling his opponent by mentioning low genres, instead of e.g. historians or rhetoricians. *Syngrapheus* is the general word for prose author. Although Philodemus changes topic immediately after this statement, it is clear that he was objecting to the fact that his opponents at this point did not make clear how poets differ from prose authors. The demand that poets write in a style consistent with their subject matter is reasonable, but it does not define the task of the poet. The use of the term *syngrapheus* is suggestive, precisely because it is the usual word for "prose author" and contrasts so obviously with *poetes*, whose defining feature was commonly thought to be, as Aristotle reports (although he disagrees), composition in verse.[207] Though not necessarily true, the beliefs of the majority have an obvious practical connection with the *prolepsis*, especially the *prolepsis*

[205] See Hordern (2004: 4-10) and Wiemken (1972: 31-3). Epicharmus, active late 6th through the 5th century, was a comedian who wrote in verse (see Aristotle *Poet.* 49b5, cf. Plato *Theaetetus* 152e), but Sophron, second half of the 5th, wrote in prose, and it is likely that his son Xenarchus did as well. Verse mime might be an invention of Hero(n)das and/or Theocritus in the third century BCE, from which the Roman tradition of mimes in verse descended (cf. Decimus Laberius). For bibliography and a list of papyrus texts assigned to the genre, see *POxy.* LXXIX 5187-5189 "Mimes" (pp. 13-14).

[206] See Reinach (1885). They are rarely mentioned in extant texts, but no hint is made of their composing in verse. Strabo implies by use of the verb cυγγράφω that they were written in prose (17.1.17, where the text has been needlessly questioned).

[207] For ποιητής and cυγγραφεύς used together to mean "all writers," see, e.g. [Longinus] 1.3. At *On Rhet.* IV (*PHerc.* 1423.vi.3 = p. 150 Sudhaus), Philodemus uses the phrase ῥήτωρ δ[ὲ] καὶ πᾶc cυγγρα[φεὺc in a context which implies that only prose authors are at issue (Isocrates, Demosthenes, and their imitators are discussed shortly afterwards).

of something that exists by human convention: what we experience as poetry are the texts that other people present to us as poetry. Unlike the gods, who have an existence independent of humanity, poems are human products and defined by human usage. So common usage and what the majority of people believe matters a great deal to the constitution of the *prolepsis*.

On Poems I contains a discussion and rebuttal of the theorist Heracleodorus, who appears to be unique in considering mimes and some other prose to be poetic, despite not being in verse, on the basis of aspects of their style. Aristotle suggested that the traditional distinctions drawn regarding poetry and prose on the basis of meter were inadequate, but is not known to have fully developed a new definition.[208] Theophrastus may have gone further than Aristotle in redefining poetry and prose, as well as in discussions of style, and he may have claimed that some works written in prose were poems.[209] Heracleodorus then is the first known certainly to actually suggest that a work in prose was in fact a *poema* or *poemata*, but Theophrastus, or some other theorist now completely lost, may have preceded him.

---

[208] At *Poetics* 47b10, he does not know what to call the mimes of Sophron and Xenarchus, both of whom wrote in prose, but he calls Epicharmus, who wrote in verse, a poet at 48a33. On mimic elements in Epicharmus see Hordern (2004: 10) and Wilamowitz (1959: 54-55), who connects Epicharmus with mime ("Auf italischen Untergrund ist der Mimus und seine künstlerische Blüte, die Epicharmische Posse, erwachsen"). There is no evidence for metrical mimes before Hero(n)das and Theocritus in the third century, but some later mimes were clearly metrical; see the mimes in *POxy*. II 219 (= 75 Page, *Select Literary Papyri* = pp. 182-4 CA) and *PLond.Lit*. 52 (= 79 Page); *POxy*. III 1903 (= 76 Page) is prosimetric. The lovers' dialogue on p. 184 CA is partly metrical, and seems to be intended to be metrical throughout. Decimus Laberius, in the time of Cicero, wrote in meter, and probably could not have done so and called his works "mimes" without this being a conventional option. In Philodemus' day, it seems that mimes could be either metrical or prose (or both). N.b. in this connection Janko (1987: xv).

[209] Theophrastus' *ipsissima verba* on the definition of poetry are not preserved. Cicero at *Orator* §67 says that "nonnulli" thought that Plato and Democritus wrote *poemata*, though not in verse, and the comic poets are barely deserving of the title "poet," since their language hardly departs from the quotidian; Cicero himself disagrees. Mayer claims this for Theophrastus (cf. p. x on his use of Cicero as a source for Theophrastus) and notes a close connection with *Orator* §184 "qui locus locupletem Theophrasti exhibet doctrinam" (p. 39). Ardizzoni (72-3) argues that for Theophrastus any work made up of καλὰ ὀνόματα will have poetic language and so be a πόημα, although it is not verse, which corresponds with Cicero's report in *Orator* §67. It is not clear what his requirements for mimesis were. This might have the result of banishing some genres from the canon: comedy and mime, which use low words and are mimetic, were worthy of consideration by Aristotle (whether as poetry or literature more generally), but will not be poetry for Theophrastus under this reading. Note the methodological caution about doctrines ascribed to Theophrastus advised by Innes (1985).

Heracleodorus' idea that all artistic prose is poetry and Philodemus' refutation of it are reasonably clearly expressed in the following passage:

On Poems I.197R.2–198R.9:[210]

2   καὶ αὐτὸς "εἶν[αι ἐ-
κεῖνα 'ποήματα'" ἔφη, "καὶ
μὴ μόνα· καὶ γὰρ [τὰ τοῦ
5   Cώφρονος καὶ τὰ [τῶν
ἄλλων μιμογρ[άφων
ἐνίοτε 'ποήμα[τ'" εἶναι λέ-
γεται, καὶ μὴ 'μ[ῖμοι,' καὶ
οἱ συντιθέν[τες αὐτὰ
10 'μίμων ποη[ταί'......

14 ἀφ' οὗ 'π[οητὰς' τοὺς
15 ἀκριβῶντας κ[ατανομά-
ζουσιν, ὑπελάμ[βανε λέ-
γειν, ἢ παρακοῦ[σαι δοκοῦ-
μεν ἡμεῖς ἢ παρα[πλῆξ
ἐκεῖνος ἐμαίν[ετο, "'πο-
20 ήματα'" φάσκων "τὰ [Δη-
μοcθένους καὶ [τὰ Ξενο-
φῶντος, μᾶλλον [δὲ καὶ
τὰ Ἡροδότου, καί[τοι κατὰ
τὴν συνθήκην [ἑκάστου cυγ-
25 γράφο[ν]τος," εἰ μὴ [τὴν ἱc-
1   τορία]ν πόλλ[ο]ὶ πολλάκις ἐν
ἁδρῷ] πλάcματι προθε-
τέαν] λέγουcιν. κἄν,
προθ]έμενος ἐν [ἱc]χνῷ
5   πλάcμ]ατι μεγ[άλ]α καὶ
cεμ]νά τις πράγματ' εἰ-
πεῖν], μακρὰν ἀφεcτή-
κοι τ]οῦ πόημα κατ[αcκ]ευ-
9   άζειν ἀ]πὸ τ[ούτω]ν.

He himself said that "those works are poems, and not only those. For Sophron's works and those of the other mimographers are sometimes said to be verses and not 'mimes,' and those who compose them are said to be 'poets of mime' … from which they call 'poets' those who are precisely correct, he understood that they meant them, we suppose either that he misunderstood or that critic was a raving lunatic to claim that "the words of Demosthenes and Xenophon are 'verses,' and even more so those of Herodotus, although according to convention each is a prose-writer," except many often say that history is to be undertaken in a grand style. Even if someone should set out to say great and serious things in a light style, he would be far from composing poetry from these starting points (or "materials").

Philodemus' objection is based on the *prolepsis* of poetry; this is, in effect, what he means by cυνθήκη or "convention."[211] Stylistic and well-composed prose is indeed artistic, but it is not poetry according to the normal usage of that term. The normal definition of poetry includes

---

[210] Note that the text is quoted from the columns printed at the back of revised edition of 2003.

[211] cυνθῆκαι, conventions, will be discussed in chapter six, §3 under the guise of θέματα, rules. There, they are "conventions" (in the normal sense) for the composition of poetry which, because they guide the actual practice of poets, eventually come to constitute the relevant *prolepses*.

meter; Aristotle denied that some verse writers, e.g. Empedocles (*Poetics* 47b17), really deserved

to be called poets, but did not in any case claim that a prose-writer was actually a poet.

Philodemus' precise objection is revealing. He makes no claim about style or subject

matter, but simply dismissing the claim with another appeal to common usage: prose authors are

simply not poets. It is again likely that the distinguishing criterion is meter.

Similarly *On Poems* I.201.21-26:

21	οὐ μὴν ἀλλ[ὰ δι- ὰ τὸ {υ} θέ⟦ν⟧ˋμαˊ ἔκαςτ᾽ [ἀ]ν[έφη- ˋνˊεν Ἡρακλεόδωρος ἡμ{ε}ῖν, εἴτε τοῦ νοου- μένου ποήματ[ος] ὑπο- δεί[γ]ματα κατεχώρι‖[ςεν	Nevertheless, Heracleodorus presented each of the cases to us to prove the rule, whether he set down examples of what he conceived of as "verse"…
25		

Philodemus' implication is that what was verse for Heracleodorus was not so considered by

many other people. The further inference that Heracleodorus was trying to redefine "verse" and

"poetry" is reasonable.

Another passage, in book four, supports the claim that Philodemus required meter for a

literary work to be a poem.

On Poems IV.109.4-15:[212]

4	κ]αί	And I claim that he [sc, the good poet] has need of everything, to the extent that he will surpass the composition of a layman in it, since he found that poetry at once comes into being when its excellence comes into being, and not in the same genre of the art in verses; so he will not compose the same poems but different ones, and different genres of the metrical art.
5	φημι] πάντων ἐκεῖνο[ν δεῖc- θα[ι, //ὁ]πό//cῳ διοί[c]ει τῆc cυν- θέ[c]εωc ἰδιώτ[ου τ]ῆc ἐν αὐτῆ, τ]ὴν πο[ί]ηc[ιν γινομέ- νην αὐτίκ[α εὑρ]ὼν γ[ινομέ- νηc ἀρετ//ῆc, οὐ//δ᾽ ἐν [τῶι αὑ]τ[ῶι //γ]ένει τ//ῆc ἐν [ποι- ήμαcιν // τ]έχνη//[c]· οὔ[κουν τὰc αὐτὰc]//ποήc//[ει, ἀλλὰ ἑτέραc καὶ ἕτερα [γένη τῆc ἐμμέτρου.	
10		
15		

---

[212] I have modified Janko's translation. The referent of αὐτῆ in line 8 is not clear, and ταὐτῆ and ταὐτῷ may be possible, if not too wide for the space.

90

The text is very rough generally, and specifically the crucial word must be supplied in the last line, but the parallel phrasing in ll. 11-12 and the common ellipse of the word τέχνη makes this easy. Philodemus almost certainly would not have referred to the art of poetry as the art of verse or meter twice in the same column if he did not think that poetry needed meter.

Although the following passages provide the clearest evidence that Philodemus thought that poems were metrical, I have reserved them until last because of the difficulties they present: in the first case, the problematic state of the text, and in the second, the fact that Philodemus may be stipulating a position, possibly for dialectical reasons rather than because he agrees with it. In the first passage, Philodemus explicitly says that even bad poets preserve meter and rhythm, strongly suggesting that meter was involved in the *prolepsis* of poetry, since even bad poets used it.

On Poems II.209.1-10:

1 φ[α- ν[ερ]ῶς δ' ἐδ[είχθ]//η τ[ὰ ἐλ- λ[εί]π[ο]ντα, κ[ὰξ ὀ]//νομ[άτων κακῶν ἐτέθ[η κα]ὶ ὑ[πὸ 5 τῶν κακῶν ποητῶν. πῶς οὐχὶ καὶ "τελείως ἀπαραλλάκτους" ε[ἴρηκ]εν, ἐπειδὴ καὶ τὰ μέτ[ρα καὶ τοὺς [[μετ]] ῥ[[ο]]υθμοὺ[ς εἰ- 10 ώθασι τηρεῖν;	"But deficient verses were obviously pointed out, and were put together out of bad words and by bad poets." How is it not true that he has actually said that "(the bad poets are) perfectly indistinguishable," since they are accustomed to preserve both the verse-forms and the rhythms?

The first part of the section is a quotation or paraphrase of the opponent; Philodemus returns to his own voice with the customary asyndeton. The topics of the previous columns do not give any aid. Nevertheless, the text of lines 8-10, the relevant part, is not in doubt.

The second passage comes from the disconnected fragments which are all that remain of the first part of book 5 of the *On Poems*. On the basis of the vocabulary (specifically coφά,

cπουδαῖον, and καταχρηcτικῶc), the opponent seems to be the anonymous Stoic. We have little context, however, besides the fact that Philodemus is attacking the philosopher's use of the terms κυρίωc and καταχρηcτικῶc.

On Poems V, *PHerc*. 403 fr. 2 col. 1, ll. 6-17:

6   δεδο-
μένου γὰρ τοῦ τὸν κυ-
ρίωc, εἰ βούλονται, πο-
ητὴν ἀγαθὸν καλού-
10   μενον τοῦτον ὑπάρ-
χειν, ὃc ἐκφέρει διὰ μέ-
τρων cοφὰ πράγμα-
τα, καὶ cπουδαῖον πόη-
μα τὸ τοιαῦτα περι-
15   ειληφόc, ἐπιcκεφθή-
cεται τὰ καταχρηc-
17   [τικῶc...]

For, given that "the poet called 'good' in the true sense," if they wish it so, is fundamentally that person who expresses wise contents by means of metrical verses, and that a "good poem" is one that includes such contents, the "transferred" sense will come into question...

Since the definition of poet used here is clearly that of the opponent and includes a demand that we know Philodemus definitely did not accept, it is possible that he did not agree to the demand for metrical form either. That the statement is part of a stipulation for the sake of the argument, rather than a firm statement of position, leaves open the possibility that he did not require meter for a work to be poetry, but this seems unlikely in light of the other evidence.

While it is not definitely certain that Philodemus required a poem to be in meter, the balance of the evidence clearly favors this position. Dismissal of statements that prose authors wrote *poemata* as well as references to *poetike* as an art in verses or a metrical art strongly point to his conclusion. The cultural *milieu* in which verse was commonly thought to be a, if not the, defining feature of poetry, points to the same conclusion.

§4 Responses to Objections to a *Prolepsis*-Based Theory of Poetry

Porter (and Mangoni following him) has argued that, precisely because Philodemus has a

prolepsis of the good poem, he has no need of a theory, or as Porter puts it, he "has no theory of poetry because he only has a *prolepsis* of poetry."[213] As for the theory of poetry, what follows will illuminate that. The implications which they draw from the existence of the *prolepsis* deserve consideration.

Porter characterizes the prolepsis as "hover[ing] between an empirically derived concept and functioning in an *a priori* way."[214] This is true, but it plays out otherwise than he argues. For instance, justice, about which we are reasonably well informed, "taken generally... is the same for all, since it is something useful in people's social relationships."[215] This is one aspect of justice, namely that it guarantees security and peace in societies, but because different societies have different practices and customs, "the criterion of justice has no specific content: justice 'is not anything *per se*' and 'looked at concretely, across time and place, 'it is not the same for all.'"[216] But the fact that justice itself differs does not mean that the *prolepsis* of justice has no specific content; instead, its content is dependent precisely on the experiences of the person to whom it belongs. As Diogenes Laertius defines it (X.33), it is (in one aspect) a μνήμη (a memory), so it is particular to an individual. Because justice itself varies from community to community (that is, there is no absolute standard), the *prolepsis* also varies. But it is not therefore true that the *prolepsis* has no specific content: its content will also vary according to the community. So it is not true that "it was never meant to be filled out with specific empirical content, but only to exemplify the natural content of concepts and to demonstrate the *possibility* of their empirical derivation (and application),"[217] since it is *in fact* formed by empirical means

---

[213] Porter (1996: 625).
[214] Ibid.
[215] Ibid.
[216] Ibid.
[217] Porter (1996: 625-6).

(μνήμη τοῦ πολλάκις ἔξωθεν φανέντος, "a memory of what has often appeared from without," D. L. X.33). If natural content means "consistent, uniform content regardless of particular circumstances," then no, the *prolepsis* of justice does not have it, but that does not mean that it is without any content. If "natural" means "not dependent on convention, but instead on nature" then it cannot have natural content because Epicurus is a conventionalist for justice, which is συνθήκη τις ὑπὲρ τοῦ μὴ βλάπτειν ἢ βλάπτεσθαι, "a convention regarding not harming or being harmed" (*KD* xxxiii). In the case of poetry, the common taste of the community canonizes a group of poems, which form the experiential basis for the *prolepsis* of each individual in the community.[218] Presumably, this happens in school, at public recitations, and symposia.[219]

For poetry, according to Porter, reliance on the *prolepsis* has two main effects, which I will discuss in order. The first:

> [T]he *prolepsis* of the poem points us to that feature of poems which most resembles *prolepsis*: the clear view of what naturally is (the beauty of a rational content). The theory of *prolepsis* thus forestalls on the theoretical level any attempt to dissociate language from its being meaningful and in consequence diminishes the relevance of its secondary characteristics to all but naught.[220]

By "secondary characteristics," he means the sensory effects of language. But it is not true that Philodemus diminishes their relevance; on the contrary, form is extremely important to his analysis of the goodness of poems.[221] It is true that poetry must have intelligible contents for Philodemus, but to characterize poetry as "the beauty of rational content" is without basis in the

---

[218] Mangoni made a similar error in her description of the *prolepsis*, "che comporta l'accettazione *a priori* di una certa poesia e di certi poeti come buoni, in base alla loro corrispondenza all'idea naturale e universale che della buona poesia e del buon poeta hanno gli uomini" (1993:31). But the *prolepsis* is not universal and it is not natural, if that means innate. Rather, it is dependent on the experiences of the individual person who has it (though it is likely to be shared among members of a community).

[219] This is also, I take it, why Philodemus relies on an educated audience, who will have had a literary education and leisure time for furthering their experience of poetry.

[220] Porter (1996: 626).

[221] See chapter six, §9.

texts: for Philodemus, it is contents expressed in non-prosaic, metrical language (at least). If we can generalize to the case of poetry the commitment expressed by Epicurus at *Ep. Hdt.* §37, that our utterances should always correspond with reality, then Philodemus is bound to an analysis of poetry which requires meaningful language, but this is no obstacle to developing an aesthetic theory of poetry.[222] It does forbid theories which permit unintelligible or contentless poetry, however.

> The second effect that Porter identifies is as follows:
>
> Methodologically, Philodemus' tactics are misleading, for his object is not exactly to "refute" his opponents, but ultimately to reduce the content of what may be asserted to be the case, insofar as this is warranted by *prolepsis*.
>   This is not to say that Philodemus has no views about poetry, but only that he can defend them philosophically only by appealing to *prolepsis*, and on the terrain of *prolepsis* he has but one argument available to him: not evidence, and apparently not even sensory evidence, but *self-evidence*.[223]

This position relies on the misunderstanding of the *prolepsis* I discussed just above. Since the *prolepsis* is empirically based, appeals to it are, indirectly but truly, appeals to experience. This precise argument is used against theorists who throw out generally admired poets: if the poet is a bad poet, why are they universally admired? Since the poet (e.g. Archilochus, Hipponax, or Euripides) is in fact admired, the objection has real force: the theory cannot account for what people will generally admit to be true and therefore cannot be a cogent explanation of how poetry works.

It is worth recalling that Epicurus himself, in a discussion about theology in *Ep. Men.* §§123-4 , argued that many people mistook the contents of the *prolepsis* of the gods: οἵους δ᾽

---

[222] We know that the contents of poetry need not be factual for Philodemus, but the language must always be intelligible, so the principle is not straightforwardly applied to poetry: it is possible that the language must correspond to the facts in the world of the poem or, more generally, be meaningful in its context, but the discussion is lacking.

[223] Porter (1993: 626, his italics).

αὐτοὺς ⟨οἱ⟩ πολλοὶ νομίζουσιν, οὐκ εἰσίν· οὐ γὰρ φυλάττουσιν αὐτοὺς οἵους νομίζουσιν ("of what sort the man think of them as being, they are not; because the many do not preserve the idea of the gods as what they think they are"). Most people have incorrect beliefs, Epicurus says, about the gods, because the majority of people do not follow their basic beliefs to their conclusions: they remove the attributes of indestructibility and imperturbability from the gods, and impiously add other attributes (*Ep. Men.* §123). These, Epicurus says, are not *prolepseis*, but simply mistaken beliefs. Because people do not necessarily have the *prolepsis*, it is possible to argue about theology. Similarly, people may have the wrong idea about poetry, and an Epicurean can correct their ψευδεῖς ὑπολήψεις (cf. *Ep. Men*. §124).

A *prolepsis* is not a definition, but it does admit of description and can used to explain and justify decisions. The body of good poems which forms the *prolepsis* functions as a sort of data set, in which trends are identified and from which principles can be abstracted: those trends and principles can be compared with the *prolepsis* to determine their truth:. For instance, an Epicurean considering a course of action would presumably consider whether or not it is just before acting, which I presume would mean comparing it to the *prolepsis* of justice to make sure it does not contradict any aspect of it. Likewise, an Epicurean literary critic will be able to compare a given poem to what he takes a good poem to be. Since the wise man can discourse correctly about poetry and music (fr. 269 Usener), this sort of analysis is possible for the Epicurean sage.

All this need not mean that the Epicureans actually had a theory of poetry, of course. But just as the fact of a *prolepsis* of "gods" did not prevent Epicureans from writing theological works explaining various aspects of the gods (including their shape, language, and diet), so the *prolepsis* of poetry need not prevent them from having well worked out and detailed ideas about

poetry.

Chapter Four

Poetry as *Techne* and the Use of Poetry

§1 Introduction

 Philosophical discussions about the *technai* are as old as Plato,[224] and the Epicureans took part in them as well. It is clear that Epicurus handled the development of the arts in one of his works; he summarizes his doctrine of the invention of language in his letter to Herodotus (§§75-6) and we have versions of the story of the invention of the arts by Lucretius and Diogenes of Oenoanda which reflect school doctrine. He thought of an origin for the arts in human needs, at the dawn of society, and then discussed their development over the course of time. Technical questions of what constitutes a *techne* were entertained both by the founders and, later, by Zeno of Sidon, his student Philodemus, and several Epicurean philosophers contemporary with them. In this section, I will examine the status of *poetike* as a *techne* in Epicurean thought, and discuss the evidence. At a certain point, however, the evidence gives out, and in an excursus, I extrapolate from the extant texts and speculate on positions that Philodemus may have held, and I also discuss Epicurus' attitude towards poetry, poets, and poems, as well as the roles that education and philosophy play in the life of the Epicurean.

 Techne is a problematic term and does not admit of a simple translation. It covers much of the same lexical ground as the English words "art," "craft," "skill," and "science" and can even be used to refer to a handbook which teaches an art, craft, skill, or science. Furthermore, the

---

[224] The *Gorgias* is probably the most familiar.

term was adopted into philosophical jargon and then subjected to redefinition. What the Epicureans meant by the term is the subject of most of this chapter. Generally, however, it is a term of approbation; *technai,* generally, are good things to know and usefulness is often made the criterion of technicity, i.e. the state of being a *techne*. They require knowledge of a set of rules or principles, which can be separated from specific applications or products. A *techne* also requires some skill, training, innate knack or disposition, and/or combination of the three, and should result in some sort of product or result, which is not generally obtainable by the untrained. For example, Philodemus says that it is improper to use the adverb τεχνικῶc of tying sticks of wood together (*On Rhetoric* II, *PHerc*. 1674, col. 18.29-19.10 = pp. 81-83 Longo Auricchio): there is no art of tying sticks together, even though someone must learn how to tie knots in the first place and exercise judgment about what sticks to tie together—should they be matched in length or circumference or species of tree? Tying sticks together is simply too banal and quotidian (possibly too narrow as well) to rise to the requirements of being a *techne.* Due to these difficulties, I leave the term untranslated and italicized. I refer to the *techne* of writing poems as *poētikē* to avoid the ambiguities of the English terms poetry (the whole field of study or a collection of poems, e.g. the poetry of Homer?) and poetics (much used in critical-theoretical treatments of literature, not all of which is verse or poetry).

Diogenes of Oenoanda briefly summarizes the invention of the arts in his monumental inscription.

Diogenes fr. 12.ii.4-11:[225]

---

[225] I follow the edition and translation of Smith. He prints the text in a column, rather than continuously, following the layout of the inscription, which was evidently modeled on papyrus texts. The inscription does not separate words, but a blank space is sometimes used for punctuation; this is represented by the sign *u* (for *uacat*). The section before the first line is Smith's supplement *exempli gratia*, but it must be along the right lines. Smith compares Diodorus Siculus 1.8.7, which seems to be following an Epicurean source, which itself probably descends ultimately from Democritus (Cole 1968). Note also Lucretius 5.955, where primitive humans live in

[διὰ μὲν τῶν σπηλαίων εἰς]
[ἃ ἐφοίτων τοῦ χρόνου προ-]
i.1 βαί]νοντος, χειμῶνας
φεύ]γοντες, ᵛ εἰς ἐπίνοι-
α]ν [ο]ἰκημάτων ἦλθον,
δι]ὰ δὲ τῶν περιβολῶν
5 ἃς ἐποιοῦντο τοῖς σώμα-
ϲιν, ᵛ εἴτε φύλλοις αὐτὰ
ϲ]κέποντες εἴτε βοτά-
ναις εἴτε καὶ δοραῖς, ἀναι-
ροῦντες ἤδη τὰ πρ[ό]βα-
10 τα, ᵛ εἰς ἐνθύμηϲιν ἐϲ-
θητῶν ᵛ (ϲτρεπτῶν μὲν
οὔπω, καϲωτῶν δ' ἴϲωϲ
ἢ ὁποιωνοῦν). ᵛ εἶτα δὲ
14 προβαίνων ὁ χρόνοϲ
ii.1 ταῖς ἐπινοίαιϲ αὐτῶν
ἢ τῶν μετ' αὐτοὺϲ ἐνέ-
βαλεν καὶ τὸν ἱϲτόν.
εἰς οὖν οὐδεμίαν τέχνην
5 ὡς ο]ὐδὲ ταύτας, ᵛ οὔτ' ἄλ-
λον τινὰ θεῶν *u* οὔτε
τὴν Ἀθηνᾶν παραλημ-
πτέον· ᵛ πάϲας γὰρ ἐγέν-
νηϲαν αἱ χρεῖαι καὶ πε-
10 ριπτώϲειϲ μετὰ τοῦ
χρόνου.

[The caves which they frequented with the advance of time, as they sought shelter from] wintry storms, gave them the conception of houses, while the wraps which they made for their bodies, as they protected them either with foliage or with plants or even (for they were already killing sheep) with skins, gave them the notion of clothes – not yet spun, but perhaps felted or of some such kind. Then the advance of time inspired them or their descendants with the idea of the loom as well. So no arts, any more than these (sc. building and cloth making, which were just mentioned), should be explained by the introduction of Athena or any other deity; for all were the offspring of needs and experiences in conjunction with time.

Human ingenuity and experience in the face of necessity led to inventions and the development of *technai*, which are not due to any god. Need compelled the earliest humans to develop various practices, which they improved in the course of time. The whole account is broadly comparable, and indeed consistent in many details, with Lucretius' version in book V of the *De Rerum Natura*. But what is a *techne* according to the Epicureans?

---

groves and caves and sleep in bushes, and further 5.984, where humans flee lion attacks from their rocky roofs. For further details of the reconstruction, see his notes; the sigla for legible letters and the like are the same as for papyrus texts.

For ϲτρεπτῶν in l. 11, Smith gives "plaited" instead of "spun" (i.e. into yarn for weaving), but plaited cloth is out of place before the invention of the loom and fabric. καϲωτῶν, l. 12, is a *hapax legomenon* of uncertain meaning. Related words refer to some sort of heavy or thick clothing. Felting is indeed an ancient and fairly simple procedure which is not out of place here as a middle step between leather skins and spun and woven cloth. Historically, weaving seems to predate felting by several millennia and was known to the Greeks, but the process of felting does not require woven cloth (it often uses it, however) and might have been thought to be an intermediate step between leather and woven cloth. See Barber (1993: 215-222).

§2 The Definition of *Techne* and the "Technicity of Rhetoric"[226]

In book II of his work *On Rhetoric*, Philodemus argues with other Epicureans about whether or not sophistic (or panegyric), political, and forensic rhetoric are *technai* or not; his position is that only sophistic is a *techne*, because only the sophistic orator accomplishes his goal of making good speeches consistently and methodically, whereas the political and forensic orator cannot consistently persuade councils or juries. Furthermore, only a trained person can make a really stunning oration, but most citizens can figure out what is beneficial for their cities. In this discussion about *techne*, he reports the meaning of the word "among the Greeks," that is, he summarizes the *prolepsis*, the mental image which allows words to have meaning and to correspond to things in the world.

On Rhetoric II, PHerc. 1674.38.2-15 (p. 123 Longo Auricchio):[227]

2	νοεῖ-	So a *techne* is, among the
	ται τοίνυν καὶ λέγεται	Greeks, thought and said to be a
	τ]έχνη παρὰ τοῖ[c] Ἕλλη-	state or disposition deriving from
5	cι[ν ἕ]ξιc ἢ διάθ[ε]cι[c] ἀπὸ	observation of some common and
	παρ[α]τηρή[c]εω[c τιν]ῶν	fundamental elements which
	κοινῶν καὶ [c]τοι[χειω][ν]-	extend through most of the
	δῶν, ἃ διὰ πλειόν[ω]ν δι-	specific cases, which com-
	ήκει τῶν ἐπὶ μέ[ρ]ο[υc], κα-	prehends and accomplishes
10	ταλαμβάνουcά [τ]ι καὶ	something, of such a kind that
	c]υντελοῦcα τοιοῦτον,	none of those who have not
	οἷον ⟨οὐδεὶc⟩ ὁμοίωc τῶν μὴ	learned it could accomplish it
	μαθόντων ε[ἴθ'] ἑcτη-	either regularly and consistently
	κότωc καὶ βε[βαί]ωc [εἴ-	or by hitting and missing.
15	τ]ε cτοχαcτι[κῶc].	

In this short passage, Philodemus includes the main points: the state or disposition must generally allow the craftsman to create the product of the craft successfully. Someone without

---

226 Much in this section draws on Blank (1995).
227 The Greek text is quoted from the edition of Longo Auricchio (1977) and the translation is a lightly modified version of Chandler (2006). In line 13, where Longo Auricchio reads ἔνιοι, there does not appear to be enough room for the word in the *disegni*, nor is the resultant hiatus permissible. Sudhaus read [οὐδεὶc], which gives admirable sense, but is far too long for the space. Sedley (pers. com.) conjectured εἴθ' (l. 13)...εἴτε (l. 14-5) and supplied οὐδεὶc, rightly in my opinion (cf. *Poems* I.167.19-20). The genitive could stand as a subject in the meaning "some of those who have not learned," but this sense is not wanted.

training could not be as successful as the craftsman is, generally speaking. That is, Philodemus allows for beginner's luck, or the possibility that, e.g., a schoolboy without any particular training in poetry could compose a very fine poem. Philodemus' description of *techne* indicates that he requires method and teachability.[228] In this connection, note especially the following:

On Rhetoric II, *PHerc.* 1674.42.8- 17 (p. 131 Longo Auricchio):[229]

8   πλὴν ἐγὼ μὲν τὴν cυν-
    ήθε]ιαν ο[ὔ] φημι κυρ[ί]ωc
10 ταῦτα καὶ τὰ τοιαῦτ[α
    τέχναc καλεῖν, ἀλλὰ τ[ὰ
    προcφερομένα τὸ με-
    θοδικόν, ὃ προχει[ρ]ότ[α-
    τα κατὰ τὴν τῆc τέχνηc
15 ἀναφώνη[c]ι[ν] ὑποπίπτ[ει
    καὶ ὑπὸ τ[ὴν] τῆc ἐ[πιcτ[ή-
    μηc
	But I deny that common usage properly calls these things *technai* [sc. the falsely so-called "arts" of running away, flattery, and luxurious eating, cited *supra*] but those [sc. arts] which bring method to bear, which most readily happens according to the expression "art" and under that of "science".

Some human activities are called arts by a misapplication of the term, but only those activities which admit of method properly deserve the title.

As Grilli (1983) has demonstrated, the *diathesis* is an atomic state, comparable to the *dispositura* of atoms discussed in Lucretius.[230] That is, a *techne* is a particular arrangement of atoms in the soul of the person, which can be caused by teaching.[231] However, the *sine quibus non* of a *techne* are method (which leads to success) and teachability, since teaching is

---

[228] See Blank (2003: 73). Cf. Chandler (2006: 63-4) for a few brief comments on exact arts and natural talent.

[229] For ἀναφώνηcιc, cf. Demetrius Laco's *Aporie Testuali* (*PHerc.* 1012) 67.7 where Puglia renders φύcει δὲ τὰc πρώτac τῶν ὀνομάτων ἀναφωνήcειc as "per natura ... i primi pronunciamenti dei nomi" and the conclusion of Sedley (1973: 19) and his commentary to Epicurus *De Nat.* 28, fr. 10 I b 18, that ἀναφωνέω is particularly appropriate to a primitive utterance. This is probably another way of referring to the *prolepsis*.
    ὑπό (l. 16) should mean something different from κατά (l.14), because variation for variation's sake is not Philodemus' style and in any case the two prepositions are not synonymous. The noun in the ellipse is surely ἀναφώνηcιν, and the meaning is perhaps "according to the utterance 'art' and under the rubric 'area of human knowledge'; cf. Epicurus' usage of the prepositions in *De Nat.* 28, καὶ οὐδὲν ἧττον ὑπὸ τὴμ φυγὴν ἢ αἵρεcιν [κα]τ᾿ αὐτὴν [ἀ]γόμενοc τεύψεται τοῦ ὀρθοῦ, i.e. "and under its guidance [κατ᾿ αὐτήν] he will arrive at the truth just as much in the category [ὑπό] of avoidance as in that of choice" (fr. 13. col. VIII *infra*, ll. 9-7 [sic] Sedley).

[230] He argues further that both *ataraxia* and the state of being a sage are *diatheseis*.

[231] This seems comparable to the Aristotelian *hexis* at *EN* II.4 1105b20, though it is generalized beyond Aristotle's use, which was limited to explaining emotions and character.

presumably the main way to instill a *diathesis* in the soul of the artist.[232] Indeed, Philodemus

requires teachability of arts a little earlier in the same work:

On Rhetoric II, *PHerc.* 1674.26.3-16 (p. 99 Longo Auricchio):[233]

3 οὐκ ὀρ- θῶς δ' ἵcταcθαι νομιcτέ- 5 ὸ]ν οὐδὲ τοὺc ἀποφαινομέ- νο]υc οὐκ εἶναι τέχνην, εἴ τι[c] προείληφε τέχνην τ̣[ὴ]ν τὸ μεθοδικὸν ἔχου- c[α]ν καὶ ἑcτηκὸc παρά- 10 δοcιν], εἰ δὲ καλεῖ καὶ τὴν ὁ[λ]οcχερῆ παρατήρη- c[ιν τὴν] cτοχαζομένην τοῦ ὡc ἐπὶ τὸ πολὺ καὶ κα- τὰ τὸ εὔλογον, ὥcπερ ἰα- 15 τρικὴ καὶ κυβερνητικ[ή, _τ[έχ]νην εἶναι.	We must think that even those who demonstrate that it [i.e. any skill whose technicity is under question] is not a *techne* consider the matter incorrectly, if someone preconceived as a *techne* one with a methodical and stable transmission, and if he also claims that general observation which aims at general and probable success, like medicine and navigation, is a *techne*.

That is, if someone has a preconception of a *techne* as having methodical and consistent

transmission from teacher to student, and if he thinks that conjectural skills are also *technai*, then

that person thinks rightly. In this passage, Philodemus is talking about the person who denies that

they are *technai*, which leads to a confusing mass of negatives, and the conditional which

provides the grounds on which he says they think wrongly. However, he does state that the

prolepsis of *techne* includes the transmission of the *techne*.

More explicitly, when Philodemus is discussing the skilled actor or orator, who knows

how to move his body for effect, he denies that this knowledge constitutes a *techne*, on the

grounds that it is not teachable. The few lines preceding are broken and no sense can be got from

them.

---

[232] It seems sensible that practice will also play a role, but since non-*technai* can be practiced (one can practice, e.g., tying the knots used to bundle sticks), this cannot be a defining feature.

[233] The three negatives in the first part of the quoted section cause serious difficulties, but it seems that the οὐδέ is felt to follow the simple negative in οὐκ ὀρθῶc δ' ἵcταcθαι νομιcτέον and so has no negative force of its own, as is regular when a compound negative follows a simple negative (cf. Smyth §2761 and Kühner-Gerth §514).

On Rhetoric II, *PHerc.* 1674.39.35-40.19 (pp. 105-7 Longo Auricchio):[234]

35   ὐπομν[η]σθήτω-
40.1 caν δὲ καὶ τοῦτο, [διό-
τι τέχν[η]ν τοιαύ[την λέ-
γοντες εἶναι τὴν ῥητο-
ρικήν, [οἵαν] ἄν τις εἴποι
5   τὴν ἐκ παρατηρήσε-
ωc ποιᾶc cυνηcκημε-
νην ἕξιν, καθ᾽ ἣν ὡc [ἐ]πὶ
τὸ πολὺ κ[αὶ] κατὰ τὸ εὔ-
λογον περιγίνεται τὸ
10   προκείμενον τέλοc, τὸ
τῆc τέχνηc ἴδιον αὐτῆc
_ἀναιροῦνται. θεωρεῖται
γὰρ ἐμ μεθόδωι τοῦτο
καί τινι παραδόcει κοι-
15   νῶν τινων διατεινόν-
των ἐπὶ τὰ κατὰ μέροc,
ἄν τ᾽ οὖν ἦι τῶν παγίων
ἐ[πι]cτημῶν, ἄν τε τῶν
19   cτοχαcτικῶν.

But let them note this as well, that by claiming that rhetoric is a *techne* of such a sort as someone could call the *hexis* which is trained by some kind of observation, in accord with which the goal which was put forth comes about for the most part and probably, they remove the defining feature of the art itself. For this [sc. defining feature] is considered to consist in method and in a transmission of common elements which extend through the particular cases, whether it be a question of precise or of conjectural *technai*.

The particular or defining feature of a *techne* is here said to be both its method and its transmission, that is, an art must both have a method and be teachable. It matters not whether the *techne* accomplishes its goal all the time or not, as long as someone using the *techne* is more reliably successful than someone attempting the same feat who does not have that *techne*.

Philodemus does distinguish between exact and conjectural *technai*, though this does not bear on their technicity. Exact *technai* are those which accomplish their goals in the vast majority of cases, such as γραμματιcτική, μουcική, and ζωγραφία (*PHerc* 1674.38), and inexact ones are those which do not, such as ἰατρική and κυβερνητική.[235] μουcική and ποιητική are linked in

---

[234] A *hexis* is a disposition, synonymous for Epicureans with the more common term *diathesis*. See above with n. 231.

[235] For the distinction and the examples, see Sextus Empiricus *Adv. Math.* 1 §§72-5 with Blank's notes (1998). Philodemus mentions the distinction at *Rhet.* II, *PHerc.* 1674.6.3ff. (= p. 55 L.A.), and 30.17-9 (= p. 107 Longo Auricchio), and technical explanations are given at 1674.38.35ff. (= p. 123ff. L.A.). It is important to note that, on the Epicurean view, the art of music will consist of composing only a song, which can be reliably done by anyone with the appropriate training. Medicine, for example, can fail to save a patient even when the doctor does everything properly; similarly a navigator might be blown off course in a storm or unable to see the stars because of overcast skies and therefore lose the way.

similar contexts, and so it is reasonable to assume that ποιητική is also an exact art for Philodemus (subject to several provisos, again to be discussed below).[236] Since ῥητορική is very narrowly, for Philodemus, the art of composing good speeches,[237] it seems reasonable that ποιητική will be the art of composing good poems.

Each art has its own particularity, which is presumably its own specific defining feature or goal, for which it and no other art is responsible. This question is at issue in book I of Philodemus' *Rhetoric*, where he makes the following point.

On Rhetoric I, *PHerc*. 1427 fr. 1.12-18 (p. 3 Longo Auricchio):[238]

12   διαφορῶν γὰρ οὐ-
         cῶν ἀπλάτων ὄcων
         ἐ]ν ταῖc τέχναιc, ὅταν
15   ἰδιό]τητι προcπέcω-
         cιν, ἐκ τῶν τ[ε]χνῶν εὐ-
         θὺc ἐξ]ορίζουcιν τὴν
18   τοῦ]το προcφερομένην.
	For, because there are a monstrously large number of differences in the *technai*, whenever they do violence to the particularity, they exclude from the list of *technai* the *techne* that brings this to bear.

Philodemus is here, as usual, arguing against those who deny that rhetoric is a *techne*, but on different grounds from those elsewhere. The context is lost, but the argument put forward was clearly based on the particular aspect of rhetoric that distinguishes it from other arts and skills. Philodemus' reply is that, every time his opponents make an error in identifying the particularity,

---

[236] Music is mentioned at *On Rhetoric* II, *PHerc.* 1674 col. 38.33 (pp. 122-3 L.A.) and 41.12-3 (pp. 128-9 L.-A.); poetry is mentioned at *On Rhetoric* II, *PHerc.* 1672 col. 22.39 (pp. 218-9 L.A.). See generally Blank (1995: 181-2).

[237] Cf. *On Rhetoric* II, *PHerc.*1674.23.33-24.9: τῶν τε περὶ τὸ[ν Ἐ]πίκουρον ἀποφ[αι]νομένων τέχνην [εἶν]αι τὴν cοφιcτικὴν τ[οῦ λ]όγου`c´ cυγγράφειν καὶ ἐπ[ιδε]ίξειc ποιεῖcθαι, [τοῦ δὲ] δίκαc λέγειν καὶ δη[μη]γορεῖν οὐκ εἶναι τέ[χνη]ν, τὴν cοφιcτικὴ[ν οὗ]τοι τέχνην φαcὶν εἶ[να]ι, i.e. "although the Epicureans show that sophistic is a *techne* of composing speeches and making displays but that there is no *techne* of making legal or political speeches, those people claim that sophistic is a *techne*."

Note that in *Rhet* I, *PHerc*. 1427.3-4 (p. 13-15 Longo Auricchio), Philodemus denies that λόγωι πείθειν (persuasion by speech) is the goal of rhetoric, since laymen can do it just as well as professionals, which violates his rule that the trained must accomplish the goal more often and more consistently than the untrained.

[238] For the translation of προcπίπτω as "do violence to," cf. LSJ s.v. I 2 "fall upon, attack, assault" with the dative. The idea is that the enemies make some kind of error which causes them to miscategorize the subject. Merely "chancing upon" (cf. Longo Auricchio "s'imbattano" and Chandler "encounter") the peculiarity would not cause that kind of error.

they assert that whichever *techne* actually has that particularity is somehow not a *techne*.

In summary, *techne*, for the Epicureans, denoted a *diathesis*, an atomic arrangement, which comes about by being taught, and allows the person with it to make products or accomplish tasks that someone without the *techne* could not do. They can do this either consistently or just most of the time, so long as they are reliably more successful than the unskilled person. If an art or skill cannot be taught or does not accomplish its goal, then it is not a *techne*.

§3 The Technicity of Poetry

Now we turn to the question of ποιητική: is it a *techne*, and what specifically does Philodemus have to say about it?

He declares that poetry is in fact a *techne*. In a discussion rebutting Epicurean opponents with citations from the founder of the School Metrodorus[239], he makes the claim that rhetoric is a *techne* and has method, and compares it to ποιητική.

On Rhetoric II, *PHerc.* 1672.22.28-39 (p. 219 Longo Auricchio):[240]

28 ἦν δὲ τοῦ`το´ πιστοῦ- cθαι, διότι δὴ καὶ κατ᾽ ἀλή- 30   θειαν ἡ cοφιcτικὴ ῥητο- ρικὴ τέχνη τίc ἐcτιν περί τε τὰc ἐπιδείξε[ι]c, οἴαc αὐ- τοὶ ποιοῦνται, καὶ τὰc τῶν λόγων δ[ι]`α´θέcειc, οἵων αὐ- 35 τοὶ γράφουcἰ`ν´ τε κ̣αὶ cχεδι- άζουcιν. φαμὲν τοίνῡν τὸ μεθοδ̣[ι]κὸν ἔχε̣ιν αὐτήν,	It (sc. our task) was to demonstrate this: that sophistic rhetoric really is a *techne* both about display pieces, of which sort they compose, and about the arrangements of the kind of speeches which they themselves write or improvise. So we claim that it has method, but not much,

---

239 Metrodorus of Lampsacus was also the author of a *De poematis* in at least two books, which Philodemus quotes here as support for his assertions about rhetoric, which Metrodorus had used as a comparandum for poetry (see chapter two, §3). There was another Metrodorus of Lampsacus, a century earlier, who was a follower of Anaxagoras and wrote allegorical interpretations of Homer.

240 Slight changes to punctuations and accentuation, printed above, were suggested to me by R. Janko (pers. comm.) in lines 38 (for δὲ καθάπερ) and 39 (for -κὴν καὶ).

οὐ πολὺ δέ, καθάπ[ερ] οὐδὲ τὴν
ποιητ[ι]κήν ...

just as poetics does not …

Philodemus admits that sophistic is in fact a *techne*, but that it and poetics do not have much method. Sadly, the papyrus breaks off just after this. I presume that he means that, after mastering basic metrical rules and lexical practices, there is not much method in composition, that is to say, either every poet goes about composing in their own, individual way which is not part of the *techne*, or, alternatively, that, after he masters the basic precepts, there is little or nothing left to learn. I incline towards the first reading because of the following discussion.

On Rhetoric II, *PHerc.* 1674 50.29-51 (pp. 147-9 Longo Auricchio)[241]

ιτοῦ-ι

30 τ' ἐμπ[είρως τί]θεται, ὡς
    ἄλλου μὲν [τὸ] λόγον ἔχει[ν
    καὶ ἄ[τ]τ[α π]ῶς ἂν καὶ
    ιἐκ τίνιων γιένιοιτο καλλί-
34 ιστηι ῥητορ[εία], ἄλλου δὲ `τὸ καλῶς´
51.1 ιῥηι[τορ]ιεύιειν. καὶ [μ]ι[κρ]ὸν
    προβά[ς π]ως μαρτ[υ]ρεῖ τ[ὸ
    μηδέν[α] πώποτε γε[νέ]σ-
    θαι ποιητὴν †ἐν τοσο[ύ]τοιст
5   ἢ ῥήτορα ἱκανὸν ἀπό γ[ε
    τῶν τεχνολογιῶν [αὐ]τῶν.

This is set down as a matter of experience, that it is one man's to have a method and the means by whichever and from whichever the most beautiful set-speech comes about, but it is another's to practice oratory well. Moving a bit further on [sc. in the treatise], he [sc. Metrodorus] bears witness that no one ever became a poet among the best or a competent orator from handbooks alone.

The discussion is about what training and talents are necessary for a public speaker; the poet is mentioned for the first time at the end. Philodemus asserts that in addition to handbooks, the rhetor and the poet need method and means for composition and, if "practicing oratory well"

---

[241] The passage is a paraphrase of Metrodorus, which began in col. 49.27. In 50.4, the phrase ἐν τοсούτοις seems to be corrupt. It is usually followed by a noun of some sort, e.g. ἐν τοсούτοις κακοῖс "in the midst of so many evils" vel sim., and so I suspect that either a word has fallen out after τοсούτοις or the phrase has been misread. Demosthenes 18.101 has a similar, but not exactly parallel phrase, ἐν τοсούτοις καὶ τοιούτοις, which Yunis *ad loc*. glosses without explanation as "long Athenian tradition" relying heavily on the context of the passage. Neither Longo Auricchio nor Chandler translate the phrase. Janko suggests "among such great ones" (pers. comm.) which I have (modified and) accepted. Furthermore, lines 6-12 of col. 51 are mutilated and attempts to restore them have not been successful. On the basis of the Oxford *disegno*, I read a gap of two letters before τῶν in line 6 and supplement αὐτῶν; happily the rest of the damaged part is not necessary for the argument. For my translation of αὐτῶν as "alone," see LSJ s.v. I 3.

Longo Auricchio (1985) reads ἔμπειρον in l. 30, but in 1977 she printed ἐμπείρως, which I follow. The expression is unparalleled and requires an extension of the normal meaning of ἔμπειρος, but it is not difficult.

means good delivery, perhaps natural talent is necessary as well.[242] Nevertheless, the clear implication of the final statement is that good poets need something more than what the handbooks provide, which could be experience gained from practice and criticism, vocabulary and a feel for the literary tradition gained from reading other poets, or something else. I imagine that practice of the art leads to the *hexis* or *diathesis*, which functions as a sort of "muscle-memory," that is, the faculty which allows someone to ride a bicycle or drive a car competently even if they have not done so in some time.

Further, a discussion of how method and observation are related is relevant, because it indicates that observation alone is not method.

On Rhetoric II, *PHerc.* 1674.41.1- 13 (= p.129 Longo Auricchio):[243]

1 παρα- τετήρηκεν πῶς ἑαυ- τὸν στῆσαι δεῖ καὶ πῶς ἰ]έναι καὶ ποῦ ˋτ[ὸν] πόδα θεῖναι καὶ ποῖˊ cυνεπι- 5 νεύειν, ἀ[λ]λὰ παρατε[τ]ή- ρηκέ τινα μόνον, καὶ μόνος τοὖργον π[ο]ιεῖ καὶ διὰ παντός· με[θ]οδ[ικὴν δὲ καὶ cτοιχειώδη [τινὰ 10 παράδοcιν διὰ πλ[ειό- νων δι[ήκου]cαν, ὥc[περ γραμματιcτής ⟨ἢ⟩ ὥcπερ μο[υ- _cικόc, οὐκ ἔχει. τὸ δ' [ὅ]μοι- ον καὶ ἐπὶ τῶν πετευρ[ι- 15 ζομένων καὶ τὰς μαχαί- ρας ὑπεραλλομένων ἔ[τυ- 17 χε.	He [sc. the good orator] has observed how it is necessary to place himself and how to move and where to put his foot and in what direction to move his head, but he observed only some things and only he performs the action consistently; but he does not have a methodical and systematic transmission which extends through most cases, like the grammarian or like the musician. Something similar obtains also in the case of acrobats, even the ones who dance on swords.

---

[242] In *PHerc.* 1674.25.9-15, Philodemus' opponents assert that good delivery requires *physis* (which I take to be natural talent), and Philodemus does not explicitly contradict them on this point. This is questionable, however, since the argument focuses on other matters.

[243] I read παρατε[τ]ήρηκέ τινα at 5-6 (Longo Auricchio prints -ρηκε τίνα) and μουcικόc followed by a comma (Longo Auricchio prints no comma and a grave). I also print με[θ]οδ[ικὴν since it is better fitted to the letter count of the line (cf. *On Rhetoric* II, *PHerc.* 1674.27.5-6); Longo Auricchio prints Sudhaus' μέ[θ]οδ[ον. My translation further reflects the printed text at 15,which I interpret as meaning "gymnasts, even sword-dancers, do not have a *techne*." It seems to me that Philodemus almost always uses a double article and so to get "both gymnasts and sword-dancers" would require ⟨τῶν⟩ τὰc, which is an easy enough correction, but would weaken his point. Finally, R. Janko (pers. comm.) supplied ⟨ἢ⟩ in line 13.

The rhetor or actor in question, who moves well and effectively, does so only because he has observed what sorts of movements are effective. He has no method, only observation, and cannot teach this skill to any students.[244] On these grounds, Philodemus denies that his ability constitutes a *techne,* which the grammarian and musician both have.

In a passage of book III of the *On Rhetoric*, Philodemus mentions lessons in poetry. Unfortunately, the context is too broken to learn much from the passage, even though the work survives in two copies.

On Rhetoric III, *PHerc*. 1506 col. xlviii.28-35 = *PHerc*. 1426 col. I[a].1-8 (p. 23-5 Hammerstaedt):[245]

28 διὰ] τῆς ἐκ τῶν δι- δαcκ[α]λείων τούτων εὐ- 30 ρυθμίας ἱκανῶc χαριέc- τερ[οι] γεγόναcι καὶ ἐν δή- μοιc καὶ ἐν [δι]καcτηρίοιc καὶ ἐν ἐκκληcίαιc. καὶ γὰρ τάχα καὶ ποιητι- κῶν καὶ φιλοcόφων μαθη- 35 μάτων μετα[c]χόντεc …	They have become considerably more elegant on account of the good use of rhythm they learned from those schools both in public assemblies and in courts and in meetings. In fact, perhaps they have even taken part in lessons about poetry and philosophy …

Lessons are an obvious and straightforward means of learning the basics of the craft, but, as we saw above, they are not sufficient for becoming a poet.

The clear implication for poets is that mere observation of other poets going about their business does not constitute method or instruction. The apprenticeship may be useful for learning the skills, but is not the method of composition, which presumably guides what a poet does when he sits down to compose. That poetry does not have much method is an interesting claim, espcially in light of traditions that assign a high level of method to poets. For example, Horace

---

244   On the topic of Philodemus' opinions on rhetorical delivery, see the first part of Winter (2004).

245   Because the text survives in two copies, I print a composite text and mark only letters which are damaged or must be supplied in *both* copies. Hammerstaedt edits each papyrus separately and uses half-brackets to mark supplements from the other papyrus; that system seemed too cumbersome for this kind of study. The supplement in l. 32 appears only in *PHerc*. 1506, which is the papyrus whose lineation I have followed. διὰ in the first line is my supplement; Sudhaus suggested μετειληφότεc and Hammerstaedt suggested ἀπὸ. For the use of ἱκανῶc in l. 30 cf. Antiphon 2.1.6 and 2.2.2.

devotes a section of the *Ars Poetica* (ll. 295-332) to the topic of how to be a good poet and

suggests a thorough knowledge of *realia* in order to represent characters correctly:

> qui didicit patriae quid debeat et quid amicis,
> quo sit amore parens, quo frater amandus et hospes,
> quod sit conscripti, quod iudicis officium, quae
> partes in bellum missi ducis, ille profecto
> reddere personae scit conuenientia cuique.
>
> Whoever knows what is owed to his father land and his friends,
> with what love a parent, a brother, and a guest are to be loved,
> what the duty of a senator is, that of a judge, what
> are the offices of a general sent to war, that man immediately
> knows how to provide fitting features for each character.

Horace has Roman society firmly in view here, as the patriotism and mention of a senator show,

but the basic demand that the poet have thorough knowledge of the roles of his characters is

much older. Such demands are often linked with demands for educational content, as apparently

was done by the critic handled by Philodemus before Heraclides Ponticus in book V. It might be

that, because Epicureans denied educational content to poetry, the barriers to entry were not very

high, that is, since a poet only has to develop good taste and learn versification, she does not

need much training, and the art, accordingly, does not require much method—there simply is not

that much for it to teach.[246] Similarly, Aristotle has quite a bit of advice for poets at *Poetics* §§17

and 25 as well as scattered throughout the rest of the treatise; whether this constitutes "a lot of

method" I doubt. Additionally, Aristotle[247] and Horace[248] both say that the poet must visualize

the scenes and try to feel the same emotions as the characters in the poem in order for the

---

[246] Because the Epicureans denied didactic intent in poetry, it is not clear if they would consider, e.g., Aratus' or Manilius' knowledge of astronomy to be part of the *techne* of astronomy or of the *techne* of poetry, or part of both. The question simply does not arise for them.

[247] *Poetics* 17, 55a17-32, cf. fr. 80 Rose, *apud* Cicero *Tusc*. IV.19, on rhetoric

[248] *A. P.* 101-113

characters to present them realistically and make the audience feel those emotions.[249] This entails a method of poetic composition in which the poets work themselves up into feeling emotions before composition.

However, it is clear enough that discussions of method were common in Hellenistic treatises and it is therefore likely that Philodemus is staking out a position opposed to one which demanded a great deal of method from poets.

§4 Do *technai* benefit those who know them?[250]

The scholiast to Dionysius Thrax (p. 108.27 Hilgard = Epic. fr. 227b Usener) records an Epicurean "definition" of *techne*: οἱ μὲν Ἐπικούρειοι οὕτως ὁρίζονται τὴν τέχνην· "τέχνη ἐστι μέθοδος ἐνεργοῦσα τῶι βίωι τὸ cυμφέρον." "ἐνεργοῦcα" δὲ οἷον ἐργαζομένη ("the Epicureans define *techne* as follows: 'a *techne* is a method which brings about what is useful for life.' 'brings about' is like 'works out'").[251]

One ought always to have been cautious with this testimony, since the Epicureans are known to have eschewed definitions of precisely this sort.[252] A further problem is that it contradicts explicit statements of Philodemus. As shown above, he considered ποιητική to be a *techne*, but in *On Poems* V he says again and again that poems do not benefit:

---

[249] Advice similar, coincidentally, to the modern technique of "method acting."

[250] Asmis's discussion (1991) of poetic utility in Philodemus will be treated in chapter six, §9.

[251] Chandler (2006: 93-4) discusses this passage from a similar perspective. He too is suspicious of the definition ("it could also be said that it resembles a rather simplistic formulation of the Stoic definition") and is inclined to consider it to be "of little, or at least questionable, consequence in the analysis of Philodemus' view of art." My view is different, in that I consider the definition to be of no consequence at all.

[252] See Asmis (1984: 39-47). The case is built on several late citations (Erotian and an anonymous commentary to Plato's *Theaetetus*) which explicitly deny that Epicureans the use of definitions, Cicero's exchange with Torquatus in book two of the *De Finibus*, and the absence of discussion of definitions from Epicurus' extant work. Note especially pages 42-3 with n. 27 for a possible Epicurean use of ὑπογραφή or ὑποτύπωcιc, outlines or sketches, in place of definitions.

On Poems V. 25.18-21 and 30-34[253]

18	ἡλήθ[ε]υ[ον] δὲ φυ- ϲι[κ]ὸν ἀγαθὸν ἐμ ποιήμα-	But they told the truth when the claimed that there is no natural good in a poem, if they actually claimed that.
20	τι μηδὲν εἶναι λέγον- τεϲ, εἴπερ τοῦτ᾽ ἔφαϲκον ...	
30	οὐ̣ γὰρ {ο} κα- θὸ πόημα φυϲικὸν οὐδὲν οὔτε λέξεωϲ οὔτε δ[ια- ν]οήματοϲ ὠφέλημα [πα- ρ]αϲκευάζει.	For, *qua* poem, it does not cause any natural benefit, either in diction or in contents …
34		

And again:

On Poems V.32.17-19

| 17 | καὶ διότι, κἂν ὠφελῆ⟨ι⟩,
καθὸ πόημat᾽ οὐκ ὠφε-
λεῖ. | And that, if they should aid, they do not aid as poems. |

This is to say, if a poem does somehow benefit its reader, this is not due to whatever makes it a poem, but rather to the argument residing in the language, which could conceivably benefit the reader, if the poem, for example, exhorted them to an Epicurean lifestyle. Finally, the verb ἐνεργέω is characteristically Stoic in this sense.[254]

The mistaken ascription to the Epicureans will have arisen through a misunderstanding of a statement like fr. 219 Usener (= Sextus Empiricus xi.169): ἐπαγγέλλονται γὰρ τέχνην τινὰ περὶ τὸν βίον παραδώϲειν, καὶ διὰ τοῦτο Ἐπίικουροϲ μὲν ἔλεγε τὴν φιλοϲοφίαν ἐνέργειαν εἶναι λόγοιϲ καὶ διαλογιϲμοῖϲ τὸν εὐδαίμονα βίον περιποιοῦϲαν. This should be translated "they announce that they will transmit an art of life, and accordingly Epicurus claims that

---

[253] οὐ is the emendation of Janko, in his review of Mangoni's edition, for the ευ corrected into ει of the manuscripts. Mangoni reads only an doubtful omicron after γὰρ, which she deletes. The disegni both have οι, which is the basis of Gomperz' reading εἰ γὰρ ⟨τ⟩οι. Jensen noted in his apparatus that the papyrus did not have the οι, and so he printed κα̣ὶ γὰρ, which Mangoni followed. A conditional followed by apodotic δέ is grammatically possible (as the next sentence begins διὰ τοῦτο δὲ, with weakened punctuation, it could mean "for if it does not...then nevertheless on that account"), but this is unlikely (the construction is rare, according to Denniston p. 180, outside Homer, Herodotus, and Xenophon).

[254] Cf. *SVF* 3.242, 293 and Sextus Empiricus *Adv. Math* 11.205

philosophy is an activity which brings about the happy life through arguments and discussions," but it could be misunderstood to say "they claim that the art will transmit some [sc. useful] things about life."[255]

If poetry does not benefit through poems, its product, it is not clear at all how it could possibly benefit; the scholiast only claimed that the *techne* provided something beneficial, which poetry does not. Thus the scholiast is somehow mistaken.[256]

Further, we must reckon with the consequences of a *techne* not necessarily providing anything beneficial or useful.[257] Some arts are useful, at least sometimes; this is not a necessary condition for being a *techne*.[258] In the *On Household Management,* Philodemus' position on the "two types" of management is that the one is worthwhile but the other does not befit the philosopher.[259] The difference stems from the attitude and goal of the person practicing the skill: the philosopher has the goal of happiness in mind, whereas the professional money-manager has the goal of making the most money possible, and so the money-maker will practice differently.[260] This distinction is not clearly relevant to poetry and Philodemus does not discuss it in the extant portions of the *On Poems*. Even so, in the excursus below I have considered some possible ways that this difference might play out in the realm of poems.

Philodemus recognizes only a single art of poetry under which are subsumed all the types of poetry. The important passage is in *On Poems* IV. He is rebutting Aristotle's doctrine that

---

[255] The correct rendering follows closely that in Ramelli (2002).

[256] Chandler notes that this definition looks like a simplification of the Stoic definitions given in Olympiodorus' commentary on Plato's *Gorgias* (12.1.69 = vol. II p. 420 fr. 392 Hülser). It is just possible that Zeno of Sidon and Zeno of Citium were confused.

[257] At *On Rhetoric* II, *PHerc.* 1674.38.14-8, Philodemus explicitly leaves aside any discussion of the utility of the art; it is not taken up again in our extant texts.

[258] Cooking and household management are examples used by Philodemus.

[259] See the discussion at Blank (2009: 218-9).

[260] Philodemus says that he has an ἐμπειρία and a δύναμις, which the philosopher does not have.

poets compose certain genres according to their characters.

On Poems IV.111.4-10:

4 5 10	κα]ὶ [ὁ ϲεμνό]τατοϲ //πο//[ητήϲ, φημί, γελοίο[υϲ] ἐ[οι]ίει ϲα- τύρουϲ· καὶ πρότε[ρ]ον δ' ἐ- χλ[εύαζο]ν μετ⟨ὰ τῶν⟩ [α]ὐτῶν ῥη[μάτ]//ω//[ν], ἢ κ[α]ὶ διαφό- ρων ἀ[λλ]//ὰ τ//ῆϲ αὐτῆϲ ἐπ[ι- _ϲτήμηϲ.

The most dignified poets used to compose, I affirm, laughable satyr-plays; and previously too they used to make mockery with the same words, or even with different ones but belonging to the same skill.

Aristotle claims that poets write according to their characters, but Philodemus, by way of rebuttal, points out that even tragedians also wrote satyr-plays, which were of a very different character from tragedies and were written in a different register. Philodemus' point is that the specific diction, and even the character of the poet, are irrelevant; whatever diction is used, it is all covered by the one single skill of poetry. This is of a piece with his devaluation of genre as a relevant criterion for the judgment of poems, but presumably he does not mean to forbid poets from specializing in a particular genre. The goal of poetry, in his view, is to create a communicative composition in non-prosaic language, and this can be accomplished in any genre, or even in no recognized genre. All equally have the same goal, and so this is not an important difference between them.

What are we left with? Philodemus has said that poetics is an art, presumably that of writing good poems. An art is a method which can be taught and learned, but which does not necessarily provide any benefit; it affects the person who has it, since it is a *diathesis*, which is an arrangement of atoms, and only brings about a narrowly limited goal. In the case of poetry, this is simply a poem.

§5 Excursus: Two Types of Poetics?

Philodemus distinguishes between two levels of the application of a *techne* in an interesting passage in his *On Household Management*.

On Household Management col xii.5-25:[261]

5 　　　　　διαλεξόμε-
θα τ[ο]ίνυν οὐχ ὡς ἐν οἴκωι κα-
λῶ[c] ἔcτιν βιοῦν, ἀλλ’ ὡς ἵcτα-
cθαι δεῖ περὶ χρημάτων κτή-
cεωc τε καὶ φυλακῆc, περὶ [ἃ
10 τὴν οἰκονομίαν καὶ τὸν
οἰκονομικὸν ἰδίως νοεῖcθαι
cυμβέβηκεν, οὐδὲν διαφε-
ρόμενοι πρὸc τοὺc ἕτερα τοῖc
ὀν[ό]μαcιν ὑποτάττειν προ-
15 αιρ[ο]υμένουc, καὶ περὶ τῆc
φιλοcόφωι δεούcηc κτήcε-
ωc, [ο]ὐ τῆc ὀτωι[δ]ήποτε. φι-
λοcό]φωι δ’ ἔcτι πλούτου
μέ[τρ]ον, ὃ παρεδώκαμεν
20 ἀκολ]ο[υ]θωc τοῖc καθηγε-
μόcιν] ἐν τοῖc Περὶ π[λού]του
λόγο]ιc, ὥcτε τὴν οἰκον[ομι-
κὴ]ν τῆc τε τούτου κ[τή]cε-
ωc κ]αὶ τῆc τούτου φυλ[ακ]ῆc
25 ἀποδ]ίδοcθαι.

　　Now we shall discuss not how it is possible to live well in a household, but what stance it is necessary to take regarding the getting and preservation of money, about which matters it turns out that "household management" and "manager" are to be understood strictly, taking issue in no way with those who prefer to consider other things the referents of these terms, and about the acquisition of wealth necessary for the philosopher, not for just anybody. For the philosopher, there is a limit to wealth, which we have propounded in accordance with the founders of our school in our treatise "On Wealth," so that the art of management is assigned the properties of gaining and protecting it.

Philodemus distinguishes between the manager or money-maker properly so called and the philosopher, and gives each of them a different relationship to the art of household management.[262] The manager is supposed to make as much money as possible and to manage the property he already owns in the best manner possible; the philosopher has a limit, that is, he does not need all the wealth that the manager does. The name of the art does not change, but Philodemus says that the use of the terms "manager" and "household management" with

---

[261] The text is based on the edition of Jensen (1906). The translation of this passage is indebted to Tsouna (2007: 177). Note ἔcτι (Janko) for ἐcτὶ (Jensen) in line 18. The usage of ἵcτημι in l. 7 is peculiar to Philodemus; it also occurs at *On Rhetoric* II, PHerc. 1674 col. 26.3-6 (= p. 99 Longo Auricchio): οὐκ ὀρθῶc δ’ ἵcταcθαι νομιcτέ[ο]ν οὐδὲ τοὺc ἀποφαινομέ[νο]υc οὐκ εἶναι τέχνην, i.e. "it must be thought that not even they who claim that it is not an art *hold the* correct *position*."

[262] My discussion throughout this section is indebted to Tsouna (2007, chapter 8).

reference to philosophers is not strictly correct. The choices made by managers and philosophers will be different since they have different goals, and, though they share some techniques and skills, they will be employed differently. The manager will have a much more specialized knowledge as well. Later in the treatise, Philodemus explains the philosopher's attitude towards wealth:

On Household Management xiv.23:[263]

23   τ]ῶι γὰρ μὴ
    λυ[πε]ῖϲθαι τῶ[ι] παραπολλυμέ-
25   ν[ωι] μηδὲ διὰ τὴν ἄκρατον
    ϲ[που]δὴν περὶ τὸ πλέον καὶ
    το[ὔλαττ]ον ὑφ' αὑ[τ]οῦ ζητρί-
    οιϲ τιϲὶ]ν ἐγ[κ]εῖϲθαι, τούτω[ι
    γ'] ὀ[ρ]θῶϲ οἰκο[νο]μεῖϲθαι νο-
30   μίζω τὸν πλοῦ[τ]ον· ὁ [γ]ὰρ κατὰ
    τὴ[ν κτῆ]ϲ[ι]ν π[όν]οϲ [κἀ]ν τῶι
    προ[ϲφορ]ὰν ἕλκειν ἑαυ[τῶι] γί-
    νετ[αι] κἀν τῶι περὶ τῶν ἐλατ-
    τ[ωμάτ]ων ἀγωνιᾶν, ὡϲ εὐ-
35   θέ[ωϲ εἰ]ϲ ἀλγηδόν[α κ]α[τ]α-
    ϲτηϲόντων ἢ παροῦϲαν ἢ
   _   προϲδοκωμένην. ἂν δέ τιϲ
    περι[έ]λη[ι] ἑαυτοῦ τὰς τοι[α]ύ-
    ταϲ [δ]υϲχερείαϲ, καὶ μὴ [ϲ]ω-
40   ρεύειν ἐπιβάλ[η]ται καὶ πο-
    εῖν τὴν οὐϲίαν ὅτι μεγίϲτην,
    μηδ' ἢν ὁ πλο[ῦ]τος ἐξουϲί-
    αν παρέχει τα[ύ]την παραϲκευ-
    άζη[τ]αι τῶι δ[υ]ϲχερῶϲ αὑ-
45   τὸϲ [τ]ὰ χρήματα φυλάτ[τειν ἢ ϲυν-
    άγε[ιν] λιπαρῶϲ, ἀπαρά[λλα-
xv.1 κτοϲ γίνοιτ' ἂν διὰ [ταῦτα
    ἑτοιμότηϲ τῆϲ κτήϲεωϲ τῆι
   _   καὶ δι' αὑτοῦ κοινωνούϲηι· δι-
    οικεῖν γὰρ οὕτω ταῦτα τῶι κε-
5   κτῆϲθαι καὶ κτᾶϲθαι τὸν ϲο-
    φὸν φίλουϲ ἀκόλουθον·

Indeed, I think that the right management of wealth lies in this: in not feeling distressed about what one loses and in not trapping oneself on treadmills because of an obsessive zeal concerning the more and the less. For the pain involved in the acquisition of wealth consists both in eking out a profit for oneself and in agonizing over one's losses on the grounds that they will bring one directly into pain, whether present or expected. But if one has removed from oneself such difficulties and does not eagerly desire to amass and make one's property as great as possible, and, moreover, one does not procure for oneself those resources that wealth offers by oneself watching painfully over one's possessions or by collecting them in rich abundance, as a result of this a readiness for acquisition would become indistinguishable from one's readiness to share things very much on one's own initiative. In truth, that the wise man administers these goods in such a manner is a consequence of the fact that he has acquired and continues to acquire friends.

---

[263] Trans. Tsouna (2012). ζήτριον in l. 27 is occasionally attested in this spelling, but George Choeroboscus (ap. *EM* 411.33 vouches for ancient dispute about the accent and the spelling with a diphthong ζήτρειον (or ζητρεῖον). Accordingly, ζητρείοιϲ should probably be restored here.

    At xiv.32 and xv.1, I respectively adopt Delattre and Tsouna's reading (πρὸ[ϲ βί]αν...ἑαυ[τον] Jensen) and Sedley's (δία[ιτα καὶ Jensen). The hiatus in line 38 betrays this as paraphrase of Metrodorus.

The major objection is that, if the philosopher gets too involved in managing his household, he will lose his *ataraxia*. Wealth, Philodemus admits, is useful for a philosopher in a variety of ways (mostly to benefit her friends), but only instrumentally, never *per se*.

This implies that there are two different levels of involvement in a *techne*, i.e. in this case a light to moderate involvement appropriate to the philosopher (with use of the term in an extended sense), and a deep involvement appropriate to the manager in the strict sense. Indeed, Philodemus says as much, earlier in the *On Household Management*[264]:

On Household Management xvii.2-27:[265]

2   —   τεχνί-
    της μὲν οὖν ἅμα καὶ ἐργάτης
    κ]τήσεως πολλῆς καὶ ταχέ-
5 ως συναγομένης οὐκ ἴςως
    ῥητέος ὁ ςόφος· ἔςτι γὰρ δή
    τις ἐμπειρία καὶ δύναμις καὶ
    περὶ χρηματιςμόν, ἧς οὐ κοι-
    νωνήςει ςπουδαῖος ἀ[ν]ήρ,
10 οὐδὲ τοὺς καιροὺς παρατη-
    ρήςει, μεθ᾽ ὧν κἂν ἡ τοιαύ-
    τη δύναμις χρηςίμη {μη} γί-
    νοιτο· φιλοχρημάτου γὰρ ἅ-
    παντα τοιαῦτα. οὐ μὴν ἀλλὰ
15 φαίνεταί γε καθάπερ [καὶ] ἐ-
    π᾽ ἄλλων πλειόνων, ἐν οἷς ἀ-
    γαθῶν ὄντων δημιουργῶν
    τό γε [πρ]ὸς τὴν χρείαν [ἀρ-
    κοῦν ἕκαςτος ἡμῶν, [ὡς] εἰ-
20 πεῖν, οὐ⟨κ ἂν⟩ κακῶς ἐπιτελῴηι,
    οἷον ὁρῶμεν καὶ περὶ τὴν
    τοῦ ςίτου κατεργαςίαν ἢ τὴν
    τῶν ὄψων ςκε[υ]αςίαν· πᾶς
    γάρ τις ἱκανὸς α[ὐ]τῶι τὰ τοι-
25 αῦτα ποιεῖν μέχρι τῆς [ἀ]ρ-
	So the sage perhaps is not to be called an expert (*technites*) or producer (*ergates*) of a great deal of property collected in a short time. For there is indeed an element of experience and a capability even regarding money-making, in which a serious man will not take part, nor will he keep an eye out for special opportunities, at which times such a capability could be useful, because all such things are characteristic of the greedy man. Never the less, it appears to be just as in many other cases, in which, although the craftsmen are good, nearly any of us could without baseness achieve sufficiency for our needs, as we see both in baking and in the preparation of other foods: everyone is capable of doing these things for himself to the point of fulfilling his need, although there is also a technical (i.e. professional) practice of them.

---

[264] See also Blank's discussion (2009: 218-219).

[265] μετά with the genitive (l. 11) in a chronological sense is rare, but attested (LSJ s.v. A IV). It can also more broadly mean "in connection with" (LSL s.v. A III). I take the sense of the passage to be that the sage will not keep an eye out for special opportunities at which his experience and capability could be put to greater use than normal, for example, special sales or opportunities for investment, since watching the markets so closely is bound to distract him from the real business of Epicurean philosophizing.

    For the mention at ll. 21-3, it is useful to remember that the Greeks divided food not into two categories (food and drink) but three: bread, other foods, and drink. For full discussion, see Davidson (1998: 20-23).

κούϲηϲ χρεία[ϲ], οὔϲηϲ [πε]ρὶ
27   αὐτὰ καὶ ἐνπερίαϲ ἐν[τε]χνου.

The parallel drawn by Philodemus between cooking and household management is instructive. Everyone, he claims, can cook at least well enough that they do not starve; similarly, they should be able to manage their households at least well enough that they do not go bankrupt. However, beyond cooking well enough for one's own needs, there is a professional level as well, e.g. being able to cook luxurious meals for many people, rather than sufficient meals for a small group, like a family. The professional level is here called the ἐμπειρία ἔντεχνοϲ[266]; the normal level is not named, but seems to be within the grasp of most people. If the parallel with household management holds, then this normal level might be a *techne* only be extension. At col. 16.34-5, Philodemus refers to this familiarity as αὐτὸϲ ὁ λόγοϲ καὶ κοινὴ ἐμπειρία, reason itself and common experience, which suffice for non-professional practices that might otherwise be classified under the heading of one *techne* or another. The non-professional, personal use does not seem to be a *techne* (at least not in the technical sense), which requires education, dedicated pursuit, and practice to qualify as such. In these cases, most people can manage their households and cook well enough to survive, but this does not rise to the level of a *techne* properly so called. For our purposes, we can refer to this as the non-technical skill and the *techne*.

If this division holds in the case in poetry as well, then what differentiates the two types? There is no extant evidence that Philodemus made such a division, but I will consider its possible implications. Probably, it would simply be a difference of attitude and goals, as in the case of the household manager discussed above, though training may enter into the question.

---

[266] Tsouna (2007: 193) notes that Philodemus uses τέχνη, ἐμπειρία and ἔντεχνοϲ ἐμπειρία interchangeably. See also *On Poems* II.43.16-19.

After all, being a professional chef does not differ from home cookery in its fundamental goal (feeding people), but the skills required and time dedicated to the practice of the *techne* are quite different. In terms of poetry, it would be the difference between being a poet by way of vocation (which is banned by Epicurus' famous dictum, fr. 569 Usener), and being pretty good at writing verse as a hobby. Nothing stands in the way of such an amateur poet being quite accomplished; at issue, rather, is their attitude towards their craft and their use of their own time. If an amateur poet maintains their *ataraxia*, there is nothing obviously standing in the way of their hobby, as seems to have been the case for Philodemus' own poetic career. A professional, however, will not have enough time to devote to the study of Epicurean philosophy, as well as damagingly misplaced priorities. We can also expect differences in results which stem from different levels of skill and time devoted to the task. A professional chef is capable of much more than a home cook, and a professional poet would compose better poems than an amateur.

It is true that cooking and household management are necessary skills for people to have generally, and that the ability to write poetry is in no way necessary for anyone, but this does not seem relevant to Philodemus. The philosopher needs none of the three *technai* in question, but only non-technical skills related to two of them. Some skill in writing poetry could be useful, depending on the situation, but many other non-technical skills could potentially be useful. Epicureans are expected to dedicate themselves to the study and practice of philosophy rather than the cultivation of other skills or *technai*, and they were expected to be able to thrive even in conditions of poverty, both of which obviate the need for most *technai*. If one follows the example of Epicurus, and is perfectly happy with lentils and bread, and counts cheese is a luxury, technical knowledge of cookery is a waste of time and effort that would be better expended elsewhere.

Chapter Five

The Form, Content, Judgment, and Purpose of Poems

§1 Introduction

The two aspects of poetry, content and form, were first distinguished by Plato, *Resp*. III 392c6, where the terms are λόγοι ("stories," i.e. contents) and λέξιϲ ("language"). Philodemus explicitly sets out a relative valuation of them and indicates that they are inseparable, though evidently they can be discussed separately. His discussion of form and content, as well as the criteria he advances for judging poems, are the topic of this chapter; I hope to explain what, in Philodemus' opinion, constitutes both parts, their relative valuation, and the principles by which he judges poems.

In a passage to be examined in greater detail later, Philodemus sets outs his idea of the basic interrelatedness of form and content. For now, it will suffice to know that Philodemus is responding to Crates of Mallos, the critic and Homeric scholar, who had set out a particular and idiosyncratic scheme for interpreting Homeric cosmology and was a euphonist critic of poetry. Philodemus' objection is that Crates' cosmological interpretations violate the meanings of the words while his euphonic strictures ignore them.

On Poems V.28.33-29.7:[267]

33	ἢ πρόcλ[ο-	Either it is reasonable that the
	γον ἐcτὶ τὸ διὰ τῆ[c] ἀκο-	mind accepts the language
35	ῆc τὰc λέξειc παραδέ-	through the faculty of hearing
1	χεcθαι τὴν διάνοιαν, ἢ ἀ-	or it is generally true that the
	ληθὲc δι' ὅλο͜υ [τὰ νο]ούμε-	contents in poems are judged
	να ἐν ποήμ[ἀcι]ν κρίνεc-	and that, whenever we praise
	θαι, καὶ μηδ', ὅταν τὴν	the composition, we should
5	cύνθεcιν ἐπαινῶμεν, ἀ-	not tear it away from what
	ποcπᾶν αὐτὴν τῶν ὑπο-	underlies it.
	τεταγμένων.	

Philodemus' objections deal with the separation of language and meaning which Crates requires in his theories. By demanding euphony without concern for the meaning, Crates is severing the necessary connection between words and referents, and by interpreting Homer symbolically (or allegorically, i.e. through *hyponoiai*), he is doing violence to the obvious meaning of the text. Both objections hinge on the close relationship between form and content, or better, language and meaning demanded by Epicurus.

For now, we will examine what Philodemus means by form and content taken separately, and then we will consider their interconnection and how this plays out in the judgment of poems. First, we will discuss the terms—what does Philodemus mean when he says form and content?— and then their relationship to each other.

§2 Terminology: λέξιc, διάνοια, cύνθεcιc, and ὑποτεταγμένη διάνοια

Philodemus accepts the division of poetry into content and form, but the terminology is

---

[267] The text incorporates a correction of misprinted ἤ at 28.33 (Janko [1994] correcting Mangoni [1993]). Janko also suggested to me reading πρόcλογον instead of πρὸc λόγον, which is the usual supplement and interpretation. The adjective is not attested, but is presupposed by the rare ἀπρόcλογοc (in Polybius) and may have been common in the banking industry (cf. Theocritus, *Ep.* 14 = *AP* ix.435 and LSJ s. v. λόγοc. I.1). I also conjectured δι' ὅλου for δι' ὅλα in 29.2, since the latter is almost certainly wrong; it does not have a parallel until the 16th century CE. The genitive was simply attracted to the case of the following phrase.

not completely straightforward.[268] There are several words for each, which seem at first glance to be used without differentiation. On investigation, however, it is clear that Philodemus' preferred terms are λέξις for language, cύνθεcιc for "arrangement," which is probably shorthand for cύνθεcιc τῆc λέξεωc, or arrangement of the language, is "form," and διάνοια "thought" for content. λέξις is used sometimes for form as well, in an extension of its usual sense.[269] He uses other terms as well, but they are usually borrowed from whichever critic he is engaging at that point in the treatise.

Demetrius Laco offers two definitions of λέξις, one for the proper definition (κυρίωc), the other for the specific use in question (ἰδίωc), at *On Poems* II.36.2-10. The context is too broken to be useful in specific details, and one important term is not well understood, but he was willing to recognize two uses of the term.[270] For what it is worth, his definition for the proper usage is ὅτι λέξις κοινῶς μὲν λέγεται φωνὴ ἔναρθρος ἐν ὧι τρόπωι καὶ ἡ ἀνυπότακτος, "*lexis* is commonly termed articulate speech in the same way as ἀνυπότακτος [sc. speech] is also," which I take to mean that language is articulate speech and that it stands in a relationship

---

[268] Mangoni (1993: 79-103) has usefully analyzed the terms used in *On Poems* V, and my discussion is founded on her work.

[269] Philodemus juxtaposes λέξις with διανόημα at V.25.32, διάνοια at V.26.2, and νοήματα at V.35.6. For a complete list of these juxtapositions, see Mangoni (1993: 87). Further, "language" is an obvious choice to refer to the linguistic aspects of a work of literature, especially when composition (cύνθεcιc) is already a technical term. λέξις was a technical term for Aristotle, who used it to refer to the language which characters in poetry used.

[270] The word in question is ἀνυπότακτος, which can mean "not restrained, free; unclassified; irregular." Romeo *ad loc*. rightly rejects "irregular" for our sense, but I think she is wrong to link it with cύνδεcμοι (conjunctions) and the processes of διαίρεcιc and διαcτολή (both "division" of some sort) and translate it as "loose" (*sciolto*) stylistically. I would rather compare it with Philodemus' use of ὑποτάττειν and perhaps translate it as "casual, quotidian, careless, without ordering principle" i.e. quotidian conversational discourse, rather than carefully composed verse or prose works (which for Philodemus have a ὑποτεταγμένη διάνοια), with reference not to style but to the thought given to the composition. The translation given above reflects my opinion; Romeo would have it mean "*lexis* is articulate voice in the same way in which the unbound (i.e. without cύνδεcμοι, conjunctions) style is" ("*Lexis* viene definita la voce articolata nello stesso modo in cui viene definito anche lo stile slegato" [1993: 136]).

to unorganized, i.e. disjointed speech.[271] Since incomprehensible speech does not maintain its

connection with τὰ ὑποτεταγμένα (cf. *Ep. Hdt.* §47), it could be said to be ἀνυπότακτος or

"without anything underlying it." This fundamental demand for meaningful language carries

through into Philodemus' poetics, in which the διάνοια ὑποτεταγμένη plays an important role

(see below for more on the verb and on the idea).

The words for content are more problematic, because they seem to refer to two different

types of content. First, there is the content of the poem in the sense of "what happens in the

poem," i.e. the plot. There are terms like μῦθος ("plot" or "story," Aristotle's term) and ὑπόθεσις

("plot," the term in general use in the Hellenistic period). πλάσμα (probably Heracleides' term),

which in later Greek means "fiction," also occurs in a lacunose passage at *On Poems* V.8.34.[272]

Alongside these terms are another set with a different reference: διάνοια, διανοήματα,

νοήματα, and νοούμενα are all taken to refer to the "thought" of the poem.[273] We tend to

separate the plot of the poem from the author's intention, but it does not seem that Philodemus

(or any other ancient theorist) did this consistently.

Philodemus' preferred term for "thought" seems to be διάνοια and it is significantly

paired with parts of the verb ὑποτάττειν. It means "mind" or "reason" in Epicurean philosophy

---

[271] The emendation to the papyrus reading of ανυποτακτας was made by De Falco. Hiatus in φωνὴ ἔναρθρος means that the definition is not Demetrius' own, because he avoids hiatus. I have suggested in a paper delivered in 2013 that he is quoting Epicurus. Romeo *ad loc*. suggests that it has a Stoic origin on the basis of the mention of articulation, which plays an important roll in their theory. However, this is no indication that Stoic theories are at issue, and it is more likely that Demetrius, an Epicurean after all, would object (cf. ὡς ἂν οὐ βλέπων ὅτι ... "as if he didn't understand that ..." introducing the quotation in the main text) to an opponent on Epicurean grounds rather than Stoic grounds. However, the context is very damaged and much about this passage remains mysterious. It is not clear what the ἰδίως use was. It may have been either *lexis* as a particular language (e.g. Greek) or *lexis* in its sense of "literary style."

[272] If Philodemus did use it, it was almost certainly a borrowing from Heracleides, since it appears nowhere else in Philodemus' treatise in this sense, but it is used in books I and II to mean "style:" see Janko (2003: 415 n. 6). Its use to mean "(work of) fiction" seems to be much later.

[273] That διάνοια is the "meaning" of a poem rather than the contents was suggested by Hammerstaedt (2003, 308) *à propos* the instance at *On Poems* V.26.4-5, but this does not seem to hold up throughout the treatise. See further on content below, §4.

123

generally; it is appropriate that the contents of the poem, which, as we will see, must appeal to the mind, should be referred to with the same word.[274] Aristotle had already used διάνοια in his analysis of tragedy in a different sense (i.e. the thought behind the statements of the narrator or of a particular character in the tragedy, see *Poetics* 50a6-7). In the scholia it is used to signify "meaning," i.e. the paraphrasable content of a sentence or passage.[275] The use of *dianoia* in the phrase *hypotetagmene dianoia* in Philodemus is more closely akin to that in scholiastic literary criticism.[276]

As for the meaning of ὑποτεταγμένη, two passages from Epicurus' *On Nature* XXVIII indicate that the verb has to do with the relationship between words and meaning for Epicureans.[277] The surviving portions of this book handle a type (or types) of error in language. The first passage belongs to a discussion of how confusion and false utterances arise, which Sedley ascribed to the period when Epicureans were trying to reform language usage. I have italicized his translations of the verb ὑποτάττειν.

Epicurus *On Nature* XXVIII Fr. 6 col. I:[278]

```
5              οὕ[τω γ]ὰρ
  ἀναγκαῖον ἦν τοῦτο {υτο}
  ἐνδίκνυ[c]θαι τὸ δὴ ὅτ[ι] βλέ-
  ποντεc [το]ὺc ὁμοφώνου[c ἡμῖν
  ὄ[ν]τα[c] ἀ[ν]τικειμ[έ]ν[ω]c αἷc ἡ-
10 με[ῖ]c φωναῖc χρ[ώμ]ε[θα] ψευ-
  δ[έc τι ἄλ]λο ὑπ[οτ]άττοντα[c
  ἀνύπ]οπτό[ν τε] ἐ[π]’ ἐκίναιc τα[ῖc
  ἐ[ννο]ία[ι]c, ἀλλὰ μένο[ν]τ[εc ..
  πρὸ[c α]ὐτοὺc .. εc[ .. δεδο-
15 ξάcθαι ἢ διὰ τὸ τι[ .....
```

For it was so necessary to point out that we, by observing that those who speak the same language as us were, in contrast to our own use of words, *assigning* some unsuspected false connotation in addition to those meanings but remaining, in respect to them … to think rather than on account of …

---

[274] On the meaning of the term, see Kleve (1963).
[275] So Dickey (2007: 232). Schironi (2009) argues that Aristarchus continued to use Aristotle's sense of the term *dianoia*.
[276] Schironi (2009: 297-300) argues that Aristarchus uses the term in the familiar Aristotelean sense "contents" (cf. *Poetics* 50a6-7 and 56a36-b2 and *Rhetoric* 1404a18-19).
[277] Both these passages should be read with Sedley's introduction and notes to his edition (1973).
[278] I have added the last part of the translation; Sedley left it untranslated.

A second passage contains a similar worry, about how changing views of language in the early days of the Epicurean school might leave them open to attacks from opponents:

Epicurus *On Nature* XXVIII, fr. 13 col. VI inf. 10-col. VII sup. 5 (numeration *sic):*

VI.10   καὶ [ἐκῖ-
νο ἔγωγε πολλάκις ἐνεθυ-
μήθην τὸ ὅτι [εἰ, ἐ]μοῦ προφέ-
ροντος ἀπορήμ[α]τα ἅ τις
ἂμ πρὸς ἡμᾶς ἔ[τρε]πεν, ἀπο-
5 διδώιη ὃ ἐκ τῶν [λέ]ξεων ϲυν-
οικε[ιοῦν] ὡϲ ταὐτὸ ϲυνέβαινε
μελετ[ᾶν] ἐπὶ τῆϲ γραφῆϲ,
πολλο[ῖ]ϲ ἂν ἴϲωϲ δόξειε τό-
1 τε μέν, ἤτοι κατὰ τὸν ἐπι-
VII.1 βλητικὸν τρόπον ἢ περιλη-
πτικῶϲ ἢ φανταϲτικ[ῶϲ] ἢ
δ[ι]ὰ λόγου δὴ θεωρητικῶϲ,
ψευδὴϲ ὑποτετάχθαι ταῖ[ϲ
5 λέξεϲ[ιν] ἐκίναιϲ δόξα ...

I also frequently reflected that if, when I raised difficulties which someone might have turned against us, he should claim that what used to be assimilated from ordinary language was the same as used to be practised in the written work, many might well conclude that in those days false opinion was *represented* in that language, whether through an empirical process, an imaged-based process, or a theoretical process...

Sedley has translated ὑποτάττειν differently in both of these passages, but it is clear that it refers to the ideas that *undergird* our language. In the first passage, ὑποτάττοντας refers to the action of assigning a meaning to a word, and, in the second, ὑποτετάχθαι refers to the opinion's being arrayed among the meanings of a word. In this connection, we should remember that the same usage occured in the phrase τὰ ὑποτεταγμένα τοῖϲ φθόγγοιϲ (*Ep. Hdt.* §37).

I suggest that Philodemus uses the phrase ὑποτεταγμένη διάνοια in poetry by analogy or extension with or from language: in language, meaning undergirds words. In poetry, the meaning of the poem undergirds the words of the poem. This will have an important consequence for the interrelationship between form and content: the content determines the form, at least to some extent, since words and meanings are linked and not to be separated.

The most suggestive statement of what Philodemus means by ὑποτεταγμένη διάνοια

comes at V.29-31, in his refutation of the anonymous opinions in Zeno's book.[279] The first

opinion handled by Philodemus claims that the excellence of a poem comes about when the

composition delights the hearing or is easily borne (κ[αλῶ]c φερομένη) and impresses its

meaning (διάνοια) on the audience. Philodemus' objections are predictable: word order does not

delight the hearing, the opponent did not define "excellence," or what kind of meaning the poem

ought to have, or several other terms besides. After registering his objections, he makes a brief

statement in his own words in which he expands on his objection that his opponent has not said

anything particular to poetry:

On Poems V.30.6-12:[280]

6 ἡ δὲ cύνθεcιc λέξεωc ἐναρ- γῶc καὶ ἐμφατικῶc τὴν ὑποτεταγμένην διάνοι- 10 αν [c]ημαίνουcα{ν} κοι- ν]ή [γ᾽ ἐc]τι καὶ λόγου παν- ＿τὸc ἀρετή{c}.	But the composition of the language, which clearly and expressively signifies the underlying meaning, is common to every discourse and is their virtue.

For the moment, Philodemus treats poetry and prose together as discourse and defines clear,

---

[279] This Zeno is commonly assumed to be Philodemus' teacher, Zeno of Sidon, who did write a work Περὶ ποιημάτων χρήcεωc "On the Use of Poetry," although if the Stoic were Zeno of Tarsus, he would be making a reappearance here. Since the *doxai* are not presented as belonging to Zeno, but as in his work, the assumption that the author is Zeno of Sidon seems unwarranted (see chapter two, §7). They are transmitted anonymously here (though one is assignable to Andromenides), and difficult to refer to specific philosophical schools or intellectual traditions, because of their brevity and general nature. See generally Asmis (1992c). This same brevity, paradoxically, makes them useful for exploring Philodemus' poetics, since he presents the totality of his opponent's statement and then explains his objections to it. Since the compass is so small and the discussion is at the end of the book, it is well preserved. (Four of the same opinions are handled, though with minor differences in phrasing, in *PHerc.* 228, fr. 3, which is an earlier part of *On Poems* V.)

[280] The emendations in ll. 10 and 12 were made by Dübner and Jensen respectively. According to Gaines, ἔμφαcιc (l. 8), as a technical term, can refer to a use of language to mean more than the bare denotations of the words: "a forceful use of language to express a meaning deeper or broader than that literally conveyed by the composer's words" (1982: 76 n. 18). Otherwise, in the realm of verbal communication, it can mean "force" or "expressiveness." But we need not assume that the word always has its technical significance. Philodemus himself seems to use ἐμφατικόc to simply mean "forceful" in the *On Rhetoric* (*lib. inc.*) *PHerc.* 1004 fr.7.6 (I.326 Sudhaus); his example is a saying of Epicurus (δι᾽ οὗ γίνεται τὸ ζῆν ἀλ[ύ]πωc, ἐπιμελητέον το[ύ]του· δι᾽ οὗ δὲ [μ]ὴ γίνετ᾽, οὐδαμῶc), which is notable more for its brevity, pith, and force than for any implication that there is something deeper to be apprehended.

    In ll. 10-12, I take λόγου παντὸc with both κοινή and ἀρετή.

forceful communication of their ideas as an excellence common to both of them. That the διάνοια is ὑποτεταγμένη λόγωι recalls Epicurus' usage (*Ep. Hdt.* §47, discussed above) in which he demands that our language correspond to the underlying meanings. Philodemus concludes his refutation of this opinion as follows:

On Poems V.30.34-31.7:

34	καὶ τὴν διάνοι[α]ν μέντοι, ποίαν τινὰ τοῖc ποιή-	However, what sort of thought is judged worthy to underlie poems, both these critics in general and many of those whom we examined previously and will investigate later are far from characterizing.
36	μαcιν ἀξιουμένην	
31.1	ὑποτάτ[τ]εcθαι, καὶ ὅ- λωc οὗτοι καὶ πολλ[οὶ τῶν πρό]τερον ἐξητα[c- μ[έ]νων καὶ τῶν ὑcτε-	
5	ρον θεωρηθηcομένων πο[λ]ὺ [δ]έουcιν ἀποχα- ρά]ττειν.	

Philodemus' complaint is that these critics and many others simply have not given an adequate description of the contents of poetry. There is no hint here that a ὑποτεταγμένη διάνοια is something characteristic of only a few poems, and that it is generally the same as the διάνοια is suggested by a passage from the start of the refutation of this *doxa*: Philodemus objects that the διάνοια (unqualified in the *doxa*) has not been defined:

On Poems V.29.32-6:

32	— οὐ διορίζει δὲ τὴν ἀρετὴν τῶι τίνα καὶ ποίαν δεῖ	And he does not define excellence by not indicating which and what kind of thought one ought to express.
35	διάνοιαν ἐ[κ]φέρειν μὴ	
36	ὑπογεγραφέναι.	

The objection in this case is the same as the one above; the only difference is in its phrasing. This leads us to believe that διάνοια is just a shorter way of saying ὑποτεταγμένη διάνοια, which itself implies τοῖc ποήμαcι.

Thus διάνοια is the contents of the poetry, and Philodemus does not seem to distinguish

between contents of the poem *stricto sensu* and the poet's "take" on them or intention. This state of affairs is surprising to us moderns, but it is worth remembering that Aristotle did not recognize the distinction in his *Poetics*, nor did Horace in his *Ars Poetica*. Aristotle may have subordinated authorial intention to his own view of how tragedy works on the psyches of its audience, or considered them to be the same. Horace might be assuming a certain intention (either elite propagandizing or entertainment) or have left it out of what is a fairly practical book of limited scope. They may also have considered it to be part of the poet's responsibility during the selection and arrangement of the contents. With this in mind, we can perhaps see a requirement for the poet to have a take on his material enter through the back door when Philodemus says that the contents are said to move the audience "rationally by artistic means" (τῶι τεχνικῶι λογιστικῶc κ{ε}[ι]νεῖ, I.175.22-23).

The phrase implies a certain view of the relationship between form and content, namely that contents have priority over form, not just chronologically or in the process of composition, but also linguistically, in that the poet's word choice is determined by her choice of contents.[281] That is, contents are selected and then the form is built up over them: the thought underlies (ὑποτάττεται) the form. Though this may seem to separate the two from each other, the verb implies rather a much closer relationship: form and content have the same kind of close relationship to each other as words and things do in the Epicurean analysis of language. The language of the poem cannot help but reflect the contents, because correctly used language

---

[281] Such a priority is, on reflection, reasonable: one cannot write verses that literally do not have a topic. For compositions of a whole poem to occur, the poet must have an intended topic. See chapter 3, §4 and §4 below on *On Poems* II.64.23-65.24. At *On Poems* II.30.17-23, Philodemus says that the poet thinks of the contents which he then makes clear through the composition: φροντίcαc γὰρ τοῦ διανοήματοc, ὃ διὰ τῆc κατασκευῆ[c ἔλ]εγον ἐμφαίνεcθαι, κ[ριθήc]εται ποητὴc ἀγαθὸc ἐ[πὶ] τῆ[ι] φροντιcτεί⟨αι⟩ ("For by taking care of the thought, which as I was saying is manifested by means of the elaboration, he will be judged a good poet according to a certain standard of care"). On this last passage, see below, chapter six, §3.

cannot help but have meaning. This close relationship has important consequences for the Epicurean analysis of how poetry works.

This is different from Aristotle's view in the *Poetics* (51b13-32), where he states that the poet can decide on and work out the plot before the language, or even the character names, is added in. It seems that, for Aristotle, the plot is completely prior and not intertwined with language; for Philodemus, the form and content are inseparable, even though the poet must logically conceive of the contents prior to the language.

§3 Form *and* Content

As we shall soon see, form is valued more highly than content, but they constitute the two halves of a coin and are just as inseparable. This inseparability is grounded in Epicurean commitments about language, specifically that words should always signify. Both are essential to the judgment of poems, but are not equal in that realm. First I will lay out Philodemus' rules for judging poems, which he gave in his rebuttal of the Stoic Critic:[282]

---

[282] For this Stoic, see Mangoni (1993: 61-69), who is agnostic about his identity, and Ioppolo (1980: 256-278; 2005), who treats him as Ariston. Textual evidence for his name survives only at col. 16.28-30, where the reading is]τωน, with the tau very uncertain, since it survives only in the Oxford *disegno*. Fish and Armstrong state that Ἀρίϲ]των is too long by two letters for the space (leaving only one and a half or two letter widths before the damaged tau in the Oxford *disegno*, or two and half to three spaces and -ων if that trace is disregarded), but do restore a reference to the Stoic school just before the name. Wigodsky's conjecture δο]ξῶν is probably the best option ("The one upholding Stoic beliefs"). If that is not accepted, the adversary might be the Stoic Zeno of Tarsus (successor of Chrysippus in 204), whose name would fit if the tau in the Oxford *disegno* is interpreted as a slight miscopying of the top horizontal and diagonal instead of a horizontal. Very little is known of his work. The extant fragments (*SVF* III p. 209; n.b. the fragment of Philodemus' history of the Stoics has been reedited in Dorandi's edition of that work) focus on the organization of philosophy and the *ekpyrosis*, as well as a possibly spurious work in five books *Against Hieronymus*, who, interestingly, wrote on rhetoric and style. He did write on dialectic, however, which may indicate a broader interest in language, including poetry. Amusingly, the Suda's entry shows confusion between the Stoic Zeno of Tarsus and the Epicurean Zeno of Sidon, Philodemus' teacher.

Very little is actually known about Stoic positions about poetry; the main idea seems to have been that poetic form seems to foster or aid the inculcation of correct beliefs irrationally. See esp. Seneca *Ep.* 108.10 and the quotation of Cleanthes at Philodemus *On Music* IV.142.1-14 (which is Philodemus' rebuttal of a position possibly summarized at 53.8).

On Poems V.19.34-21.27:[283]

<table>
<tr><td>34</td><td>εἰ γὰρ] οὔτ᾽ ἀc-</td></tr>
<tr><td>35</td><td>τείαν ⟨οὔ⟩τε φ[α]ύλην ἔλε-</td></tr>
<tr><td>20.1</td><td>γε, τίνα τὴν [ἔχουcαν co-
φὰc καὶ [παιδευτικὰc ὑ-
πέλειπεν δ[ιανοίαc, κ]α[ὶ
ποῖα τῶν ἀρχαίω[ν ὑ]π̣ε̣[τί-</td></tr>
<tr><td>5</td><td>θει ποημ[άτων ταύτ]αc̣**
περιέχειν· κα[θόλ]ου
δ᾽, εἰ μὴ ταῦτα καλ[ὰ π]οή-
ματα φήcει τ[ιc, πα]ντε-
λῶc οὐχ ὁρῶ τ[ί]να φή-</td></tr>
<tr><td>10</td><td>cει]. τεχνι̣κ̣[ὰ μ]έντοι**
τὰ παρα[πλή]cια τοῖc Ἀ[ν-
τιμάχο[υ γιν]ώcκω τ[ι-
νὰc λέγον[τα]c. εἰ δ᾽ ἑτέ-
ροιc, καὶ [δὴ τ]αὐτά (πᾶc[α</td></tr>
<tr><td>15</td><td>γὰρ ἐξουcία πᾶcιν ἐδόθη)
λελέχθω. κατὰ τέχνην δὲ*
τὴν ἐπαιν[ε]τὴν γέγρα-
πται, πόλεω[ν] αὐτ[οῖc] καὶ
τόπων οὕτωc εὐαρμόc-</td></tr>
<tr><td>20</td><td>τωc ἐ[νόντω]ν, cὺν τῶι
καὶ τὴν τάξι[ν] διαφυλάτ-
τειν, ὃ κἂν ὠφέλιμόν τιc
εἴπειεν. λέγοντα δ᾽ ἐ[π]ο-
μένωc, "ὅcα μήτε τὴν cύν-</td></tr>
<tr><td>25</td><td>θεcιν μήτε τ[ὴν δ]ιάνοι-
αν ἀcτείαν ἔ[χει, μ]ήτε
ἀcτεῖα μήτε φαῦλα ε̣ἶναι,"
μέμφομαι διό[τ]ι τῶν το[ι-
ούτων οὐ πα[ρ]έθηκεν ὑ-</td></tr>
<tr><td>30</td><td>πόδε[ι]γμα. θαυ[μ]αcτὸ[ν
γὰρ εἶναί μοι δο̣[κεῖ τὸ
cύνθεcιν ἔχον οὐ[κ ἀcτεί-
αν καὶ διάνο̣ι[αν οὔθ᾽ ὁ-
λῶc ποιητικὴν [οὔτ᾽ ἀcτεί-</td></tr>
<tr><td>35</td><td>αν μὴ φαῦλον ε[ἶ]ν̣[αι. ἐ-</td></tr>
<tr><td>21.1</td><td>κεῖνα τοίνυν ἐπ[αι]νῶ, δ[ι-
ότι "[τ]ὰ τὴν [μὲν διάν]ο[ιαν
ἀcτείαν ἔχο[ντα, κακὴν</td></tr>
</table>

... [for if] he meant neither good nor bad [sc. contents], what poem with wise and educational thoughts did he leave us, and which of the ancient poems did he think contained these? Generally, if someone denies that these are good poems, I cannot possibly see which ones he will say *are* good poems. I recognize that some people claim that the poems similar to those of Antimachus are in line with the demands of the art. But if [sc. the poems are similar] to other [poems], let the same be said, since every indulgence has been granted to everyone. The poems have been written in accordance with the art that is praised, since the cities and places are in them so harmoniously, along with the preservation of the order, which someone could even call "useful."

I blame him for not providing an example for his next claim that "those poems which have neither good synthesis nor good thought are neither good nor bad." For it seems amazing to me that "a poem with neither good synthesis nor good or any poetic thought at all is not bad."

So I praise those [sc. opinions], that "those that have good thought but bad composition are bad," and that "being badly

---

[283] The supplement εἰ γὰρ at 19.34 is Janko's. At 20.10, I read τεχνι̣κ̣[ὰ μ]έντοι (my emendation) for the reading τέχνη[ν μ]έντοι of Fish and Armstrong. O however seems to read τέχνην clearly. Janko conjectured ἐπεν̣[εχθέντων at the end of 21.12, which is likely if the letters now read there belong to a different layer. I have translated πόημα as "poem" since Philodemus' usage generally shows little indication that it should mean "verse" (the idea that a πόημα is a small part of a πόηcιc is Neoptolemus', not Philodemus', and that usage should not be imputed to him). I take the reference in ll. 16-23 to be to the poems of Antimachus, but it may be, as Janko suggests (pers. comm.), to the Catalogue of Ships in the *Iliad*.

<div style="column layout merged">

δὲ τὴν cύνθε[c]ιν, μ[ο]χθη-
5 ρά ἐcτι," [κ]αὶ διό[τι] "τὸ κ[ακῶ]c
cυνκεῖcθαι πρὸc τὸ φ[αῦ-
λον ἀπόχρη." τὸ δὲ π[ρὸc
τὸ cπουδαῖον μὴ ἀπ[ο-
χρῆν τὸ καλῶc, ἀλ[λὰ] προc-
10 δεῖcθαι καὶ εὐφω[νίαc
καὶ διανοίαc [καὶ π]ολλῶν
ἀλλῶν επεν[....]cπα[.
μο[ι] φαίνεται [.(.)]ηcθειc
τεc[.... (.) κ]αὶ cυν[ε-
15 πενηνέχθαι ταῖc ἀγε[νή-
τοιc εὐφωνίαιc τῶν κ[ρι-
τικῶν. ἔτι δ[ὲ μ]ᾶλλον
τὸ "τινὰ τῶν ἀρχ[α]ίων κα-
τά τι χρηc[τ]ὰ [ὄ]ντα καὶ μά-
20 λιcτα κατὰ τὴ[ν cύ]νθε-
cιν καθάπαξ εἶναι φαῦλα."
τ]οῦ γὰρ "τὰ κατά τι cπου-
δα]ῖα καθάπαξ εἶναι [φ]αῦ-
λ]ά γ'" [οὐδ]ὲν ἀδιανοη[τό]τε-
25 ρον] εὑρίcκω κατ[ὰ τὴν
cυνή[θ]ειαν ἀκούων τῶν
λεγ[ο]μένων.

composed suffices for a judgment of 'bad.'" But that being well composed does not suffice for a judgment of "good," but there is a further need for euphony, thought, and many other [qualities] … seems to me [somehow mistaken], and to have been brought in with the nonexistent euphonies of the critics. Even more so the claim that "some of the poems of the ancients, though good in one respect, but mostly in composition, are completely bad." If I read that according to the accepted sense of the words, I can find nothing more thoughtless than the claim that poems which are good in one way are completely bad.

</div>

This passage has been recognized as fundamental for Philodemus' poetics since at least Greenberg.[284] The opponent is unknown; Jensen identified him as Ariston of Chios, a Stoic; Mangoni refers to him as "the Stoicizing critic."[285] Whoever he was, his poetics are fairly simple. He thinks that poems can be good, bad, or intermediate, and that both good *synthesis* and good thoughts are important, but Philodemus takes him to task for claiming that a poem without any good aspect might somehow be "not bad" and for claiming that a poem with at least one good aspect is completely bad. He seems actually to like Antimachus, as Plato did. Despite that, some of his critical rules are approved by Philodemus.[286]

The implication of the Stoic critic's position is that, while composition and contents are

---

[284] Summarized at (1990: 273).
[285] See above, n. 282.
[286] Ioppolo (2005, updating the relevant chapter in Ioppolo 1980) discusses this Stoic's opinions and attempts to prove that he was Ariston (she does not take into account the papyrological problem of the space for his name).

different things, and can be evaluated separately, a poem requires them both, and requires them both to be at least reasonably good. Philodemus accepts this much, but his objections reveal his positions: bad composition makes a bad poem, no matter the quality of the thought. No matter, that is to say, how educational or beneficial the contents of the poem might be thought to be, if the composition is bad, it is a bad *poem*.[287] On the other side of the coin, mere good composition does not suffice for a judgment of "good"—good contents are also necessary. A poem cannot judged good without good contents and good composition. Finally, even if a poem is bad, if it has some good aspect, it is not wholly bad (and to claim so is an affront against the normal use of language). Philodemus' specific statement that the euphonies demanded by the *kritikoi* do not and never have existed was supported by argumentation in books I and II of the treatise, where he demonstrated that the rules are arbitrary and were not actually followed by poets in practice, a position that he summarizes neatly here.

What do composition and content consist of? This is a much vexed question. Philodemus gives a hint elsewhere in book V in his discussion of some unnamed philosophers who made some interesting claims, firstly that poets composed according to *themata*, arbitrary stipulations, and secondly that poetry provided no natural good or natural benefit (φυcικὸν ἀγαθόν, φυcικὸν ὠφέλημα) either in language or in thought. The identity of these philosophers is a riddle.[288] The passage is worth quoting at length:

On Poems V.25.2-26.11:[289]

---

[287] See below for more on this topic.
[288] There are many possibilities: Janko (2003: 129-133) argues for early Epicureans, Philippson (1924) and now Hammerstaedt (2003) suggest Skeptics. They were definitely not Stoics nor is it likely that they were Peripatetics (if later members of that school hewed closely to Aristotle's views).
[289] See Hammerstaedt (2003: 305-315) for discussion of the text of this passage and further bibliography. In 25.30, I suggest {ε}`τοι´γάρτοι as the interpretation of the traces reported on the papyrus. For ἔπη (25.27) as "verses" simply rather than "epic verses," see LSJ s.v. ἔπος IV b and c. The generality of the discussion here warrants the less specific translation. Asmis's discussion (1991: 8-9) of this passage specifically is vitiated by taking the goals

<table>
<tr><td>2</td><td>τ[οὐ]ς δὲ θ[έ]ματα φάσκον-
τες εἶναι φιλοϲόφους π[ρὸ]ς
ἃ δεῖ βλέποντας κρίνειν,</td><td rowspan="20">As for those philosophers who claim that rules exist, with an eye to which we must judge, and who propose in addition the rest of what he copied out, if he was hinting that they were Epicureans, he was babbling, as has become clear and will become clear as we continue; but if [sc. he claimed] that they were some other [sect], then they were partly right and partly wrong and they left some things out. They left out completely the ideas of good and bad verses and poems, but they were right to claim that there is no natural good in a poem, if they claimed that, since what Crates wrote is not clear. And they were wrong to think that all are rules and that there exists no common judgment of good and bad verses, but that there is a different one for each group of people, like that of customs. For that reason, *qua* verse, it provides no natural benefit either in language or in content. Therefore there do exist solid goals for goodness—for language, the imitation of language which teaches useful things in addition, and for thought, being intermediate between the thought of the wise and that of the uneducated. And these (sc. goals) do exist, whether one thinks so or not, and one must judge with reference to them.</td></tr>
<tr><td>5</td><td>κ[αὶ] τὰ λοιπὰ προστιθέν-
τας ἃ μετέγραψεν, εἰ μὲν
τ]οὺς περὶ τὸν Ἐπίκουρον
ἠι]νίττετο, φλύαρος ἦν,
ὡς καὶ γέγονε καὶ γενή-</td></tr>
<tr><td>10</td><td>c]εται προιόντω[ν] cυμ-
φ[α]νές. εἰ δ’ ἄλλους τινάς,
ἐ[κε]ῖνοι τὸ μὲ[ν] ἠλήθευ-
ο[ν, τ]ὸ δ’ ἐψεύδ[ον]το, τὰ δὲ
παρέλιπον. παρέλειπομ</td></tr>
<tr><td>15</td><td>μὲν ὅλως τὰς ἐννοίας
τῶν ἀϲτείων καὶ φαύλων
ποιημάτων καὶ ποιή-
ϲεων], ἠλήθευ[ον] δὲ φυ-
ϲικὸν ἀγαθὸν ἐμ ποιήμα-</td></tr>
<tr><td>20</td><td>τι μηδὲν εἶναι λέγον-
τες, εἴπερ τοῦτ’ ἔφαϲκον
(ὃ γὰρ οὗτος ἔθηκεν ἀδιά-
ληπτόν ἐϲτιν), ἐψεύ-
δοντο δὲ θέματα πάν-</td></tr>
<tr><td>25</td><td>τα ν[ο]μίζο[ν]τες εἶναι καὶ
κρίϲ[ι]ν οὐχ ὑπάρχει[ν] τῶν
ἀϲτείων ἐπῶν καὶ [φαύ-
λων κοινήν, ἀλλὰ πα-
ρ’ ἄλλοις ἄλλη[ν], ὡς τὴν</td></tr>
<tr><td>30</td><td>νομίμων. {ε.} ῾τοι῾γάρτοι, κα-
θὸ πόημα, φυϲικὸν οὐδὲν
οὔτε λέξεως οὔτε δι[α-
νοήματος ὠφέλημα π[α-
ρ]αϲκευάζει. διὰ τοῦτ[ο</td></tr>
<tr><td>35</td><td>δὲ τῆς ἀρετῆς ἑϲτηκότες</td></tr>
<tr><td>26.1</td><td>ὑπόκεινται ϲκ[οπ]οί, τῆι
μὲν λέξει τὸ μ[εμι]μῆϲ-
θαι τὴν ὠφέλι[μα] προϲ-
διδάϲκουϲαν, τῆς δὲ δι-</td></tr>
<tr><td>5</td><td>ανοίας τὸ μεταξὺ μετ[εϲχη-
κέναι τῆς τῶν ϲοφῶν
καὶ τῆς τῶν χυδαίων.
καὶ ταῦτ’ ἔϲτιν, ἄν τε νο-
μίϲῃ τις ἄν τε μή, καὶ</td></tr>
<tr><td>10</td><td>κριτέον ἐπὶ τ[α]ῦτ’ ἐπα-
νάγοντας.</td></tr>
</table>

(ϲκ[οπ]οί, 26.1) as goals for utility rather than for poetic quality. For more on her arguments, see below chapter six, §9.

Philodemus lays out the two goals for language and content in poetry, but we must first discuss his method. He first takes pains to correct Crates' apparent misunderstanding about the identity of the group: they were not Epicureans. Then he gives a critical summary of their positions, granting some of their positions and interpreting them generously, which allows them to hold a position he agrees with, even though they may not actually have done so. However, he does disagree with two positions, namely that good poetry is determined by *themata* and that there is no common basis for judgment of poetry. Both of these statements are incompatible with his Epicurean commitments. Philodemus did not believe that poetry *per se* was beneficial to its audience, but the *prolepsis* covers the same ground that these "Philosophers" attributed to the *themata*: it determines what is "good poetry." The *prolepsis* also serves therefore as the common basis of judgement; since any educated person has a *prolepsis* of good poetry, they can determine the status of any poem by comparing it to their *prolepsis*.

Nicola Pace and more recently Jürgen Hammerstaedt have raised serious objections to the assumption that these opinions are Philodemus' own and not the "Philosophers'."[290] Their arguments rest on two points. The first is that the demand here is similar to those at *On Poems* V.32-3 and at *Rhet*. I.149 Sudhaus (book 4), both of which Philodemus clearly disapproves of:

On Poems V.32.36-33.7:[291]

32.36 ἡ δὲ 33.1 cύν[θεcιν λ]έξεων προc- δι[δάcκουcάν τι περι]ττό-	The [opinion] that a composition of language (= style) teaches something additional by means of verse

---

[290] Pace (1995: 166-75), Hammerstaedt (2003: 310).
[291] The term "composition of language" is odd. Philodemus seems to understand it as "poem" (i.e. a composition in language through verse), which gives good sense and is how I have taken it here. Another possibility is that it means "the composition of the language [sc. of the poem in question]", which seems grammatically possible, but I think Philodemus would have had serious objections with the idea that the word order was supposed to "teach something in addition." Janko suggests (pers. comm.) "arranged language," whether in verse or not, which then is limited here to verse by Philodemus' qualification. It is impossible to recover what the original meaning of the term was in context, and Philodemus may be reading his opponent generously and taking the less objectionable interpretation of the phrase. Scodel (pers. comm.) suggests taking ταύτηι in ll. 3-4 as an instrumental dative.

τερον διὰ ποιή]ματος [ἢ τ]α[ύ-
τηι γ᾽ ὡμοιωμένην [τὸ
5   μὲν προϲδιδάϲκειν πε-
ριττ[ό]τερον οὐ διαϲαφεῖ
7   _τίνοϲ.

or is likened to this [sc. composition or style?] does not make clear what it teaches in addition.

Superficially, Philodemus' objection here seems fatal to the idea put forth in col. 26, quoted *supra*. But in col. 32 "something additional" is demanded, and Philodemus' objection is precisely that this "something additional" (τι περιττότερον) is not specified, whereas at 26.3 "useful things" (ὠφέλιμα, presumably educational content, but any sort of benefit, e.g. psychological, is possible) are in question. This is an indication that the two opinions belong to different critics: if the critic had specified that "useful things" were the "something additional" required, Philodemus would be an even worse debater than he is usually alleged to be. Since Philodemus' objection at col. 32 is that the critic did not specify *what* additional thing was required, and at col. 26 something is specified, the same objection does not apply.

The second textual basis for Pace and Hammerstaedt's objections is in *On Rhetoric* IV (I.149 Sudhaus), where the discussion is about prose style. Philodemus is refuting an unknown opponent, possibly a Peripatetic, about the demands for a good prose style. At issue, evidently, are both what features constitute a good prose style and what a good style ought to accomplish for its audience. But Mariachristina Fimiani informs me that this column was misrestored in Sudhaus' edition and that it is made up of two half-columns with a *sezione* missing in between, with the result that the particular text on which they rely no longer exists; hence the objections of Pace and Hammerstaedt are not valid.[292]

These considerations form a prologue to discussion of Philodemus' claim that the language of a poem should teach useful things in addition, and that the content should be

---

[292] Pers. comm. She is currently reediting book four of Philodemus' *Rhetoric*.

midway between that for fools and that for the wise. There is a variety of opinions on what precisely these statements mean. However, we will discuss his demands for the content first, both because these are the more difficult to understand and because clarification of them will help clarify the demands placed on style.

§4 Content

The demands placed on content are fairly clear: τῆς δὲ διανοίας τὸ μεταξὺ μετ[εϲχη]κέναι τῆς τῶν ϲοφῶν καὶ τῆς τῶν χυδαίων ("and for thought, being intermediate between the thought of the wise and that of the uneducated"). χυδαῖοϲ, "base," "vulgar," is not really a technical term, but by Philodemus' time has come to mean "uneducated" and is used in opposition to terms which imply a high degree of intellectual attainment, as here. It is often joined with other pejorative terms (cf. e.g. *Music* IV.140.2, where it is joined with φατικά "merely assertory" and μαχόμενα "contradictory"). ϲοφόϲ is a technical term in Epicurean philosophy for the Sage, the philosopher who has a perfect grasp on the ideas and practices of the group. Epicurus used the term in this way (cf. frr. 222 - 223 Us.) and Philodemus himself used it similarly, for instance, in the *De Ira* (*passim*).

Therefore the demand is for contents which are intelligent but not philosophical, perhaps a sort of high-brow entertainment, similar to the *diagoge* (or liberal leisured pastime) allowed by Aristotle.[293] Education, though perhaps admitted as a theoretical possibility, is firmly *not* the goal of a poet in writing a poem. This conclusion is supported by other positions taken throughout the *On Poems*. For instance, Philodemus denies that poems, *qua* poems, are useful (V.25.30-34), and

---

[293] See *Politics* 8.5, 1339a11-1340b19 for a discussion of the status of *mousike*, which for Aristotle includes music and song (in my sense), and Janko (2011: 375-6).

claims that no useful poem ever was or will be written (V.17.20-24). Further, he may have stated that poets have no obligation to provide proofs or philosophical demonstrations in their poems, just as such demonstrative rigor is not required in most prose genres (V.1.26-33).[294] If τὸ πραττόμενον at V.7.6-13 means "reality" (so Armstrong), then Philodemus does not even require poems to be *about* the real world.[295] The utility of poetry is simply not a concern for Philodemus. This is not a wholesale denial of the possibility that poems could be useful. If a poem should turn out to be useful, it will not be so *qua* poetry but rather *qua* treatise, and he will then say that it would have been better to write it in prose, since that medium promotes clarity and argument.

If the Epicureans held that the speech of the wise was about better or more important topics in some way than was that of most people, then Philodemus' statement is understandable as follows: the contents of poetry should not be stupid, nor that of philosophers. This leaves a wide field in which poets can play, but does set some limits: stupid contents presumably will impede the poet from achieving a good poem in good literary form. On the other hand, if a poet wanted to write about philosophical topics, they would not do so in verse.[296]

We can say a bit more about contents in a more practical way. The poet is under no requirement to be original, as suggested by the comparison of poets with cooks:

On Poems II.64.23-65.24:[297]

---

[294] The subject of ἔχουϲι at l. 33 seems to be οὐκ ὀλίγοι (sc. ϲυγγραφεῖϲ) at l. 27 and τάγμα should be understood as "obligation" or "requirement," a meaning not recognized in LSJ.

[295] Armstrong (1995b: 216-7). Mangoni translates it as "i fatti," which amounts to the same thing, and reads the passage as permitting vivid descriptions of non-existent topics. The term looks like it could have a broader meaning of "subject matter" in the broad sense of "topic treated;" however, the rest of the sentence, in which Philodemus says that not only lies but also myths are narrated extremely vividly by poets, seems to demand the more precise term.

[296] For the implications of this statement about Lucretius see McOsker (forthcoming 2).

[297] ἴδια δὲ at the end of line 11 is my conjecture, and I read γὰρ at the end of l. 9 with Henry (τιϲ Janko), and "particular" sc. to him is another possibility for its translation.

<table>
<tr><td>

23   διὸ καὶ
τὸν ποιητὴν cυρίτ[τ]οι‹μεν›
25 ἂν δικαί[ω]c, εἴ τι πονοί-
η τῶν ἀναλόγων. ὃ ὀ[ὐ-
27 χ ὅμοιόν ἐcτιν ἐπ[ὶ τ]ῆc
65.1 ποιητικῆc τὸ "τὰ πρ[άγμα-
τα ἄγνωcτα εἶναι, [τὰc δὲ
λέξειc οὐκ ἀρεcτά[c", τῶι
ἐπὶ τῆc μαγε[ιρι]κῆ[c cα-
5   πρὰ τἀγοράcματα'. τ[ῆc
μὲν γὰρ ἔξω ταῦτ' ἐc[τί,
τῆc δὲ ποιητικῆc ὀ[ὐ]κ [ἔc-
τιν ἔξω τὸ ποεῖν [γνωc-
τὰ τὰ πράγματα. [κἂν γὰρ
10 παντελῶc αὐτὰ [παρ' ἑ-
τέρου λαμβάνη[ι, ἴδια δὲ
τῇ cυνθέcει τὰ πο[ήμα-
τα, τοῦτ' ἦν ἰδιώ[τατον
αὐτοῦ'. διόπερ ο[ὐδὲ τὸ
15 τὰc λέξειc ο`ἰ´κείαc [ποιεῖν
ἐκτόc ἐcτι τῆc π[οιητικῆc,
κἂν αἱ λέξειc ὠφ[ελείαc
τοῦ βίου παρεcχή[κωcι
κοιναί'. τὸ γὰρ ἐγλ[έγειν
20 τὰc ο`ἰ´κείαc καὶ δ[ι]ατ[ιθ]έ-
ναι πρὸc [[α]] δήλωcιν τοι-
ούτου νοήματοc ἐπι-
τηδ//ε//[ίωc]', τοῦτ' ἦ[ν ἴ]δι-
24 >ον αὐτοῦ'.

</td><td>

Hence we would rightly hiss the poet, if he prepared something of the same kind. The claim in the case of poetry that "the contents are unintelligible and the words not pleasing" is not like the claim in the case of cookery that "the ingredients are rotten." For the latter are external to the art [sc. of cookery], but making the contents intelligible is not external to the art of poetry. For even if [sc. the poet] takes them [= the contents] over completely from someone else, and the verses are his own by his composition, this is, as we saw, very much his particularity. For this reason, even making the words one's own does not lie outside the art of poetry, even if words that are common have provided the needs of life. For, as we saw, selecting appropriate words and arranging them suitably with a view to expressing clearly such a thought is his particularity.

</td></tr>
</table>

This passage will be discussed at greater length below, in §8. For now, it suffices to say that

Philodemus can easily imagine cases in which the poet has no control over the topic.

Nor does the plot even have to be logical.

On Poems V.10.23-34:[298]

<table>
<tr><td>

23   δύνα-
τα[ι γάρ] τι[c] ἄλογόν τινα
25 μῦθον καὶ ὑπόθ[ε]cιν
προθέμενοc ἐξε[ργ]άcαc-
θα[ι] ποιητ[ι]κῶc, καί τι-
νεc πο[ιη]ταὶ γεγόναcι τοι-
οῦτοι. τέλ[ει]οc δὲ καὶ ἀγα-
30 θὸc ποιητὴc ὁ cὺν τῆι κα[ὶ]

</td><td>

Someone can set for themselves some irrational story or plot and work it up poetically, and there have been such poets. But a complete and good poet is thought to be the one with the selection of those aspects too [sc. plots or *tropoi*, mentioned earlier].

</td></tr>
</table>

---

[298] Greenberg (1955: 33-7) and Pace (1995: 126-130) consider this passage, but they are mislead by a flawed understanding of *poema* and *poesis* in Philodemus. Janko (pers. comm.) suggests τίc in line 34.

34	τούτων ἐγλογῆι ν[ο]εῖται. τὴν μέντοι τάξ[ιν τελειο- τάτην, οἷα παρ' Ὁμ[ήρ]ω[ι καὶ Cοφοκλεῖ, τίς η[]οτc[ ]τιντα	Yet who...the most perfect arrange- ment [sc. of the plot], such as in Homer and Sophocles...

Philodemus says outright that the plot need not be rational for the poet to be good (and the poet is already better than the merely good versifier). It seems safe to infer that a good and logical arrangement is the best and that this is the thrust of the damaged end of the column. As Pace indicates, this is related to Aristotle's position that plausible impossibilities are better material for a play than implausible possibilities (*Poetics* 24, 60a26-9). This probably implies that the irrationality of the plot, if unavoidable, should be at least not obvious.

§5 Form

Philodemus' general term for "form" is cύνθεcιc. Pace again has done an excellent job determining its significance in his poetics: it is precisely the ἴδιον, the particular feature, of poetry.[299] This was inferred from the discussions of the ἔργον of the poet, since the *ergon* would surely be to produce a work of art ἴδιον to that art, and the ἔργον is saying something, not new, but in the way in which only a poet would say it.[300] Similarly, τὸ ἀγαθόν, the "goodness" of a poem, is related to the ἀρετή, or "excellence" of a poet: the terms are not actually synonymous, but refer to the same thing seen from different viewpoints, those of the creation and of the creator respectively: the ἀρετή of the poet is to write ἀγαθὰ ποήματα.[301]

---

[299] Pace (1995: 184-190).
[300] Cf. *On Poems* I.167, with Janko's note.
[301] The *idion* accordingly is from the perspective of the poem and the *ergon* from that of the poet; see chapter six, §6. All of these terms can also retain their usual meanings in addition to their technical ones.

Diction[302] and the figures of language are probably to be included under the heading of "form," but Philodemus does not go into details.[303] The interconnectedness of form and content means that certain distinctions are difficult to make. Unusual word-order cannot be merely a stylistic feature and, since it surprises the reader with the postponed words, has an intellectual effect. So it is not purely a stylistic feature, but it cannot be said to be a feature only of the contents either.

More obscure is the demand made about style at *On Poems* V.26.1-4: τῆι μὲν λέξει τὸ μ[εμι]μῆϲθαι τὴν ὠφέλι[μα] προϲδιδάϲκουϲαν.[304] Jensen explained the statement as a demand that the language of poetry be an imitation of daily usage, which arose under the compulsion of nature, and that, once this had been accomplished, it would contain all the stylistic virtues.[305] This may be right in broad outline but does not explain the unusual phrase, which he translates as "die nebenbei Nützliches lehrt." This will turn out to be the most accurate translation. Greenberg (1955: 84) explains it as a demand for "an informally didactic" tone, or one which is "expositive" and "meaningful." Grube (1968: 197-8) gives a similar explanation, with reference to Philodemus' poetic practice and Peripatetic theories of style:

As for the requirement that poetic language should imitate that of useful instruction, we

---

[302] Many scholars have treated diction as if it were separable from "form" generally, though in some cases they discuss what I could call "form" generally or language as a mode of communication rather than word choice specifically, e.g. Pace (1995: 142-3), who calls it form, and Greenberg (1955: 274-5) who calls it language.

[303] Heracleodorus (so Janko, forthcoming, revising his previous opinion) discusses diction at I.43-6, possibly until 48, but the rebuttal in book 2 is too fragmentary for any conclusions. See chapter six, §2.

[304] Everyone, as far as I know, takes τὴν...προϲδιδάϲκουϲαν as the object of μεμιμεῖϲθαι, though only an anacoluthon of a common type (switch from dative to accusative, *ad sensum*) prevents it from being the *subject*: "That the language imitate [sc. life?] while also teaching useful things is the goal." This is a less obvious understanding of the word order and is in conflict with Philodemus' statement that he does not know of any useful poems nor does he think that a poet will ever write one (V.17.20-24). If he did require even incidental teaching of useful lessons, it would violate this stronger statement.

[305] "...daß die Dichtersprache eine Nachahmung der Umgangssprache sein soll, welche einst unter dem Zwang der Natur entstand, als sich bei den Menschen das Bedürfnis nach gegenseitiger Verständigung geltend machte. Wenn der Dichter diese Sprache richtig nachzuahmen versteht, werden seine Schöpfungen auch alle die Stiltugenden enthalten..." (1923: 157-8).

should remember that, in Aristotle and Theophrastus, the language of useful instruction is that of the philosopher who avoids ornamentation, and Philodemus seems to mean that poetry should be simple and straight-forward in expression, which would appear to agree with his own practice.

Epicurus too demanded clear prose as the vehicle for useful instruction, so the comparison is apt. But we should be cautious of any rendering which makes, or seems to make, poetry out to be actually didactic.

The verb προσδιδάϲκω (used in *On Poems* V.26.3-4, quoted above in §3) has remained an issue.[306] A useful comparandum is *De Poem.* I.185-6, part of Philodemus' rebuttal of Andromenides, who claimed that beautiful language was important. Philodemus' rebuttal is that mere words "on their own, do not seem to have any beauty" (καθ' αὐτό τι φαίνεται καλὸν ἔχειν, 186.1-2), nor do they ever make the thought intelligible, but those things, which give extra understanding of the characters and affections of the soul, seem to teach something useful in addition (ἀλλ' οὐχί ποτε⟦ν⟧ ϲυνετὸν ποι|εῖν τὸ διανόημα, ⟨ταῦ⟩τα δὲ προϲδιδάϲκειν τι τῶν ϲυμβαινόντων, ἃ προϲ[ε]πιϲυνετίζει [τὰ ἤ]θη [ἢ πάθη τ]ῆϲ ψυ[χῆϲ]). προϲεπιϲυνετίζω is a *hapax legomenon* (and is partially emended to boot), so we are proceeding by explaining *obscurum per obscurius*, but the definition suggested by Janko *ad. loc.* ("to give extra understanding") is surely along the right lines. This clarifies the use of προϲδιδάϲκω: in context, we are not expecting any discussion of education, and besides this sentence, there is no such discussion. So the verb must mean "teach in addition to doing something else" rather than

---

[306] Besides Philodemus, the word appears several times. In the other instances, there is a previous explicit mention of learning or of a lesson, so the force of the preverb is obviously appropriate in context. N.b. the spurious fragment of Menander (553 Kock, not in Körte or Kassel-Austin) which appears under several guises in a TLG search for this verb. The date of the fragment, which is actually an excerpt from the *Comparatio Menandri et Philistionis* (4th-6th century CE) puts it out consideration here; see Koerte's preface (vol. II pp. vii-viii) to his 1953 ed.

"just one lesson in addition to another lesson."[307]

So Philodemus' phrase τὴν ὠφέλιμα προσδιδάσκουσαν does not refer to a style which teaches useful things in addition to teaching some other topic, but to one that teaches useful things in addition to doing something else entirely (e.g. be entertaining). Formulations such as "expository and meaningful" are not so far off from the idea, but "didactic" should probably be avoided, since real education via poetry is simply out of the question for Philodemus.

The demand for imitation is confounding as well, but there is again a useful comparandum at *On Poems* V.35.11-28. The *doxa* is anonymous there, but is very similar to a statement of Andromenides at I.160.17-18; he was a *kritikos* who demanded not only beautiful sound but also a match between form and content, specifically that the vocabulary should match the characters using it.[308]

On Poems V.35.11-28:

11 ὅτι "τοῖς θεοῖς καὶ τοῖς ἥρωσιν ἡ τοιαύ- τη πρέπει λέξις" ἠλιθί- ων ἐστί, καὶ μεμιμῆς- 15 θαι βέλτιον λέγειν τὴν πρέπουσαν. τελείω[c δὲ μ[αν]ικὸν τὸ παρ[α- ψηλαφ[ᾶ]ν ὁμοιότητα λέξεως τοῖς δηλουμέ- 20 νοις πράγμασιν. εἰ δὲ προσυπακουστέον καὶ τὴν διάνοιαν, ἢ γρα- φεὺς παραλέλοιπε, τὸ πο-	...that "such a style befits the gods and the heroes" is the claim of foolish men, and it is better to say that it imitates the style which befits them. But the grasping after a similarity of the style to the actions it describes is completely insane. If "contents" must be understood as well, or if a scribe has left it out, it is ludicrous to assign to the art

---

[307] See Smyth §1695.4: "Often in the sense *additionally*, qualifying the whole sentence rather than the verb." Cf. πρὸς ἐξανδραποδίcαcθαι at Herodotus I.156.2 (written *separatim* in Hude's OCT), προcαποκρίνομαι in Arist. *Metaphysics*. Γ 4, 1007a17. and προcλαμβάνω at Philodemus *On Poems* IV.117.16-7. and n.b. Armstrong 1995b: 217 n. 18. Armstrong supplies "being attractive" as the thing which the poem does besides teaching.
    Another relevant passage is in *On Rhetoric* IV (*PHerc.* 1423.xvii = I.159 Sudhaus), in which some things (αἱ μὲν... αἱ δὲ...τινὲc...τινὲc) προcδιδάcκουcι, but others do not. Unfortunately, the antecedent is not preserved and the precise meaning of the verb is not clarified by context.

[308] He was an influence on Crates and was summarized in his work. See Janko (2003: 143-154) for a collection of fragments and discussion. That Demetrius Laco also discussed him in his *On Poems* (the name appears at I.16.8-9) may be evidence of his importance and influence around the end of the second century and into the first.

25	ητικῆ διάγνωϲιν ἀπο- νέμειν τ[ῶν ἑ]κάϲτωι προϲώπωι πρεπόν- των λόγων παράκο- πόν ἐϲτιν.	of poetry the differentiation between the speeches which befit each character.

This passage is discussed in detail below (chapter 6, §2), but here imitation is used as a way to avoid demanding from the poet technical knowledge which is outside the purview of the art of poetry. Poets need not be expert theologians to write gods' speeches in their poems, and so the standard to which they are held is a lower one: only the imitation or representation of the divine style, not actually producing or reproducing it. A better translation might perhaps be "portray fictionally," i.e. to compose something resembling what most people think the object is like, regardless of whether or not it is actually that way, or more simply "to be or seem like something else," regardless of how close the actual relationship is. In this case, Homer's job was to compose the speeches for the Olympians in the council of the gods as they discuss Odysseus' fate, even though, as good Epicureans, we know that the gods do not care for mortal affairs and would not have bothered themselves with him. In the first instance above, the demand put on poetic style is for it to be reasonably straightforward, clear, and informative, since it only has to mimic, imitate, or represent an informative or expository style. We might paraphrase this demand as "write plausibly and reasonably clearly."

These are to be understood as general guidelines, not universally valid rules, however. Philodemus is happy to allow variation to fit style or theme, as he objects to one of the anonymous *doxai* in book V.

On Poems V.31.18-32:

18 20	πρόϲ- εϲτι δ' αὐτῆι καὶ τὸ [πά]ντα ϲυντόμωϲ ἐκφέρειν ἀ- ξιοῦν, ἐπὶ μέν τινω[ν	The demand for expressing everything briefly is additionally required [sc. by this *doxa*]; in some

ἐξεργάζεσθαι δέον, ἐπὶ
δέ τινων τ[ο]ῖς αὐτ[ο]ῖς
ἐνδιατρίβειν, ἐπ[ὶ δ' ἐνί-
25 ων καὶ περιφράζειν.
κα]ὶ τ[ὸ π]ᾶcι παρακολου-
θεῖν τὴν cαφήνεια[ν,
οὔτε πάcηc ἐπιτρεπομέ-
νηc τοῖc ποηταῖc οὔτε
30 τῆc cυγχωρουμένηc
ἅπαcι τοῖc νοουμένοιc
32 ἁρμόττειν δοκούcηc.

cases, it is necessary to compose [sc. briefly], but in others to dwell on the same topics, and in some cases to resort to paraphrase. And that clarity is incumbent in every case [sc. is also demanded by this *doxa*], though not all of it [sc. clarity] is entrusted to the poets, nor does it seem to allow befitting all types of contents.

Here, Philodemus denies that brevity and clarity are appropriate in every case, because some topics require more expansive or more elliptical treatment or are too inherently difficult for perfectly clear exposition in any case.[309] He is pessimistic about poets' ability to be clear, which is in line with his denial of utility to them. It is not evident from this passage whether he grants authority to authors to be unclear as a stylistic choice rather than because the material forces them to, but it seems possible that he does, depending on the interpretation of "cases" (ἐπὶ μέν τινων…ἐπὶ δέ τινων…ἐπὶ δ' ἐνίων). If these are cases of contents, then he does not discuss style in this passage. If these are cases understood broadly to mean "cases in which poets can make choices about their poems," then he seems to allow them consciously to decide to be unclear.

If I am right, then, the demands are for a reasonably clear style which expresses intelligent contents, but expert knowledge is not demanded in either case: gods can speak in poetry, but they need not speak in veritably divine style about Epicurean truths. This is permission for poets to compose by their own lights and a justification for permitting falsehoods—not just mistaken arguments, but outright lies and myths—in good poetry. A

---

[309] It is difficult to imagine what kinds of topics could demand elliptical treatment, but, in the *On Anger* (20.18-34), he discusses those who, in fits of rage, violate the secrecy of the Mysteries. He could conceivably have a treatment of the Mysteries in poetry in mind here, such as the *Homeric Hymn to Demeter*.

possible basis for this position is precisely Philodemus' claim that no useful (i.e. philosophically educational) poem had ever or will ever be written (*On Poems* V.25.30-34). There was a large corpus of poetry recognized as good on some grounds or other (possibly on the basis of simple enjoyment), but which was not philosophical. By making the criteria for adjudicating a poem "good" unrelated to the poem's utility or truth, Epicureans were able to subordinate poetry to philosophy, because it is not a rival source of truth about the world. At the same time, they permit its enjoyment by those who are aware of the potential dangers.[310]

§6 The Interrelation between Form and Content

Let us now turn to focus on the relationship between form and content, which has to some extent already been handled. To do so, we will need to consider how Crates of Mallos, the Homeric scholar of Pergamum, violates Epicurean doctrines about language in passages which we will discuss later. Specifically, Philodemus finds his idea of *Sphaeropoeia* ("sphere-making" literally), the interpretive practice of finding circles in Homer's poems, to be somehow ridiculous (if this is indeed what Philodemus means at V.28.33-29.7), which is consistent with his criticism of Stoic *allegoresis* and the discussion of the gods in the second half of the *De Pietate*.[311]

At this point in the discussion, Philodemus seems to be discussing the violence that Crates' interpretive schema does to the plain meaning of the poem as communicated by its

---

[310] Philodemus was not the first to put forward the view that poetry was only for entertainment; both Eratosthenes and Aristarchus had similar opinions.

[311] See, for now, Schober's edition (1988) and Obbink (1995b); for further bibliography, see Obbink's bibliographical note on the "Theological Works" (1995: 280). Obbink's expected *On Piety pt. 2* will supersede Schober's edition. On Crates, Broggiato's collection of fragments with introduction and commentary (2001) is indispensable. See also Asmis (1992) for a general treatment, Porter (1992) on the difference between Aristarchus's lines and Crates' spheres and their implications for readings of Homer, and Bilić (2012) on his geography and astronomy. N.b. the list of identifications made by "maniacs" between gods and bodily organs and natural phenomena given by Philodemus at II.53-4, with his criticism extending a few columns further (where, however, the text is badly damaged).

language. Crates thought that both the universe and the planet were spherical, that both Homer and Hesiod knew this, and that they reflected it in their works.[312] He also had opinions about cosmological organization, e.g. the sun holds the highest circuit above the earth, then the moon is below it, and so forth, and about the seas. Based on an attempt to reconcile the statements of the Homeric poems with contemporary knowledge of geography, he made statements about the travels of the heroes, e.g. that Odysseus sailed in the Atlantic Ocean (frr. 44 and 77 Broggiato) and that Menelaus visited India after circumnavigating Africa on his way home from Troy (fr. 40 Broggiato).

Philodemus' major tactic is to accuse Crates of inconsistency: for example, the latter claims that poems are pleasing, but should be judged according to how well they meet the *logika theoremata*, which serve as criteria. Philodemus understands him to be claiming that poems are judged both on the basis of the pleasure they give us and on how well they accord with the criteria. A more pleasing poem would reasonably be described as "better" than one that pleases less. But since Crates thinks that poems please on the basis of their euphony (see V.24.30-32), which does not seem to be part of the *logika theoremata* that should be the basis of judgment, he is inconsistent. What exactly the *logika theoremata* are is poorly understood: they may include euphony and interpretative strategies for poetry.[313] Mangoni (1993: 296) suggested with great

---

[312] For an account of *sphaeropoeia*, see Broggiato (2001: li-lix) whom I summarize in this paragraph. cφαιροποιία is also known as the cφαιρικὸς λόγος; cf. Geminus at Crates fr. 50 and [Plutarch] *De Homero* II.92-111, which draws on interpretative practices known from Crates and the Stoics and dating back to Metrodorus of Lampsacus the elder. At the later, §92 ad init., ὁ δὲ θεωρητικὸς λόγος ἐςτὶν ὁ περιέχων τὰ καλούμενα θεωρήματα..., perhaps read cφαιρικὸς for θεωρητικὸς: an unfamiliar phrase was glossed using a word found later in the same sentence. These *theoremata* would then be the same as the *logika theoremata* mentioned by Philodemus at *On Poems* V.28.24.

[313] Jensen translated the phrase as "vernunftgemäße Anschauungen" (opinions which correspond to reason), which are naturally existent and in accord with the Stoic *Logos*. Mangoni translates the phrase as "princìpi razionali" (rational principles) and prefers Asmis' interpretation, which sees them as the theorems of the rational account of poetry which Crates provides in his work, though she jettisons the Stoic interpretation that Asmis provides. As

probability that they were natural rules which Crates suggested be used instead of the *themata* of the philosophers. These *theoremata* could be the same as the λόγος τῆς τέχνης ("account of the art") mentioned at V.28.3; alternatively, they could be the "knowledge of the truth acquired in a systematic way" including via allegorical interpretations, mentioned in [Plutarch] *de Homero* II.92, a passage which is known to rely, at least in part, on Crates' views. Mangoni cited Dionysius of Halicarnassus *De Comp. Verb*. 5.38-9 (p. 27 Usener-Rademacher), where he refers to *theoremata* and *techne* together, to support the first view, but it could actually support either.[314] What seems certain, at the end, is that these rules do not treat poetry as a matter of form, but submit the contents to judgment based on some external criterion, perhaps their fidelity to the truth. Crates' *sphaeropoeia* might be relevant in this connection: his anachronistic view of Homeric geography did serve to bring the poet into line with the best contemporary knowledge. The form of the poem is judged on euphonic grounds, which is the point of contact between Crates and the early *kritikoi*.

First we will consider Philodemus' objection to Crates' system of judgment, according to which the ear is pleased by the sounds of poetry, but the mind judges the poem according to the

---

such, they provide pleasure to the hearing, since they are the guidelines which enforce the *techne* of poetry (leading thereby to the audience's pleasure).

Instead I would connect these *logika theoremata* with Crates' *logike episteme*, mentioned by Sextus Empiricus (*Adv. Math*. I.79) who reports Crates' explanation: καὶ τὸν μὲν κριτικὸν πάςης, φηςί, δεῖ λογικῆς ἐπιςτήμης ἔμπειρον εἶναι, τὸν δὲ γραμματικὸν ἀπλῶς γλωςςῶν ἐξηγητικὸν καὶ προςῳδίας ἀποδοτικὸν καὶ τῶν τούτοις παραπληςίων εἰδήμονα ("the Critic, he claims, should be experienced in the whole linguistic art, but the grammarian need only be an explainer of rare words and concerned with pronunciation and knowledgeable about fields related to those"). That the critic needs much greater and more fundamental knowledge of the field is confirmed by Sextus' follow-up comment: παρὸ καὶ ἐοικέναι ἐκεῖνον μὲν ἀρχιτέκτονι, τὸν δὲ γραμματικὸν ὑπηρέτηι ("for which reason he compared the critic to an architect, but the grammarian to an assistant"). The critic then understands the real reasons for the rules and choices, whereas the grammarian understands what the critic tells him. Unfortunately, at this point, our knowledge of Crates' *episteme* and *theoremata* gives out, but if he used the terms in reference to grammar as opposed to euphony, then Philodemus' point stands. I intend to take up the issue in another venue.

[314] "The ancients did not arrange their sentences at random, but they had an art and principles, by use of which..." (τέχνη δέ τις ἦν παρ' αὐτοῖς καὶ θεωρήματα, οἷς χρώμενοι...).

147

logika theoremata.

On Poems V.28.33-29.7:[315]

33	ἢ πρόϲλ[ο- γον ἐϲτὶ τὸ "διὰ τῆ[ϲ] ἀκο-
35	ῆϲ τὰϲ λέξειϲ παραδέ-
1	χεϲθαι τὴν διάνοιαν" ἢ ἀ- ληθὲϲ δι' ὅλο‸υ [τὰ νο]ούμε- να ἐν ποήμ[αϲι]ν κρίνεϲ- θαι, καὶ μηδ', ὅταν τὴν
5	ϲύνθεϲιν ἐπαινῶμεν, ἀ- ποϲπᾶν αὐτὴν τῶν ὑπο- τεταγμένων.

Either it is pertinent that "the mind accepts the language through the hearing", or it is generally true that the contents in poems are judged and that, whenever we praise the composition, we should not tear it away from what underlies it.

Both options speak to Epicurean commitments, that the hearing merely reports what it hears, in this case, the words, to the mind, which is responsible for judging them, and that language should correspond to reality.

Fairly complete Epicurean accounts of hearing survive in the *Letter to Herodotus* §§52-3 and Lucretius IV.524-614.[316] They run as follows: voice, and noise in general, is physical, since it strikes the senses (our ears, in this case) and our throats hurt when we shout. The atoms that make up a sound are emitted from our mouths in a certain form which splits into many different atomic structures; these all, nevertheless, keep the same shape. The consistent form allows it to preserve the intended sounds across the distance between source and recipient. The atomic structures can be eroded by distance or damaged by physical interference, which is why shouting is often indistinct over long distances and conversations heard through walls are muted. Hints of a semantic theory are gathered from frr. 334-5 Usener: words have a natural correspondence with the things they describe, since the first humans to use language were moved by nature to name things. This is consistent with the demand in the *Letter to Herodotus* §§37-8 that we take care that our words correspond to reality: since they have a natural correlation with their underlying

---

[315] See n. 267 above for discussion of the text and translation.
[316] See also Epicurus frr. 231-3, which corroborate and fill out details in the main sources.

realities, we speak most clearly when we are most respectful of that relationship. If we violate that connection, other people cannot understand us.

It is this last demand which is at issue in Philodemus' criticism of Crates: his interpretations tear words away from their meanings. Philodemus and Crates seem to agree on what constitutes *lexis*, but not about *nooumena*, which is used in the passage just quoted to mean "contents" as *dianoia* is elsewhere, since *dianoia* is used, also in the passage just quoted, in its philosophical sense of "mind."[317] Crates tries to find evidence for his geographical and cosmological speculation, even though they violate plain statements in Homer; this evidence is considered by Philodemus to qualify as *dianoiai* for Crates. That is, Philodemus thinks that, for Crates, those statements about geography or cosmology count as *dianoiai.* Since these contents are not reflected by the language used, it is a violation of Epicurean linguistic theory and Crates forces the poem not to make sense.

That Crates was willing to judge language apart from contents is another violation of Philodemus' poetics; this is a second sense that Philodemus' phrase "tear away from underlying meanings" can bear. According to him, Crates was willing to judge the sound without reference to the states of affairs that it refers to, since he was willing to foist understandings of Homer onto the text without its support, thereby tearing language away from its normal meanings.[318]

A second literary critic who made this same mistake is Neoptolemus of Parium, the purported source for Horace in his *Ars Poetica*.[319] Neoptolemus made claims about the tripartition of the art of poetry into three sections, *poema*, *poesis*, and *poetes*, but due to textual problems and an elliptical discussion by Philodemus, the passage is extraordinarily difficult and

---

[317] It is likely that νοούμενα is Crates' term in this case.
[318] See Pace (1995: 113 with n. 8) for a summary of the arguments and bibliography and below, §7.
[319] Porphyrio on *Ars Poetica* 1. Wigodsky (2009) discusses the issue.

has been the basis of a remarkable amount of scholarly attention in the attempt to clarify it.

What Neoptolemus really meant by his terms is not relevant here; Philodemus criticizes him for the views that he thinks he held.[320] What is certain is that Philodemus considered it absurd to rank the poet as part of the art that he possessed. It seems clear enough that Philodemus takes *poema* either to refer to some sort of formally organized section of a longer poem (he cites the first thirty lines of the *Iliad* as a *poema*[321]) or simply means "verse," as at V.15.21-22, quoted immediately below. *Poesis*, on the other hand, has to do with *hypothesis* ("plot" or "topic"), and the whole *Iliad* is an example of a *poesis*. It probably denotes a complete, organized poem rather than a section of one and may mean "(complete) poem (with a plot)". Philodemus will reject this distinction because it tears style and contents apart. For a deeper discussion of Neoptolemus' view and Philodemus' criticism of it, see the appendix to this chapter.

With this in mind, let us examine Philodemus' objections to Neoptolemus:

On Poems V.14.26-15.22:[322]

26 θ[α]υμ[cτὸ]ν δ' αὐ- τοῦ καὶ [τὸ] "τῆ[c] ποήcεω[c εἶναι τὴν ὑπόθεcιν [μ]ό- νον," καὶ τοῦ ποήματο[c καὶ 30 πάντων ὅλως τῆc ποήc[ε- ωc ὄντων. ἡ μὲν [γ]ὰρ πό- ηcιc καὶ π[όημά γ' ἐcτιν,	Also amazing of him was the claim "only the plot belongs to *poesis*," since *poema* too and everything belong completely to *poesis*. For the *poesis* is also *poema*, e.g. the *Iliad*, but the first thirty lines of it are

---

[320]   I make this statement not to disparage Philodemus as a philosopher or reader of his opponents, but to cut the Gordian knot of this particular problem and focus on Philodemus' ideas rather than Neoptolemus'. Porter's attempt (1995) to reconstruct Neoptolemus' ideas is very interesting, and he may be right to argue that the three sections are aspects of a poem rather than a strict division of the art. This is clearly not how Philodemus interpreted him, however.

[321]   We should understand him to be speaking loosely, since the thirtieth line of the Iliad ends in the middle of a sentence. Allen and West both begin a new paragraph at l. 33, however.

[322]   I refrain from translating *poema* and *poesis*, since they are Neoptolemus' technical terms and their precise meaning has evaded scholars. Asmis (1992b) argues for understanding them as the medium and message of the poem, but does not propose translations. Porter (1995) argued for understanding them as the formal aspect and the contents-related aspect, but also did not propose a consistent set of terms. I intend to take up the matter elsewhere. In addition to adding quotation marks, I supply πάθη at the end of 15.4, instead of Asmis' ἤθη, to avoid duplicating the sense of προcωποιίαc, punctuate with a dash in 15.3 and print a question mark at 15.6. Also, I read αἴτι]ο[ν (Mangoni) for ἴδι]ο[ν (Jensen) at 15.10 on the grounds that it reflects Philodemus' idea that the plot is prior to its treatment in language, cf. §2 ad fin.

οἷον ἡ Ἰλι[άς], οἱ δ[ὲ πρῶτοι
στίχοι τρι[άκ]οντα τα[ύ]της
35 πόημα μ[έ]ν, οὐ μέντοι ποί-
15.1 ησις· καὶ τὸ "ποή[ματος μό-
νον τὴν [cύνθεcιν τῆc
λέξεωc"—ἀ[λλὰ μὴ τὰς κοι-
νὰς διανοί[ας καὶ πάθη
5 καὶ πράξεις καὶ π[ροcω-
ποποιί[ας]; εἰ δ' ἐν [τῆι
λέξει πε[π]οιῆcθαι [δεῖν
λέ]γει, κἀνταῦθ[α νὴ Δί' οὐ-
κ ἔcτι τι πεποι[ῆcθαι το]ύ-
10 των χωρίς, ἀλλ' [αἴτι]ο[ν το]ῦ
cυνκεῖcθα[ι τὴν] λέξιν τὸ
cυ]νκεῖcθαι [τὴν πρᾶξ]ιν εἶ-
ν]αι φαίνεταί μ[οι. ἐῶ δὲ] καὶ
τὸ "τοῦ ποιητοῦ ταῦτ]α καὶ
15 δὴ] καὶ τὴν ὑπόθεcιν καὶ
τὴ[ν] cύνθεcιν·" [ὁ γ]ὰρ πάν-
τ[α ποι]ῶν οὖτ[όc ἐc]τιν. εὐ-
ήθ[ωc] δὲ γέγραπται καὶ
τὸ "[μ]ὴ κοινωνε[ῖ]ν τῶι
20 πο[η]τεῖ τῶν ἁμα[ρτ]ιῶν
τὰ[c ὑπ]οθέ[c]εις καὶ τὰ πο-
ήμ[ατα]·" πονηρὰ γὰρ ἔστιν
ὅτε [γ]ίνετα[ι] ποιήματα
κα[ὶ ὑπ]οθέcεις φαῦλαι ποι-
25 ήc[εω]ν, ἀφαμαρ[τά]νον-
το[c τοῦ] ποιητοῦ.

poema, and not *poesis*. Also [sc. amazing is] the claim "only the composition of the language belongs to the *poema*"—but not common thoughts and experiences and actions and characterizations? If he says that they need to be composed in language, then on those grounds, by Zeus, it is not possible for them to be composed without them, but the composition of the action seems to me to be the cause of the composition of the language. I also let pass his claim "these things belong to the poet, and in particular the plot and the composition," since the poet is the one who composes all these things. His claim "the plots and the *poemata* (i.e. verses) do not share in errors with the poet" is stupidly written; for sometimes verses are bad, and plots of *poeseis* (i.e. poems) are bad, because the poet has erred.

Armstrong (1995: 218-219) has treated this passage in part; he points out that Philodemus' objections center around the separation between contents and form that he sees in Neoptolemus' poetics.[323] Further, Philodemus objects to the separation of the style and content from the poet, which seems ridiculous to him because the poet is responsible for them; he created, or at least formed, them. The statement about the cause (αἴτιον, at 15.10; see n. 55) is especially interesting (if correctly restored), since it indicates that the plot in some way determines the language of the poem. This leads into our next topic.

A striking statement of the interconnection between the form and content is at *On Poems*

---

[323] On Neoptolemus generally, see Asmis (1992b) and Mangoni (1993: 53-61).

II.70.17-28. Although the text has been reedited since Pace handled it (1995: 134-6), his conclusions are still correct. He pointed out that Philodemus took over his opponent's categories and terms, but put them to his own use.

On Poems II.70.17-28:[324]

17 τάχα [γ]ά[ρ, τ]ὰϲ διαν[οίαϲ] ἄλ- λου διδ[όν]τοϲ καὶ τὴν χύ- ϲιν τῶ[ν] λέξεων τοῦ βί- 20 ου χορηγοῦντοϲ, ἡ ϲύνθε- ϲιϲ ἰδί[α γε]ίνεται τῶν πο- ητῶν, οὐκ ἀέριοϲ οὐδ' ἐπαι- νουμένη καθ' αὑτήν, ἀλ- λ' ὅτι π[ρὸ]ϲπαρίϲτηϲι διανοί- 25 αϲ' αἶϲ ψυ[υ]χαγωγοῦϲιν, οὐ παρά τινοϲ λαβόντεϲ, ἀλ- λ' αὐτοὶ γεννήϲαντεϲ πα- 28 >ρ' αὑτῶν.	For perhaps, when someone else supplies the contents and life stage-manages the flow of the words, the *synthesis* becomes particular to the poets, not in vain nor praised for its own sake, but because it brings thoughts to bear in addition, by which they [sc. the poets] entertain, not taking them over from someone else, but giving birth to them from themselves on their own.

The genitive absolute ἄλλου διδόντοϲ could also be conditional: "[even] if someone else gives...," and it is worth noting that life provides the raw materials for the form, not the form itself. That is to say, the *synthesis* is the work of the poet in question, and of no one else. Someone else can give the poet the contents and life can give the raw materials for the form, but the poet him- or herself is ultimately responsible for the verbal dress. The *synthesis* in turn is not pointless and it is *not* praised for itself, but because it causes additional thoughts in the audience (see §9 below). Let us note for now that verbal form is praised for its intellectual effect on the audience, not for any of the obvious aesthetic reasons why one might praise poetic form. Indeed,

---

[324] As regards ψυχαγωγέω in l. 25, Wigodsky argued that *psychagogia* is "entertainment" in Philodemus (1995: 65-68); the word first appears in Plato's *Phaedrus*, where it is a semi-technical term for convincing someone (specifically, in that case, leading their soul to the right conclusions through rhetoric), but is a metaphor from necromancy and related phrases are attested much earlier. While I find Wigodsky's conclusions broadly convincing, I suspect the term was chosen because of the moving effect that literature is often felt to have on its audience. Halliwell (2011: 324 n. 155) thinks that "entertain" is too weak and holds that the metaphor was still alive in Aristotle's day. Janko translates as "enthrall," which seems to me too strong; three hundred years is long enough to kill even a necromantic metaphor. That Philodemus uses κινεῖν as a synonym also tells against Halliwell's position, but does suggest that "entertain" is too weak. Chandler (2006: 147-167) discusses the meaning of the term in Epicurean rhetoric. For convenience, I translate ψυχαγωγέω as "entertain" and κινέω as "move" without confidence that those renderings really capture the ideas.

that position, held by the Stoic critic, is called "wretched" by Philodemus in book V.

On Poems V.23.33-2 4.11:[325]

33   ἀθλι[ώ]τερον δὲ τὸ
     τὴν cύνθεcιν αὐτὴν τῶ[ν
35   λέξεων (διανοίαι γνω-
24.1   ριζομένην, ποτέρα φαύ-
     λῶ]c ἢ cπουδα[ίωc ἔ]χει),
     τα]ῖc ἀ[λ]όγοιc ἀϙ[οαῖ]c καὶ
     μηθὲν πολυπραγμο-
5   νούcαιc τῶν ἐπιτευγμά-
     των ἢ διαπτωμάτων
     ἀνάπτειν, καὶ λόγωι φά-
     ν[αι μ]ὴ γνωρίζει[ν] πῶc
     ἁπάcαc ἔcτιν ἀποδ[ιδό-
10   ναι λόγ[ο]ων τὰc ἰδ[ιότη-
     ταc.
	But more wretched is his claim that the very *synthesis* of the language (which is known by the mind to be either bad or good) is referred to the irrational hearing, which has absolutely no interest in successes or failures, and his claim that that it is not possible to give a rational account of all the particularities of language.

Philodemus' objection stems from the Epicurean position that the hearing cannot judge poetry. He also objects to the Stoic's position that it is not possible to give a rational account of language, which creates difficulties for the judgment of poetry, since poems are made of language.[326]

All this is to say that Philodemus claims that the mind knows whether or not the *synthesis* is good or bad, i.e. whether it is well-constructed or not. The hearing is not concerned with successes or failures because these are matters of judgment, not of data-transmission (i.e. it is up to the mind to decide if the data transmitted is accurate).[327] Philodemus' Stoic opponent does not follow the Epicureans on this point and so thinks that the hearing is responsible for judging the *synthesis* of poems. The other view was probably the more widespread view in antiquity because, from very early, poetry was a *terpsis* (Hesiod *Th.* 917), along with such bodily pleasures as food (Pindar *Pyth.* 9.19), drink (Sophocles Ajax 1201), and sex (Hesiod *Th.* 206). The Epicurean

---

[325] The marking of the parenthesis is mine, and represents Philodemus' polemical intrusion into a report of the Stoic's view, as does the reference to the "irrational" hearing two lines later.

[326] For an overview of the Stoics' views on grammar, see Blank and Atherton (2003); for Philodemus' demand that poetry be intelligible, see chapter five, §8.

[327] Cf. especially frr. 36 and 247, and see *GE* s.v. αἴcθηcιc.

position was therefore probably an innovation vis-à-vis the normal assumption; it was motivated by their commitment that the senses do not judge.

We know that Philodemus was profoundly skeptical of the euphonic schemes worked up by some of the *kritikoi* (Andromenides, for instance), and called them "inexistent" (ἐξ οὐ[κ ὄντος ἐπιγενή[μ]ατο⟨c⟩, II.77.21-2), that is to say "non-existent" or perhaps "impossible," because they depart so far from actual experience of a poem (according to Philodemus, at least). This means that even the *synthesis* (the form of a poem, its verbal structure and the sounds of the words, if they matter) is appreciated intellectually, rather than as purely sensory delight. The content of poetry is also evaluated intellectually—in fact, the only part of poetry which has an effect on a non-intellectual part of the audience is the rhythm, which can tickle the hearing. Poems work their effects in a thoroughly intellectual way.[328]

§7 The Inseparability of Form and Content

One of the few aspects of Philodemus' poetics which has been well understood is his position that the form and content of a poem are fundamentally connected. Though they can be discussed separately (at least, Philodemus himself feels licensed to do so), his position is that the contents of the poem help to dictate the form of the poem, at least in part.[329] The form, in turn, is inseparable from the content: you cannot have form without content, nor the reverse. This explains his hesitancy regarding the critical method of "metathesis," which was most famously used by Dionysius of Halicarnassus. The method involves changing a line or sentence in a variety of possible ways in order to show how it could be improved or that it is best the way it

---

[328] See below on "Further Thoughts" (§9) for more on this topic.
[329] See the discussion at the end of §2.

was originally.[330] Previously, scholars of Philodemus thought that the ban on this method was absolute, but the textual basis for this has disappeared.[331] It is clear now that he merely thought it to be useless.

The first claim can be seen in Philodemus' rebuttal of Neoptolemus of Parium. Philodemus is discussing a claim made by Neoptolemus, whose text was just quoted above (§6) and which I repeat here for convenience.

On Poems V.14.26-15.22:[332]

26   θ[α]υμ[cτὸ]ν δ' αὐ-
τοῦ καὶ [τὸ] "τῆ[c] ποήcεω[c
εἶναι τὴν ὑπόθεcιν [μ]ό-
νον," καὶ τοῦ ποήματο[c καὶ
30 πάντων ὅλωc τῆc ποήc[ε-
ωc ὄντων. ἡ μὲν [γ]ὰρ πό-
ηcιc καὶ π[όημά γ' ἐcτιν,
οἶον ἡ Ἰλι[άc], οἱ δ[ὲ πρῶτοι
cτίχοι τρι[άκ]οντα τα[ύ]τηc
35 πόημα μ[έ]ν, οὐ μέντοι ποί-
15.1 ηcιc· καὶ τὸ "ποή[ματοc μό-
νον τὴν [cύνθεcιν τῆc
λέξεωc"—ἀ[λλὰ μὴ τὰc κοι-
νὰc διανοί[αc καὶ ἤθη
5 καὶ πράξειc καὶ π[ροcω-
_ποποιί[αc]; εἰ δ' ἐν [τῆι
λέξει πε[π]οιῆcθαί [δεῖν
λέ]γει, κἀνταῦθ[α νή Δί' οὐ-
κ ἔcτι τι πεποι[ῆcθαι το]ύ-
10 των χωρίc, ἀλλ' [αἴτι]ο[ν το]ῦ
cυνκεῖcθα[ι τὴν] λέξιν τὸ
cυ]νκεῖcθαι [τὴν πρᾶξ]ιν εἶ-
13 ν]αι φαίνεταί μ[οι.

Also amazing is his claim "only the plot belongs to *poesis*," since also *poema* and everything belong completely to *poesis*. For the *poesis* is also *poema*, e.g. the *Iliad*, but the first thirty lines of it are *poema*, and not *poesis*. Also the claim "only the composition of the language belongs to the *poema*"—but not the common thoughts and the characters and the actions and the characterizations? But if he claims that it has been done in language, from there is impossible, by Zeus, to have done something without these [sc. thoughts, characters, actions, etc. mentioned just before], but it seems to me that the composition of the plot is the cause of the composition of the language.

Neoptolemus' opinions are not easy to understand, but he seems to claim that the poet, the *poema*, and the *poesis* are separate and independent (possibly equally important) parts of the art

---

[330] Some instances of metathesis use only the same words as the original line; others go further afield. See Greenberg (1958) for a discussion of its use in the judgment of poetry and de Jonge (2005) for a discussion of Dionysius' use of it.

[331] See Greenberg (1990) and Armstrong (1995a) and (2001). The passage is in *On Poems* II, which is currently being reedited.

[332] On the text, see n. 322 above.

of poetry. Philodemus implies that *poema* maps closely onto form and *poesis* onto the plot (and *poema* has no part of it, V.14.26-29). μόνον in l. 28 implies that the separation is strict. For our purposes, what exactly Neoptolemus meant is not under discussion, only what Philodemus took him to be saying and how he responds.

Philodemus' basic objection to Neoptolemus' strict separation of form and content (as Philodemus understood him), as was pointed out by Asmis (1992b), is that these two aspects interpenetrate and are not separable. (That Neoptolemus seems to contradict himself by saying that some things belong to *poema* but not *poesis* is secondary.) Not only does the plot condition[333] the language used by the poet, but the two are therefore inseparable to a certain degree. If Mangoni's supplement of αἴτιον is correct, they are not only inseparable, but have a partially causal relationship: "but it seems to me that the composition of the plot is the cause of the composition of the language," that is, the formation of the plot, and its actions and characters, indelibly affects the language used to relate the plot to the audience, and that the plotting out of the poem is prior to its actual instantiation in language. This recalls the anecdote about Menander (Suetonius *Vit. Ter*. 5) in which he, in response to a friend worried about his finishing a play in time for the competition said, "the play is done. Now I just have to write the words." This indicates that, for him, working out the plot was the lion's share of the work.

That this position is actually Philodemus' confirmed explicitly by another statement he makes against Neoptolemus, as Asmis (1992b) pointed out:

On Poems V.13.32-14.4:

---

[333] The language is not completely dependent on the plot, since both of these things are still under the control of the poet. Cf. *On Poems* V.15.22-6: πονηρὰ γὰρ ἔστιν ὅτε [γ]ίνετα[ι] ποιήματα κα[ὶ ὑπ]οθέσεις φαῦλαι ποιής[εω]ν, ἀφαμαρ[τά]νοντο[ς τοῦ] ποιητοῦ ("for sometimes the verses are bad and the plots of the poems are base because the poet makes mistakes"). The reason why the poet is blameworthy is simple: [ὁ γ]ὰρ πάντ[α ποι]ῶν οὗτ[ός ἐς]τιν ("he is the one who composes everything," V.14.16-7).

156

32 ἀ]λλὰ μὴν ὅ [γε Νεο]π[τ]όλεμος οὐκ ὀρ[θῶς ἔδοξ]ε τὴν σύν- 35 θεϲιν [ἀπὸ τῶν ποητι]κῶν 14.1 διανοημά[των χωρί- ζειν, οὐδὲν ἧϲϲ[ω μερίδα λέγων αὐτὴ[ν] ἢ πλεί[ω, 4 καθάπερ ἐπεν[οήϲ]αμεν.	In turn, Neoptolemus was wrong to think that the composition of the language is separate from the poetic contents, though he claimed that it was in no way a smaller or greater part, as we pointed out.

Here, the issue is the separation of the parts, not the their relative importances, but Philodemus' use of the verb χωρίζω is important. Not only are they more or less equally important, but the worked out thoughts (i.e. those that the poet has selected and arranged) are inseparable from the language used to express them.

       Lastly, we return to Philodemus' rebuttal of Neoptolemus for a possible glimpse of how he thought this interaction worked.

On Poems V.14.12-17:[334]

12 μᾶ[λλο]ν γὰρ ἐχρῆν τὰς ⟨ποιήϲεις⟩ διαθ[έϲει]ϲ {ποιήϲεις} ἐπ[ικαλεῖ]ν, ἔτι δὲ βέλ- 15 τιον ἔ[ρ]γα τὰ ποήματα, τὰς δὲ ποιήϲεις οἷ[ον] ὕ- 17 φη.	Because one ought to have called the *poeseis* "dis-positions," or, better, the *poemata* are "works" and the *poeseis* are like tapestries.

On this reading, the *poesis* is taken to be some sort of organized product, just as a tapestry (or any woven product) is inseparably constructed from warp and woof, both of which are needed for weaving; it contains the smaller sections of the work, the *erga* or *poemata*, woven together in such a way that no part can be changed without implications for the whole, and so we can infer that the organization and effect of the whole (intended, after all, by the poet) would be altered by

---

[334] I follow Ardizzoni's understanding of the term *diathesis* (1953: 23-5); especially n.b. Aristotle *Metaphysics* Δ 19, 1022b1: διάθεϲις λέγεται τοῦ ἔχοντος μέρη τάξις. The emendation in line 13 is mine and is intended to restore consistency: with it, all the ποη- roots belong to Neoptolemus' technical vocabulary and all the non-ποη-glosses are Philodemus' attempts at rephrasing him. As Asmis (1992b) demonstrated, *poema* does not mean "short poem" or "part of a poem," nor does *poesis* mean "complete poem" or "long poem" in either Neoptolemus' or Philodemus' critical vocabularies.

changing the order of the parts.

A consequence of the close connection between form and content is Philodemus' distaste for the critical practice of "metathesis." He does not ban the practice outright,[335] but, in what amounts to the same thing, he thinks that it is perfectly useless for the judgment of poetry. Metathesis is handled extensively in books one and two of the *On Poems* and seems to have been a characteristic practice of the *Kritikoi*.

In Philodemus' rebuttal of Heracleodorus in book II, one passage has clear bearing on our topic.

On Poems II.61.21-7:[336]

21 [ἡ]μεῖc δὲ τὸν [ἀπο- δεχόμ[εν]ον "ἀμετάθ[ε- το{υ}`ν´" (τα[ύτ]ηc ⟨τῆc⟩ cυνηθεία//c ὑ]παρχ[ο]ὑcηc) "τὸν νοῦ[ν 25 τῶν ποητῶν" εἰκαίωc ἐπαινεῖν ἐροῦμεν ἢ [ἀπο- 27 κόπτειν.	But we will say that the (critic) who accepts that "poets' meaning is un-metathesized" (if this usage exists) praises or rejects it at random.

Uncertainties plague the passage, but it is clear enough that Philodemus thinks that whoever uses the method of metathesis "praises and blames poetry at random." This is because metathesis fundamentally changes the poem: it cannot be said to be the "same poem" when it has been changed or manipulated in this way. Metathesis, according to its practitioners, only changes the form. So there are two possibilities for what exactly Philodemus' objection consisted in: either, given that form and content are so closely interrelated, it is impossible to change only the form

---

[335] This was reasonably thought to be the case by e.g. Greenberg (1990), Armstrong (1995a), and Oberhelman and Armstrong (1995), because it was the correct understanding of the texts they were using, but reedition of the passages has changed the text, which can be found in Janko (forthcoming). The most important is *On Poems* II.61, quoted below.

[336] The major difficulty is in l. 23, where Jensen and Sbordone printed [ἄλλ]ηc and Greenberg (1990: 153) translated the passage as "but we say that the one who assumes that the thought of the poet is not changed, if a different usage of the speech is present..." Janko's new edition rules out that text and the interpretations built on it. The words from ταύτηc to ὑπαρχούcηc are a parenthetical apology for a neologism or unfamiliar word.

without also changing the contents, or, by changing the form, even if the content of the verse remains unchanged, they are changing the poem so much that it is no longer "the same."[337]

A passage from later in the book indicates that the second version is the one that Philodemus intended.

On Poems II.76.1-22:

1   πῶς οὐκ, "ἐὰν τὸ
μέτρον τις ἢ τὸ κῶλον
{ι} ἐκβιβάσηι διὰ τῆς μετα-
θέσεως´, ἀνελεῖ τὰ καὶ τὴν
5   ἀκοὴν ἐπιτερπῶς διατι-
θέντα;" οὐ μέντοι ˋγεˊ, ⟦π⟧ὼς οὖ-
τος οἴεται, συνάξει διὰ τοῦ-
το{υ} τὸ "τὴν ἀρετὴν τοῦ πο-
ήματος ἐν εὐφωνίαι κεῖ-
10   σθαι·" "τὴν" γὰρ "εὐφωνίαν"
οὐκ ἔλεγε "τὸ μέ[τ]ρον ἢ τὸν
τῶν κώλων ὅλων ῥυ-
θμὸν" ὁ "μηδὲ ⟨ποεῖν⟩ ποή{ι}ματα"
φὰς βελτί[ο]να τῶν ὁμοί-
15   ω[ς] χρωμ[έ]ν[ω]ν αὐτοῖς,"
ἀλλὰ] ἑτέραν [α]ὐτῶν "ἐπι-
φαιν[ομ]//ένη//ν ταῖς συνθέ-
σε]ς̣ι̣[ν," ἣν οὔτ᾽ ἐν τοῖς ἀκει-
ν]ή̣τοις [ε]ὑ̣[ρ]ίσκομεν ὑπάρ-
20   χους[α]ν´, οὔτε κατὰ τὰς με-
ταθέσεις ἀποβαλλομέ-
> νην τὴν οὐκ οὖσαν.

How is it not the case that, if someone eliminates the verse or the colon by means of his re-arrangement, he will not destroy those elements which also dispose the hearing pleasantly? However, contrary to what this critic supposes, he cannot conclude on this account that "the excellence of verse lies in euphony." For the person who said "good poets do not even compose better verses than those who use them likewise" did not call "euphony" the verse-form or the rhythm of entire cola, but "the euphony" different from them "that supervenes upon the com-positions"—which, we find, does not exist in unaltered verses and does not lose in the rearrangements the euphony that does not exist!

Heracleodorus, the opponent at this point, has evidently argued that metathesis can reveal faults in the sound of verses (which supervenes on the word order as the words are read out loud) and that therefore the excellence of poetry is in the sound. Philodemus criticizes him on two points. The first is that, by changing the word order, he is removing whatever was originally there that would please the hearing. The second criticism is that Heracleodorus' second claim does not

---

[337] Relevant too is the refutation of Crates in book V, discussed at the beginning of the chapter at §1, in which Philodemus states that, when we discuss the composition, we should not "tear it away" from the underlying contents.

follow from his first. We are not in a position to evaluate the second claim, but the first seems

compelling, and is in line with an earlier part of Philodemus' critique:

On Poems II.71.17-21:

17   λοιπὸν ἄπορον ἡμεῖ[ν
προπίπτει, τίνος ϲυμ⟨μ⟩έ{ν}-
νοντος ἐκ τῆ[ς] μεταθέ-
20 ϲεως οἰκειούμ[εθ]ʼ ἢ {ι} δυϲ-
χεραίνομεν;

Finally, a puzzle presents itself to us: because of what element remaining after the metathesis are we pleased or irritated?

We are pleased or displeased with a metathesized line according to its current form; but because

of the connection between form and content, it is not clear to Philodemus what of the original

form remains in the new form to provide a basis for judgment. That is, if the metathesis changes

both form and content, nothing seems to remain from the original form. Metathesis gives you a

completely new verse and is therefore useless as a technique for judging the verses that someone

has actually written.

The objection, as it is found in Philodemus, is to the use of metathesis by the *Kritikoi* for

their own ends: they rearranged verses in an attempt to judge the aural effects of poetry, whether

these are found in word order itself or in the pronunciation of those words. But Philodemus'

criticism goes beyond their claims: not only is this an invalid technique for judging euphony, but

it is also useless for judgment of content, and a line and its metathesized variant are not

comparable. However, he does admit that the new arrangement might result in a better or worse

line than before:

On Poems II.70.28-71.7:

28 > τὸ δὲ "τῆς αὐτῆς
δι]ανοίας {ι} καὶ τῆς ⟨αὐτῆς⟩ λέξεως
71.1 ἐ]νυπαρχο[υϲῶν, τῶ]νδε
δὴ κ[εινουμένω]νʼ παρὰ
τ[ὸ μεταθ]εῖναι ἢ καλὸν
ἢ μ[οχθ]ηρὸν ἀποτελεῖϲ-

But his claim 'if the thoughts and the diction are the same, but the latter are changed, the verse is rendered either beautiful or base because of the transposition' is the most

5 θα[ι τὸ πόη]μα"', πάντων μέν	persuasive of all his
ἐςτι//ν π//ιθανώτατον τῶν	statements.
7 λεγομένων·	

Philodemus admits a minor point: if the metathesis does manage to affect only the verbal expression of the line, then the line will be better or worse depending solely on the new verbal expression.[338] But he immediately places strict limits on the range of the procedure:

On Poems II.71.7-17:

7 ἀλλὰ τό γε	But his claim "it is because of
"πα[ρ]ὰ τὴν cύνθεcιν εὐφω-	the composition that euphony
νίαν τῶι 'Cέριφος ἄλμηι	appears on the surface of (the
10 ποντίαι περίρρυτος" ἐπι-	verse) 'Seriphos, round which
φα[ί]νεcθαι" κ[ἀπ]ὶ τοῦ πά-	flows the salty sea'" is
θους ἀντιφ[ω]νεῖ[cθ]\τ/αι.' τὸ	controverted even in the case
δ' "αὐτὴν ψυ[χα]γωγεῖν ⟨τὴν⟩	of (our) experience. His claim
cύνθεcιν κ[αθ' α]ὑτήν,' ἕτε-	'composition itself by itself
15 ρον οὐδὲν ἐ[πιφ]ερομέ-	enthralls, contributing no other
ν[η]ν ἀγαθόν", [ἀ]πίθανόν	excellence," is implausible.
17 ἐcτι.'	

Philodemus appeals to experience to deny Heracleodorus' claim that the composition is responsible for the euphony in Euripides' verse and denies his claim that composition enthralls or entertains. His motivation for the second claim is probably to be found in the Epicurean doctrine that only arguments can sway an audience and that the ears can be tickled only by sound: euphony simply cannot exert by means of the irrational ears such a strong mental effect as *psychagogia*. But Philodemus' motivation for the first claim is mysterious: if it is not in the composition, where is euphony really to be found?[339] Gomperz' suggestion that the triviality of the contents makes the nobility of the description ridiculous might be true, as far as it goes, but it does not touch Philodemus' assertion that the claim "the euphony appears *because of the*

---

[338] He makes the same concession at length in II.72.6-73.17.

[339] It may be nowhere to be found: at *On Poems* II.76.18-22 and 77.21-23, Philodemus seems to deny that it exists.

composition" is false.[340]

On the topic of the "impossibility of metathesis," Armstrong (1995: 221) had concluded that "[o]nce they have been through the poet's mind and become his own handiwork, the thought and subject as well as the style are then entirely his own, and to call the subject the identical thought or subject if it is written up in a different style is entirely superficial. Sophocles' version of a legend and Euripides' are not two treatments of the same subject, thought it may be convenient (*grosso modo*) to put it that way, but poems on two different subjects that are not *the same* any more than are their words." He later adds: "Philodemus' doctrine, then, goes even further than to claim Sophocles' and Euripides' *Oedipus* are not simply not on *the same* subject. Indeed, Sophocles' *Oedipus* with any verse metathesized, that is with *the same* words metathesized, would not be *the same* poem because the thought would have been changed, not just the order of words; and the composition can never be praised apart from the composition of the whole" (1995: 222). We can be somewhat more precise now: the plot, when uncomposed (ἀπόητον), is common (κοινόν), but when the poet gives it verbal dress and form, he makes it "poetic" or composed (πεποιημένον); it becomes part of a unique composition. Changing the form will change the effect that the form has on the audience, that is, it changes the "additional thoughts" that the *synthesis* of a poem provide.

A further problem is not mentioned by Philodemus here, but is implicit in a statement of Epicurus.[341] In *De Natura* XXVIII, he says that all words have one and only one meaning each (τὸ πάντα φθόγγον ἐπιφέροντα δοξάζειν τόδε τι, fr. 13, col. 2 inf. ll. 5-8 Sedley). This means that, if the critic during metathesis changes a word into an apparent synonym, he has changed the

---

[340] Gomperz (1891: 63).
[341] This point was made by in print by D. Armstrong (2001: 304), who says that M. Wigodsky mentioned it to him in conversation.

poem more deeply than might at first appear to be the case. Not only is the form no longer the same, but the contents have also been disturbed, however slightly, and the poem is not "the same" any more.

All of this is to say that, if a single aspect, even just one word or the word-order within a single line, is changed, the thought of the poem is changed, and so the poem itself is essentially changed as well. Ancient critical use of metathesis relied on the assumption that the line or poem, no matter how changed, is still fundamentally comparable with the original version; Philodemus allowed the comparison while denying its utility.

§8 The Judgment of Poems

On these grounds, we can construct a broad outline of Philodemus' poetics, avoiding small details, in accord with his own wishes. A poet should take whatever contents he wants, provided they are intelligent, intelligible, and suited for a liberally educated audience, and clothe them in language which reflects the contents. The result will be a work of art whose purpose is to entertain the audience through an appeal to their minds by the unique combination of form and contents, which is made manifest by the particular arrangement imposed by the poet. The poem probably should belong to a recognized genre, but this is less important than its quality taken alone as a single poem without reference to generic demands.

That Philodemus is willing to judge the two aspects separately, and talks about them without reference to the other throughout his own treatise, indicates that, however intimately linked they may be, they are not completely inseparable: a judgment on either aspect does not constitute a judgment on the entire poem. Of course, some reference to the other aspect is necessary, because without the language, the contents would be incommunicable, and without

knowledge of the contents, it would be impossible to say whether the language is describing the contents well. Here too we find an implicit demand for intelligibility and perhaps a robust relationship between form and contents.

But how do we determine if a poem is good or bad? To answer that, we will have to return to the initial quotation, from the refutation of the Stoic critic (see §2, above).

On Poems V.20.35-21.27:[342]

35 ἐ- 21.1 κεῖνα τοίνυν ἐπ[αι]νῶ, δ[ι- ότι [τ]ὰ τὴν [μὲν διάν]ο[ιαν ἀστείαν ἔχο[ντα, κακὴν δὲ τὴν cύνθε[c]ιν, μ[ο]χθη- 5 ρά ἐcτι, [κ]αὶ διό[τι] τὸ κ[ακῶ]c cυνκεῖcθαι πρὸc τὸ φ[αῦ- λον ἀπόχρη. τὸ δὲ π[ρὸc τὸ cπουδαῖον μὴ ἀπ[ο- χρῆν τὸ καλῶc, ἀλ[λὰ] προc- 10 δεῖcθαι καὶ εὐφω[νίαc καὶ διανοίαc [καὶ π]ολλῶν ἄλλων επεν[. . . .]cπα[. . μο[ι] φαίνεται [. . ( )]ηcθειc τεc[. . . . . . ( ) κ]αὶ cυν[ε- 15 πενηνέχθαι ταῖc ἀγε[νή- τοιc εὐφωνίαιc τῶν κ[ρι- τικῶν. ἔτι δ[ὲ μ]ᾶλλον τό "τινα τῶν ἀρχ[α]ίων κα- τά τι χρηc[τ]ὰ [ὄ]ντα καὶ μά- 20 λιcτα κατὰ τὴ[ν cύ]νθε- cιν καθάπαξ εἶναι φαῦλα." τ]οῦ γὰρ "τὰ κατά τι cπου- δα]ῖα καθάπαξ εἶναι [φ]αῦ- λ]α γ'" [οὐδ]ὲν ἀδιανοη[τό]τε- 25 ρον] εὑρίcκω κατ[ὰ τὴν cυνή[θ]ειαν ἀκούων τῶν λεγ[ο]μένων.	And yet I praise those [opinions?], because, although they have good thought, but bad composition, they are bad, and because being badly composed suffices for a judgment of "bad." But being well composed does not suffice for a judgment of "good," but there is a further need for euphony and thought and many other [qualities] … seems to me [somehow mistaken], and to have brought in with it the nonexistent euphonies of the critics. Even more so the claim that "some of the poems of the ancients, though good in some one respect but especially composition, are completely bad." If I read that according to the accepted sense of the words, I find nothing more thoughtless than the claim that poems which are good in one way are completely bad.

From this passage, two general principles of judgment can be extracted: bad composition suffices for a judgment of "bad," and good composition does *not* suffice for a judgment of "good." A subsidiary concern is that it is stupid to say that a poem which is good in some respect is

---

[342] Discussion of the text is included in n. 283.

completely bad. From this, we must infer that Philodemus recognized an intermediate category or gradations of quality, in that a poem which is good in some respect and bad in another is probably to be considered middling or mediocre.

That Philodemus is only arguing dialectically and does not genuinely hold the opinions he puts forth seems possible, but is probably not the case. His criticism, at the end of the quoted passage, that a poem said to be good in one part or aspect cannot be said to be completely bad, depends on Epicurean linguistic commitments, and it seems safe to assume that he is putting forward his actual opinions throughout the passage.[343]

We should note that Philodemus probably considered form and content to be roughly equally necessary; he reveals this position in his refutation of an anonymous critic preserved in Philomelus[344]:

On Poems V.12.24-27:

24 καὶ τὸ	And the statement "both the language
25 "παραπληςίωc ἀναγκαῖ-	and the plot are more or less equally
α τήν τε λέξιν εἶναι καὶ	necessary" is reasonable.
27 τὰ πράγματα" λόγον ἔχει.	

Here, their relative weights are at issue, and Philodemus is succinct. It will turn out that form is slightly more important for him, however.

It is possible to construct a chart. Along the x-axis the contents are rated according to the three possibilities outlined by the Stoic Critic. Along the y-axis are the same possibilities for

---

[343] Ioppolo (2005) attempts an explanation of how the Stoic might evade Philodemus' criticism or even not have been subject to it in the first place; the important thing for my argument is that Philodemus' criticism, regardless of its target, is motivated by his Epicureanism and reflects his views.

[344] Philomelus is otherwise unknown (the name is fairly common, with 101 entries in the *LGPN*). He seems to be Philodemus' source for Praxiphanes (presumably the Peripatetic from Mytilene), Demetrius of Byzantium (another Peripatetic), and several anonymous critics. Because he quotes Peripatetics and the anonymous critics use Peripatetic-sounding terms like μῦθοι, πρᾶξιc, and λέξιc, I suggest that he too was a Peripatetic and wrote a resume or critical summary of earlier Peripatetics. See also Mangoni (1993: 47-52). It seems more likely that Philodemus' judgment of "is reasonable" reflects his own position than that he is just conceding a point for no clear reason to this particular anonymous opponent. On this passage, see Pace (1995: 122-5).

form. At the intersections are Philodemus' statements about the poems with that combination of form and contents. Numbers in parentheses correspond to the list of statements below, taken from the passage quoted just above. I have marked with question marks cases where the term adopted seems doubtful .

Contents Form	Good	Mediocre	Bad
Good	Good (Best?)	Good? (Better?)	Bad (2.5)
Mediocre	Good? (Better?)	Mediocre? (3)	Bad (inferred from 2.5)
Bad	μοχθηρόν (1)	μοχθηρόν (1)	μοχθηρόν (1)

1. "being badly composed suffices for a judgment of 'bad.'" (i.e. if the poem is badly composed, it is bad regardless of the quality of the contents.)

      1.5 "although they have good thought, but bad composition, they are bad"

2. "being well composed does not suffice for a judgment of good"

      2.5 "...but there is an additional need for ... thought"

3 "I find nothing more thoughtless than the claim that poems which are good in one way are completely bad."

For hesitations about this chart, see below. I understand the rule in 2.5 for "thought" (διάνοια without an adjective) to mean "moderate thought," and have written the table in accord with that interpretation. It could mean "good thought," in which case, a poem with moderate form and moderate contents will be bad. Further, I infer that the poem with moderate form and bad contents is bad, because a better poem, one with good form and bad contents, is still bad. Likewise, a poem with good form but bad contents is bad and therefore a poem with moderate

form and bad contents must also be bad.

In general, then, any poem with a single bad aspect, whether form or contents, is bad. Those poems in which both elements are moderate or good are acceptable. Philodemus uses only "good" and "bad" as judgments, not "mediocre;" so we do not know what distinctions he drew; however, if he recognized the gradations available, the table would be as it appears above. I think would be perverse of him not to recognize that a poem with good form and contents is better than a poem with good form but mediocre contents. The case of the fully mediocre poem is also left somewhat undefined. It seems strange to call a thoroughly mediocre poem "good" (i.e. it would contradict the normal usage of language), but to call it "mediocre" or "acceptable" seems reasonable. Similarly, to call a poem which has one good aspect and one mediocre aspect "mediocre" may also seem strained. A scheme like "good, better, best" would allow all four categories to be good while still recognizing the differences, but, unfortunately, Philodemus is himself being schematic in his response to a schematic critic and the shades of grey are not fully treated.

If Philodemus did not actually recognize a "moderate" category, the only good poem will be one with both good form and contents, since a single bad element suffices to render the poem bad. The reason for thinking that he did not recognize such a category is that (i) he never uses it in his discussion (except possibly in the ambiguous phrasing "not bad"), and (ii) the following passage.

On Poems V.20.30-35:[345]

| 30 | θαυ[μ]αϲτὸ[ν
γὰρ εἶναί μοι δο[κεῖ τὸ
ϲύνθεϲιν ἔχον οὐ[κ ἀϲτεί-
αν καὶ διάνοι[αν οὔθ' ὁ- | For it seems amazing
to me that "a poem with
neither good synthesis
nor good or poetic |

---

[345] The adjective "poetic" in line 34 is unexplained. It may be borrowed from the adversary.

λῶς ποητικὴν [οὔτ' ἀcτεί-
ἂν μὴ φαῦλον ε[ἶ]ν[αι.

thought is not bad."

It is not clear what Philodemus understands his negations to mean. "Neither good synthesis nor good ... thought" can mean either bad or mediocre, but here he seems to be excluding the middle ground. A poem without good form and without good thought could be mediocre, but, if this is so, Philodemus should be willing to say that it is "not bad," since that can also mean "mediocre;" however, he not only does not say so, but pretends to be scandalized that someone else said so. Unfortunately, Philodemus' words here conflicts with his apparent commitment to clear language and I do not see how to arrive at his actual opinion.

An apparent exception to the above statements is found in *doxa* 8, recorded in book V, according to which the best poem is that with language which matches the speakers. In it, Philodemus objects that the author of the *doxa* only considers language, while ignoring the thoughts.

On Poems V.35.6-10:

6
καὶ περὶ τῆ[c] λέ-
ξεωc μόνον λαλεῖ, τὰ νο-
ήματα κυριωτέραν δύ-
ναμιν ἔχοντα παραπέμ-
10
πουc[α.

And this opinion speaks about style only, ignoring the thoughts, though they have the more authoritative power.

More context clarifies the issue: the *doxa* is concerned with the relationship between characters in a poem and the speeches composed and put into their mouths by the poet. The author has discussed only the style of these speeches, and left aside discussion of their contents (or alternatively the thoughts of the characters). The word κύριος ("authoritative" above) presents a problem. Mangoni (*ad loc.*) takes it to be the opponent's term taken over polemically: Philodemus is accusing the author of this *doxa* of ignoring what he considered to be more

important, even though Philodemus himself disagreed with that analysis.[346] This is in line with Philodemus' method. Since the style relates to the character giving the speech, so too the thoughts/content (clearly in this context those of the speech) should match the character.

There are two final cases to discuss, which do not easily enter into the framework established just above. The first case is when a poem's content is unintelligible; the second is a poem whose form does not meet the requirements for poetry or verse. Let us take the former case first:

On Poems II.64.23-65.24:[347]

23   διὸ καὶ
    τὸν ποιητὴν cυρίτ[τ]οι⟨μεν⟩
25   ἂν δικαί[ω]c, εἴ τι πονοί-
    η τῶν ἀναλόγων. ὃ ο[ὐ-
27   χ ὅμοιόν ἐcτιν ἐπ[ὶ τ]ῆc
65.1 ποιητικῆc τὸ "τὰ πρ[άγμα-
    τα ἄγνωcτα εἶναι, [τὰc δὲ
    λέξειc οὐκ ἀρεcτά[c", τῶι
    ἐπὶ τῆc μαγε[ιρι]κῆ[c εἰ cα-
5   πρὰ τἀγοράcματα. τ[ῆc
    μὲν γὰρ ἔξω ταῦτ᾽ ἐc[τί,
    τῆc δὲ ποιητικῆc ο[ὐ]κ ἔc-
    τιν ἔξω τὸ ποεῖν [γνωc-
    τὰ τὰ πράγματα. [κἄν τιc
10 πάντελῶc αὐτὰ [παρ᾽ ἑ-
    τέρου λαμβάνη[ι, ἴδια δὲ
    τῇ cυνθέcει τὰ πο[ήμα-
    τα, τοῦτ᾽ ἦν ἰδιώ[τατον
    αὐτοῦ. διόπερ ο[ὐδὲ τὸ
15 τὰc λέξειc ο᾽ἰ᾽κείαc [ἔχειν
    ἐκτόc ἐcτι τῆc π[οιητικῆc,
    κἂν αἰ λέξειc ὠφ[ελείαc
    τοῦ βίου παρεcχή[κωcι
    κοιναί. τὸ γὰρ ἐγλ[έγειν
20 τὰc ο᾽ἰ᾽κείαc καὶ δ[ι]ατ[ιθ]έ-
    ναι πρὸc [[α]] δήλωcιν τοι-
    ούτου νοήματοc ἐπι-
    τηδ//ε//[ίωc]᾽, τοῦτ᾽ ἦ[ν ἴ]δι-
24 >ον αὐτοῦ.
	Hence we would rightly hiss the poet, if he prepared something of the same kind. The claim in the case of poetry that "the contents are unintelligible and the words not pleasing" is not like the claim in the case of cookery that "the ingredients are rotten." For the latter are external to the art [sc. of cookery], but making the contents intelligible is not external to the art of poetry. Even if a poet takes them over completely from someone else, and the verses are his own by his composition, this is, as we saw, very much his particularity. For this reason even making the words one's own does not lie outside the art of poetry, even if words that are common have provided the needs of life. For, as we saw, selecting appropriate words and arranging them suitably with a view to expressing clearly such a thought is his particularity.

---

[346] δύναμις might also be the opponent's word, but it does not appear in Philodemus' summary of the *doxa* here. It may have occurred in the summary of them, partly preserved in *PHerc.* 228.

[347] See n. 297 on the text and translation of this passage.

The comparison is not obvious.[348] The freshness of the ingredients of a recipe is not under the control of the cook (instead, apparently, it is the responsibility of a provisioner, as in Menander's *Dyscolus*[349]); only the recipe and techniques are up to the cook. It is, however, the poet's job to make his poems understandable, even if uses someone else's plot. Philodemus lived in a world in which kings could command poets to write about their victories; such a choice is not up to the poet nor to the art of poetry, but a poet who wrote a poem which no one can understand has not done his job. Additionally, many poems were about traditional myths and so their plots were not invented by the poets, even if they controlled the choice of topic. Very relevant is Philodemus' brief comment on something that the Stoic said. He accuses the Stoic of being inconsistent vis-à-vis a different position that he took elsewhere, but nevertheless Philodemus approves the claim under discussion.

On Poems V.22.13-21:[350]

13 κα[ὶ μ]ὴν τὸ φ]άϲκειν "ἐφ' ὧν [οὐ]κ ἔχο- 15 μ]εν εἰπε[ῖν, εἰ διάνο]ιά τιϲ ὑ]ποτέτακται, μηδ' εἰ π]οιήματ' ἐϲτὶν [ἔχ]ειν ε[ἰ]πεῖν," τῶι μὲν [ἀ]ρτίωϲ τούτου διαϲύρει[ν] τι πο- 20 λὺ δεδέηκεν ἀκολ[ο]υθεῖν, ἄλλωϲ δ' ἀρέϲκε[ι] μοι.	...and moreover, his claim "in those cases in which we cannot say whether there is thought underlying [sc. the poem], we cannot say whether they are poems either" is, on the one hand, some long way from being coherent with his just now savaging part of this opinion, but otherwise I like it.

---

[348] Nor is it satisfying. Surely it is the cook's responsibility to make an edible meal, which requires satisfactory ingredients, just as it is the poet's responsibility to make an intelligible poem, which requires understandable contents.

[349] At ll. 393-9 the cook complains about the sheep again, and at ll. 438-9 the Mother mentions that it looks near to death. The text does not provide any clue as to who provided it; Gomme and Sandbach *ad loc.* assume that the cook did. Instances of comic complaint at the poor quality of sacrificial animals are collected by Gomme and Sandbach *ad Samia* 399 and by Sommerstein *ad Samia* 399-404; in at least one case, Plautus' *Aulularia* (ll. 294-5, 564), the complainer was given the animal rather than owning it to begin with or having to buy it *ad hoc*.

[350] The translation of the phrase at ll. 18-20 is difficult. τῶι is to be taken with διαϲύρειν as an articular infinitive with τούτου as a partitive genitive dependent on τι, the direct object, and ἀρτίωϲ as an adverb (Jensen translated "daß er sich kurz vorher über etwas derartiges lustig machte"). Alternatively, one could accept Mangoni's emendation of τούτου into τοῦτο and understand it as simply "this opinion"; τι πολὺ would then be taken together to mean "some long way" (cf. Xen. *Resp. Lac.* 15.8 for this word order). The phrase is dative dependent on ἀκολουθεῖν, which in its turn depends on δεδέηκεν.

We know that contents are required of a poem, so the line of thought must be that, if we cannot understand the contents, we cannot actually say for sure that they are there, in which case, we cannot say for sure that it is a poem.[351]

The second difficult case, not mentioned by Philodemus but implied by his formal requirements for poetry, is a written work which does not meet those formal criteria. The classic requirement is for meter, which Philodemus too seems to demand.[352] If a poem does not meet those formal criteria, it probably cannot be judged as a poem or, if it can, it will have bad form, and so receive a judgment of "bad." Unfortunately, we do not know specifically what these formal criteria were.

We should inquire into why form should weigh more in the balance than content. The reason is that form is the *idion* of poetry: it is the specific thing that poets do that no other artist does. The *telos*, the goal, is to use the medium well, that is, to compose the literary form well. Choice of topic is indeed outside of the art of poetry: a sculptor or prose author can choose to tell the story of, say, Laocoon just as much as a poet can; the poet's goal is to use language and verse to tell that story in a way that a sculptor or prose author cannot. Similarly, the sculptor's goal is not merely to tell the story, but to do it in a way that a poet cannot.

§9 "Further Thoughts"

Finally, we come to an investigation of how, according to Philodemus, a poem works and

---

[351] At II.37-8, there is discussion of unintelligible poems and the adoption or non adoption of rules ἐμ παραλήψει θεμα[τι]κῶν τινων ἢ ⟨μὴ⟩ παρα[λή]ψει (38.5-7), which may indicate that Heracleodorus thought that the one way to judge non-intelligible poems was to adopt arbitrary rules (rather than by using the natural *prolepsis*?).
Judgement of the contents as harmful (that is, out of line with Epicurean thought) is not a matter of poetry, but of the relevant part of philosophy; see chapter six, §1 for more on this topic.
[352] See chapter three, §3.

what it does. First of all, what a poem is: a poem is language in meter which relates contents. It need not present arguments (this is the job of the prose author) nor is it likely to be useful. A good poem has both good style and good contents, and they work well together to communicate the ideas of the author to the audience. Good style matters more than good contents to the quality of a poem.[353]

All of this is in the hands of the poet, as Philodemus makes clear earlier in the *On Poems*, during the refutation of Andromenides, who had claimed that ornate and impressive diction gives pleasure to the ear.

On Poems I.175.18-24:

18   βλέπ[ε]ται κα⟨ὶ⟩ τοῖc τυ-
     χοῦcιν ὅτι πρὸc τὴν
20   ἀκοὴν οὐθέν ἐcτιν,
     οὐδὲ τὴν ψ[υ]χὴν ἀλό-
     γωc ἀλλὰ τῶι τεχνι-
     κῶι λογιcτικῶc κ{ε̣}[ι-
24   _νεῖ.
	It is obvious even to the average person that it means nothing to the ear, and does not move the soul irrationally, but rationally by artistic means.

That is to say, poetry entertains rationally through artistry, rather than irrationally by tickling the hearing. The artistry is not itself what moves, but the form and contents together (which must be rational if they are to be understood) arranged artistically. For the Epicureans, the hearing is irrational and can only be tickled by rhythm and transmit what it hears to the mind; it cannot judge the contents or form of a poem, because only the mind can.

---

[353] The apparently contradictory statement at *On Poems* V.35.6-10 must be understood strictly with what precedes, at 34.35-35.6: the *doxa* (actually from Andromenides, see Janko [2003: 147 with nn. 2-3]) talks only about the language *appropriate to characters* and not about their (the characters') thoughts, which are more authoritative in some unspecified way, perhaps for their characterization. The whole passage is as follows: οὐδ' ἡ τὸ "λέξιν προcφέρεcθαι πρέπουcαν τοῖc εἰcαγομένοιc προώποιc." [κοινὸν γὰ]ρ καὶ τῶ[ν] πεζῶν ἐcτι λόγων, εἰ δὲ μή γε, τῶ[ν] ἱcτορικῶν ἢ τῶν γε δ[ι]αλόγων. καὶ περὶ τῆ[c] λέξεωc μόνον λαλεῖ, τὰ νοήματα κυριωτέραν δύναμιν ἔχοντα παραπέμπουcα ("nor [sc. is] the opinion [valid] which states "bring to bear language which befits the characters introduced on stage." For it is common to prose works as well, or if not, at least to histories and dialogues. Besides, it only talks about style, leaving aside the contents even though they have the more authoritative power"). It is not immediately clear why the characters' thoughts should be more important than their language, except by parallel with Philodemus' opinion that plot and action are prior to language in a poem (cf. V.15.10-3, discussed at the end of §2).

The relationship between form and content was discussed above (§6), but I have left until here the discussion of what actually hangs on the unity of form and content. It turns out that a poem produces an effect greater than the sum of its parts (form and content). These are the "additional thoughts" that I identified in a passage of book II, discussed at §6 above. I repeat the text and translation here for convenience:

On Poems II.70.17-28:

17 τάχα [γ]ά[ρ, τ]ὰϲ διαν[οίαϲ] ἄλ- λου διδ[όν]τοϲ καὶ τὴν χύ- ϲιν τῶ[ν] λέξεων τοῦ βί- 20 ου χορηγοῦντοϲ, ἡ ϲύνθε- ϲιϲ ἰδί[α γε]ίνεται τῶν πο- ητῶν, οὐκ ἀέριοϲ οὐδ' ἐπαι- νουμένη κα̣θ' αὑτήν, ἀλ- λ' ὅτι π[ρο]ϲπαρίϲτηϲι διανοί- 25 αϲ' αἷϲ ψ[υ]χαγωγοῦϲιν, οὐ παρά τινοϲ λαβόντεϲ, ἀλ- λ' αὐτοὶ γεννήϲαντεϲ πα- 28 > ρ' αὑτῶν.	For perhaps, when someone else gives the contents and life stage-manages the flow of the words, the *synthesis* becomes particular to the poets, not in vain, nor praised for its own sake, but because it brings thoughts to bear in addition, by which they [sc. the poets] entertain, not taking them over from someone else, but giving birth to them from themselves on their own.

There are difficulties with the interpretation of this passage, because Philodemus seems to be straining for terminology which he does not have, and the whole comment is an aside in a discussion of a different topic. First of all, "someone else" (ἄλλου), i.e. not the poet, provides the contents and life itself (βίου) provides the words used to describe it, which come in a flow (χύϲιϲ).[354] That is, the poet is imagined, in this case, to have borrowed the plot and proficiently dressed it up in language according to his own lived experience. But the *synthesis* is particular to the poets, because each poet has a different lived experience and will use different words even if they treat the same plot.[355] Philodemus does not deny the possibility of creativity to poets in the

---

[354] χύϲιϲ is a metaphor for the fluent use of artistically arranged language in [Longinus] *De Subl.*12.4, about Cicero, and see Russell ad loc. for parallels in Cicero for the metaphor, which in Latin uses *flumen*.

[355] A poet's "lived experience" can, I think, be understood to include what language they speak, the poetic tradition in which they write, etc. Pace (1995: 135) also takes βίοϲ to mean "lived experience" ("esperienza umana").

realm of plot.[356] Rather, his point here is that, even if the plot is not original to the poet, the poem *must* be, since each poet cannot help but give it a different form. The first διάνοιαι mentioned in the passage, on my reading, are the contents of the poem. They are likely to be the same thing as the ὑποτεταγμένη διάνοια discussed elsewhere.[357] They are ὑποτεταγμέναι because they undergird the poem as a whole, as a plot does, even when abstracted from the novel or poem in which a particular author narrates it; their choices determine the exact path the story will follow. It seems that this διάνοια must also include any moral or message that the poet wishes to communicate, since that cannot be part of the poetic form. The descriptive phrase "that the poet wishes to communicate" is important, since the audience's reception of it will depend on the form as well; it is, after all, the *synthesis* that provides the additional thoughts.

The plan and contents are matched to *lexeis* (words, i.e. language), which are provided by lived experience*,* to form the particular *synthesis* of that particular poem. It may be that the contents are said explicitly to cause the form. This, instead of language, is the specific verbal dress of the particular poem, and it then "brings thoughts to bear in addition" (προσπαρίϲτηϲι διανοίαϲ, n.b. the plural), which means "produce an intellectual response in the audience." Use of the word διάνοια means that the response is not emotional: πάθη, the Epicurean technical

---

[356] At *On Poems* V.7.9-13 he mentions the narration of false and mythological topics. At 33.24-34.33, he cites and refutes a *doxa* demanding the imitation of acclaimed poets of the past, but his rebuttal is on the grounds of internal incoherence. Generally, there is nothing in the text to suggest that Philodemus disallowed creativity to poets. Given his low estimate of the importance of abiding by the rules of particular genres (see chapter 6 §3), he may even have encouraged it.

[357] See above, chapter five, §2. If they are not, then the ὑποτεταγμένη διάνοια (of the poet) governs what the διάνοια of the poem is, and the difference is that one is the intention of the poet and the second is the contents of the poem. But it is more likely that, since the contents govern the form, they can be said to underlie the form as well and that Philodemus does not clearly distinguish the intention of the poet and the contents of the poem in this way.

term for emotions, are not διάνοιαι.[358] Here we find a basis for Philodemus' position that the appreciation of poetry is an intellectual endeavor. Incidentally, this is the basis for his denial of usefulness to metathesis: a change in form, even if the contents of the poem remain the same, will change the *dianoiai* that the verse gives to the audience. This fact precludes the possibility that critics could ever compare just the verbal form.

Unfortunately, Philodemus does not go into further detail about this intellectual reaction and the trail goes cold. But it is possible to hypothesize what sort of phenomenon he had in mind. The specific mental effect that poetry has (i.e. *psychagogia*, whether this means "entertainment" or something stronger) must stem from, or perhaps be, this the second set of *dianoiai*.[359] If they came directly from the contents of the poem, then the poetic form would not matter, but it is clear from the above statement that Philodemus thought that the poetic form *does* matter quite a lot to our reception and understanding of a poem. Form, which is the *idion*, or particular defining feature, of poetry consists in saying things in a non-prosaic way, but it has far greater effects than could have been predicted from that definition.

Philodemus' language makes it clear that this is entirely in the hands of the poet himself: the subject of the plurals ψ[υ]χαγωγοῦϲιν, λαβόντεϲ, and γεννήϲαντεϲ must be the poets and not the ποήματα, which would take a (neuter) singular, as it does in προϲπαρίϲτηϲι; Philodemus attributes all the aspects of a poem to its creator, who is responsible for its faults and infelicities, but also for its good qualities. Poets do this technically, i.e. artistically, through poetic form: they are skilled manipulators of words, meter, imagery and all the various specific

---

[358] πάθη are defined as specifically only pleasure and pain at Diogenes Laertius X.24 (and see further s. v. πάθοϲ in Usener *GE*). διάνοια is usually "mind" in the Epicureans (see Usener *GE* s.v.), and its use to mean "contents of a poem" is either an extension of that primary meaning or a borrowing from the general Greek literary-critical vocabulary; Dickey (2007: 232) defines it as "meaning" in her glossary of specialized scholiastic vocabulary.

[359] It is not clear if the *dianoiai* are imagined to be a part of the poem disclosed by the *synthesis*, or if the *synthesis* causes the audience to think them.

aspects of poetry, plot, and literature that Philodemus' opponents unsuccessfully champion in their attempts to account for what makes poetry good. The goodness of poetry, for Philodemus, consists in this: fulfilling its *idion* in such a way as to engage the audience. Now we can guess why, despite being treated as in many ways an irrelevant afterthought (since they are common and outside poetry, after all), contents do matter even so. One possibility is that, without good contents, the poem could never get off the ground and the audience would abandon it before the form can work its effect. Another possibility is that, since the mind cares little for sonic effects, the contents must carry some weight. A third possibility is that, since form is in a way caused, or at least conditioned, by the contents, the goodness of the form is related to the goodness of the contents. A fourth is that somehow the form itself, with only minimal reference to the contents, can cause the further thoughts.

A passage from Philodemus' *Rhetoric* III may be useful for explaining how these *dianoiai* contribute to *psychagogia*, and incidentally supports the fourth option mooted in the previous paragraph. In this section of the text, Philodemus is discussing an audience which gets carried away by the formal aspects of a speech and ignores the contents. However, I am interested in the formal aspects and what thoughts they provoke in the audience, not their lack of concern for the arguments.

On Rhetoric III, *PHerc*. 1506 col. LI.24-LII.6 = *PHerc*. 1426 col. IVᵃ.14-Vᵃ.2 (pp. 28-31 Hammerstaedt):[360]

24	ὅταν δ' οὕτως	But whenever they listen in this way
25	ἀκούωςι, τοῖς μὲν λεγομέ-	[sc. to a display oration at a *panegyris*],
	μοι[c] οὐ π[ρ]οςέχου[c]ιν, [π]ότε-	they do not heed whether what is being
	ρα cυμ[φ]έροντα ἢ οὐ cυμφέ-	said is beneficial or not, and, on the
	ροντα, καὶ τὸ cύνολον ἀλη-	whole, true or not, but, entertained by
	θῆ ἢ οὐκ ἀληθῆ, ὑπ' αὐτοῦ	

30	δὲ τοῦ ἤχου κ̣αὶ τῶν περιό- δων καὶ τῶν παρίϲων καὶ ἀντιθέτων καὶ ὁμοιοτέ- λεύτων ψυχαγωγούμενοι, ἤδη προϲεδόκηϲαν, εἰ οὔ-
35	τω{ι} λαλ̣ώ̣⟨ι⟩ηϲαν, καὶ ἐν ἐκ- κληϲίαιϲ καὶ δικαϲτηρίοιϲ
LII.1	εὖ ἀπαλλάττειν, οὐ ϲυνορῶ[ν- τεϲ, ὅτι οὐδ᾽ ἂν ἠνέϲχοντο, εἰ ἐν ἐκκληϲίαι κ[αὶ] δικαϲτηρίωι οὔ]τω{ι} λαλοῦντοϲ ἤκουον, ὅθεν
5	ἦλθον ἐπὶ τὸ ἀνα̣λ̣ίϲκειν μιϲθοὺϲ̣
6	τοῖϲ ϲοφιϲτ̣αῖϲ.

the sound itself, the periods, balanced clauses, antitheses, and rhymes, they already expect to acquit themselves well, if they should speak like that, both in assemblies and in courtrooms, because they do not understand that they would not tolerate it if they heard someone speaking like that in an assembly or courtroom, on which grounds they came to hire sophists.

Chandler (2006: 165) identifies the audience's aesthetic experience as a reaction to the sound, which is reasonable with certain qualifications. First of all, the aesthetic experience must nevertheless be an intellectual one, since we know from the case of poetry that even the form is appreciated by the mind rather than the senses (see above, §8). The senses themselves are *alogoi* and do not judge; as far as poetry is concerned, they are merely tickled by rhythm. Presumably rhetoric is a parallel case—the formal qualities of the speech will tickle the hearing, but the intellect of the audience appreciates or depreciates them. These aesthetic qualities of the speech create *dianoiai* in their mind of the audience. Put differently, their appreciation of the rhetorical qualities is intellectual rather than sensorial, and inspires their own hopes of rhetorical greatness. Their ears do not recognize the formal features nor force their souls into desiring courtroom glory.

A similar case in which the formal features of a poem have an impact on the mind of the audience is implied in Philodemus' discussion of "metathesis" in II.72.13-22. He has just considered how the rearrangement of the words in a line or poem can affect the meaning and clarity of the contents; now he moves to discuss the effect on the rhythm of changing the word-order.

On Poems II.72.13-22:[361]

13 πο̣λλάκι δέ, κἂν τοῦτ[ο συμ]μένηι, 15 τὸ μὲν εὔρ//υ//[θμ]όν ἐστι τὸ δὲ κακόρυθμον, πε- φυκότων ἡμᾶς κεινεῖν καὶ τῶν εὐρύ[θ]μων. ἔс- τιν δ' ὅτε τὸ μ[ὲ]ν εὔμε- 20 τρ//ο//[ν, τὸ δὲ κακόμετρο[ν, οἰκείως καὶ το[ῦ] μέτρου 22 διατιθέντος, ἤ τινός γε.	Often, even if this [sc. the content] is unchanged, the one (verse) has a good rhythm, the other a bad one, since (verses) with a good rhythm too can by nature move (us). Sometimes one (verse) has a good verse-form, the other a bad verse-form, since verse-form too disposes (us) agreeably, or something does.

Here good rhythm (τὸ εὔρυθμον) is said to move (κινεῖν) us and good verse-form (τὸ εὔμετρον) disposes us agreeably (διατίθεναι οἰκείως). It may be that the movement effected by the rhythm is nothing more than what Philodemus elsewhere describes as "tickling" (cf. II.158.14-16, and see I.151.1-17, discussed just below), but a discussion in book I gives reason to believe that the meter, at least, had an impact on the mind as well as the hearing.

On Poems I.151.1-17:[362]

1 τι καὶ καθόλου μελῶ[ν καί, νὴ Δία, ῥυθμῶν οἰκείω[ν, ἀλλ' οὐχ ἕνεκα τούτου [κἀ- πὶ τῶ]ν ποημάτων. [καὶ 5 γὰρ τὰ] μὲν ἐπὶ τὴν ἀ[κοὴν ἀναπ]έμπεται, τὰ δέ π[ο- ήματ]α, συνιέμενα π[ρὸς διάνο]ιαν, ψυχαγωγεῖ. Μ[ε- γακλεί]δης δὲ συναλείφ[ει, 10 λέγω]ν "ὡς ὁμοζηλεία[ς ο]ὔсη[ς]." καὶ συμπείσω [τὸ ὡς ἐκε[ί]νην τὴν τέρ[ψιν ἄλογο[ν], οὕτω κα[ὶ ταύτην δεῖ παρ]αδέχεσθαι [τὰς μέ- 15 τ̣[ρω]ν [] ἰδέας ἀπ[άσας, κἀκ	… is, and generally [sc. in the case] of songs, by Zeus, and of pleasing rhythms, but not, as far as this [sc. sound?] is concerned, in the case of verses too. For the former are referred to the hearing, but verses, as they are understood with regard to the intellect, entertain. But Megaclides obscures this, saying "as the art is similar." I shall advocate that, just as the hearing receives that delight which is irrational, so also the mind must receive all the forms of metres, and from the hexameter [sc. recognizes?]

---

[361] The phrases τὸ εὔρυθμον, τὸ κακόρυθμον, τὸ εὔμετρον, and τὸ κακόμετρον might be better translated as "the quality of having good rhythm," "the quality of having bad rhythm," "the quality of having good meter," and "the quality of having bad meter." The final phrase is difficult and, as written, seems to be a weaker statement than warranted. Gomperz' εἴ τινός γε "if anything does" deserves consideration; if correct, it would mean that good meter, of all the aspects of poetry, is best able to dispose an audience agreeably, but this seems to be a rather strong statement.

[362] I omit Janko's supplement of ⟨τὴν⟩ at the end of l.12 as unnecessary (and not reflected by his translation, which I have followed except for putting "entertain" in place of "enthrall").

τ[ο]ῦ ἑξαμέτρου πο[. . . (?)   epic composition …

17   . . (?)] τὴν ἐποπο[ΐ]αν κ[

I take the distinction that Philodemus makes to be that the rhythm of language impinges on the hearing, and is thereby transmitted to the mind, which then makes a judgment as to whether meter is present or not, and then possibly further judgments as to the quality of the meter, if there are mistakes or not, etc. So rhythms impinge directly on the hearing, but only the mind grasps meter, which is, incidentally, here recognized as a part of a poem. Indeed, poetry as a whole is understood by the mind. Philodemus here uses the term τέρψις (*terpsis*, delight) to describe the sensation that rhythm causes to the hearing. At *On Poems* II.158.14-16, he talks about this sensation as tickling (γαργαλισμός);[363] I think that this is the same effect described in another way. "Tickling" discounts the pleasure, which is, after all, irrational (ἄλογον, l. 13); *terpsis* allows the effect more power, but whatever pleasure there is in the rhythm is taken into account under the rubric of "form" in the judgment of poems, where it is one among many potential concerns.

The crucial point is that a purely formal element is operated on by the mind. In this case, the rhythm of the words is recognized as metrical—indeed, Philodemus seems to say at the end of the passage that we recognize epic poetry from the meter, which is simply organized rhythm. In this way, a purely formal aspect of the poem does lead to further thoughts. Here, the thoughts do not stray far from the poem or its form, but the passage from *On Rhetoric* III suggests that they can roam further afield.

It is worth noting that all the elements that Philodemus lists in the passage from *On Rhetoric* III are formal and that he explicitly states that the audience of the speech is not

---

[363] ὠιόμε[θα] γὰρ δήπου κ̣αὶ ὑπὸ ῥυθμῶν καὶ [ὑ]πὸ μέτρων̣ α]ὐτὴν γαργαλίζεσθαι ("For we thought all along that it [sc. the hearing] is tickled by rhythms and by meters," my translation).

evaluating its contents. Despite this lack of reflection, the form has an effect on the audience and leads them to flights of fancy about their futures. These fantasies are clearly *dianoiai*, or thoughts, and they are caused by the form, with a certain reference to the context: the speech is a display piece at a festival, and the audience imagines themselves giving successful speeches, winning court cases and earning civic glory. Though not the same, these are all clearly related ideas. This supports the fourth option, that the thoughts caused by the form are probably somewhat, but not necessarily very closely, related to the contents of the work. This also aligns with many people's experience when reading literature: their imagination takes flight but starts from the work that they have just read. On reflection, this seems reasonable: Aratus' poem about astronomy with mythological asides is much more likely to create ideas about astronomy, the myths which he included, or poetry, all of which are connected with the poem itself, rather than battle scenes or erotic scenarios. Though some of the mythological narrations could have that effect, the poem is much more likely to inspire someone to study astronomy rather than warfare.

Given that both poetry and display oration have this effect on their audience, it appears that the latter effect is the response that people have to artistic language of any sort, whether prose or poetry, and it may reasonably be thought that any type of artistic language would have a similar effect on its audience.[364] Additionally, given the specificity of the response to rhetoric discussed by Philodemus, it seems likely that the responses to poetry and other types of literary writing might be similarly specific.

It is a pity that more of Philodemus' thinking on this aspect does not survive, especially given contemporary interest in the effect of literature on its reader, both in the form of

---

[364] The category of "artistic writing" is apparently exhausted for Philodemus by poetry and sophistic rhetoric (which seems to be the *techne* of writing artistic prose generally), but this might not be true.

psychological studies which claim to find increased empathy among readers of literary fiction,[365] and in reader-response literary theories. It certainly appears that Philodemus here identifies "being a spur to the imagination" as an aspect of good poetry, or at least has pointed out that good literature often does provoke further meditation on the work itself and related topics.

§10 Summary and Conclusion

Philodemus held that poetry had two parts, form (*synthesis*) and content (*dianoia*), and that these required and affected each other: content cannot be related without words (which constitute form, however good or bad), and linguistic form cannot exist without being about some topic or another. The two parts constitute the poem; however, when read, it has an additional psychological impact on its audience, namely that it causes somewhat mysterious "further thoughts."

Form is somewhat more important than content to the judgment of poems, but both are significant and cannot be neglected. The demands which Philodemus places on form and content are elliptically phrased and difficult to understand, but he seems to aim for high-brow content (but not philosophical or didactic content) expressed in a reasonably clear style. These are to be understood as general statements, not absolute rules, and certain topics (or even stylistic choices) may force the poet's hand.

---

[365] E.g. Usherwood (2002) and Paul's New York Times article "Your Brain on Fiction" (17 March 2012).

Chapter Six

An Epicurean Critical Miscellany

§1 Introduction

In this chapter a series of unrelated topics will be discussed.[366] They are the concept of τὸ πρέπον (§2), the rules of genre (§3), and the *mimesis*, or imitation, of things (§4) and of earlier poets (§5). Additionally, certain technical terms will be treated more precisely: the meanings of τὸ ἴδιον, τὸ ἔργον, and τὸ τέλος (§6), ὁ ἀγαθὸς ποητής, the poet (§7), and the excellence of poetry (§8). I will end by discussing the utility of poetry (§9). In cases like genre and imitation, Philodemus is dismissive of his opponents' positions because he considers them misguided or impossible in practice. In these cases, his own views are not developed. He seems to have considered genre basically irrelevant to the question of what makes a good poet; this is interesting in light of the emphasis put on genre by modern historians of ancient Greek literature. Likewise, his view of mimesis shows basically no point of contact with Aristotle, on whom modern discussions of the term center. He has, however, a very interesting position related to the utility to be found in poetry: poetry *per se* is not useful, but this does not prevent the contents from being useful or harmful (§9).

These various topics did not fit into the grand narrative of form and content discussed in chapter five, and often presuppose knowledge of what Epicureans meant by "poetry" and "good poetry." Accordingly, they must be discussed after the broad outlines of Philodemus' position are understood.

---

[366] It is much indebted in argumentative form and choice of content to Pace (1995).

§2 τὸ πρέπον: Characterization, Verisimilitude and the Suspension of Disbelief

τὸ πρέπον, "the (be)fitting," is a demand, common in antiquity, for language and content to match, i.e. to fit each other properly. Other terms used to express the same relationship are τὸ (συν)αρμόττον and τὸ οἰκεῖον (as well as related verbs). But language can match content in several ways: speeches should match the characters who deliver them, or the language generally should match the elevation of the theme, or the language can be judged morally indecent.

Philodemus has opinions on these debates, but also has a particularly Epicurean attitude to the relationship between the contents of poetry and theology, in which the contents of poetry are judged by their "fit" with Epicurean doctrine. In the second part of *On Piety*, Philodemus discusses the relationship between the contents of poetry and Epicurean philosophy in terms of τὸ πρέπον. As Obbink (1996: 696) puts it, "the criterion employed throughout is what is πρέπον to say about the gods according to the restrictions set forth in *Kyria Doxa* I and *Ad Menoeceum* §123." This use of the term is of great interest, because it indicates clearly that for an Epicurean interpreter Epicurean doctrines are the final arbiter of the truth of the contents of poetry.[367] The truth of poetic contents can matter very much to an Epicurean.

But Philodemus' perspective is different here. In the *On Piety*, he writes as a theologian and criticizes poets *qua* authorities used by his Stoic opponents;[368] in the *On Poems*, he does not concern himself with the truth of the contents of poems. Even if there is some truth in them,

---

[367] This seems to have been the Epicurean position from the start, when Epicurus criticized liberal education (poets importantly included) for being useless. See chapter two §2.

[368] So Obbink (1996: 694).

poems are useless, and the amount of truth does not enter into his method of judgment.[369] In this case, he assumes that his audience is familiar with the various Epicurean criticisms that could be mounted against the poets as educators, i.e. he assumes that his readers are familiar with content-focused criticism like that in his *De Pietate*, and know that the contents of a poem are not required to be wise or intelligent; nor should they expect to gain any real utility from reading poetry.

Within the *On Poems*, Philodemus does not much concern himself with τὸ πρέπον. The phrase does appear in the text, but seldom. At I.64.19-24, Heracleodorus makes the claim that speeches should fit the characters of those giving them, and in book III, col. 10.27-30, the opponent mentions instances when the language does not suit something (unfortunately, it is not clear what "something"). In neither case do we get Philodemus' opinion or discussion of the claims. However, there seems to be a similar discussion of Pausimachus' opinions at I.82.1-2, of which an interesting bit survives: προс]ώποιс ἀρμ[ότ]τον[τας ἤχου]ς κωλύειν ("sounds appropriate to the characters prevent"). The refutation in book two suggests that Philodemus was none too impressed with this claim:

On Poems II.153.20-154.9:

20 ἀλλὰ μὴν ἄτο- πον αὐτο[ῦ κα]ὶ τ[ὸ] "πλ[έο]ν μέγεθος φωνῆς ἐν συν- θέσει χρηστῆι κείμενον ἐναρμόσει παντὶ προсώ{ι}- 25 πωιι καὶ διαθέσει πάσηι." φωνὴ[[ς]] μὲν γάρ, [[της]] οἵαν 27 οὗτοι παρεισάγουσιν, ου (three lines missing)	But bizarre indeed is his claim that "a greater magnitude of sound which resides in a good composition will be appropriate to every character and every disposition." For voice, such as these critics introduce, [is not?] (*three lines missing*) ... which

---

[369] That this extremely important topic is not covered at all in the extant *On Poems* may indicate that Philodemus expected his readers to be familiar with statements of school doctrine found elsewhere.

4 ὃν καὶ "εἰλ[ικρινῆ" προς]αγο-	those who are concerned with
5 ρεύειν οἱ π[ερ]ὶ τοὺ[ς ἤχο]υς	sounds are also accustomed to
εἰθίκασιν, [εἰ] "παντὶ προ-	call 'pure', if it seems
cώπωι καὶ‚ διαθέcει" καὶ	'appropriate to every character
καθόλου π[ρ]άγμασιν "ἐν-	and disposition' and to content
9 αρμό[ττ]ειν" ἔοικεν'.	in general.

His exact objection seems to be to the demand for large sound (or vocalization, in Janko's
translation) and particular sonic effects; possibly he pointed out that these demands might
contradict a demand for diction which fits a character. Unfortunately, more certainty is
impossible.

The word for verisimilitude or suspension of disbelief seems to be τὸ πιθανόν
"persuasive quality." It appears in a discussion of Andromenides' claims that the poet should
pick the words "most suited to the contents so that they cohere and have a persuasive quality"
([οἰκειότα]τα τοῦ πρά[γ]ματοc ἐγλ[έγεc]θαι τὰ ῥήμα`θ´ ἵνα προ[cαρμόcῃ] καὶ τὸ
πιθαν[ὸν ἔχηι], I.17.26-18.4). Philodemus takes him to task for not actually wanting fitting
words:

On Poems I.172.18-25:

18 _ ἀλ-	But in fact he does not ever
λὰ [μ]ὴν οὐδὲ "τὰ τῶν	advise them to "adopt the
20 πραγμάτων οἰκεῖα ῥη-	words that are suitable for
ματα" παραινεῖ "λαμ-	the contents," to tell the
βάνειν," ὡς ἀληθὲς εἰ-	truth, if a poet were to select
πεῖν, εἰ τὰ μάλιστά τις	those words that are the most
ἐμφαίνοντα ἐγλέγοι-	suggestive.
25 το.	

Philodemus' prose is difficult here, but he seems to be saying that Andromenides does not
actually demand of poets fitting vocabulary (despite his claiming to do so), but rather suggestive
language, that is, language which carries many connotations or seems freighted with unspoken

significance. However, in what remains of the text, he leaves the demand for τὸ πιθανόν untouched. Indeed, it is consistent with other claims that Philodemus makes about poetry: characters should be consistently drawn and plausible.

The most instructive passage is in book V, in the refutation of the various *doxai* in Zeno. The particular demand in this case, attributable to Andromenides,[370] is for the use of a style which befits the characters brought on stage or generally introduced into the action of the poem (οὐδ᾽ ἡ [sc. δόξα] τὸ λέξιν προσφέρεσθαι πρέπουσαν τοῖς εἰσαγομένοις προσώποις, 34.35-35.2). Philodemus' rebuttal seems petty at first, but is quite revealing.

On Poems V.35.11-28:[371]

11 ὅτι "τοῖς θεοῖς καὶ τοῖς ἥρωσιν ἡ τοιαύ- τη πρέπει λέξις" ἠλιθί- ων ἐςτὶ καὶ μεμιμῆς- 15 θαι βέλτιον λέγειν τὴν πρέπουσαν. τελείω[ς δὲ μ[αν]ικὸν τὸ παρ[α- ψηλαφ[ᾶ]ν ὁμοιότητα λέξεως τοῖς δηλουμέ- 20 νοις πράγμασιν. εἰ δὲ προσυπακουστέον καὶ τὴν διάνοιαν, ἢ γρα- φεὺς παραλέλοιπε, τὸ πο- ητικῇ διάγνωσιν ἀπο- 25 νέμειν τ[ῶν ἑ]κάςτωι προσώπωι πρεπόν- των λόγῶν παράκο- 28 πόν ἐςτιν.	… that such a style befits the gods and the heroes is the claim of foolish men, and it is better to say that it imitates the style which befits them. But completely insane is the grasping after a similarity of the style to the actions it describes. If the "sense" must be considered as well, or if a scribe has left it out, it is insane to assign to the art of poetry the distinction between the speeches which befit each character.

Philodemus' objection is grounded in the reality that humans do not actually know what style of

---

[370] See Janko (2003: 147 nn. 2-3).
[371] ὑπακούω can mean "consider, regard," so I have translated προσυπακούω as "consider as well, in addition" (to the style, in this case). This meaning is recorded in LSJ, although this passage is miscategorized. On *mimesis*, see below §§4-5.

speech the gods and heroes use;[372] the demand for imitation of it is an admission that the poet is working with probabilities or what seems best to him as he composes, rather than with actual truths about the universe. This is also the basis of the objection about the contents of speeches as well: deciding whether the contents of speeches are appropriate to heroes or gods is definitely not the prerogative of poets but of philosophers. But poets apparently should make probable guesses as to what that style or contents would be like when they compose.

A further problem identified by Philodemus is that involved in demanding similarity of style to action; he takes this as a demand for a thoroughly onomatopoeic style, which is ludicrous to consider and impossible in practice.

Philodemus considers real *prepon* relationships between the characters in a poem and their real-world analogues difficult, if not impossible, to manage. He prefers a weaker standard than "(actually) befits," namely "imitation of what actually befits," which is to say verisimilitude. The position is very similar to Aristotle's differentiation between faults accidental to poetry and faults against poetry in *Poetics* 25, 60b15-6; for Philodemus, like Aristotle, thinks some things (theology, in this case) that are involved in poetry are not in the realm of the art of poetry, and he does not demand accuracy on those topics from the poets, since, on other grounds, poems are understood to be inaccurate sources of information about important topics like ethics and theology.

His position seems to be a low-grade demand for consistency in characterization for purposes of verisimilitude (see just below) rather than an axiomatic statement about how poetry

---

[372] Epicureans believed that the gods spoke Greek, cf. Phld. *De Dis* 3.14.6-7 Diels (= *PHerc.* 157 fr. 77.1): καὶ νὴ Δία γε τὴν Ἑλληνίδα νομιστέον ἔχειν αὐτοὺς διάλεκτον ("and indeed, by Zeus, we must believe that they [sc. the gods] have the Greek language").

works. Because Philodemus is not interested in narrow demands but in broad general rules, the topic does not attract attention (cf. *On Poems* V.30.25-29, and contrast I.80.18-20, where he complains that his opponents are not sufficiently detailed).

§3 Genre: *Themata* and *Prolepsis*

Genre, in antiquity, was defined in different ways at different times; by Philodemus' lifetime, genres were distinguished by formal criteria, such as meter, the presence or absence of certain refrains (e.g. ἰὴ παιάν), dedicatee (e.g. poems celebrating mortals were *enkomia* or, depending on circumstances, *epinikia*, but poems celebrating gods were *hymnoi* or a more specific variety, like *dithyramboi* for Dionysius), and contents (it seems that abusive poems, even in non-iambic meters, could be described as "iambic"[373]), as well as combinations of these. Some criteria related to the performance contexts survived (for example, *hyporchemata* were songs which accompanied dancing, as their name suggests), but probably only as fossils of an earlier system. Philodemus generally upholds the importance of genres and generic boundaries, but is not firm on the point: if a poem is good, it may break or transcend the laws of genre.

Philodemus made several disconnected remarks about genre and its relationship to the *techne* of poetry. While it is not entirely clear that he has a fully developed position on the topic, he does have certain firm opinions which stand in opposition to those of previous thinkers, most notably Aristotle, and his discussion is in line with Epicurean doctrine. The most important passage is in book II.

---

[373] Phld. *On Poems* I.117.7-13: οἱ χ[ὰρ ἰ]αμβοποιοὶ τραγικὰ ποιοῦϲιν καὶ οἱ τραγῳδοιοὶ πάλιν ἰαμβικά, καὶ Cαπφώ τινα ἰαμβικῶϲ ποιεῖ καὶ Ἀρχίλοχοϲ οὐκ ἰαμβικῶϲ, and cf. II.203.21-204.2. I take "compose iambically" to mean that they wrote poems describable as "iambic" even if not metrically iambs.

On Poems II.73.18-74.7:[374]

<div style="display:flex">

18 καὶ πρὸϲ τὰ θέματα μέν-
τοι πεφ//υ//[ϲι]ωμένο[ι τὰ
20 μὲν ἀκολούθωϲ αὐ[τοῖϲ
ϲυγκείμενα᾿ προϲιέμε-
θα᾿, τὰ δ᾿ ἐναντίωϲ᾿ ἀπορι-
πτοῦμεν᾿, οἷον "τὸ ϲυνκε-
κόφθαι παρακειμένωϲ
25 ἐν τραγω[ιδ]ίαι μὲν᾿ ἀνοί-
κειον εἶναι᾿, καλὸν δ᾿ ἐν τ[οῖϲ
ἰαμβικοῖ[ϲ," κα]ὶ "τὸ μακρο-
28 ϲύνθετον ἄτ[λητ]ον μὲν
74.1 ἐ]ν τῆι τραγωιδίαι το[ῖϲ τε
ἔπεϲι καἰϲχίον ἐν τ[οῖ]ϲ ἄ[λ-
λοιϲ᾿, ἄλυ[π]ον δ᾿ ἐν τῶι δ[ι-
θυ]ράμβωι, [κ]ἀμύθητα᾿
5 τὰ μὲν ἰδίωϲ κ[αθ᾿ ἕκ]αϲ-
τὸν τρόπον᾿, τὰ δὲ καὶ κοι-
νῶϲ ἐν ποήϲει᾿.

However, since we are naturalized to the rules, we admit verses that are composed in accord with them, but spurn those that are the opposite, such as the principle that "repeated collision in successive words is unsuitable in tragedy, but fine in iambus," and "a long compound is intolerable in tragedy and epic and uglier in the other genres, but painless in dithyramb," and countless others, some individually in the same style, others commonly in poetic composition.

</div>

This calls to mind Philodemus' refutation of the so-called Philosophers who demanded *themata* (here translated "rules") in book V (25.2-30). There are two important differences. The first is that they demanded rules for the *judgement* of poems, but Philodemus here is discussing rules of the *composition* of poetry in genres: for a poem to fit into a genre, it must obey the *themata* of that genre.[375] The second is that these *themata* are actually the *prolepsis*, that is, they are the rules to which we have grown accustomed and which constitute the *prolepsis*, each *thema* being an aspect of it. For example, our *prolepsis* of a human includes feet; accordingly, it is a *thema* that, if you build a human, you include feet. Here, then, Philodemus states that audiences had *prolepseis* of the various genres. So genres are real, not illusory, and adherence to generic

---

[374] Trans. Janko (2011: 224-5), with light modifications. The linguistic practices mentioned by Philodemus are generally valid, and he makes a similar statement at I.162-3. As Janko notes ad loc., "style" (τρόπον, 74.6) is the same as genre. "Repeated collision" (τὸ ϲυνκεκόφθαι παρακειμένωϲ, 72.23-4) is either elision or hiatus.

[375] There is an evaluative aspect to this, in that a critic decides how well a poem obeys the *themata*, but deciding whether a poem is a paean, or good as an example of the paean genre, is a different question from deciding whether it is a good *poem*.

conventions is a topic available for judgment by a literary critic: tragic verses which contain too many "repeated collisions" are *bad* verses.[376]

Demetrius Laco, in a different context, names and etymologizes the parts of the nome, which indicates that such information was relevant to the discussion at hand.[377] The column preceding his discussion discusses the conventional commonality by which writings with certain features are called "poems," and it seems that the argument moved from features common to poetry (style, metaphor, and forceful language may have been mentioned) to those particular to specific genres.[378] This also suggests that genre is a real category for Epicureans, but not of the greatest importance, since a poem's fidelity to a genre was less important than its overall quality.

A related question is whether each genre has its own *techne.* There are three passages relevant to the question. The first is Philodemus' rebuttal of Aristotle's view that poets can only compose poetry that corresponds to their character, on the historical grounds that serious tragedians also wrote funny plays:

On Poems IV.111.4-10:

4	κα]ὶ [ὁ ϲεμνό]τατοϲ//πο//[ητήϲ,	Even the most dignified tragic poet
5	φημί, γελοίο[υϲ] ἐ[πο]ίει ϲα-	used to compose, I affirm, laughable
	τύρουϲ· καὶ πρότε[ρ]ον δ' ἐ-	satyr-plays; and previously too, they
	//χλ[εύαζο]ν μετ⟨ὰ τῶν⟩ [α]ὐτῶν	used to make mockery with the same
	ῥη[μάτ]//ω//[ν], ἢ κ[α]ὶ διαφό-	words, or even with different ones but
	ρων ἀ[λλ]//ὰ τ//ῆϲ αὐτῆϲ ἐπ[ι-	belonging to the same skill.
10	ϲτήμηϲ.	

---

[376] It is not clear what these critics would have thought of mixed genre poetry or the Hellenistic "Kreuzung der Gattungen." Philodemus sidesteps the problem by considering genre basically irrelevant to the question of the quality of a poem.

[377] The terms ϲπονδῆον, καταχορῆον, and ὑποϲυριγμόϲ are discussed in II.52. N.b. that, in Demetrius' orthography, η before a vowel stands for ει. See Romeo's commentary ad loc. and also (1988b).

[378] The text is damaged, and the printed supplements (τρόποι, ἀλληγορίαι, τόνοι) are unusual words.

ἐπιστήμη seems to be equivalent to τέχνη here;[379] if so, Philodemus states outright that the abilities to write serious and funny poetry belong to the same art.[380] The point about the diction is probably included to cover the case of paratragedy, in which a funny poet uses tragic diction and tragic metrical rules to parody tragedy. This is not open to the objection that only tragedy and satyr play are linked in this way: in the next passage to be discussed, Pausimachus made the argument that, while genres are natural because of the sounds of the poems, poets are only called poets of a particular genre by convention, not by nature. Philodemus objects that Pausimachus' conception of phonic appropriateness to genre is nonsensical, which implies that he thinks that poetic genres are established by convention, not by nature, and which leaves the conventional status of poets (according to Pausimachus) uncriticized.

Similarly, according to Pausimachus, poets are not bound to write in only one genre and, despite stereotypes, the same poet often wrote wildly different types of poetry.

On Poems I.117.4-16:

4   [ὥc-
5   τ' εὐφυεῖ[c τοῖc τοιούτοιc
   ἤχοιc ὅμοιοι γινόμ[ενοι
   κατατυγχάνουci⟨ν⟩. οἱ χ[ὰρ ἰ-
   αμβοποιοὶ τραγικὰ ποι-
   οῦcιν, καὶ οἱ τραγῳδοποι-
10   οὶ πάλιν ἰαμβικά, καὶ Cαπ-
   φώ τινα ἰαμβικῶc ποιεῖ,
   καὶ Ἀρχίλοχος οὐκ ἰαμ-
   βικῶc. ὥcτε φύcιει μὲν
   οὐ ῥ]ητέον ἰαμβοποιὸν
15   ἢ ἄλλ]ο τι ποιοῦντα γένοc,
   ἀλλὰ νόμωι, φύcει δὲ ὅταν
   εἰc τὴν εὐγενὴ φωνὴν
   καὶ πρώτην καὶ εἰc πάν-
   τ' ἐναρμόττουcαν οἱ πο-

...so that naturally talented poets succeed by becoming like such sounds. For poets of lampoon compose tragic verses, and conversely tragic poets compose lampoons, and Sappho composes some verse in the manner of lampoon, and Archilochus some not in the manner of lampoon. Hence, one must say that a poet of iambs or a poet in some other genre is so not by nature but by convention, but [sc. it happened] by nature when the poets stumbled upon and named a nobly-born word, original and com-

---

[379] Cf. *Rhet.* II.38.30-39.6 (pp. 125-126 L.-A.), where *episteme* is used in this way as well.
[380] Socrates is said to have argued something similar at the end of Plato's *Symposium* (233d1-6).

ηται ἐμπεσόντες ὀνο-
μάζ`ω΄σι⟨ν⟩).

pletely appropriate [sc. to the poem or
the sense].

Pausimachus' argument here is based on his commitment to euphony: when poets become like the sounds,[381] they produce good poems, and poets of a genre do not exist by nature, only by convention, since many poets wrote in more than one genre. However, poets compose well by nature (i.e. natural talent), and we can take "composing well" to include "composing within the rules of a particular genre." Philodemus' rebuttal in book II is brief but informative:

On Poems II.203.18-204.2:[382]

203.17   οὐ] γὰρ λογισθήσεται
εὑρεῖν ο]ὐδὲ φωνὴ[ν] ἐν
αὐτοῖς ἀπ]οδεδομένην
20   ἢ] ἀπ[ο]δ[ε]κτὴν [τ]οῖς γένε-
σιν. [κα]ὶ μὴν διὰ τοῦτό {υ}
λέγει τὸ] "τινὰς τραγικὰ ⟦c⟧
ποιής]ειν, ἑτέρους δὲ ἰ-
αμβικ]ά, τοὺς δὲ μέλη {ι},
25   τοὺς δ]' ἀ[λ]λοῖα', κἂν εὑρίσ-
204.1   κωνται παρε[μ]βά[λ]λον-
τες ἑτερογεν[ῆ]." πεζ[ὸ]ν
δὲ] νὴ [Δί]α τὸ "ὁμογέν]ὲς
διὰ μη//δὲ//ν εἶναι" // ἔ[στ]αι
5   > κατά γε // τοῦτο.

For [sc. the poet] will not be reckoned to invent even a sound that has been explained by or is acceptable in the genres themselves. Indeed, on this account he says that "some poets will compose tragic poems, others iambics, some lyrics, and others various ones, even if they are found to be inserting bits and pieces from different genres." But, by Zeus, "what is in no way homogeneous" will be, by this argument, prose.

Philodemus' point is that the sounds of a poem are not the only determining feature of the genre

---

[381] Janko ad loc. takes this to mean simply "talented poets have a natural affinity for good sound," and Philodemus' rebuttal in II.202 does not shed much more light on the matter; though he does use the word εὐφυΐα several times, which may imply something stronger than just natural affinity.

[382] ἀπ[ο]δ[ει]κτὴν (my suggestion) in line 20 is a possibility, in which case the translation would run "nor is the sound in poems explicative of or explained by the genres." I have rendered ἑτερογενῆ in l. 204.2 as "bits and pieces from other genres;" Janko translates it as "verse from other genres," but this seems to imply borrowing of already composed lines, rather than of typical aspects of poems in certain genres. I take the neuter plural to be intentionally vague.

and that the sounds of a line do not make it a tragic or hexameter line.[383] Furthermore, an epic, for instance, does not lose its character if a base character is included, nor does a tragedy which contains jokes or a funny passage become a comedy.

Philodemus seems to agree, then, that poets are writers in a particular genre by convention, according to the genre in which most of their poems are written. For example, Aeschylus is called a tragic poet not because he *only* wrote tragedies, but because he *primarily* wrote tragedies and is most known for them, and Sappho is not known as a poet of lampoon, even though she wrote *some* lampoons, because most of her poetry was *not* lampoon.

Philodemus relies on historical examples to dispose of arguments that relied on stereotypes of poets' production. Sappho did write abusively from time to time and Archilochus did write poems which were not abusive. It is obviously the case that they could write them if they did actually write them, so essentialist statements about poets' productions being determined by their character must be false on historical grounds. His position is in contrast with Aristotle's view that serious people write serious poems and baser people base poems (4, 48b19-49a6).[384] It is different again from Horace's principle *si uis me flere, dolendum est / primum ipsi tibi*,[385] in which the emotions of the author are transferred to the audience *via* the character portrayed. This may highlight a broad interest in the history of literature. Other literary scholars of antiquity were

---

[383] The meter, not the sound, makes it a hexameter line; by sound, the *Kritikoi* mean primarily the phonetic qualities of the words, and secondarily the sounds of the words in their sequence; part of this secondary option may be meter.

[384] Aristotle's advice, that poets should try to imagine themselves into the emotions and movements of their characters while composing their parts (*Poetics,* 17, 55a30-34), is similar, since it implies a psychological similarity between poet and character. This is the basis for Horace's view, mentioned subsequently.

[385] That the whole passage (*Ars Poetica* 99-113) has to do with plausibility or verisimilitude is indicated by the line *male si mandata loqueris | aut dormitabo aut ridebo* (ll.104-5); *decent* (106) indictes that Horace considers this a matter of πρέπον.

content, it seems, to pick out only what a particular poet was famous for and then disregard the rest of their oeuvre, e.g. tragedians whose satyr-plays are forgotten or, in Roman terms, to remember Catullus for his poems about Lesbia and forget the political jabs at Cicero and Caesar or the moving epitaph for his brother. This inclusivity may stem from the empirical practice of reading all that the poets had to offer.

So far, we can determine that all genres of poetry were included under one *techne*, and Philodemus generally leaves unstated the *themata* for each genre (in accord with his stated unwillingness to go into detail);[386] nor does he consider in depth the relationship of the genre of poem to the judgment of its quality, though he seems to have considered writing "a good poem" (good in terms of general quality) more important than writing (e.g.) "a good dithyramb" (good in terms of fidelity to the rules of the genre). Probably, the judge considered how well the poem accorded with the standard practices of the genre, but this consideration was not decisive. The poet is almost left out of consideration: s/he writes poetry in a chosen genre, and may be nicknamed after their chosen genre or the one which contains their best-known works, but no poet is essentially a writer of a genre: Euripdies is called a tragedian because he is most famous for his work in that genre, but he also wrote satyr plays and an epinician for Alcibiades as well.

The *prolepsis* would have to be fairly complex, if it includes all the genres and all their details, but this is possible. More likely is that there is one *techne* for writing poetry, but several *prolepseis* for the variety of genres. This is implied by the discussion of the *themata*, which seem to provide the raw material for the constructing the *prolepseis* of particular genres.

Another passage may be relevant to determining the relationship between genre and

---

[386] But some are mentioned at *On Poems* II.73, discussed above in this section.

judgment. Unfortunately, its context is badly damaged. It is certain that Philodemus is speaking, because there are other explicit quotations in the vicinity. The discussion seems to be about fidelity to a given genre.

On Poems II.30.16-25:[387]

16   φρον-
τίϲαϲ γὰρ τοῦ διανοήμα-
τοϲ, ὃ διὰ τῆϲ καταϲκευῆ[ϲ
20 ἔλ]εγον ἐμφαίνεϲθαι, κ[ρι-
θήϲ]εται ποητὴϲ ἀγαθὸϲ ἐ[πὶ
τῇ[ι] φροντιϲτεί⟨ᾳ⟩,‘ κἂν ἐκ το[ῦ
γ]ένουϲ ἐξεβάλλετο,‘ καὶ
ὑ]πὸ τ[ο]ύτων κατ’ οὐδὲν
25 ἕτερ]ον ἐξεβάλλετο, τὰ
προκείμενα ποήματα.

For, having given thought to the contents which, I claimed, are indicated through the craftsmanship, he will be judged a good poet for his thoughtfulness, and he would have been expelled from the genre, and the aforementioned poems *were* expelled for no other reason by these critics.

Philodemus states that the quality of the contents matters more to the overall quality of a poem than its adherence to a particular genre. A poem is good or bad in accordance with the care given to it by the poet. Sadly, the rationale for the irrelevance of genre to this calculation does not survive, but one possibility is that, if a poem violates generic boundaries, it may simply be seen as belonging to a different genre. Another possibility is that Philodemus does not feel the need strictly to police generic boundaries; after all, he was happy to use vitriolic poems by Sappho to make a point earlier. If so, genre will not have played much of a rôle in judgment: a good poem would just be a good poem, even if the genre were poorly adhered to or indeterminate. In any case, it is clear that the contents, indicated by the style or craftsmanship of the poet, matter more

---

[387] Janko suspected (pers. comm.) that the opponents at this point are the *kritikoi*, so the plural in l. 30 could possibly be used of them; however, this is not a position they hold, so I have taken it as a first person singular referring to Philodemus. If the opponent is not the *kritikoi*, but a single person, then Philodemus must of course be the speaker. In l. 23, I take the subject to be "the poet," continuing from l. 21, because of the punctuation after ἐξεβάλλετο. Both the poet and his poems are expelled from the genre. Alternatively, τὰ προκείμενα ποήματα could be the subject of both verbs, as Janko suggests to me, in which case, the passage should be translated "even if the aforementioned poems were expelled, and were expelled by them for no other reason."

than adherence to the *themata* of the various genres. The ancient confusion over the genre of Bacchylides 17 (paean or dithyramb?[388]) bears witness to the relevance of Philodemus' position: the poem was not clearly a dithyramb or a paean, which caused some trouble for other ancient literary critics. Philodemus would not have cared to which genre it belongs, so long as it was well-crafted.

That poem, however, and others like it were probably special cases. In *On Music* IV, Philodemus says that not every type of music is appropriate for religious occasions (οὔτε πᾶν εἶδος), but only the most serious type (cπουδαιότα[τον], 118.20-1 and 23). This phrasing, along with the general Epicurean preservation of traditional religious rites, serves to indicate that music (here including poetry) could make up a part of religious festivals, provided it was suitable in tone and required by tradition. These requirements imply (but does not guarantee) acceptance of the traditional genres: the serious poetry appropriate for such festivals would be hymns, paeans, and the like. In this case, while a poem's quality might excuse transgressions of generic boundaries, it might render it unsuitable for religious use.

On balance, then, it seems that Philodemus did not have a developed position on the question of whether each genre of poetry had its own *prolepsis*. I suspect that he would have granted that they did, inasmuch as "paean" and "dithyramb" correspond to different ideas of poetry. This is not in conflict with his apparent position that all the genres are covered under one *techne*: cobbling is the art which covers all the making of footwear, but individual practitioners can specialize in boots or sandals without being any the less cobblers generally.

---

[388] The problem has attracted other suggestions as well. See Schmidt (1990).

§4 Imitation of Things

Mimesis is most famous from Aristotle's use of it in the *Poetics* to mean "representation,"
what the actors of a tragedy do to the plot of a play as they perform it on stage (or what readers
of the text do mentally as they imagine the play unfold).[389] Philodemus, however, does not use it
in this way; rather he takes it to mean "imitate" or "portray" in a quite general way, as younger
poets imitate older poets, as poets imitate matters they do not know about, or as someone might
imitate a bird's song (or a bird might imitate someone's voice).

For Philodemus, the voice can be mimetic, but this means onomatopoeic rather than
representational. This is clear from a passage in his *Rhetoric*:

On Rhetoric IV (*PHerc.* 1423.5.12-6 = I.150 Sudhaus):

12 … μιμεῖϲθαι δὲ τὰ πράγματ[α] μὲν φω- ναῖϲ ο[ὐ] δυν[ατόν ἐϲ- 15 τιν, ἤχουϲ [δέ τι]ναϲ καὶ ψόφουϲ …	It is not possible to imitate contents with words [or "voices"] but certain sounds and noises.

It is easy enough to use noise to imitate other noises, even quite skillfully, but on reflection, it is
clear that it is impossible to imitate things with voices. By using the voice alone, someone can
easily enough imitate with their voice, say, the noise a box makes as it falls down a staircase, but
not simply "a box," let alone anything more complex, like the plot of a tragedy.[390]

Philodemus makes the same point in *On Poems* IV, probably criticizing Aristotle's lost
On Poets. Specifically, he attacked a doctrine that musical language (i.e. voice and noises
organized into language and then sung) somehow achieved the goal of mimesis more than

---

[389] For the debate over the meaning of *mimesis* see, e.g., Halliwell (2002: 155-76) and Janko (2011: 330-62).
[390] Pausimachus, a *kritikos*, uses birdsong to show that sound is fundamental at *On Poems* I.114-15 and to make a
point about art and nature in poetry, but *mimesis* as a concept does not seem to be important to his point.

unsung speech, i.e. that the addition of music somehow made the text more mimetic:

On Poems IV.117.30-118.1-13:[391]

(117.30)   ["ἡ τῶν]
118.1   νόμων πόησις," ε[ἰ] μὲν "οὐκ ἐν
        διηρθρωμένῃ" γίνεται, λε-
        γέσθω{ι} "τὸ τέλος ἔχειν ἐν
        φωνῇ καὶ ψόφοις· ἐπεὶ δ᾿ "εἰ-
5   cὶ] λόγοι μελῳδούμενοι,"
        πῶς ἐν τούτοις ἀλλ᾿ οὐχὶ "κἀν
        τ]ῶι λόγωι τὸ τέλος ἕξου-
        cι] τῆς μιμήσεως," μᾶλλον
        δὲ] μόνωι "λόγωι," διὰ τὸ
10   "φωνῆι καὶ ψόφοις" ἀδ[ύ]να-
        τον] εἶναι "πράγματα μιμεῖ-
        cθαι" καὶ μὴ μόνον φωνὰς
13   καὶ ψόφους αὐτῶν.

The composition of nomes, if it comes about "not in articulated voice," let it be said to "have its end in voice and sounds." But since [sc. nomes] are "speech sung to music," how will they "have the goal of mimesis in these [sc. voice and sounds]" but not "in speech too" or rather "in speech" alone, because of the fact that it is impossible to "make a mimesis of things with voice and sounds," and not merely to make a mimesis of their voices and sounds?

The composition of nomes includes, at least in some cases, lyrics (the λόγοι of l. 5), but the real topic seems to be the relative contributions to mimesis of voice *qua* sound, language *qua* means of communication, and melody *qua* pure music, and what kind of mimesis that is. Aristotle's claim seems to be that that the voice and sounds with music are mimetic. Philodemus' rebuttal shows that Aristotle must mean something like "mimetic of the plot of the poem" (which we would expect from the doctrines in his *Poetics*), because Philodemus' final point is that you cannot make a mimesis of things with mere voice and noise. Notable is the use of τὰ πράγματα, "the facts," but also the "contents" of poetry, that is, the action which the plot, on the Aristotelian view, represents. This use recalls that in the passage of the *Rhetoric* discussed just above.

Nevertheless, this may not mean that poetry is not mimetic. Philodemus seems to admit

---

[391] The discussion may be limited to the genre of nomes, since that seems to be how the discussion is introduced. Janko takes it to be a discussion of tragedy (see his notes ad loc. for his justification). I suspect that the discussion is technically limited to nomes but is applicable to any poetry set to song. The gloss "nomes" is my suggestion; Janko (pers. comm.) suggests "the lyrics."

that it is mimetic in a discussion in the *On Music* of a parallel drawn by Diogenes of Babylon between music and poetry.

On Music IV.136.27-34:

27	"καὶ τῆι ποητικ[ῆι] δὲ" γράφων "ἀναλόγω[ς] ἔχ[ε]ιν κατά τε τὴν μίμηc[ι]ν [κ]αὶ	Although he writes that "it [sc. music] is analogous to poetry both with regard to mimesis and with regard to invention," he could not have demonstrated this with regard to mimesis, but with regard to invention he could not have shown that it is more the case for this art than for any other one.
30	__ κατὰ τὴν εὕρ[ε]cιν." κατὰ μὲν τὴν μ[ε]ίμηcιν
	__ οὐκ ἂν ἀπέδειξεν, κατὰ δὲ τὴν εὕρεcιν οὐ ταύτ[ηι] ʽμʹᾶλ-
34	λον ἢ ταῖc ἄλλαιc [τέχ]ναιc.

Diogenes claimed that music and poetry are alike, in that both are mimetic and both put similar demands on their practitioners. Philodemus' objection is that Diogenes has not proved his case and perhaps cannot ever prove it, because it is impossible. Halliwell says (2002: 281) "[w]hen Philodemus repudiates the Stoic Diogenes of Babylon's view of music as parallel to poetry 'in terms of mimesis,' he actually implies that poetry itself is uncontentiously mimetic." This is not the only possibility: Diogenes may not have been able to demonstrate it because *music* is not mimetic (and so not comparable to mimetic poetry), or because *poetry* is not mimetic (and so mimetic music is not comparable), or because *neither* is mimetic, or for some other reason (e.g. a deficient definition of mimesis on Diogenes' part, or different ways in which poetry and music are mimetic). It seems likely that Philodemus would have considered music to be mimetic in the sense in which he uses that term in the passage of the *Rhetoric* discussed above: a flautist can imitate birdsong or a percussionist the sound of something falling down a staircase. It is true, however, that poetry, or at least an aspect of it, was certainly mimetic, in some sense, for Philodemus (see below).

On Music IV.91.3-10, the passage adduced by Halliwell to support his contention, does not name poetry: τῶν μυρίῳ μιμητικωτέρων "arts infinitely more mimetic" is the phrase in question. Philodemus denies Diogenes' claim that music can imitate emotions and that the emotions so imitated by music are somehow useful. He adds in an indignant parenthesis "even if they had been imitated by arts infinitely more imitative!"[392] Poetry is certainly a possibility, but so are, e.g., painting, sculpture, and dance (Delattre's examples *ad loc.*), arts which are both much more mimetic and much more obviously mimetic than poetry. Since Diogenes' claim is that mimesis leads to virtue, Philodemus is better served by using the most mimetic, and most obviously mimetic, arts possible for his rebuttal. After all, no one claimed that sculpture led to virtue.[393]

In light of this, a particular statement of Philodemus about mimesis seems very strange. He is rebutting the anonymous philosophers in Crates who made some claim about mimesis, but unfortunately their original formulation does not survive at all; only Philodemus' refutation does.

On Poems V.26.11-20:[394]

11   ἐῶ γὰρ ὅτι,
κἂν ⟨ἦⁱ⟩ μίμης[ίς] τις ἐν τοι-
αύτηι κατ[ασ]κευῆι (τὸ
ποίημα δ' ἐ[στὶ] τὸ μιμού-
15 μενον ὡς ἐνδέχεται
μάλιστ' ἐν τοιαύτηι), κοι-
νὸν ἀποδώσει κρίμα πᾶ-
σιν, ἀλλ' οὐ κα[θ]' ἕκαστον
θέμα τοῖς διαταξαμέ-

For I allow his claim that, even if there is mimesis in such a form (and verse is the most mimetic thing possible in such a form), it will provide grounds for a judgement common to all, but not for those who classified it according to each rule.

---

[392] Following Delattre, I take μᾶλλον δὲ δῆτα as an indignant "self-correction" (i.e. a correction of what he just said, which was actually his opponent's claim) and the following genitive as dependent on ὑπὸ in l. 7: ὑπ' αὐτῆς πρὸς ἀρετὴν ὠφελεῖν τι, μᾶλλον δὲ δ[ῆ]τα τῶν μυρίῳ μιμητικω[τέ]ρων ("… by it [sc. music], no! absolutely not!, even arts ten-thousandfold more mimetic!").

[393] As a mimetic art, it would have been a step in the wrong direction for Plato.

[394] The translation of the last clause is difficult. Cf. Janko (2011: 225-27 with further bibliography). ⟨ἦⁱ⟩ was added by Pace (1995: 166) after κατασκευῆι; Janko (2011: 225) moved it due to hiatus.

We should note Philodemus' skepticism and caution. καὶ ἐάν simply sets up a conditional sentence and hardly admits that poetry has mimesis. If poetry actually is mimetic (about which he makes no comment here), then that mimesis would give grounds for a common judgment, presumably because the audience could judge how faithful the mimesis was to reality. His statement that "a poem" (or "line of verse") "is the most mimetic thing possible in such a form" also need not give up much ground: it might be the most mimetic thing possible, but that possibility might be extremely small to begin with. "In such a form" here is probably to be understood as "verbally," that is, other forms (like sculpture, or using pure voice to imitate bird sounds) are more mimetic, but poetry is the most mimetic thing in language. At the end, Philodemus notes that the proposed criterion of mimetic accuracy will not satisfy those who use *themata* as their criterion of judgment. If the *themata* are rules of any sort, e.g. the rules of a genre,[395] then it is because the criteria are simply different: mimesis presumably is not rule bound, but governed by the accuracy of the likeness.

Philodemus' view seems to be that, while language generally can be somewhat mimetic, this quality hardly matters at all for poetry. Indeed it is possible to see the *dianoiai* at the heart of Philodemus' interest in poetry as being rooted in a different relationship between audience and story. For Aristotle (at least in the *Poetics*, and at least about tragedy[396]), the mimesis of a story through actors, their speeches, scenery, and the other parts communicates essential, timeless moral truths to the audience, to which they are receptive because they have suspended their

---

[395] As I suggested in §3 above.
[396] The same, *mutatis mutandis*, seems to be true of comedy as well. See Janko (1984).

disbelief and accept the mimesis, which, through the action of the plot, makes them feel emotions and infer just such a moral truth. In contrast, Philodemus understands literature in a "readerly" way: the poem, with its unique combination of form and content, is evocative and entertaining. [397] Poetry, for Philodemus, is not particularly or importantly imitative or representative.

§5 The Imitation of Earlier Poets[398]

In the collection of *doxai* at the end of book V, we find the opinion that good poetry is made by imitating the excellent poets of the past. Philodemus rebuts it with four different arguments:

On Poems V.33.24-30:[399]

24 καὶ	And indeed, the opinion that calls
25 μὴν ἡ{ι} τὸ εὖ μεμιμῆς-	for good imitation of the works of
θαι τὰ ['Ο]μήρου καὶ τῶν	Homer and similarly traditional
ὁμοίω[ς π]αραδεδομέ-	poets will not think that Homer
νων, τὸν Ὅμηρον καὶ	and the like are good poets, since
τοὺς ὁμοίους οὐ δόξει ποι-	they could not have imitated
30 εῖν σπουδαίους, ἐπείπερ	themselves. Further, neither has
αὑτοὺς οὐκ ἐμιμήσαν-	he hit upon the common

---

[397] I do not mean to imply anything about the performance context of Philodemus' own poetry, nor about the poetry he discusses. Indeed, he says almost nothing about performance in his *On Poems* (an actor's possibilities for expressiveness are mentioned at II.73.3-6 and IV.119.13-19), though it is clear from his *On Music* that he images public recital as at least one way in which an audience has access to a poem. I think that his own poem inviting Piso to dinner indicates that he considered private reading a possibility, because a meaningful performance of such a poem is difficult to imagine. Piso would have to be present, and so already invited, to hear such a recital. However, it could easily be reperformed in such a context (perhaps as a way to delight the audience and at the same time increase Piso' stature and Philodemus' reputation). More generally, I do not take sides between Bing's vision of a bookish reading culture and Cameron's insistence on the continued importance of performance. I think both coexisted for very different contexts, and I think that Philodemus separated a poem *per se* from its performance (i.e. reading a tragedy is just as acceptable for him as it was for Aristotle) and he might even prefer private reading, since crowds at a public performance can be distracting (cf. *On Music* IV.142.16-35).

[398] This problem was handled differently by Arrighetti (2011): 76-77.

[399] For the translation of πλήν in l. 32, cf. the usage discussed at LSJ s.v. III.2, "to break off and pass to another subject."

το. [π]λὴν οὔτε παρε-
φάπτεται τ[ῆς] κοινῆς
ἐννο[ίας οὔτε] προει-
35 λήφαμεν ταύτην ἀρετὴν
ποιήματος.

conception nor do we have this as
our *prolepsis* of the excellence of
poetry.

The first argument is curtly and mockingly phrased, but stronger than it may appear, and has a

basis in Epicurean opinions: imitation of the great poets of the past implies a decline from an

original state of excellence, but whom would the first poet have imitated? Poetry for the

Epicureans had a definite (though unknown) starting point in human history.[400] Even if an

imitation could surpass the model, the first poet would be left without such a model to use as his

goal.

The second argument clearly relies on the *prolepsis* for its force: "a good imitation of

Homer and the other old poets" is just not what people mean when they say that a poem is

"good."

The third and fourth arguments, reproduced below, are much longer and constitute an

interesting methodological complaint. The third one first:

On Poems V.34.3-33:
3   δικαιος]ύ[νην]
γέ τοι φήσε[ι τ]ις εἶναι τὴν
5 Ἀριστείδου μίμησιν
καὶ χρηστότητα τὴν Φω-
κί[ω]ν[ο]ς καὶ [σοφ]ίαν τὴν
Ἐπικούρου καὶ πολιτι-
κὴμ μὲν τὴν Περικλέ-
10 ους, ζωγραφίαν δὲ τὴν Ἀ-
πελλέους, καὶ περὶ τῶν
ἄλλων ὁ[μοίω]ς, ἀντι-
στρόφως δ' ἐπὶ [τ]ῶν κα-
κιῶν. θεματικήν τε
15 παντάπασι τὴν κρίσιν

Yet someone will say that
justice is the imitation of
Aristides and uprightness
that of Phocion and wisdom
that of Epicurus and politics
that of Pericles and painting
that of Apelles and so on
and so forth, and con-
versely for the vices. He
introduces a judgement of
the good poem which is

---

[400] On this point, see Mackey (forthcoming).

17	τοῦ καλοῦ ποιήματος εἰcάγει καὶ ἀόριcτον.	completely arbitrary and unlimited.

This position is actually open to the same objection that Philodemus made against the "imitation of the first poets" claim: how did Aristides learn to be just if justice is imitation of himself?

More important, however, are the terms with which Philodemus characterizes the faulty judgment that such a demand for imitation would create: it would be "arbitrary" and "unbounded."[401] Romeo *ad* 14 ss. explains ἀόριcτοc as follows: "infatti, osserva Filodemo, visto che è impossibile imitare i modelli in ogni singolo aspetto e particolare, bisogna definire un limite conveniente dell'imitazione, e chiarire quali sono gli aspetti nei quali i grandi poeti debbono essere imitati, ma poiché i sostenitori della *doxa* non lo precisano, non sarà possibile giudicare se un'imitazione è stata realizzata convenientemente o meno." I differ from her understanding in that I take Philodemus' complaint to be more precisely that, instead of judging a poem by a long list of fine details, we should do it with reference to the main idea, the τί ἐcτι καθ' ὃ θαυμ[άζ]ον|τ[α]ι ἔ[νι]οι (ll. 31-2), "what it is in accord with which some poets are marveled at," or, as Philodemus calls it elsewhere (V.30.28), τὸ διῆκον, "what permeates" a poem to give it its essence.

Philodemus' fourth argument, by probing the unspoken foundations of his opponent's claim, reveals that his own search is actually what his opponent should be involved in as well.

On Poems V.34.17-33:

---

[401] See Mangoni *ad loc.* for a defense of the translation "arbitrary." On θέματα, "rules," generally, see Rispoli (2005: 81), who states "possiamo dunque concludere che singoli studiosi e scuole diverse dal Kepos proponevano θέματα non fondati scientificamente, validi solo per chi li aveva classificati, e assunti come criterio di giudizio di una sequenza vocale, un verso, una composizione; dei θέματα così concepiti erano, ovviamente, considerati da Filodemo inutilizzabili ai fini della formulazione di un giudizio di carattere universale." Philodemus' goal in this part of the text is to arrive at just such a judgement.

17 τό τε μιμεῖϲθα[ι τὸ]ν Ὅμη- ρον ἐμ πᾶϲι καὶ τὸν Εὐ- 20 ριπίδην καὶ τοὺϲ ὁμ⟦ω⟧οί- ωϲ τεθαυμαϲμέ[ν]ουϲ οὐκ ἐπιεικὲ{ι}ϲ ῾εἶναι῾ δόξει. τά- χα δ᾽ οὐδ᾽ ἐπιγνῶναι δυ- νηϲόμεθα τὴν ὡϲ 25 προϲήκε⟨ι⟩ τούτουϲ με- μι]μημένην, ἐὰν [μὴ τὸ πρ]οϲῆκον εἰδήϲω[μ]ε̣ν. πλὴν οὐδὲν γελοιότε- ρον ἔϲται τοῖϲ οὕτωϲ ἀπο- 30 διδοῦϲι. πευϲόμεθα γὰρ τί ἐϲτι καθ᾽ ὃ θαυμ[άζ]ον- τ̣[α]ι ἔ[νι]οι καὶ καθ᾽ ἃ μιμη- 33 τέο̣[ν το]ύτουϲ ὀρθῶϲ.	And imitating Homer in every detail and Euripides and those held in similarly high esteem will not seem to be reasonable. Perhaps we will unable to recognize the poem that imitates them as it ought, unless we know what befits them. Further, there can be nothing more ridiculous for those thus explaining [sc. the excellence of poetry]. For we will ask what it is, in accord with which some are admired and according to which they must be imitated correctly.

If we take it as given that a poet should imitate an earlier great, it is reasonable to ask in what respects they should follow their chosen model or even how to choose an appropriate model from among the good and bad poets of the past. But the answers to such questions will define the good qualities of the poet in question. It is better to search for the answer to the general question "what is it that makes a good poet?" The similarity of προϲῆκον to διῆκον is a happy coincidence: what befits those poems, i.e. what they deserve in an imitation which will really live up to their greatness, is presumably the general quality which makes them good poems in the first instance.

§6 τὸ ἴδιον, τὸ ἔργον, τὸ τέλοϲ, ὁ ἀγαθὸϲ ποητήϲ

    These terms have all been mentioned already in passing. The ἴδιον, or "particular feature,"[402] is what makes poetry poetry and not something else, like prose. Accomplishing it is

---

[402] Janko, *passim*, translates it as "particularity." See Pace (1995: 185-190) for a discussion of Philodemus' use of it.

the τέλος. The ἔργον is the labor of the poet to create a poem which has the ἴδιον. The ἀγαθὸς ποιητής is not clearly defined, but we can make some guesses as to what makes him good.

Philodemus sets out the relationship between these terms in an extended engagement with Heracleodorus' position, which ends, *more Socratico,* with an analogy to a craftsman, near the beginning of book two of the *On Poems*. We will take the last part first, since it lays out most clearly the terms used in the rest of the passage.

On Poems II.68.18-69.26:

18	ἀκ]ό[λ]ουθο//ν γὰ//ρ ἦν τὸ "μηδὲ τὸν π//ο//ητὴν ἐμπο-	For it is consistent with this, as we saw, that "the poet is not hindered in regard to the function of his particular skill," because he brings about entertainment not by means of the contents and words of prose, but by means of divergent ones, not that "(he is not hindered) if he has totally neglected even the appropriate underlying materials, since (the poet) seeks sound that is lacking in content," and one can observe that he has adduced against himself the claim "arts that differ, but have their purpose in common." For "just as the ring-engraver has as his end not making a likeness—for this is shared with both sculptor and painter—but (doing so) on steel or on a gem-stone by means of engraving, with his excellence residing not in this, but in making a likeness, which is common to (them) all, likewise" it is claimed that "the poet too founds his particularity on the composition, but pursues excellence by means of that (excellence) which is also common to prose," which this
20	δ]ίζεσθαι πρὸς τὸ τῆς ἰδ[ί]ας ἐ]πιστήμης ἔργον", ̔ ὅτι οὐ δι- ὰ τῶν τοῦ λόγου διανοη- μάτων ̔ καὶ λέξεων ἐξερ- γ]άζεται τὴν ψυχαγωγί-	
25	αν, ̔ ἀλλὰ διὰ παραλλαττόν- των·, οὐ τὸ "καὶ τῶν οἰκεί- ων ὑποκειμένων ἀμε-	
28	λήσαντα τελέως, ̔ ἐπ[ε]ὶ τὴν	
69.1	φωνὴν δι//ώκει τὴν ἀδι- ανόητο//ν", ἐκεῖν[ό] τε πάρεσ- τιν λέγ]ειν, ̔ ὅτι καθ᾿ αὑτοῦ τ[ὸ] "δ[ι]αφερούσα[ς] μὲν τέ-	
5	χνας, ἐν δὲ τῷ κοινῶι τὸ τέ[λο]ς ἐχούσας" παρατέθη- κεν. ̔ "ὡς" γὰρ "ὁ [δ]ακτυλιογλύ- φος, ἴδιον ἔχων οὐ τὸ ποι- εῖν ὅμο[ι]ον᾿ — κοινὸν γὰρ ἦν	
10	καὶ πλ[ά]στου καὶ ζωγ[ρ]ά- φου — [τὸ] δ᾿ ἐν σιδήρῳ καὶ λι- θαρίωι διὰ τῆς ἐγγλυφῆς, τἀγαθ[ὸ]ν οὐκ ἐν τούτωι κεί[με]νον, ̔ ἀλλ᾿ ἐν τῶι ποι-	
15	εῖν ὅμ[ο]ιον, ̔ ὃ πάντων κοι- νὸν ἦν, ἔχει, ̔ παραπλησί- ως" ἀξιοῦται καὶ ὁ ποιητὴς "τὸ μὲν ἴδιον ἐν τ[ῇ συ]ν- θέσει β[άλ]λ[ε]σθαι, ̔ τὸ δ᾿ ἀγα-	

206

20 θὸν διὰ [τ]ο̣ῦ κ̣αὶ λό[γῳ] κοι-
ν⟦ω⟧\οῦ/ θηρεύειν",' ὅ φησιν οὗ-
τος ἁπλῶς "μηδὲ ἕν ὠφε-
λεῖν ἢ βλάπτειν", ὥσπερ
ἐκ τῶν παρατεθέντων
25 cυνηχὼ[c] ἀ̣λλ' οὐ τοὐν-
> αντίον.

(critic) flatly says 'cannot help or harm (the poet) at all," as if on the basis of these comparisons he had proved this claim rather than its opposite.

Ring engravers, sculptors, and painters all set out to make a likeness of something, for instance of Ptolemy I, and this is their τέλοc, their goal, and it is "common to them," since all of them have it as their purpose. The ἴδιον, particular feature (or often "particular means"), of each of their arts differs, since it is the medium. The gem-carver's particular feature is working gemstones, the engraver's is metal, the sculptor's is stone. The ἔργον, work or "job," is to accomplish the goal using the particular means of the *techne* in question. We know from a related comment that the object of imitation is outside of the art, that is, the sculptor is not responsible for inventing the shape that he carves (see below).

The poet, then, has the particular feature of working in verses (Heracleodorus claims that it is in the *synthesis*, but Philodemus disagrees), and since the subject matter is outside the art, he does not have to invent his plot, but can take it over from another, that is, originality in topic is not required of the poet, nor, as Philodemus implies at III, fr. 28, is it necessarily praiseworthy in itself. Of course, it was not banned nor was it blameworthy in itself either. Evidence of this can be found in book III.

On Poems III, fr. 28.18-22:
18   ὡc δο[κεῖ, οὐ-
δὲν ἔ]χει παρ' [ἄ]λλο[υ, οὐδὲ
20 πά]ρεcτιν ἡ [ἀ]ρετ[ὴ τοῦ ἐ-
παι]νετοῦ τραγωι[δοῦ, ἀλ-
22 λ]ὰ Χοιρίλου.

As it seems, he [sc. a tragedian] has nothing from another poet, yet the excellence is present not of the praise-worthy tragedian, but of Choerilus.

There were several Choerili: a tragedian of the early fifth century, and two epic poets, one from Samos of the late fifth century, and one of Iasus, who was the infamously bad court epicist of Alexander, and to whom the reference here points.[403] Philodemus' sarcasm points out that Choerilus of Iasus, by versifying Alexander's deeds, had genuinely new material that no one had ever treated before, but he was nevertheless a terrible poet, which means that originality of content does not guarantee quality of product.

For the rest, the passage amounts to a demand on the part of Heracleodorus that the poet not use prosaic language, but language divergent from normal usage (i.e. poetic). Philodemus admits that this is consistent with his position, but says that Heracleodorus has the wrong goal: language without meaning. We will now turn to the beginning of the passage.

On Poems II.67.6-68.18:[404]

6 ἀ[λ]λ' οὗτος, οὐκ ἔςτιν εἰ- πεῖν ὡς ἀδιάληπτος ὤν, ὑ]φ' [ἧς] ἂν προχείρως πα- ραχθῆι φανταςίας, εὐθὺς 10 οἴεται τὸ δοκ[ο]ῦν αὐτῷ κυροῦςθαι δι' αὐτῆς, ὡς καὶ "τοὺς διαφέρ[ο]ντας" εἰ- πὼν "τεχνείτας ὁμοίαν εἰκόνα ποιεῖν ἐν ἄλλοις 15 ὑποκειμένοις, τῆς πα- ραλλαγῆς οὐδὲν βλαπτού- ςης," ἐπιτειμᾶ τοῖς τὸν πο- ητὴν ἐκ τῶν ὑπο[κ]ειμέ- ν]ῳν θεωρ[οῦ]ς[ιν], ο[ὐ]θενὸς 20 ἐ]κ τῶν [ὑποκει]μένων ὄντως ἂν ψυχῆ καθ[α]ρ[ᾶι	But as this (critic), being inexpressibly confused, is readily misled by whatever image, he at once thinks that his own opinion is validated by means of it, as too, when he says that "different [sc. kinds of] craftsmen make a similar image in diverse underlying materials, as the variation does no harm," he is criticizing those who consider the poet from the perspective of his underlying materials, when nobody with a clear mind would really consider the poet on the basis of his

---

[403] The other two Choerili were respected, but not particularly famous, so a reference to one of them would lack point. Also, the lack of a further designation (e.g. τραγωιδός, Cάμιος) indicates that we should understand the most famous one. See Janko *ad loc*.

[404] I take τοῦ πλάττοντος in 68.5-6 to mean "sculptor" or "moulder," i.e. a artisan or artist who works in moldable or shapeable media (i.e. not a painter or poet, for example). The final two lines of the passage could also be translated "this is the claim of a blind man."

θεωροῦντος τὸν ποιητήν
(εἰ δ᾽ ἐ⟨κ⟩ τῶν τούτωι δοκούν-
των "ὑποκειμέ[ν]ων", ἴσω[ς),
25 ἐκ] τῶν δὲ τῆς ποιητικῆς
ὑπαρχόντ[ο]`ω´ν. ἔργον γάρ
ἐςτι τὸ διὰ ποιῶν λέξε-
28 ων ἐ[γ]λογῆ[ς] καὶ πλοκῆ[ς
68.1 ι[. . . . .(.)
       [. . . . .]
       κ[. . . . . ., οὐδ]᾽ // ὑ[πὸ τοῦ δια-
       φ[όρ]//ου βλάπτ[ε]τ[αι τὸ ἴδ]ιον,
5   εἰ // δ[ι]αφερούςη[ι] ⟨τῆς⟩ τοῦ πλάτ-
       το//ντος ὕληι ποεῖ τὴν ὁ-
       μ[ο]//ιότητα. καταξι-
       ῶν δὲ "τὸν ποιητήν, ἐὰν μὴ
       δ//[ι]ανοήματ᾽ οἰκεῖα λάβη[ι
       κ//αὶ [λέ]ξεις προςηκούςας, ἀ-
       γα]θόν τι ποιητικὸν ἀπ[ο-
15   _[δει]κ[ν]ύειν", κἂ[ι]`ν´ παρίδη τ[.
       . . .]η[]τ[.]δ[.]. ι[]ςιαλ[. .]ι[.
       .]β[]κ[]ς[.(.)] ἐςτι τυφλώ`τ´τον-
18   τος.

underlying materials (but if [sc. he did so] on the basis of what *he* imagines to be 'underlying materials," then perhaps), but on the basis of what constitutes the art of poetry. For the [sc. poet's] function is, by means of the selection and interweaving of words of a certain quality [sc. to compose verses which reveal thought? Three lines are lost here.] … and the particular feature is not harmed by the different material, if he creates the likeness with subject-matter that is different from that of the sculptor. But when he claims that "if the poet does not adopt appropriate content and suitable words, he can achieve some poetic excellence," even if he overlooks the … , [sc. he] is [sc. less sighted] than a blind man.

The "underlying materials" seem to be the raw material or, more generally, the medium in which the artist works. An image *simpliciter* is not harmed nor helped by appearing in one medium rather than another: an excellent gem-carver may make a better (e.g. more vivid, more realistic, more flattering) image by engraving even a cheap stone than an unskilled or incompetent sculptor working in Parian marble.

If we should not judge poetry on the basis of what underlies a given poem, we can judge it based on what underlies the art. What is that? Philodemus immediately begins to speak about the *ergon* and then, after the lacuna, he speaks about the *idion*, subject matter (ὕλη here[405]) and excellence (ἀγαθόν). It seems likely that these are what underlies the art, that is, they are the

---

[405] This is not Philodemus' usual term, so it must be taken over from the opponent.

principles and organization of the art, and it is not surprising to claim that we should judge a work of art in accord with the principles of the art.

We can find more details about the *ergon*, *idion*, *telos*, and *arete* in the passage which immediately proceeds the one just under discussion.

On Poems II.64.17-65.24:[406]

64.17 χ]ωρὶс γὰρ τούτ[ων οὐ
⟨μόνον⟩ ψέγειν ἡμᾶс, ἐ[ὰν cαπρὰ
cκευάζῃ, τῆс ἐγλ[ογῆс ἐ-
20 π᾽ αὐτῷ κειμέ//νη//[c], τὸν
μάγειρον, ἀλλὰ καὶ κρε-
μάcανταс ἐκδείρειν, ἐπαι-
νεῖν δ᾽ ἂν εὔ[φ]⸢χ⸣́υλα· διὸ καὶ
τὸν ποιητὴν cυρίτ[τ]οι⟨μεν⟩
25 ἂν δικαί[ω]c, εἴ τι πονοί-
η τῶν ἀναλόγων." ὃ ο[ὐ-
27 χ ὅμοιόν ἐcτιν ἐπ[ὶ τ]ῆc
65.1 ποητικῆс τὸ "τὰ πρ[άγμα-
τα ἄγνωcτα εἶναι, [τὰc δὲ
λέξειc οὐκ ἀρεcτά[c", καὶ
ἐπὶ τῆc μαγε[ιρι]κῆ[c τὸ "cα-
5 πρὰ τἀγοράcματα." τ[ῆc
μὲν γὰρ ἔξω ταῦτ᾽ ἐc[τί,
τῆc δὲ ποητικῆc ο[ὐ]κ [ἔc-
τιν ἔξω τὸ ποεῖν [γνωc-
τὰ τὰ πράγματα. [κἄν τιc
10 παντελῶc αὐτὰ [παρ᾽ ἑ-
τέρου λαμβάνη[ι, ἴδια δὲ
τῇ cυνθέcει τὰ πο[ήμα-
τα, τοῦτ᾽ ἦν ἰδιώ[τατον
αὐτοῦ. διόπερ ο[ὐδὲ τὸ
15 τὰc λέξειc ο᾽ἰκείαc [ἔχειν
ἐκτόc ἐcτι τῆc π[οητικῆc,
κἂν αἱ λέξειc ὠφ[ελείαc
τοῦ βίου παρεcχή[κωcι
κοιναί. τὸ γὰρ ἐγλ[έγειν
20 τὰc ο᾽ἰκείαc καὶ δ[ι]ατ[ιθ]έ-
ναι πρὸc [[α]] δήλωcιν τοι-
ούτου νοήματοc ἐπι-

[he says that "for, apart from these [sc. considerations?], we not only abuse the cook, when the selection of ingredients is up to him, if he makes rotten meals, but also hang him up and flog him, but we praise him if they are succulent; hence we would rightly hiss the poet if he prepared something of the same kind." The claim in the case of poetry that 'the contents are unintelligible and the words not pleasing' is not the same as the claim in the case of cookery that 'the ingredients are rotten'. For the latter are external to the art (of cookery), but making the contents intelligible is not external to the art of poetry. Even if a poet takes them over completely from someone else, and the verses are his own [or "are particular to him"] by his composition, this is, as we saw, very much his particular feature. For this reason even making the words one's own does not lie outside the art of poetry, even if common language has provided the needs of life. For his particular feature is, as we saw, to select appropriate words and to

---

406 In 65.17-8, I take the phrase ὠφ[ελείαc] τοῦ βίου to be emphatic overstatement for "everything he needs." (Another possibility is to ᵣₑₐᵈ τοῦ βι⟨οτ⟩οῦ and translate "the needs of his livelihood"). Janko suggests (pers. comm.) reading ποεῖν at the end of 65.15 in place of ἔχειν.

τηδ//ε//[ίως]′, τοῦτ᾽ ἦ[ν ἴ]δι-
>ον αὐτοῦ.

24

arrange them suitably with a view to expressing clearly such a thought.

Heracleodorus here wants to blame the cook for making a bad meal and, likewise, the poet for making a bad poem, evidently blaming both for their poor choice of initial materials.[407] Philodemus' rebuttal seemingly excuses the cook for the rotten ingredients, though he only says that shopping is outside the *techne* of cookery, not that the cook is not responsible for the bad meal. This will be taken up just below.

The second part of the passage speaks to the problem of the *idion* and says clearly that the particular feature of the poet is "to select appropriate words and to arrange them suitably with a view to expressing clearly such a thought." This dovetails with the description of the *ergon* at I.167: not to come up with original content, but to express whatever content in a unique way.

Lastly, we have mention of the τέλος (the "end" or "goal"): for the painter, sculptor, and gem-carver, it seems to be "to make an image" for all of them: δ[ι]αφερούσα[ς] μὲν τέχνας, ἐν δὲ τῷ κοινῶι τὸ τέ[λο]ς ἐχούσας ("although the arts are different, they have their goal in common," II.61.4-6, discussed above). So, for a portrait painter, his *ergon* is to fulfill the *telos*, that is, his job is to paint a portrait, using the *idion* of his craft, in this case, paint and canvas. If poetry is analogous to painting (we have no indication that it is not), then the *telos* is simply "a poem" which it is his *ergon* to write. The *idion* is the treatment in language as opposed to any

---

[407] The initial statement of Heracleodorus' position at I.34 is badly damaged, but the terms πιον[(l. 5) and ϲαπρο[(l. 7) suggest that Heracleodorus himself discussed the quality of the ingredients and so held both cook and poet responsible for their choices.

other medium.[408]

We can now resolve the Cook's Objection in Philodemus' terms: if the raw materials are in poor condition, the job of the artist will be harder or perhaps impossible. It seems as if it ought to be the artist's responsibility, that is, part of their *ergon*, to avoid such material, and so it is, indirectly: if they realize that they cannot complete the *telos* using such materials, they will be forced to abandon their plan.[409] But Philodemus may prefer to accept the objection: if the poet picks an intractable topic and writes a bad poem, he has *nevertheless* written a poem, that is, he has completed his *ergon* and fulfilled his *telos*. It will be a bad poem, but it is a poem. Though neither the plot itself nor the poet's choice of it is part of the art of poetry, the poet is responsible for the quality of the poem he writes, but he is to be judged only for his flaws *qua* poet, not *qua* selector of plots. Philodemus puts no limits on the selection of contents, and so allows that, in theory, a good poem could be written on any topic. But this does not mean that any topic in the hands of any poet can result in a good poem.

That the poet is responsible for form and choice of content is argued somewhat earlier in the book, from col. 40 onwards. The treatment is quite lengthy, so I will quote only the explicit statements.

---

[408] *On Poems* II.119.14, ταῦτα δ[ὲ] ἰδιότ[ητ' ἔχει, may indicate that the poems themselves have the particularity of the art, but the context is very broken. Philodemus states at *On Poems* IV.107.2-3 that the *idion* of poetry is not *mimesis*.

[409] Philodemus may say that the poet needs "suitable material" (οἰκεία ὕλη) or else he will not be able to accomplish the *idion*, which would mean that he did think that some plots were completely unworkable. At II.68.7-10: τελέως δ' ἀδυ[ν]ατεῖ τὸ τῆς τέχνης ἴδι[ο]ν ϲυντελεῖν, ἂν μὴ τὴν [ο]ἰκείαν ὕλην ἔχηι ("but he is wholly unable to achieve the particularity of the art, unless he has the appropriate subject-matter"). The term ὕλη betrays this phrase as belonging to Heracleodorus, not Philodemus, since this is not his usual word. The context seems to indicate that Philodemus is speaking, but it may be deceptive. See also chapter five §8 with nn. 77 and 78.

On Poems II.40.21-41.1:[410]

21 ἀλλ᾽ ὅμως, κα- θάπερ ἐπὶ τῶν κατὰ τὰς̣ χειρουργίας οὐχ ἡγούμε- θα χείρω{ι} παρ᾽ ὅϲον ὑφελό̣- μενος ὕλην ἑτέρου τε- 25 χνείτου καλῶϲ ἠργάϲα- [ ]̣`το´, οὕτωϲ οὐδὲ ποητήν, ἐ- ὰν ἀπόητον ὑπόθεϲιν̣ λα- 28 βὼν προϲθῇ τὸν [ἴ]δι̣ον νο[ῦν, 41.1 χείρω νομίζομεν...	But all the same, just as in the case of the handicrafts we do not consider [sc. a craftsman] inferior insofar as he purloined his material from another craftsman and worked it up well, so too we do not think a poet worse if he takes over subject-matter that is non-elaborated and adds his own particular interpretation.

Philodemus' extreme situation is instructive. Even if the material is stolen, the craftsman's craft is what matters to the judgment of him as a craftsman (granted, he is guilty of theft).[411] The final phrase is important: the poet has to add his particular νοῦϲ, probably interpretation: he would not be any sort of craftsman if he simply took another poet's poem and passed it off as his own, so he needs to add something. Philodemus talks in terms of borrowing and rearranging plots (col. 41). Additionally, the style and verbal expression are completely under the control of the poet.[412]

§7 On the Poet

It makes sense that the job of the good poet is to write good poetry, and so it is. But other concerns may be involved: choices made by the poet which affect his or her poetry but do not directly weigh on, for instance, its judgment, the author's moral character, and his psychology. These three topics in particular are interrelated.

We will begin with a discussion of the choice of content. This was handled above in the

---

[410] The phrase τὸν [ἴ]διον νο[ῦν in 40.28 is difficult. I follow Janko, whose note provides extensive bibliography. νοῦϲ seems to mean "sense," i.e. meaning, elsewhere in Epicurean literary criticism: see Demetrius Laco, *On Poems* I.10.5 McOsker with parallels cited *ad loc*.

[411] Henry *apud* Janko *ad loc*. explains that, though the theft counts against the craftsman, his craftsmanship is not affected. Note that "theft" (κλοπή) was the standard term for plagiarism.

[412] Since even quotation of other poets who treated the same plot is a tool of style.

discussion of the *idion* and *ergon*, but it is worth the trouble to discuss it from the perspective of

the poet. The content of poetry is often felt to be relevant to the character of the poet: morally

upright poets write morally upright poetry, and vice versa.[413]

On Poems II.33.20-34.26:

20 παρέλκεται γ[ὰρ τὸ "χρηϲτὸν ἢ φαῦλο[ν εἶναι διανόημα τ[ὸ] ἀ[πό- ητον" εἰϲ ποιητικήν [γε ἀ- ρετήν. καὶ ἐπὶ τοῦτ' ο[ὑ- 25 χ οὗτοϲ οὐδ[ὲ] Φιλίϲκο[ϲ 26 οὐδ' οἱ λοιπο[ὶ] δύο Κου[ρῆ- 34.1 ϲτεϲ ἐπέϲτηϲαν τὴν Ἑλ- λάδα. ἀλλ' ἐξ ὅτου τ[ω]ὸν Ἀρχίλοχον ἐθαύμαζε καὶ τὸν Ἱππώνακτα 5 καὶ τὸν Ϲημωνίδην καὶ τῶν παρ' Ὁμήρωι καὶ Εὐρειπίδει καὶ τοῖϲ ἄλλοιϲ ποιηταῖϲ ἔνια πονηροῖϲ [ου] προϲώποιϲ 10 περικείμενα καὶ περὶ πονηρῶν πραγμάτων γεγραμμένα, καὶ κατε- γέλα χρηϲτοῖϲ περικεί- μενα καὶ περὶ χρηϲτῶν 15 ἀκούουϲα πραγμάτων, οὕτωϲ ἐπέπειϲτο· καὶ ποιητὴν μὲν ἀγαθὸν ὑ- πελάμβανε τὸν ἐξεργα- ϲάμενον, ὡϲ ἔφην, ὁποῖ- 20 όν ποτ' ἂν διανόημα λά- βηι παρ' ἑτέρων ἢ αὐτὸϲ προθῆται, τάχα δὲ ἄνθρω- πον πονηρὸν καὶ τὸν [ἐ- ξενέγκαντα διανοή- 25 ματα χρηϲτά, μὴ καλ- 26 λωπίϲαντα δ' οὕτω.	For the fact that "non-elaborated content is good or inferior" is irrelevant to poetic merit. Neither the latter [sc. poet, Chaeremon] nor Philiscus nor the other two squawkers [lit. Curetes, "noise-makers"] made Hellas turn her attention to this. But since the time when she began to admire Archilochus, Hipponax, and Semonides and some of the verses in Homer, Euripides, and the other poets which are associated with bad characters and are written about bad actions, and she began to laugh when she heard those verses that are associated with decent characters and are about excellent actions, such was her persuasion. As I said, she regarded someone who works up whatever content he takes from others or puts forward himself as an excellent poet, but perhaps [sc. she regarded] as a poor fellow even one who put forward good contents without having adorned them in this way.

Non-elaborated content is irrelevant, in this case, because poetic merit lies in the elaboration of

---

[413] In another context, Catullus provided a humorous, ironic self-defense against charges of personal immorality motivated by lascivious poetry: *nam castum esse decet pium poetam | ipsum, uersiculos nihil necesse est* (xvi.5-6).

the content.[414] The famous poets in Philodemus' list were admitted to be scurrilous (the Stoic in book V, for example, has trouble accounting for why they are good because they seem to fail on ethical grounds);[415] they are used specifically and intentionally to demonstrate that the moral quality of the contents is irrelevant to the judgement of the quality of poets as artists. The good poet is the one who writes a formally accomplished poem about whatever contents he chooses.

It is safe to assume that Philodemus made no claims related to the poet's personal morals, and several passages imply just that. The first is a passage from the rebuttal of Heracleodorus at the beginning of book II. Under discussion is the relationship between formal elaboration and genre.

On Poems II.30.14-26:

<div style="display: flex;">
<div>

ἀλλ' ὡς μοι δοκεῖ,]
15 ὁ ποη[τὴc χρήcεται τοῖc
πλάcμαcι ποητικ⟦οιc⟧ˋὧcˊ, ἂν
τελεῖν [τι ἀ]νέχη[τ]αι. [] φρον-
τίcαc γὰρ τοῦ διανοήμα-
τοc, ὃ διὰ τῆc καταcκευῆ[c
20 ἔλ]εγον ἐμφαίνεcθαι, κ[ρι-
θήc]εται ποητὴc ἀγαθὸc ἐ[πὶ
τῆ[ι] φροντιcτεί⟨ᾳ⟩, κἂν ἐκ το[ῦ
γ]ένουc ἐξεβάλλετο,ˊ καὶ
ὑ]πὸ τ[ο]ύτων κατ' οὐδὲν
25 ἕτερ]ον ἐξεβάλλετο, τὰ
προκείμενα ποήματα.

</div>
<div>

But as it seems to me, the poet will use his styles poetically, if he should manage to complete (or "achieve") anything. For, having given thought to the contents which, I claimed, are indicated through the craftsmanship, he will be judged a good poet for his thoughtfulness, and he would have been expelled from the genre, and the afore-mentioned poems were expelled for no other reason by these critics.

</div>
</div>

---

[414] Henry ap. Janko suggested Κου[ρῆ] | ˚ τεc in ll.33.26-34.1. The same point is made at II.40.12-23: τῶν γὰρ ὑπο[κειμένων] ἐcτὶν οὐ τὰ [νοού]μενα κοινῶc, ἀλ[λὰ τὰ μὴ] ποητὰ καὶ ἅ τιc [ἂν τὴν] ὑπόθεcιν τῶι πο[ήματι δι]δοὺc εἴπειεν, οὐ[δὲ καὶ ὕλη] κοινῶc, ἀλλ' ἡ λε[γομέν]η{ι} καὶ ἀπόητοc. [καὶ γὰρ] ταῦτ' οὐδεὶc ἐπαι[νεῖ, μᾶλ]λον δ' οὐδὲ ποή[μαθ' ἕν]εκεν αὐτῶν κρί[νει νοῦν τι]c ἔχων ("for the material of the plot is not the contents in the general sense, but those that are not elaborated, i.e. whatever someone might say in giving the plot to a poem, and (it is) material not in the general sense, but that which is also called 'non-elaborated.' For nobody praises these, but rather a sensible person judges by reason of them that they are not even verses"). The fact that unworked material [i.e. a bare plot-line?] is said not even to be verses may imply that meter was required, at a minimum.

[415] Archilochus and some of the verses in Homer are said to be good "with indulgence" (μετὰ cυγγνώμηc) by the Stoicizing critic at V.17.32-3 and "in an extended sense" (καταχρηcτικῶc) at V.18.5-7.

215

The important point is the final phrase: τὰ προκείμενα ποήματα, "the poems/verses which lay before you" or "under discussion" — the important point is that the poems themselves are the basis of judging whether or not their poet is a good poet. Further, while criticizing the poets for holding wrong opinions in the second part of the *On Piety*, Philodemus gives no hint that their wrong opinions about theology meant that the poems were bad.

Presumably, Philodemus would say that the poet ought to be an Epicurean for his own good, but he approves of non-Epicurean poems (indeed, he implicitly denies the possibility of Epicurean poetry when he denies that a useful poem will ever be written). Though he is completely silent on the issue, it seems that he would not demand that poets be particularly ethical. He is willing to say that being guilty of theft does not negatively affect a craftsman's work, and Philodemus gives us no reason to think that poets would be held to a higher standard.

The term ἀπόητος should be highlighted. It refers to the state of the plot before treatment by the poet, that is in its "unworked" state. In this sense, it means specifically "not rendered into verse" but also, more importantly, "untreated," that is, the mere plot as a sequence of events without the particular spin or interpretation that the poet gives the material in the telling. This kind of thought, according to Philodemus, does not move us; only elaborated thought can do that.[416]

Anonymous, possibly Peripatetic, critics attempt to define the best poet in book V. Their opinion was reported by Philomelus, but presented very briefly, as a "some think" statement,

---

[416] The word also appears at I.169.26 in a context too broken to interpret, at I.208.20, where Janko translates it as "raw material," and in II.2 ll.1, 4, and 9 (*PHerc*. 1081b fr. 23), it is used to describe the contents of poetry which, according to Heracleodorus, do not move the audience, but which, according to Philodemus, do not move us only in their unelaborated state. N.b. that in II.2.4 it is contrasted with τὰ πεποιημένα.

216

which gets an equally brief rebuttal from Philodemus.

On Poems V.12.12-20:

12	οἱ μὲν οἰόμενοι	Some, who think that the best
	τὸν ἐν τοῖς μύθοις καὶ	poet is the one who remains
	ταῖς ἄλλαις ἠθοποιίαις	more or less consistent in his
15	κἀν τῆι λέξει παραπλη-	plots, other character-creations,
	cíω[c] ὁμαλί[ζο]ντα ποη-	and in his style, perhaps say
	τὴν ἄριστον εἶναι λέ-	something true, but they are
	γουcι μὲν ἴcωc ἀληθές	not defining the good poet.
	τι, τὸν δὲ ποητὴν τὸν ἀ-	
20	γαθὸν οὐ διορίζουcι.	

We should perhaps understand ὁμαλίζοντα as "consistently good" or, perhaps better, "consistently excellent;" a merely consistent poet could be consistently bad and it would be very strange to describe him as "the best." Another possibility is to understand ὁμαλίζοντα ἐν as meaning "keeping [them] on the same level," i.e. making sure that plot, character, and style match each other.[417] This is more or less a rephrased demand for a *prepon* relationship between contents and form, with which Philodemus agrees. Lastly, these critics proffered a definition of the best poet but have not defined the good poet, which seems as if it ought to come first. Philodemus acknowledges that they hit on something true but does not think it constitutes a complete definition of even the good poet, let alone the best one.

In sum, Philodemus conceives of the good poet as one who writes good poems. There is no moral requirement, but they should consistently compose stylistically appropriate and thoughtful treatments of the plots they choose, which also need not be inherently moral or improving. Plot lines are outside poetry (i.e. they belong to mythology, like those of Homer, or to history, like those of Choerilus of Iasus, or perhaps to daily life, like those of Archilochus)

---

[417] That is, the poet maintains the same level with respect to the various aspects of the poem: base characters acting in a base plot described with base language, like many poems of Archilochus or Hipponax.

217

and, while the poet is not held responsible for his or her choice *per se*, he is responsible for the quality of the eventual poem, which means, in practice, that he needs to be good at picking plots amenable to treatment or else knows when to quit.

§8 The Excellence of Poetry

Another topic of discussion is the question of what defines the goodness of a poem. The terminology is easy to isolate: τὸ εὖ[418] or τὸ ἀγαθόν (both "the goodness") and ἡ ἀρετή (the "virtue" or "excellence") are commonly used, but pinning down the concept is surprisingly difficult. It should be different from the *idion* and the *ergon*, since it is an evaluative category rather than a definitional one.

The guiding passage comes from about a third of the way into book I, during the discussion of Heracleodorus' account of previous critics, who seem to have been Peripatetics.[419]

On Poems I.74.1-26:[420]

1 [ἔc- τ]αι κατὰ το[ῦτον τὸν τρό- πον οὔθ' ἡ λέξι[c οὔτε τὰ ὑ- ποκείμενα οὔτε [τῶν cυμ- 5 βεβη[κό]των οὐθὲ[ν αἴτιον _τοῦ εὖ. πρὸc μέντοι τ[ὸ "γράφεcθαι τὸ πόημα ἴcον ἔν τε τῆι ὕληι καὶ τῶι ἐνερ- _γοῦντι αὐτήν. ἑνὸc γὰρ ὁπο- 10 τερουοῦν ἀρθέντοc, οὐκ[έ- τι νοητὸν ποίωι τρόπω[ι _πόημα ἔcται." εἰ δὲ μ[ηδὲν	… in this manner, neither the diction nor the subject-matter nor any of the *accidentia* will be a cause of the excellence. However, as for the claim that "the poem is written equally both in its material and in that which actualizes its material; for if one or the other is removed, it is no longer possible to understand how it will be a poem:" But if none of these is the cause of goodness, though he alleges that the

---

[418] This seems to me to be a Peripatetic term, borrowed for the debate, rather than Philodemus' own.

[419] So Janko (2003: 269 n. 2), on the basis of the terms ὕλη (matter) and τὸ ἐνεργοῦν (what actualizes, i.e. the formal cause). He corrects (pers. comm.) his previous attribution of the discussion to Pausimachus.

[420] I have exchanged "poem" for "verse" in Janko's translation, and repaired an accidental omission of text. In l. 26, Janko suggests "the poem" for the missing object of τὸ ἐνεργο[υν. I suspect it might be narrower, like "the contents."

τούτων αἴτιον τοῦ εὖ,
ἀποδιδοὺϲ ἐξ αὐτῶν

15 τὴν αἰτίαν [το]ῦ εὖ, δο[κ]ῶν
ἀποδ[ι]δόν[αι τὴν αἰ]τίαν
τοῦ εὖ, οὐκ ἀποδίδωϲιν.
καὶ παρὲξ τούτων ἐξ οὐ-
_δενὸϲ φέρουϲι τὴν αἰτίαν.

20 ἀξιωτέον οὖν ἢ μὴ φ[έ]ρειν
ἢ δεικνύειν ὡϲ ἔϲτιν ἐξ
ἀνάγκηϲ τι τούτων αἴ-
τιον τοῦ εὖ, καὶ ἔτι τ[ὰϲ
προθέϲειϲ ἡμῶν ἀφα[ιρε]ῖϲ-

25 ηαι ταύταϲ, δι’ ὧν φαμε[ν
τοῦ]το τὸ ἐνεργο[ῦν

cause of goodness is from them,
thereby thinking that he is defining the
cause of goodness, then he does not
define it. Apart from these, they do not
offer a cause as being from anything.
Hence one must demand either that
they not offer it, or that they show that
one of them is of necessity a cause of
excellence, and again that they refute
those arguments of ours, by means of
which we state that that which
actualizes … is the cause of excellence.

Philodemus locates the cause of excellence in the unexplained τοῦ]το τὸ ἐνεργο[ῦν (that which

actualizes); but, unfortunately, the following two columns are lost and, with them, any

explanation that he may have provided.

Fortunately, we can find hints in another part of the work:

On Poems II.42.8-24:
8   βλέ-
πεται τοίν//υν καὶ τὸ πα-

10 ρατεθὲ[ν ἐπ]//ὶ τῶν ἀργυ-
ροποιῶ[ν οὐ] // ματαίωϲ
παρ[ῆχθαι]. // καθάπερ γὰρ
“τ]ὰ ὑ[πὸ τούτ]//ων δεχθέν-
τα” ἔλεγ]εν “[ἐν] ἀργυρώ-

15 μαϲιν ἐ]νεῖναι’, τὸ δ’ εὖ
ϲκευάζουϲ]ι διαροῦντεϲ
κατὰ τέχ]νην καὶ ἐν οἷϲ
χρῶνται δυ]νάμει”, ὃν τρό-
πον λέγει τὸ “ποιημάτων

20 οὐ διαφερό]ντων’, τὸ μὲν
ἀϲτείωϲ ἔχ]ειν φαμ[ὲν .
. . . .]τον διανοη-
. . . ., τὸ] δὲ καὶ φαύ-

24 λωϲ.”]

Now the comparison which was
made in the case of the silver-
smiths is also seen not to have
been made in vain. For just as
he claimed that 'the materials
which are accepted by them are
not [sc. embodied] in silver
vessels, but they fashion what is
excellent by engraving it
according to the art even on
those vessels on which they use
force', in the same way he says
'although the poems do not
differ, we say the one [sc. verse
is good] … thought … but the
other is actually inferior."

What is clear from this passage could have been guessed: the excellence of a poem is how well

the *idion* is accomplished and, in turn, the excellence of a poet lies in how well he accomplishes the *idion*. That is, the excellence is located in the craftsmanship, the ἐξεργαcία, which the poet brings to bear in accomplishing the *idion*.[421]

§9 The Utility of Poems[422]

The last topic is the utility of poetry. Various claims that poetry either is, or should be, useful had been suggested by Philodemus' day; both Plato and Aristotle held opinions of this sort. Plato, in the *Republic*, held that poems should be useful to the state; Aristotle thinks that good tragedies promote psychological health. Other critics, such as Heraclides of Pontus, seem to have formulated a demand for truly educational poetry, and, later, Horace would suggest that a combination of pleasant and useful made for the best poetry.

For Philodemus, poetry *qua* poetry is not useful for anything; utility is reserved for prose.[423] The main statement of this is the oft-cited passage ʽτοι'γάρτοι καθὸ πόημα φυcικὸν οὐδέν, οὔτε λέξεωc οὔτε δι[α]νọήματοc, ὠφέλημα π[αρ]αcκευάζει ("therefore, *qua* poem, it provides no physical benefit, neither in language nor thought") at V.25.30-34 (and n.b. οὐ γε[γρ]αφọ́τοc [τι]νὸc τῶν ποι[η]τῶν τ[οι]αύταc περιέ[χοντ]α π[ο]ήματα διανοίαc [ο]ὔτ' ἂν γράψοντοc ["since no poet has written, nor could ever written poems containing such

---

[421] Philodemus rebuts Heracleodorus at length, from col. 132 until col. 140, on the topic of the cause of excellence; ἐργαcία is one of several specific options discussed, but the text is too fragmentary to draw secure conclusions.

[422] On the topic, see also Asmis (1995b), who correctly identifies many of the positions in question but attributes them to Heracleodorus instead of Philodemus. Asmis (1991) is mistaken about Philodemus' position, and misled Pace (1995: 177-185). Pace (1995: 178) correctly notes that the moral and aesthetic qualities of poems are to be judged separately. On the utility of the art of poetry, see above, chapter four §4.

[423] On the issue of Philodemus' differentiation between poetry and prose, see Rostagni (1955), Mangoni (1988), Pace (1995: 185-190), and note Halliwell (2011: 304-326) whose chapter including Philodemus is entitled "Poetry in the Light of Prose." Note also my demonstration in chapter four §3 that metrical form, an obvious give away, was required by Philodemus.

thoughts"], V.17.20-4). Strictly speaking, this does not mean that poetry cannot be useful in any way at all. As with music, the contents might nevertheless aid the audience, despite the distractions of poetic form and performance context.[424] But it is clear that poetry is not the place to look for useful instruction; prose has that domain. Epicurus demands, in his *On Rhetoric*, "nothing other than clarity" (D. L. X.13 = fr. 54 Usener) from his own prose. Philodemus later expresses doubt that actual orators rise to the necessary level of clarity: "Surely the rhetor does not compose his demonstrations in the same way as the dialectician and philosopher" (οὐ μὴν οὕτω γε cυντίθηcι τὰc ἀποδείξειc ὁ ῥήτωρ ὡc ὁ διαλεκτικὸc καὶ φιλόcοφοc, *Rhet*. I.373.6-10 Sudhaus = *PHerc*. 1004.94.6-10), i.e. with an eye towards putting forward his arguments clearly so that they may be understood.[425] Philodemus might have held that technically accurate presentations and poetic craftsmanship cannot coexist, but the passage is lacunose.[426] All in all, it is clear that Epicureans looked to prose for instruction, not to poetry.

Early in the continuous part of book five, Philodemus refutes Heraclides of Pontus, who claimed that poetry should be useful and beautiful (though we do not know the exact relationship, except insofar as Philodemus reports it here).

On Poems V.4.31-5.11:

4.31 καὶ μὴ⟨γ⟩ γρά- φων "τὸν τέρποντα μέν, οὐκ ὠφελοῦντα δέ, ποι- 34 ητικὸμ μὲν εἶναι, τὰ 5.1 δὲ π]ρά[γματα μὴ εἰδέναι" φαίνεται πᾶcαν ἀπαγ-	And indeed, by writing "the poet who delights but does not benefit us is poetic but does not know the facts" he seems to think that every narration of facts aids, which

---

[424] See *On Music* IV.134.7-16 and 143.27-38, both discussed *supra*.

[425] Also see D.L. X.31.

[426] Andromenides claims in I.12.21-25 that the aim of a prose author is to tell the truth and that of a poet to entertain. Philodemus refutes him (coll. 161-168 are the relevant portion) but does not seem to raise an objection to that point. Since the text is lacunose here, we cannot rely on this, but it is suggestive.

γ]ελίαν πραγμάτων ὑπο-
λαμ[βάνε]ιν ὠφελεῖν,
5   ὃ] φανερῶς ψεῦδό[c ἐ]cτιν·
ε]ἰ δ' [ἔc]τιν τιc ἀνωφε-
λ]ήc, οὐδὲν κωλ[ύει τ̣]αῦ-
τ]α εἰδότα καὶ ποητι-
κ]ῶc ἀπαγγέλλοντα
10 τὸν [πο]ητὴν μηδὲν ὠ-
φελ[εῖν].

is clearly false. But if there is
an unhelpful [sc. narrative],
nothing prevents the poet,
although he knows these
things [sc. the facts] and
poetically narrates them,
from not benefiting us in any
way.

That is to say, Heraclides thinks that, if a narration does not aid, it must be due to the narrator's ignorance of the facts. Philodemus wants to preserve artistic prerogative for non-useful narrations without laying any blame on the poet: useless narrations of facts *do* exist for Philodemus, and poets can blamelessly choose to use them in their poetry.

Asmis (1991, 1995) is the strongest defender of useful poems in Philodemus. However, her case relies on an strained interpretation of the passage about goals in book V. Let me repeat the passage in question.

On Poems V:25.23-26.11:[427]

23   ἐψεύ-
δοντο δὲ θέματα πάν-
25 τα ν[ο]μίζο[ν]τεc εἶναι καὶ
κρίc[ι]ν οὐχ ὑπάρχει[ν τῶν
ἀcτείων ἐπῶν καὶ [φαύ-
λων κοινήν, ἀλλὰ πα-
ρ' ἄλλοιc ἄλλη[ν], ὡc τὴν
30 νομίμων. {ε }`τοι´γάρτοι, κα-
θὸ πόημα, φυcικὸν οὐδὲν
οὔτε λέξεωc οὔτε δι[α-
νοήματος ὠφέλημα π[α-
ρ]αcκευάζει. διὰ τοῦτ[ο
35 δὲ τῆc ἀρετῆc ἑcτηκότεc
26.1 ὑπόκεινται cκ[οπ]οί, τῆι
μὲν λέξει τὸ μ[εμι]μῆc-
θαι τὴν ὠφέλι[μα] προc-
διδάcκουcαν, τῆc δὲ δι-
5   ανοίαc τὸ μεταξὺ μετ[εcχη-

And they [sc. the "philosophers"] were wrong to think that all are rules and that there exists no common judgment of good and bad verses, but that there is a different one for each group of people, like that of customs. For that reason, *qua* verse, it provides no natural benefit either in language or in content. Therefore there do exist solid goals for goodness—for language, the imitation of language which teaches useful things in addition, and for thought, being intermediate between the

_____

427 See Chapter five n. 289 for discussion of the text.

222

κέναι τῆc τῶν coφῶν
καὶ τῆc τῶν χυδαίων.
καὶ ταῦτ' ἔcτιν, ἄν τε νο-
μίcῃ τιc ἄν τε μή, καὶ
10   κριτέον ἐπὶ τ[α]ῦτ' ἐπα-
νάγοντας.

thought of the wise and that of the uneducated. And these (sc. goals) do exist, whether one thinks so or not, and one must judge with reference to them.

Asmis (1991) takes the cκοποὶ τῆc ἀρετῆc ("goals of excellence," 25.35-36.1) to be ethical in nature, and suggests that the terms ἀcτεῖοc and φαῦλοc have their usual Stoic meanings of "decent" and "disgraceful" ethically, rather than simply meaning "good" and "bad," in this case, as examples of poems. She suggests that he has borrowed these terms from from either the Stoic Critic or from Crates to mark a distinction between sets of good poems *qua* works of art and ethically good poems.[428] However, there is no reason to think that Philodemus is making that distinction here, and in fact there is reason to think he is *not* making it. Philodemus does use a variety of terms for "good" and "bad," but he does not use Stoic technical terms in his own expositions, and there is no reason to think he does so here, especailly since giving those terms those meanings here puts this passage into *prima facie* contradiction with his explicit statements. Additionally, this passage has to do with the Philosophers' *themata* (25.24), which were apparently for the judgment of poems *tout court*, i.e. their overall quality. There is no indication in the text that moral quality is at issue, unless the Philodemus used the Stoic meanings of terms which he otherwise uses without that technical sense. For Philodemus, the excellence has nothing to do with utility of contents or moral quality of the poems, and ἀρετή here is to be

---

[428]   She asserts that the pair of terms is Stoic on p. 9. She relies on the same sorts of Stoic distinctions between evaluative terms in her discussion of *PHerc.* 1676 (1995a) as well, and that paper is open to the same criticisms: there just is not clear evidence that Philodemus used these terms with Stoic meanings. In fact, the passage on the judgment of poems (*On Poems* V.20.35-21.27, discussed above at chapter five §8) must use several of them interchangably, or else the argument is nonsense.

interpreted as merely "excellence" *qua* poem generally.

     Philodemus' work *On the Good King According to Homer* has often been used as an example in discussions of Philodemus' position and the Epicurean position generally, namely that they do think that poetry can be useful.[429] In it, Philodemus draws lessons for his patron Piso from the example of the Homeric *basileis*; these lessons are Epicurean in tone, but Philodemus has been convicted of inconsistency on two points: engagement with poetry and encouraging engagement with politics. Much recent work by Fish and Roskam lays to rest concerns on the second point;[430] Epicurus' statement in Diogenes Laertius that only the sage will correctly discourse about poetry is the basis for defending Philodemus on the first point.[431] Now, the line from Epicurus preserved by Diogenes Laertius is open to several interpretations: will only the Epicurean sage correctly discourse about the *aesthetic* properties of poetry or about its *ethical* properties, or about both? It is not surprising that the ethical realm of discourse would be reserved for the sage, and here Philodemus avails himself of the ability to discuss Homeric characters' choices and actions with a view to the improvement of his student. Reservation of the aesthetic realm to the Epicurean sage is harder, perhaps impossible, to justify: the *prolepsis* of good poetry is shared by all educated people, not just the sage, so all educated people can perform the comparison between a given poem and their preconception of the good poem, and debate the merits of particular cases.

     Philodemus did not have to choose Homer for his treatise; any sufficiently well-known

---

[429] See Dorandi's (1982b) general introduction and Fish (2002), (2011), and (Forthcoming 2).
[430] See Roskam (2007a, 2007b) and Fish (2011).
[431] Fr. 569 (*ap.* D. L. x.121): μόνον τε τὸν σοφὸν ὀρθῶϲ ἂν περὶ τε μουϲικῆϲ καὶ ποιητικῆϲ διαλέξεϲθαι.

poet could have served.[432] But Homer's fame, his use in traditional education (and therefore Piso's familiarity), and the variety and bulk of the contents made his poems obvious, good candidates. There is a bit of wit in the choice, however, and using Homer instead of Thucydides probably made for easier reading.

In the case of *On the Good King*, Philodemus is not discussing poetry *per se*, but rather evaluating the characters and actions described in it as a basis for ethical instruction. The poetic qualities of the works do not even enter into discussion. This relentless focus on the characters (*ethe*) and their ethics follows from Philodemus' purpose, which is precisely to give ethical advice. Piso, as both Epicurean and proconsul or senator, needed the ethical guidance as to how to act in such a way as to maintain his *ataraxia* (or at least continue progressing towards it) without making a mess of his public obligations and stature.[433]

Just because poetry as such is not harmful does not mean that poems cannot be harmful. But they are harmful not *qua* poems, but because they contain damaging arguments.

On Poems II.46.16-21:

| 16 | εἴποιμ̣[ι] δ᾽ ἂν "ὠφελεῖν τὸ χρηστὸν δι- ανόημα᾽ καὶ βλάπτειν τὸ πονηρόν", εἰ λαμβάνοι- | But I would say that "good thought benefits and bad thought harms," if these are taken as belonging to the poem and the poet. |
| 20 | θ᾽ ὡς ποήματος καὶ ποη- τοῦ. | |

Asmis (1995b: 175-6) and Pace (1995: 179) take the benefit and harm to be moral (and all the adjectives mean "morally good" and "morally bad"); Janko *ad loc*. takes them to be artistic: the

---

[432] He uses examples from history throughout the treatise, however. Paris is compared to Demetrius Poliorcetes in col 37 Dorandi = 92 Fish.

[433] This is brought out well by Fish (2011b). I set aside as irrelevant the question of when the work was composed: Piso was, throughout his acquaintance with Philodemus, in the Roman nobility, and public office was probably always expected of him even before he actually ran for office (he reached the consulship in 58).

verses are improved or damaged by the thought. The context speaks in favor of Asmis and Pace, and nothing stands in the way from Philodemus' point of view: the poetry as such is not helping, and he admits that the contents can have an effect on the audience.

It is perhaps strange at first glance that Philodemus would allow potentially damaging contents in poetry; this is, after all, exactly the reason why Epicurus steered the school away from poetry in the first place. The solution is that the bad contents are neutralized by exposure to Epicurean philosophy. Since Homer and Hesiod's incorrect theology is refuted by Epicurean works *On the Gods*, there is no real danger, so long as the proper attitude is maintained towards poetry. That is, the potentially dangerous contents are actually neutralized in advance by prophylactic exposure to correct views supported by argument.

This at first appears to be an innovation with respect to Epicurus's view, but there are reasons to think that this interpretation is mistaken. The first is that Epicurus, if we follow Asmis's view (1995a), was never as opposed to poetry as he is usually taken to be. The second is that he permitted the sage to enjoy Dionysiac spectacles, which in an Athenian context surely included tragedy and narrative dithyramb, and therefore the sage would be exposed to false myths. But it is clear that this was not a problem for the latter.

The sage is one case, but what about students at an intermediate stage? The discussions of poetry in *PHerc.* 1570, which is probably the second book of Philodemus' *On Wealth*, and in his *On the Good King According to Homer* show how false views in poetry could be refuted for the benefit of students.[434]

PHerc. 1570 preserves a discussion of poverty which takes as its starting point a scene in

---

[434] See Armstrong – Ponczoch (2011) on *PHerc.* 1570 and Fish (2002) and (2011a) on the *On the Good King*.

Menander's *Georgos*. Armstrong and Ponczoch argue convincingly that Philodemus is recapitulating Epicurus' discussion of the passage, but even if this is not correct, the discussion is Philodemus' and still stands as an example of Epicurean literary criticism for the benefit of students.

On the Good King, likewise, presupposes a fairly detailed knowledge of Homer for its full appreciation, but then draws moral lessons from the poems.

Both these works are used for moral improvement. The first case is clear: Epicurus is rebutting the claims made in a poem so that they do not confuse his students. Poverty simply makes incorrect statements which could damage the audience and Epicurus must refute them. The situation in the *On the Good King* is more complex, but fundamentally similar. There, Philodemus praises and blames the actions of characters in Homer as examples of correct or incorrect behavior. The poems present a mixture of good and bad, and the Epicurean interpreter must differentiate between them for the good of his students. In neither case is the poetry *per se* moral or immoral; it is simply the vehicle for descriptions of moral or immoral characters and for good and bad arguments.

Chapter Seven

Conclusion

Philodemus' aesthetic treatises fill a large gap in our knowledge of the history of ancient thinking about the arts. Book IV of his *On Music* fills adds substantially to the meagre number of ancient discussion on that topic, and the *On Rhetoric*, though treading more familiar ground, adds a great deal to our knowledge of the ancient debates on that topic, as well as others providing a window into polemics within the Epicurean school.

But it is the *On Poems* that adds the most to our knowledge. Plato, Aristotle, and Horace are the traditional focuses of study for ancient poetics,[435] but there is a gap of three hundred years between them, from which only bare fragments have been preserved; these comprise those of literary and textual critics like Aristarchus and Crates, as well as of the uncounted lesser lights who make up the bulk of our scholia. Philodemus' treatise, remarkably well preserved given the circumstances, shines a bright light into the gloom and allows a much more detailed history to be written. Not only does it increase our knowledge of some already known figures (Neoptolemus of Parium probably benefitted the most, followed by Crates of Mallos), but it allows the reconstruction of an almost fully-fleshed out Epicurean theory of poetry which could stand alongside the Platonic and Aristotelian ones.

---

[435] The author of the *On the Sublime* holds fourth place. Preplatonic and Neoplatonist literary criticism is often the province of specialists.

To flesh out that theory has been my goal in this dissertation. I have focused on Philodemus' himself, since evidence for other Epicureans is too scanty and Lucretius seems to be engaged in a different project, as the difficulties that scholars have had in reconciling him to Epicurus' statements show.[436] Some statements of Epicurus himself are preserved, alongside other fragments and testimonia from earlier members of the school. Individually, none amounts to very much, but if they are taken together, it is possible to trace some views. For instance, ethical criticism of poetry probably appears in Epicurus himself. Luckily, Philodemus' text is sufficiently preserved to serve on its own as a foundation for an inquiry into Epicurean views of poetry. Many aspects of Philodemus' poetics had been already been well known from the work of previous scholars, although in some cases, reedited texts have ruled out, or forced modifications in, their conclusions. In other cases, the new editions brought new aspects to light.

For instance, it has long been known that Philodemus emphasizes the coexistence and interdependence of form and content. This may seem banal, because it has been part of the main stream of literary criticism from Plato onward. However, Philodemus needed to reaffirm the tradition against the *kritikoi*, a set of literary critics who emphasized the formal or audiditory qualities of poetry at the expense of the content. To do so, he had to give an account of what content actually did in the poem and how it was to be valued; attempting to refute the *kritikoi* takes up the largest section of the work. This is an excellent illustration of how Philodemus was fully part of the contemporary literary scene and a participant in its debates, and keeping this in mind is essential to understanding his work, which is not a straightforward exposition of doctrine, but rather a series of polemics against positions that had some cachet at the moment.

---

[436] I review the evidence for earlier Epicureans in chapter two of this dissertation and will discuss Lucretius' relationship to the Epicurean tradition in a forthcoming article. Lucretius seems to claim utility for his poetry (in the Honeyed Cup passage, I.921-950, of which 926-50 are repeated with changes at IV.1-25), which contradicts what Philodemus says (at *On Poems* V.32.1-19).

As chapters two and five showed, Philodemus had positions about what poetry is, and about the interrelations betweeen its form and content, that were worked out in some detail; unfortunately, we cannot recover all of them. Poetry is artistically arranged language which communicates some idea (not necessarily a new one) using extra-ordinary language, which means, at least, that it is non prosaic and metrical. This view of poetry was based in the *prolepsis* of poetry, but this did not rule out discussion and debate about the *prolepsis'* contents or correct usage. The *prolepsis* also demanded good form and content, but these requirements remain obscure. What we do know is that Philodemus demanded moderation in both ("neither of fools nor sages" for content and "that which imitates the didactic" for form). What this means in practice is not clear, but it might be taken to rule out, e.g., Lycophron's *Alexandria* for its extremely difficult language and perhaps even Lucretius' *De Rerum Natura* for its philosophical contents.

That form and content are inseparable was another position that Philodemus upheld. Since content cannot exist without form (i.e. content is uncommunicable without language), and since the language used imports certain denotations and connotations, a change in one necessarily means a change in the other. This is the basis of Philodemus' position that the literary-critical method called *metathesis* is useless (it too fundamentally changes the work in question for the versions to be comparable), and it contributes to his position that the form and content have to be good for a poem to be good. Of course, the basis of that position is that, if either form or content is bad, the poem as a whole cannot legitimately be called "good." The poem as a whole, or probably more precisely the form, produces additional thoughts in the audience, which seem to be an attempt to describe how literature can spark the imagination. Unfortunately, too little is preserved on this topic for any certainty at all.

Beyond the *kritikoi*, Philodemus engaged with other critics about other topics. A portion of his work is dedicated to rebutting Aristotle (or possibly a peripatetic doxographer) about the importance of genre: Philodemus' view is that genre is not relevant to the question of the quality of a poem. A good poem can be of any genre, and merely belonging to a given genre, or being a good example of a genre, does not guarantee success as a poem. However, genre is a real phenomenon, and is constituted by a series of rules (*themata*) for composition. Similarly, poems are not particularly mimetic, and this is not a criterion of their quality.

All of this takes place against the background of certain Hellenistic debates, specifically those about the precise division and description of *technai*. In the case of poetry, whether it was a *techne* was an issue, and what repercussions its technicity might have. Then the *idion* (defining feature), *ergon* ("job" or what the craftsman does), the *telos* (the craftsman's ultimate "goal" in attempted the *ergon*), and the *arete* ("excellence," or what constitutes doing a good job at the *ergon* and *telos*) were the object of debate. Philodemus defends views that perhaps seem banal or common-sensical, but, again, this is perhaps a measure of how strange his opponents' views were.

The overall picture of Philodemus' work has two aspects. The first is of a literary critic involved in contemporary debates, defending sophisticated and detailed versions of reasonably common-sensical opinions. That form and content both matter to poetry, and that both must be good for the poem to be good are clear examples of this. That genre does not matter to the quality of a poem is another. Similarly, the language of poems should not be twisted to give up meanings alien to the poem. On this is based Philodemus' distrust of Crates' complicated interpretive and geographical scheme for Homer, as well as the older attempts to find hidden meanings (*hyponoiai*) in him.

The second is of a philosopher is loyal to his school's tradition. Philodemus cannot be shown to be innovative on any single point of doctrine about poetry, but most of his opponents are relatively recent; this does not mean that he was in fact perfectly in line, but it does suggest that any innovations were minor. However, he certainly is not fighting the same battles that Epicurus was. The founder of the school, so far as we can tell, was dedicated to countering the belief that poetry had ethical force (Plato had had the same concern). Most of the space in Philodemus' treatise is dedicated to rebutting *formal* theories of poetry. Ethical demands appear only to be dismissed summarily. That battle had been won long ago.

Philodemus stands nearly alone as a proponent of the view that poetry was only for entertainment. Others held that view, but only Philodemus' reasons survive in any detail. He held that only arguments could convince someone of anything (should poets care to provide them), and that poetic form (as well as festival performance context, music, etc.) would distract the audience from paying close attention to the arguments. In his opinion, poetry *qua* poetry is not useful for instruction or moral improvement.

Philodemus is also notable for his strictures on more flamboyant and arbitrary interpretive schemes. *Hyponoiai*, the forerunners of medieval allegorical criticism, and Crates' attempts to bring Homer into line with the most up-to-date geographical knowledge were ruled out as unwarranted forcing of the poets' words. It is not clear that Philodemus himself put forward any interpretive method, and it seems unlikely. Any contents complicated enough to require such a method might run afoul of his ban on too lofty contents, and it is not clear what he would have stood to gain from a theory which did not encompass the vast majority of poetry with which he would have been familiar.

Bibliography

Acosta-Hughes, B. and Stephens, S. 2002. "Rereading Callimachus' *Aetia* Fragment 1." CP 97: 238-55.

Acosta Mendez, E. and Angeli, A. 1992. *Testimonianza su Socrate*. Napoli: Bibliopolis.

Angeli, A. and Colaizzo, M. 1979. "I frammenti di Zenone Sidonio." *CErc* 9: 47-133.

Antoni, A., Arrighetti, G., Bertagna, M. I., Delattre, D. eds. 2010. *Miscellanea Papyrologica Herculanensia*. Pisa: Fabrizio Serra.

Ardizzoni, A. 1953 (date of preface). *ΠΟΙΗΜΑ: Ricerche sulla teoria del linguaggio poetica nell'antichità*. Bari: Adriatica editrice.

Armstrong, D. 1995a. "The Impossibility of Metathesis: Philodemus and Lucretius on Form and Content in Poetry." In Obbink, ed. 210-232.

——. 1995b. "Philodemus, *On Poems* Book 5: Translated by David Armstrong from the edition of Cecilia Mangoni, Naples (Bibliopolis), 1993." In Obbink, ed. 255-269.

——. 2001. "Philodème et l'appréciation de l'effet poétique par l'intellect (*Poèmes* V et *PHerc.* 1676)" in Auvray-Assayas and Delattre, eds. 297-309.

—— and Oberhelman, S. 1995. "Satire as Poetry and the Impossibility of Metathesis in Horace's *Satires*. In Obbink, ed. 233-254.

—— and Ponczoch, J. 2011. "[Philodemus] *On Wealth* (*PHerc.* 1570 Cols. VI-XX, Pcc. 4-6a): New Fragments of Empedocles, Menander, and Epicurus." *CErc* 41: 97-138.

Arrighetti, G. 1998. "Gli epicurei, la poesia e Lucrezio." *Atheneum* 86.1: 13-33.

——. 2006. *Poesia, poetiche e storia nella riflessione dei greci: Studi*. Pisa: Giardini.

——. 2011. "La *mimesis* nel Περὶ ποιημάτων di Filodemo." *CErc* 41: 69-82.

—— and Montanari, F. eds. 1993. *La componente autobiografica nella poesia greca e latina fra realtà e artificiol etterario: Atti del convegno Pisa, 16-17 maggio 1991*. Pisa: Giardini.

Asmis, E. 1984. *Epicurus' Scientific Method*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

——. 1991."Philodemus's Poetic Theory and 'On the Good King According to Homer'." *CA* 10: 1-45.

——. 1992a. "Crates on Poetic Criticism," *Phoenix* 46: 138-169.

——. 1992b. "Neoptolemus and the Classification of Poetry." *CP* 87: 206-31.

——. 1992c. "An Epicurean Survey of Poetic Theories." *CQ* 42: 395-415.

——. 1995a. "Epicurean Poetics." In Obbink, ed. 15-32.

——. 1995b. "Philodemus on Censorship, Moral Utility, and Formalism in Poetry." In Obbink, ed. 148-177.——. 1999. "Epicurean Epistemology." In Barnes, Mansfield, and Scofield, eds. 260-94.

——. 2009. "Epicurean Empicirism." In Warren, ed. 84-104.

Atherton, C. 1988. "Hand Over First: The Failure of Stoic Rhetoric." *CQ* 38: 392-427.

Auvray-Assayas, C. and Delattre, D. eds. 2001. *Cicéron et Philodème: La polémique en philosophie*. Paris: Éditions Due d'Ulm.

Bailey, C. 1929. "Epicurean Fragments" (Review of Vogliano 1928). *CR* 43: 222-224.

Barber, E. J. W. 1993. *Prehistoric Textiles: The Development of Cloth in the Neolithic and Bronze Ages with Special Reference to the Aegean.* Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Barnes, J. 1996. "Epicurus: Meaning and Thinking." In Giannantoni and Gigante, eds. 155-168.

——. 2005. (Review of Broggiato 2001.) *Gnomon* 77: 104-6.

Barnes, J., Mansfeld, J., and Schofield, M. eds. 1999. *Cambridge History of Hellenistic Philosophy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Bartsch, S. 2012. "Classical Poetics." In Greene et al., eds. 252-260.

Beer, B. 2009. *Lukrez und Philodem: Poetische Argumentation und poetologischer Diskurs*. Basel: Schwabe.

Bilić, T. 2012. "Crates of Mallos and Pytheas of Massilia: Examples of Homeric Exegesis in Terms of Mathematical Geography." *TAPA* 142: 295-328.

Blank, D. 1995. "Philodemus on the Technicity of Rhetoric." In Obbink, ed. 178-188.

——. 1998. *Sextus Empiricus: Against the Grammarians*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

——. 2009. "*Philosophia* and *Technē*: Epicureans on the Arts." In Warren, ed. 216-233.

—— and Atherton, C. 2003. "Stoic Contributions to Traditional Grammar" in Inwood, ed. 310-327.

Boyancé, P. 1963. *Lucrèce et l'épicurisme*. Paris: Presses universitaires de France.

Brennan, T. 1996. "Epicurus on Sex, Marriage, and Children." *CP* 91: 346-352,

Brescia, C. *Ricerche sulla lingua e sullo stile di Epicuro*. Napoli: Libreria scientifica editrice.

Broggiato, M. 2001. *Cratete di Mallo: I frammenti*. La Spezia: Agorà edizioni.

Cairns, F. 2004. "Varius and Vergil: Two Students of Philodemus in Propertius 2.34?" in Armstrong, Fish, Johnston, and Skinner, eds. 299-321.

Capasso, M. 1996. "Filodemo e Seneca a Soknopaiou Nesos." *Rudiae* 8:12-20.

——. 2003. "Filodemo e Lucrezio: Due intellettuali nel *Patriai tempus iniquum*." In Monet, ed. 77-107.

Castaldi, F. 1928. "Epicurei genuini ed epicurei sofisti." *Nuova Cultura* 2: 3-30.

Cavallo, G. 1983. *Libri Scritture Scribi a Ercolano*. Naples: Gaetano Macchiaroli editore.

Chandler, C. 2006. *Philodemus* On Rhetoric *Books 1 and 2: Translation and Exegetical Essays*. New York: Routledge.

Clay, D. 1986. "The Cults of Epicurus." *CErc* 16: 11-28

Concolino Mancini, A. 1976. "Sulle opere polemiche di Colote." *CErc* 6: 61-67.

Crönert, W. 1906. *Kolotes und Menedemos*. Leipzig: Eduard Avenarius.

——. 1907. "Die Epikureer in Syrien." *JÖAI* x: 145-152.

Davidson, J. N. 1998. *Courtesans and Fishcakes: The Consuming Passions of Classical Athens.*

New York: St. Martin's Press.

De Falco, V. 1923 *L'epicureo Demetrio Lacone*. Naples: Achille Cimmaruta.

Delattre, D. 1989. "Philodème, *De la musique*: livre IV, colonnes 40* à 109*." *CErc* 19: 49-143.

——. 2003. "Présence ou absence d'une copie du *De rerum natura* à Herculaneum (Réponse à Mario Capasso)." In Monet, ed. 109-116.

——. 2007. *Philodème de Gadara* Sur la musique *livre IV*. Paris: Les belles lettres.

De Lacy, P. and De Lacy, E. 1941. *Philodemus: On Methods of Inference*. Philadelphia: American Philological Association. (First ed.)

—— and ——. 1978. *Philodemus: On Methods of Inference.* Naples: Bibliopolis. (Second ed.)

Del Mastro, G. 2014. *Titoli e annotazione bibliologiche nei papiri greci di Ercolano*. Naples: Centro internazionale per lo studio dei papiri ercolanesi "Marcello Gigante."

Dherbey, G. R. and Gourinat J.-B., eds. 2005. *Les Stoiciens*. Paris: Vrin.

Diano, C. 1946. *Ethica Epicurea*. Florence: Sansom.

Dickey, E. 2007. *Ancient Greek Scholarship: A Guide to Finding, Reading, and Understanding Scholia, Commentaries, Lexica, and Grammatical Treatises, from Their Beginnings to the Byzantine Period.* Oxford: American Philological Association.

Diels, H. 1916. *Philodemos* Über die Götter *Erstes Buch.* Berlin: Verlag der königlich preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften.

——. 1917. *Philodemos* Über die Götter *Drittes Buch I: griechischer Text.* Berlin: Verlag der königlich preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften.

——. 1917. *Philodemos* Über die Götter *Drittes Buch II: Erläuterung des Textes .* Berlin: Verlag der königlich preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften.

Dorandi, T. 1982a. "Filodemo *gli Stoici* (*PHerc*. 155 e 339)." *CErc* 12: 91-133.

——. 1982b. *Il buon re secondo Omero.* Napoli: Bibliopolis.

——. 1983. (Review of G. Cavallo [1983]). *PP* 208: 71-80.

——. 1993. *Theodor Gomperz: Eine Auswahl herkulanischer kleiner Schriften (1864-1909).* Leiden: Brill.

——. 2007. "Il περὶ παλαιᾶc τρυφῆc attribuito a Aristippo nella storia della biografia antica." In Erler, M. and Schorn, S. eds. *Griechische Biographie in Hellenistischer Zeit: Aktendes internationalien Kongresses vom 26.-29. Juli 2006 in Würzburg*. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter. 157-72.

——. 2013. *Diogenes Laertius: Lives of the Eminent Philosophers*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Elmer, D. 2005. "Helen *Epigrammatopoios*." *CA* 24: 1-39.

Erler, M. 1992. "Orthodoxie und Anpassung: Philodem, ein Panaitios des Kepos?" *MH* 49: 171-200.

Essler, H. 2008. "Rekonstruktion von Papyrusrollen auf mathematischer Grundlage." *CErc* 38: 273-307.

Fantuzzi, M. and Hunter, R. 2004. *Tradition and Innovation in Hellenistic Poetry*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Fish, J. 2002. "Philodemus' *On the Good King According To Homer*: Columns 21-31." *CErc* 32: 187-232.

——. 2011a. "On Orderly Symposia in Homer: A New Reconstruction of *De Bono Rege (PHerc.* 1507), col. 19." *CErc* 41: 65-68.

——. 2011b. "Not All Politicians are Sisyphus: What Roman Epicureans were Taught About Politics." In Fish and Sanders, eds. 72-104.

——. Forthcoming 1 (2016?). "The Closing Columns of Philodemus' *On the Good King According to Homer, PHerc*. 1507 Cols. 95-98 (= Cols. 40-43 Dorandi)." *CErc* 46?

——. Forthcoming 2. *Philodemus* On the Good King: Edition, Translation, and Commentary.

—— and Sanders, Kirk, eds. 2011. *Epicurus and the Epicurean Tradition*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Fitzgerald, J., Obbink, D., and Holland, G. eds. 2004. *Philodemus and the New Testament World*. Leiden: Brill.

Fitzgerald, J. 2004. "Gadara." In Fitzgerald, Obbink, and Holland, eds. 343-397.

Fortenbaugh, W. W., Huby P. M., and Long A. A. eds. 1985. *Theophrastus of Eresus. On his Life and Work*. New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers.

Gaines, R. 1982. "Qualities of Rhetorical Expression in Philodemus." *TAPA* 112: 71-81.

Gale, M. 1994. *Myth and Poetry in Lucretius*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

——. 2007. "Lucretius and Previous Poetic Traditions." In Gillespie and Hardie, eds. 59-75.

Giancotti, F. 1959. *Il Preludio di Lucrezio e altri scritti lucreziani ed epicurei*. Messina: G. D'Anna.

Giannantoni, G. and Gigante, M. eds. 1996. *Epicureismo Greco e Romano: Atti del congresso internazionale, Napoli 19-26 maggio 1993*. Naples: Bibliopois. (3 vols.)

Gigante, M. 1961. "Semantikon Poema." *PP* 76: 40-53.

——. 1995. *Philodemus in Italy*. Trans. Dirk Obbink. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.

——. 2002. *Il libro degli epigrammi di Filodemo*. Naples: Bibliopolis.

——. 2004. "Vergil in the Shadow of Vesuvius." In Armstrong, Fish, Johston, and Skinner, eds. 85-99.

Gillespie, S. and Hardie, P. eds. 2007. *The Cambridge Companion to Lucretius*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Giuffrida, P. 1940 and 1950. *L'Epicureismo nella letteratura latin nel I secolo a. C*. Turin: G. B. Paravia & c. (2 vols.)

Grilli, A. 1983. "Διάθεσις in Epicuro." in ΣΥΖΗΤΗΣΙΣ, i.93-109.

Goldstein, D. 2010. *Wackernagel's Law in Fifth Century Greek*. Diss. Berkeley.

Gomperz, T. 1891. "Philodem und die äsethetische Schriften der herkulanischen Bibliothek." Sitzungsberichte der Wiener Akademie der Wissenschaften, phil.-hist. Cl. 123.6 (=Dorandi 1993: 165-252).

Gordon, P. 2004. "Remembering the Garden: The Trouble with Women in the School of Epicurus." In Fitzgerald, Obbink, and Holland, eds. 221-243.

Greene, R. et all. eds. 2012. *The Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics*. Princeton:

Princeton University Press.

Greenberg, N. A. 1955. *The Poetics of Philodemus*. Diss. Harvard. (Published by Garland Press 1990.)

——. 1958. "Metathesis as an Instrument in the Criticism of Poetry." *TAPA* 89: 262-270.

——. 1961. "*Poema* and *Poesis*." *HSCP* 65:263-289.

Grube, G. M. A. 1965. *The Greek and Roman Critics*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Halliwell, S. 2002. *The Aesthetics of Mimesis: Ancient Texts and Modern Problems*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

——. 2012. *Between Ecstasy and Truth: Interpretations of Greek Poetics from Homer to Longinus*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Hammerstaedt, J. 1992. "Der Schlussteil von Philodems drittem Buch über Rhetorik." CErc 22: 9-117.

——. 1996. "Il ruolo della πρόληψις epicurea nell'interpretazione di Epicuro, *Epistula ad Herodotum* 37 sg." In Giannantoni and Gigante, eds. i.221-237.

——. 2003. "Une ancienne discussion sur les critères de l'excellence du poème (éd. Philodème, *Poèmes V, PHerc.* 1425 col. 25sq.)." In Monet, ed. 303-18.

Heidmann, J. 1937. "Der Papyrus 1676 der Herculanensischen Bibliothek." *CErc* 1: 90-106.

Hoffman, A. 2013. "Gadara – eine hellenistisch-kaiserzeitliche Stadt der südsyrischen Dekapolis." In Hoffmann and Bührig, eds. 3-34.

Hoffman, A. and Bührig, C. eds. 2013. *Forschungen in Gadara/Umm Qays von 1987 bis 2000*. Rahden: Verlag Marie Leidorf.

Hollis, A. S. 1977. "L. Varius Rufus (Frs. 1-4 Morel)." *CQ* 27: 187-190.

Hordern, J. 2004. *Sophron's* Mimes. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Houston, G. W. 2014. *Inside Roman Libraries: Books Collections and their Management in Antiquity.* Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.

Hülser, K. 1987-1988. *Die Fragmente zur Dialektik der Stoiker. Neue Sammlung der Texte mit deutscher Übersetzung und Kommentaren.* Stuttgart: Frommann-Holzboog. (4 vols.)

Innes, D. 1985. "Theophrastus and the Theory of Style." In W. W. Fortenbaugh, P. M. Huby & A. A. Long, eds. 251-267.

Inwood, B. ed. 2003. *The Cambridge Companion to the Stoics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Ioppolo, A. M. 1980. *Aristone di Chio e lo stoicismo antico*. Naples: Bibliopolis.

——. 2005. "Poétique et théories de la perception chez Ariston." in Dherby and Gourinat, eds. 121-151.

Janko, R. 1987. *Aristotle: Poetics*. Indianapolis: Hackett.

——. 1994. "*Filodemo: Il quinto libro della poetica* by Cecilia Mangoni." *CP* 89: 282-289.

——. 2003. *Philodemus:* On Poems. *Book One.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

——. 2010. *Philodemus:* On Poems *Books 3-4 with the Fragments of Aristotle's* On Poets. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

——. Forthcoming. *Philodemus:* On Poems *Book Two*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Jensen, C. 1906. *Philodemi* Περὶ οἰκονομίας *qui dicitur libellus.* Leipzig: B. G. Teubner.

——. 1924. *Philodemos:* Über die Gedichte *fünftes Buch.* Berlin: Weidmann.

Kechagia, E. 2011. *Plutarch Against Colotes: A Lesson in History of Philosophy.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Kleve, K. 1963. "Zur Epikureische Terminologie." *SO* 38: 25-31.

——. 2003. "Lucretius in Herculaneum." *CErc* 19: 5-87.

——. 2011. "The Enigma of Lucretius" *CErc* 41: 231-234.

Koller, H. 1963. *Musik und Dichtung im alten Griechenland.* Bern and Munich: Franke.

Körte, A. 1890. *Metrodori Epicurei Fragmenta.* Leipzig: B. G. Teubner.

——. 1907. (Review of Crönert [1906].) *GGA* 169: 251-266.

Lamberton, R. and Keaney, J. eds. 1992. *Homer's Ancient Readers: The Hermeneutics of Greek Epic's Earliest Exegetes.* Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Lenchantin de Gubernatis, M. 1933. *Il libro di Catullo veronese: Testo e commento.* Ed. minor. Turin: Giovani Chiantore.

Long, A. A. 1996. *Stoic Studies.* Berkeley: University of California Press.

—— and Sedley, D. 1987. *The Hellenistic Philosophers.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. (2 vols.)

Longo Aurricchio, F. 1977. *ΦΙΛΟΔΗΜΟΥ ΠΕΡΙ ΡΗΤΟΡΙΚΗΣ: libros primum et secundum.* Naples: Giannini.

——. 1978. "La scuola di Epicuro." *CErc* 8: 21-37.

——. 1988. *Ermarco: Frammenti.* Naples: Bibliopolis .

Ludwig, W. 1963. "Plato's Love Epigrams." *GRBS* 4: 59-83

Maas, P. 1942. "The Chronology of the Poems of Catullus." *CQ* 36: 79-82.

Mackey, J. Forthcoming, 2015. "New Evidence for the Epicurean Theory of the Origin of Language: Philodemus, *On Poems* 5 *(PHerc.* 403, Fr. 5, Col. I)." *CErc* 45.

Mandilaras, B., et al. eds. 1988. *Proceedings of the XVIII International congress of Papyrology: Athens 25-31 May 1986.* Athens: Greek Papyrological Society. (2 vols.)

Mangoni, C. 1988. "Prose e poesia nel V libro della *Poetica* di Filodemo." *CErc* 18: 127-138.

——. 1993. *Il quinto libro della poetica.* Bibliopolis: Naples.

Mayer, A.. 1910. *Theophrasti* περὶ λέξεως *libri fragmenta.* Leipzig: B. G. Teubner.

McOsker, M. 2014. "A New Edition of *PHerc.* 118 (Demetrius Laco, *On Poems* I)." *CErc* 44: 19-48.

——. (Forthcoming 1). *Demetrius Laco* On Poems *Books 1 and 2.*

——. (Forthcoming 2). "Lucretius on Poetic Utility and Ennius' Errors."

Monet, A. ed. 2003. *Le jardin romain: Épicurisme et poésie à Rome: Mélanges offertes à M. Bollack.* Lille: Université Lille 3.

Müller, R. 2012. *Antike Dichtungslehre: Themen und Theorien.* Tübigen: Francke.

Neubecker, A. J. 1983. "Beobachtungen zu Argumentationsweise und Stil Phlodems in der Schrift *Über die Musik,* buch IV." *CErc* 13: 85-90.

——. 1986. *Über die Musik IV. Buch*. Bibliopolis: Naples.

Obbink, D. 1992. "What All Men Believe—Must be True." *OSAP* 10: 189-231.

——. ed. 1995. *Philodemus and Poetry: Poetic Theory and Practice in Lucretius, Philodemus and Horace.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

——. 1995b. "How to Read Poetry about the Gods." In Obbink, ed. 189-209.

——. 1996. *Philodemus. On Piety pt. I.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

——. 2007. "Lucretius and the Herculaneum Library." In Gillespie and Hardie, eds. 33-40.

Paduano, G. 1993. "Chi dice "io" nell'epigramma ellenistico?" in Arrighetti and Montanari, eds. 129-40.

Pandermalis, D. 1983. "Sul programma della decorazione scultorea" in *La Villa dei Papiri, secondo supplemento a Cronache Ercolanesi 13/1983*. Naples: Gaetano Macchiaroli.

Parisi, A. 2012. "Osservazioni sul lessico del *PHerc*. 831 (Demetrio Lacone, *opus incertum*)." *CErc* 42: 111-120.

Philippson, R. 1924. Review of Jensen (1923). *PhW* 44: 417-421.

——. 1938. "Philodemos (5)." *RE* xix/2 coll. 2444-82.

Porter, James. 1989. "Philodemus on Material Difference." *CErc* 19: 149-178.

——. 1992. "Hermeneutic Lines and Circles: Aristarchus and Crates on the Exegesis of Homer." In Lamberton and Keaney, eds. 67-114.

——. 1995. "Content and Form in Philodemus: The History of an Evasion." In Obbink, ed. 97-147.

——. 1996. "In Search of an Epicurean Aesthetics." In Giannantoni and Gigante, eds. 2.611-628.

Purinton, J. S. 1993. "Epicurus on the Telos." *Phronesis* 38: 281-320.

Ramelli, I. 2002. *Epicurea nell'edizione di Hermann Usener*. Milan: Bompiani (reprint of Usener [1887] with Italian translation).

Richter, G. 1965. *The Portraits of the Greeks*. vol 2. London: The Phaidon Press.

Rispoli, G. M. 2005. "ΘΕΜΑΤΑ e giudizio "poetico." *CErc* 35: 71-81.

Reinach, A. 1885. "Les arétologues dans l'antiquité." *BCH* 9: 257-265.

Romeo, C. 1988a. *La poesia*. Naples: Bibliopolis.

——. 1988b. "La testimonianza di Demetrio Lacone sul nomos pitico (*PHerc*. 1014 col. XLVIII)." In Mandilaras et al., eds. 283-290.

Roskam, G. 2007a. *Live unnoticed: on the vicissitudes of an Epicurean doctrine.* Leiden: Brill.

——. 2007b. *A Commentary on Plutarch's De latenter vivendo.* Leuven: Leuven University Press.

Rostagni, A. 1955. *Scritti Minori I: Aesthetica*. Turin: Bottega d'Erasmo.

Sbordone, F. 1947. *Philodemi Adversus [sophistas]. E papyro Herculanensi 1005*. Naples: L. Loffredo.

——. 1976. *[ΦΙΛΟΔΗΜΟΥ ΠΕΡΙ ΠΟΙΗΜΑΤΩΝ]: Tractatus Tres*. Naples: Giannini.

Schächter, R. 1927. "Philodemus Quid de Psychagogia docuerit." *Eos* 30:15-28

Schefold, K. 1943. *Die Bildnisse der antiken Dichter, Redner, und Denker*. Basel: Benno

Schwabe & Co.

Schmid. W. 1940. (Review of, inter alia, Tescari [1939].) Gnomon 20: 1-22.

Schmidt, D. A. 1990. "Bacchylides 17: Paean or Dithyramb?" *Hermes* 118: 18-31.

Schober, A. 1988. "Philodemi de Pietate Pars Prior." *CErc* 18: 67-125.

Scodel, R. 2003. "Two Epigrammatic Pairs: Callimachus' Epitaphs, Plato's Apples." *Hermes* 131: 257-68.

Sedley, D. 1973. "Epicurus, *On Nature* Book XXVIII." *CErc* 3: 5-83.

——. 1983. "Epicurus' Refutation of Determinism" in ΣΥΖΗΤΗΣΙΣ, vol I, 11-51.

——. 1997. "Philosophical Allegiance in the Greco-Roman World." In Griffin and Barnes, eds. 97-119.

——. 1998. *Lucretius and the Transformation of Greek Wisdom.* Cambridge: CUP.

——. 2010. "The Status of Physics in Lucretius, Philodemus, and Cicero" in Antoni, Arrghetti, Bertagna, and Delattre, eds. 63-68.

Shapiro, S. 2014. "Socration or Philodemus? Catullus 47 and Prospographical Excess." *CJ* 109: 385-405.

Sider, D. 1987. "Love Poetry of Philodemus," *AJP* 108: 310-324.

——. 1995. "Epicurean Poetics: Response and Dialogue." In Obbink, ed. 35-41.

——. 1997 *The Epigrams of Philodemos: Introduction, Text, and Commentary.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Smith, M. F. 1993. *Diogenes of Oenoanda: The Epicurean Inscription.* Naples: Bibliopolis.

——. 2003. *Supplement to Diogenes of Oenoanda: The Epicurean Inscription.* Naples: Bibliopolis.

"Summaries of Dissertations for the Degree of Ph. D. 1954 and 1955." *HSCP* 62 (1957): 141 162. (Unsigned article.)

ΣΥΖΗΤΗΣΙΣ: Studi sull'epicureismo greco e romano offerti a Marcello Gigante. 1983. 2 vols. Napoli: Gaetano Macchiaroli (no editor is named; G. Leone published a volume of indices in 1986).

Tepedino Guerra, A. 1994. "L'opera filodemea *Su Epicuro* (*PHerc.* 1232, 1289 β)." *CErc* 24: 5-53.

Tescari, O. 1935. *Lucretiana.* Turin: Società editrice internazionale.

——. 1939. Lucrezio. Rome: Edizioni Roma. (Partial, abbreviated reprint of above.)

Tsouna, V. 2007. *The Ethics of Philodemus.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

——. 2012. *Philodemus,* On Property Management: *Translated with an Introduction and Notes.* Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature.

—— and Indelli, G. 1995. *[Philodemus]: [On Choices and Avoidances].* Naples: Bibliopolis.

Usener, H. 1887. *Epicurea.* Leipzig: B. G. Teubner.

——. 1977. *Glossarium Epicureum.* (M. Gigante and W. Schmid, eds.) Rome: Edizioni dell'ateneo & bizzarri.

Usherwood, B. 2002. "The Value and Impact of Reading Imaginative Literature." *Journal of Librarianship and Information Technology* 34: 33-41.

Vogliano, A. 1928. *Epicuri et Epicureorum Scripta in Herculanensibus Papyris Servata*. Berlin: Weidmann.

Walsh, P. G. 1987. "Philodemus on the Terminology of Neoptolemus." *Mnemosyne* XL.1-2: 56-68.

Warren, J. 2002. *Epicurus and Democritean Ethics: An Archeology of Ataraxia*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

——. ed. 2009. *The Cambridge Companion to Epicureanism.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Waszink, J. H. 1954. *Lucretius and Poetry*. Amsterdam: N.V. Noord-Hollandsche Uitgevers Maatschappij.

Weber, T. 1996. "Gaderenes in Exile. Two Inscriptions from Greece Reconsidered. *ZPalV* 112: 10-17.

——. 2012. *Gadara – Umm Qais I. Gadara Decapolitana: Untersuchungen zur Topographie, Geschichte, Architektur, und der Bildenden Kunst Einer "Polis Hellenis" im Ostjordanland.* Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag.

Wiemken, H. 1972. *Der griechische Mimus.* Bremen: Carl Schünemann.

Wigodsky, M. 2009. "Horace and (Not Necessarily) Neoptolemus: The *Ars Poetica* and Hellenistic Controversies." *CErc* 16: 7-28.

Wilamowitz-Moellendorf, U. 1959. *Euripides: Herakles*. Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft. (3 vols.)

Wilkenson, L. P. 1933. "Philodemus and Poetry." *G&R* 2: 144-51.

——. 1938. "Philodemus on Ethos in Music." *CQ* 32: 174-81.

Winter, B. W. 2004. "Philodemus and Paul on ὑπόκρισις." in Fitzgerald, Obbink, and Holland eds. 323-342.

Wiseman, T. 1969. *Catullan Questions*. Leicester: Leicester University Press.