

Epicurean Arts

The Aesthetic Theory of Philodemus of Gadara

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Abstract

The aesthetic trilogy of Philodemus of Gadara, an Epicurean philosopher who lived and taught in the late first century B.C, is made up of the treatises *On Music*, *On Poems*, and *On Rhetoric*. Recent studies have indicated that Philodemus' aesthetic philosophy differs from that of traditional Epicureanism. However, these studies have examined each of the three aesthetic arts as distinct entities. This study proposes a single, unified, aesthetic theory as presented in the aesthetic trilogy; a theory which is founded on the concept of the arts as the linguistic expression of philosophy.

DECLARATION BY CANDIDATE

I Thomas Westenberg hereby declare that this thesis is my own work and effort and that it has not been submitted anywhere for any award. Where other sources of information have been used, they have been acknowledged.

October 6, 2015

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'T. Westenberg', with a long diagonal stroke extending upwards and to the right.

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Thomas Westenberg

Chapter I: Introduction

Philodemus of Gadara was a Greek Epicurean, who lived and taught in the Campanian region of Italy during the first century B.C. Philodemus wrote numerous treatises on moral and practical topics, in addition to a lengthy History of the Philosophers, and his writings are the largest extant source of Epicureanism from the Ancient World, and thus the most significant corpus for an understanding of that philosophy in the Roman World. The Philodemean corpus is part of some fifteen hundred scrolls which make up the library of the Villa of the Papyri in Herculaneum. The scrolls of this library were largely preserved, though carbonised, by the same eruption of Vesuvius which buried Pompeii.

The carbonised nature of the scrolls has created difficulty for any attempt at unrolling, deciphering, and translating Philodemus' writings, since their discovery in the late eighteenth century. Nevertheless, work has been conducted for nearly two hundred years, with ever better techniques and technology allowing more of the scrolls to be read and reassembled. In the last fifty years, in particular, technology such as infra-red imaging has radically improved the editions of several works, and have spurred projects to publish, and republish, the Philodemean corpus.

Among the scrolls in better condition, are those which constitute the ‘aesthetic trilogy’. This trilogy consists of Philodemus’ treatises *On Music*, *On Rhetoric*, and *On Poetry*. Though not written as a trilogy, the similarity of content and argument presented in each has led to this label by those working on the Philodemus Translation Project at Naples.

The significance of this trilogy, however, is more than simply its relatively good condition. The works present the only known coherent Epicurean picture of the arts, written by an Epicurean. Without the aesthetic theory, the knowledge of the Epicurean philosophy of art would be sourced entirely from second hand accounts. This makes the aesthetic trilogy an invaluable source for the understanding of Epicureanism, its position on the arts, and its influence in the Roman World.

The Work So Far

In the late eighties, the PhD thesis of Nathan Greenberg was published, though it had been written and completed in the fifties. In his thesis, titled ‘The Poetic Theory of Philodemus’ Greenberg laid out the first coherent attempt to present the entire theory of poetry as presented by Philodemus in his treatise *On Poems*.¹ This was the starting point for an increase of work on the topic, being the first holistic study of the Epicurean position on the arts. Following this, for the next fifteen years, there were a series of conferences held at Naples, and at American institutions which cooperate with the Philodemus Translation project, that attempted to define the aesthetic framework under which Philodemus wrote the aesthetic trilogy. Among the most important of these was the conference hosted at Naples in 1995, the proceedings of which were then published in a volume titled ‘Philodemus and Poetry’.² The

¹ Nathan Greenberg, *The Poetic Theory of Philodemus* (New York: Garland Publishing, 1990).

² *Philodemus and Poetry: Poetic Theory and Practice in Lucretius, Philodemus, and Horace*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995).

papers in this particular volume finally disproved the traditional opinion that the Epicureans, like Plato before them, expelled poetry, and the other aesthetics, from the life of the wise man. This was a significant step in the study of the Philodemian corpus. In particular, Asmis argued that Philodemus' position on poetry allowed for the development of philosophical poetry, and, at the very least, considered poetry a harmless pleasure.³ This argument was further expanded by the discussion of Sider, who signalled, at least the possibility of, philosophical content within Philodemus' epigrams, through an examination of the poetry in its Hellenistic literary context.⁴ Though these arguments are built using quotes from both *On Music* and *On Rhetoric*, the chief focus of these papers were on the poetic theory of Philodemus.

Indeed, poetry remains the most discussed of the treatises in the aesthetic trilogy. Even here, there has been little extensive discussion in the last 15 years, since the publication of the conference proceedings titled *Vergil, Philodemus, and the Augustans*. Again, though examining the specific understanding of poetry, as presented by Philodemus, the papers in this publication are primarily concerned with poetry as a discrete literary genre, with little reference to the other members of the trilogy.⁵

However, Delattre, in both his translation of the text of *On Music* and the related discussion in his paper 'Towards a Musical Aesthetics of Philodemus', notes that the Philodemian

³ Elizabeth Asmis, "Epicurean Poetics," in *Philodemus and Poetry: Poetic Theory in Lucretius, Philodemus, and Horace*, ed. Dirk Obbink (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995).

⁴ David Sider, "The Epicurean Philosopher as Hellenistic Poet," in *Philodemus and Poetry: Poetic Theory and Practice in Lucretius, Philodemus, and Horace*, ed. Dirk Obbink (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995).

⁵ Jeffrey Fish David Armstrong, Patricia Johnston, Marilyn Skinner, ed. *Vergil, Philodemus, and the Augustans* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2004).

understanding of music is closely related to the picture presented in *On Poems*.⁶ This same link was implicit in the discussion of poetry given by Asmis in various papers, as she used the aesthetic principles referred to in *On Music* to elucidate the fragmentary passages of *On Poems*.⁷

Despite the activity of the 90s, in the last decade the Philodemean understanding of the aesthetics has been little discussed. This is partly due to the common consensus that has been reached regarding the essentials of the philosophical framework for each of the three aesthetics discussed in the aesthetic trilogy. However, in 2009, Blank noted the same link between the separate aesthetics as mentioned by Asmis and Delattre in particular.⁸ In addition, Blank suggested that the aesthetic frameworks discussed in *On Poems* and *On Music* are best understood in relation to the definition of an art, or *techne*, given in *On Rhetoric*. For Blank, a complete understanding of any of the three individual treatises can only be attained in direct relation to the other members of the trilogy. It is this direct relationship with which this thesis is concerned.

Aesthetics, or Aesthetic?

⁶ Daniel Delattre, "Towards the Musical Aesthetics of Philodemus," *Musikarchäologie früher Metallzeiten* 18, no. 2 (2000).

⁷ Elizabeth Asmis, "Philodemus on Censorship, Moral Utility, and Formalism in Poetry," in *Philodemus and Poetry: Poetic Theory and Practice in Lucretius, Philodemus, and Horace*, ed. Dirk Obbink (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995); Philodemus, "On the Good King According to Homer," in *Philodemus' Poetic Theory and 'On the Good King According to Homer'*, ed. Elizabeth Asmis (Classical Antiquity: University of California Press, 1991).

⁸ David Blank, "*Philosophia and Techne*: Epicureans on the Arts," ed. James Warren, *The Cambridge Companion to Epicureanism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

In the following study, it is my aim to begin an analysis of the relationship between the three aesthetics discussed in Philodemus' aesthetic trilogy. Following on from the links already signified by the works of previous scholars, particularly Asmis and Blank, I shall endeavour to outline the basic foundation of what, I believe, is the single unified aesthetic philosophy of Philodemus. It is my contention that the three aesthetic arts of rhetoric, poetry, and music, are directly related parts of a whole. Specifically, a whole which must be understood as an expression of, or engagement with, the practice of Epicurean philosophy. This argument slots into the more general scholarly consensus that Epicureanism claimed all things subordinate to philosophy. Though it will be beyond the scope of this thesis to outline the whole of Philodemus' aesthetic philosophy, it is my hope that, by outlining the essential foundations, it will be possible to conduct further research on both the full framework of Philodemian Epicureanism, and its influence in Late Republican Rome and beyond.

The argument will be constructed in three parts. First, I shall analyse the text of *On Rhetoric*, with the goal of understanding the philosophical position on rhetoric, and its validity in the life of the Epicurean wise man. I shall argue that, rejecting the traditional divisions of rhetoric, Philodemus allows only his own category, titled sophistic rhetoric, to be considered a *techne*. Further, I shall argue that sophistic rhetoric, being, as Philodemus explicitly puts it, the art of prose composition, is inherently the art of philosophical expression. Thus, sophistic rhetoric is closely tied to philosophy, as it is philosophy in language. *On Rhetoric* is the most intact of the trilogy, and my discussion will range across the books to deal with the variety of themes and objections raised by Philodemus.

My discussion will then move to the treatise *On Poems*, where I shall argue for a similar close relationship with this aesthetic art and the practice of philosophy. Though Philodemus does not allow a definition of poetry according to its moral benefit, he by no means excludes the possibility of moral, and philosophical, poetic content. I shall show that this allows a

close relationship between poetic composition and the role of philosopher as a teacher; something explicitly defined by Philodemus in *On Rhetoric*. Accordingly, the result is that poetry can be considered a means of expressing philosophy, even if it needs to be interpreted through the use of sophistic rhetoric. This conclusion will be further demonstrated by a discussion of the treatise *On The Good King according to Homer*, in which Philodemus applies sophistic rhetoric to poetry in order to elucidate philosophical content. The majority of this discussion will be taken from the arguments presented at the end of the treatise, in book V. This, firstly, is the result of the argumentative structure taken by Philodemus. The earlier parts of the work are devoted to narrating the poetic theories of his opponents, with the later books focussed on rebutting those positions. Accordingly, it is in Philodemus' rebuttal that we find the clearest positive statements of what Philodemus' own poetic theory might be. In addition, books II-IV of *On Poems* are extremely fragmentary, and there lacks, as yet, a comprehensive, critical edition of the papyri.

Finally, in my analysis of *On Music*, I will demonstrate that the sole value of this final aesthetic art is to be found in the linguistic expression of the text; which Philodemus declares to be the same skill as poetry. This argument is founded on the atomist physics of Epicureanism, which results in the impossibility of melody being any more than a pleasurable adornment for the philosophically oriented poetry of the text. Once again, therefore, it will be evident that this aesthetic is at one with the others. This argument will be founded on the fourth book of the treatise. This is the only surviving, near-fully intact section, with mere fragments of the other books remaining. However, the structure of this book is important, as it deals with refuting the morally utilitarian interpretation of music as given by Philodemus' opponent, Diogenes of Babylon. As such, it ties in to the crux of the argument presented in this study; the particular relationship between the arts and morally beneficial philosophy.

It is important to be clear that I shall not argue that the aesthetic arts are philosophy, nor even that they inherently practice philosophy. Instead, I shall show that the unified aesthetic theory presented in the aesthetic trilogy places the arts in a position related, but firmly subordinate, to philosophy.

This analysis, it is hoped, will show that, instead of there being multiple aesthetics, for Philodemus there is only one aesthetic art, with rhetoric, poetry, and, to a lesser extent, music, merely being aspects of the one pursuit. Significantly, this pursuit remains closely tied with philosophy. The result of this study will be a new understanding, not only of Epicurean philosophy and its relationship with the arts, but also of artistic theories in the same period. This last becomes increasingly significant, given that the students of Philodemus included Vergil and Horace; two of the most significant poets of the period. This further significance signals the avenues for further study.

Chapter II: Rhetoric

It was the famous argument of the sophists that rhetoric was an art, a *techne*. This, they claimed, provided reason enough for its pursuit, and, of course, the fees they charged for an education in the *techne*. Aristotle also agreed that rhetoric was *techne*, and a valid pursuit for the philosophical wise man, though he provided some caveats regarding valid and invalid goals and techniques in the practice of rhetoric. In addition, Aristotle defined a tripartite division of rhetoric, based on the different goals which lead a rhetor to deliver a speech. This division was commonly accepted in the Ancient World, and the majority of philosophical discussions on the topic dealt with it according to Aristotle's classifications. The three branches of rhetoric, according to Aristotle were: forensic, deliberative, and epideictic.⁹ Forensic rhetoric is a discussion of past action, and is that used in law courts and is focussed on providing, and persuading others to believe, a particular interpretation of the past. Deliberative rhetoric is that which is focussed on persuading a group for or against a given action for the future. Thus, it was deliberative rhetoric employed by Themistocles when persuading the Athenians to build their fleet with the excess of silver. Epideictic rhetoric is praise-blame rhetoric, commonly used at ceremonies, focussing on the present but it is also

⁹ Aristotle, "The Art of Rhetoric," in *Art of Rhetoric*, ed. J.H. Freese (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2014). I. The entirety of the first book of this treatise is dedicated to outlining the distinction between these three branches and their roles.

the style used for attacks on individuals in the law courts or for political reasons, such as in Cicero's *In Pisonem*.¹⁰

It is also important to note two key points from Aristotle's *Rhetoric*. First, Aristotle defines rhetoric as the counterpart of dialectic, which is the art of philosophical discussion and analysis.¹¹ Secondly, Aristotle also claims that the sophists are those who use the different branches of rhetoric not to persuade an audience of the truth, but to persuade them to believe a lie, or to undertake a foolish action. This has commonly been called sophistic rhetoric.

This classification, as has been said, was the common picture of the Graeco-Roman World, and thus is the classification also used by modern scholars interpreting treatises on the topic. However, this is not the classification used by Philodemus in his *On Rhetoric*. It was recently argued by Robert Gaines that Philodemus has actually created his own classification of rhetoric, and his treatise must be analysed in light of this fact.¹² Further, as this chapter will argue, scholarship on this treatise of Philodemus has, too often, missed this distinction, which has resulted in unclear readings of the attitude towards rhetoric presented therein.

On Rhetoric, like many of Philodemus' works, is primarily a negative treatise. That is, the majority of the work is taken up with presenting the arguments of Philodemus' opponents, and then countering these same arguments. It is the aim of this chapter, through close analysis

¹⁰ For a discussion of the particular types of rhetoric and their codification, see *ibid.* For modern scholarship in the area, particularly in relation to Cicero, see Brandon Inabinet, "The Stoicism of the Ideal Orator: Cicero's Hellenistic Ideal," *Advances in the History of Rhetoric* 14, no. 1 (2011); Catherine Steel, "Divisions of Speech," in *Cambridge Companion to Ancient Rhetoric*, ed. Erik Gunderson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

¹¹ Aristotle, "The Art of Rhetoric." I.1-4

¹² Robert Gaines, "Philodemus and the Epicurean Outlook on Epideictic Speaking," *Cronache Ercolanesi* 33 (2003). This is the primary argument of the article.

of the counter arguments given by Philodemus, to establish his attitude towards rhetoric, and the framework within which he considered it to be a valid pursuit. I shall endeavour to highlight the fact that, for Philodemus, rhetoric encompasses the art of writing philosophical analysis and argument, which was called dialectic by Aristotle. This paves the way for Philodemus' ultimate position on rhetoric, which is that it is a valid, and even important, pursuit, provided it is conducted under the auspices of philosophy. As will be seen, this is the position he holds towards all three of the arts discussed in his aesthetic trilogy.

Techne

At the beginning of the second book of his work, Philodemus provides one of the clearest definitions of *techne* extant from the Ancient World. The remainder of the treatise is discussed in relation to this definition, so it is necessary to understand the definition before commencing an analysis of the entire work.

“An art [Greek: *techne*], as the term is commonly used, is a state or condition resulting from the observation of certain common and elementary principles, which apply to the majority of cases, accomplishing such a result as cannot be attained by one who has not studied it, and doing this regularly and certainly and not by conjecture.”¹³

¹³ Philodemus, "On Rhetoric," in *The Rhetorica of Philodemus: Translation and Commentary*, ed. H.M Hubbel (New Haven: New Haven Academy of Arts and Sciences, 1920). II. ff. i.34

As Philodemus himself notes, this is a broad definition, and applies both to exact sciences such as grammar, and also traditional arts like sculpture. This is in keeping with the variety of uses by which the Greeks themselves used the term.¹⁴

The important thing to take into account for this definition is that it does not include anything regarding the validity of pursuing the art. That is, it is perfectly possible for a pursuit to fit this definition and yet not be a valid pursuit for the wise man. For example, one could imagine a burglar having boiled his skills down to fit this definition, yet Philodemus would not say that a burglar was leading a good life. This is important, since it implies Philodemus' position on the debate regarding the validity of various *technai*. As has been said, the sophists reportedly defended their schools by attempting to prove that rhetoric was a *techne*, which made it a valid pursuit. For Philodemus, however, there are some *technai* which the wise man would not engage with.

A further example of this attitude can be found in Philodemus' *On Property Management*. Philodemus claims that, though the wise man must not be in love with money, he may still acquire property, so long as he is not too dedicated to the pursuit.¹⁵ This, Philodemus says, is because there are two sorts of skills, depending on level of intensity: lower and higher. The lower skill is the basic level required to achieve the goal, and is a level attained easily, and by all people. Higher skills, on the other hand, are invalid for the sage, since they are a dedication to the pursuit. Though this dedication produces something greater than the lower skill, the benefits do not outweigh the effort and obsession required to achieve those results.

¹⁴ Note here the classic Epicurean argumentative approach. Philodemus begins by an observation of the world as it is, or as it is commonly considered to be.

¹⁵ Philodemus, "On Property Management," in *Philodemus, On Property Management*, ed. Voula Tsouna (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2012). Col. xxvii.21-26

“We observe this, for example, in the production of bread, or the preparation of food. For everyone is able to make such things for himself to the point of meeting sufficient needs, although there is an empirical practice involving expertise [about] them as well.”¹⁶

Thus, returning to the definition of *techne* given in *On Rhetoric*, it is clear that, for Philodemus, it does not follow from the fact that something is a *techne* that the wise man ought to have it. This latter view is the one held by Plato and Sextus Empiricus, and is the picture which was also used by the sophists in defence of their rhetorical schools. Unlike these two philosophers, Philodemus does not include any notion of ‘usefulness’ in his definition of *techne*. Accordingly, he is willing to call a skill an art, and yet not consider it something to wise man ought to have.

It is important to note, of course, that it does not follow from this analysis that Philodemus would believe an art to be useless, or harmful, by virtue of being an art. Though the definition does not require an art to be useful, it does not exclude the possibility either. The example of cooking which Philodemus uses to clarify his argument reveals that much. Cooking is a useful and good skill which the wise man will possess, since it allows him to continue living. It is only the over-emphasis on the skill, rather than the sufficient provision of an end result which renders the more intense form of the art harmful.¹⁷ On the other hand, it is arguable that, if something is not a *techne* then it is not worth pursuing at all. For, if the study of a subject does not have any codified system, or does not produce a largely consistent end

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ David Blank, "Philodemus on the Technicity of Rhetoric," in *Philodemus and Poetry: Poetic Theory and Practice in Lucretius, Philodemus, and Horace*, ed. Dirk Obbink (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995). p.

result, as required by Philodemus' definition, then it must be a worthless pursuit. For what worth can there be in the effort of studying something that cannot guarantee a better result to those who studied, than those who did not?¹⁸

From this discussion, there are two criteria which must be met for Philodemus to consider rhetoric a valid pursuit for the wise man. First, rhetoric must be a *techne*. That is, it must be a logical system which will provide largely consistent end results to those who study them.¹⁹ Second, rhetoric must also be useful for the wise man, that is, it must contribute to the good life in some way.

A New Classification

In Book II of *On Rhetoric*, Philodemus, using the classic Epicurean appeal to the authority of their founder, declares:

“Epicurus demonstrated that sophistic [rhetoric] is an art of writing speeches and delivering epideictic orations but is not the art of forensic and deliberative oratory; accordingly they say sophistic is an art; his successors likewise have said there is no art of politics.”²⁰

Here, Philodemus clearly outlines the categories of rhetoric which he elsewhere labels ‘practical’ and ‘sophistic’. Sophistic rhetoric is the art of writing, arguing, and speaking clearly, whereas practical rhetoric, which includes forensic and deliberative oratory, is the ‘art’ of persuasion in order to achieve a set goal. The word ‘art’ here is used loosely, since the

¹⁸ "Blank, David, *Philosophia and Techne: Epicureans on the Arts*." This point highlights the most significant objection to the sophists used by all philosophers from the Ancient World, including Epicurus himself.

¹⁹ To this we may also add the requirement that it is not a pursuit which will require more effort to study, than benefits once learnt.

²⁰ Philodemus, "On Rhetoric." II. ff. xiv

very heart of Philodemus' objection is that this category of rhetoric is not an art at all. It is important to examine both these categories in full, in order to establish the exact nature of each, and their role, or lack thereof, in the life of the wise Epicurean.

As in the quote above, Philodemus is very clear regarding what sophistic rhetoric is. He is not, however, nearly so exact when it comes to practical rhetoric. In the above quote he indicates that sophistic rhetoric is opposed to the forensic and deliberative kinds. However in the same fragment, he states that:

“They [the Epicureans who say that no rhetoric is an art] have not made the distinction between the different parts of rhetoric, sophistic and practical, which was made by Epicurus and his immediate successors.”²¹

Given that he then takes the opposition to be between sophistic, and forensic and deliberative, it follows that the ‘practical’ rhetoric he mentions are these two kinds. The solution is not so simple, however. As Gaines pointed out, this seemingly simple division is then confused. Firstly, Philodemus never again mentions this broad category of practical rhetoric, referring instead to forensic and deliberative.²² Secondly, and further complicating the issue, by book 3, Philodemus has already entirely dropped any reference even to these two. Instead, the work is a focussed attack on politics, and political rhetoric as the opposite of the *techne* which is sophistic. How are we, then, to define practical rhetoric?

²¹ Ibid.

²² As ever, when making statements regarding the frequency or lack of a particular term in the Philodemian corpus, it must be noted that large parts of the text are missing. It is possible, and would even fit with the structure of the book, for a further analysis of practical rhetoric to have been the subject of one or more of the lost sections. See Gaines, "Philodemus and the Epicurean Outlook on Epideictic Speaking."

A specific, and completely accurate, definition of practical rhetoric is beyond the scope of this study, since the answer would require a focus on the entire moral and political framework of Philodemus' Epicureanism. This would need a larger study of Philodemus' philosophy as a whole, and not just on the aesthetics.²³ However, an answer sufficient for the present purposes is proposed by Gaines. Gaines argues that the aim of *On Rhetoric* is to establish sophistic rhetoric as an art, and a valid pursuit for the philosopher.²⁴ As such, Philodemus is only concerned with all rhetoric that is not sophistic insofar as he wants to prove that it is not an art, and is not worth pursuing.²⁵ This, then, is the definition of practical rhetoric: everything that is not sophistic. In other words, when Philodemus claims that Epicurus distinguished between sophistic and practical rhetoric, he is saying that Epicurus distinguished between rhetoric which is a worthy pursuit, and is an art, and that which is not. Thus, practical rhetoric is everything that does not fit the definition of sophistic which is 'writing speeches and delivering epideictic orations.' However, it is necessary to analyse the arguments Philodemus presents against practical rhetoric, before examining his discussion of sophistic. All analysis presented by Philodemus in support of sophistic rhetoric, is given in the context of his objections to practical rhetoric, which means these objections must be understood. In addition, the objections made by Philodemus in fact apply to his objections to all worthless pursuits, including some aspects of poetry and music. It is thus useful to be clear

²³ No attempt has thus far been made to examine the philosophy of Philodemus as a discrete whole. However, Sonya Wurster, in 2012, wrote a thesis which examined his social and political context, aims, and influences. This thesis is an invaluable foundation for any attempt to analyse Philodemus as philosopher. Sonya Wurster, "Reconstructing Philodemus: The Epicurean Philosopher in the Late Republic" (University of Melbourne, 2012).

²⁴ Gaines, "Philodemus and the Epicurean Outlook on Epideictic Speaking." p. 197

²⁵ Ibid. p. 189

on the basic nature of his objections at this point, since they are repeated throughout his whole corpus.

The fundamental objection Philodemus levels at practical rhetoric is that it is not an art. Since, as he argues, his definition of art is the definition as the term is commonly used, it is necessary for rhetoric to fit his definition at some point. However, he argues that practical rhetoric has no method, produces no sure results, and any results it may produce are no better than those of the layman. Given this practical rhetoric cannot be an art, and thus must, inherently, be unworthy of the study and effort required to master.

Regarding the system of practical rhetoric, Philodemus points out that there can be no consistent rule of how a speech ought to be delivered. The very fact that rhetoric is divided into different branches alone proves this. It is clear, after all, that a funeral oration cannot be delivered in the same manner as a defence speech in a law case. Given this, the method of rhetoric cannot be a codified system of how to speak in all situations, since speaking must differ in all situations.²⁶ Therefore, it must be that the method of rhetoric is not in providing knowledge of what to say in all situations, but the means of finding what to say in all situations. Even this, however does not save the rhetorician, for, even if you “grant that the end of rhetoric is to find the possible arguments on every rhetorical subject; the phrase ‘on every’ needs restriction.”²⁷ This is because, as Philodemus points out:

“If rhetoric can discover the possible arguments in questions relating to medicine, music etc. the rhetoricians are immediately put into rivalry with the experts in each of these fields. As it is impossible for the philosopher to discover the best possible arguments for some

²⁶ Philodemus, "On Rhetoric." III. Cols. iv-x

²⁷ Ibid. IV. Col. xxvia

other sect, how can one in a totally different line of activity discover these arguments?"²⁸

Therefore, if rhetoric is the art of finding the correct argument in any given situation, then rhetoric must be the art of knowing everything.²⁹ Since this is clearly impossible, this also cannot be the method of rhetoric. Thus, the only possibility is that the method of rhetoric is in finding the correct arguments in politics alone. That this is the only possibility, Philodemus argues is both because this is what all rhetoricians seem to speak about, and also because of the very nature of forensic and deliberative rhetoric; the parts of practical rhetoric. Both branches aim to persuade in political contexts; the law courts and the political assemblies respectively.

Finally, Philodemus concludes that either the method of finding arguments does not work, since so many rhetoricians do not succeed, or that the best argument does not always persuade the people, for the same reason. Accordingly, if it is the former, then rhetoric is a useless art, since it has no useful method, and if it is the latter then rhetoric is a useless art since its method only helps find arguments which do not persuade the people.³⁰

²⁸ Ibid. IV. Cols. xxiii-xxiv

²⁹ James Irvine, "The "Rhetorica" of Philodemus," *Western Speech* 35, no. 2 (2009). Irvine notes that this argument limits philosophy also, but Philodemus is happy to limit philosophy, because as an Epicurean he has already said that only things within the limits of philosophy are worth studying anyway.

³⁰ Clive Chandler, "Philodemus *on Rhetoric* Books 1 and 2: Translation and Exegetical Essays" (University of Cape Town, 2000). pp. 138-42 This last section is never explicitly stated in Philodemus, but is implicit in his final conclusions, as Chandler points out. This is because Philodemus has assumed the standard Epicurean position that politics is incompatible with happiness, and does not need to repeat this basic tenet of Epicureanism. For an analysis of these basic beliefs and how they relate to Epicurean treatises, see James Porter, "Epicurean Attachments: Life, Pleasure, Beauty, Friendship, and Piety," *Cronache Ercolanesi* 33 (2003).

This last note, on persuading the people, highlights the political aspect of practical rhetoric, and Philodemus' objection to it. *On Rhetoric*, as was said earlier, is the work in which Philodemus says the most about his attitude towards politics. Particularly, Philodemus argues, after the traditional Epicurean fashion, that politics is a worthless pursuit. Since practical rhetoric encompasses forensic and deliberative rhetoric, it is an inherently politically focussed art. As such, since politics is worthless for the blessed life, it follows that practical rhetoric, as an art, is a worthless pursuit. Philodemus says, in response to the claim that rhetoricians may argue for what is right:

“Not only some philosophers differ from the popular ideas of right and wrong, but all statesmen do. For in their period of office they are wholly concerned to change popular opinion on questions of right and justice and advantage”³¹

Though this assertion is debatable, Philodemus makes his point clear. The statesman's primary goal is not to do what is right, but to persuade others. This is in opposition to the philosopher, whose primary goal is investigating what is right and good, and then living in accord with his findings.³² Furthermore, Philodemus finds even the subject matter of politics, and the political rhetor, to be inferior to philosophy. For philosophy is focussed on the truth, “philosophy shows us how to find and use everything necessary for a happy life.”³³ Politics, on the other hand, is concerned with upholding or changing the laws of the state. This renders

³¹ Philodemus, "On Rhetoric." V. Col. xxii

³² Ibid. V. Cols. xix-xxi. This distinction is not found in Epicureanism alone, but is the classic distinction made by Plato, Zeno, and a host of other ancient philosophers. See J. Annas, "The Morality of Happiness," in *Passions and Perceptions: Studies in Hellenistic Philosophy of Mind, Proceedings of the 5th Symposium Hellenisticum*, ed. J. Brunschwig and M. Nussbaum (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993).

³³ Philodemus, "On Rhetoric." V. Cols. xxxii

the work of the political rhetor subjective, since their arguments are dependent on the context in which they find themselves. Thus, even if the rhetor is highly skilled at persuasion, he has learnt nothing about which he ought to be persuading. "Rhetoricians are like pilots who have a good training, but may be bad men."³⁴

Thus, politics is a pursuit which is focussed on the changeable nature of life, and, even if successful, only produces a tool without guidance. It is philosophy that guides through life. It provides better results for the individual and for society, for:

“...Philosophers do not enter politics, yet they help their native land
by teaching the young to obey the laws... by teaching them to act
justly even if there are no laws, and to shun injustice as they would
fire.”³⁵

This concludes the analysis of practical rhetoric. Though Philodemus' objections to this category are numerous, and make up the bulk of his work, they are primarily objections to individual arguments for the validity of practical rhetoric. The above discussion has endeavoured to draw out the main themes of each objection made by Philodemus, in order to provide a clear definition of the category, and why he dismisses it as a worthless pursuit. As Blank argued, Philodemus, as an Epicurean, simply cannot allow that practical rhetoric is a skill worthy of the wise man, since it is the skill of the traditional political life to which he opposes philosophy. Thus, his opposition to practical rhetoric becomes his opposition to the political life.³⁶ Further, unlike his position on other arts, Philodemus cannot even allow practical rhetoric a place in the blessed life, so long as it is not pursued too zealously. This is

³⁴ Ibid. V. ff. xiv

³⁵ Ibid. V. ff. xiii

³⁶ Blank, "Philodemus on the Technicity of Rhetoric." p. 187

because the inherent nature of this kind of rhetoric is to persuade others in a political context; and this is something an Epicurean should rarely, if ever, undertake to do. Even if he were to undertake it, then, Philodemus explicitly claims, he should follow Socrates, and talk clearly, and honestly, as a wise man, and not a rhetorician.³⁷

Sophistic Rhetoric

The definition of sophistic rhetoric is simpler than that of practical rhetoric, since twice Philodemus provides an identical definition of what, exactly, he means by the term. The first instance we have already seen, where Philodemus claims Epicurus demonstrated that “sophistic is the art of writing speeches and delivering epideictic orations...”³⁸ Later, as the title of a section which is unfortunately completely lost, we have the sentence: “Sophistic rhetoric is an art of *epideixis*, and of arrangement of speeches, written and extemporaneous.”³⁹ It is clear that Philodemus intends sophistic to refer to prose composition, and to epideictic oration. More difficult, however, is the task of identifying, firstly, why Philodemus considers sophistic rhetoric to be an art, and, secondly, what the role of this art is in the life of the wise man.

Sophistic rhetoric, as the art of prose composition, is the easiest to comprehend. As Chandler notes, if sophistic rhetoric includes prose composition, then it follows that, by the very act of writing his treatise, Philodemus is engaged in sophistic rhetoric.⁴⁰ It is natural, then, that Philodemus is willing to call this pursuit an art, and one worthy of the wise man, since it is what he himself is doing. However, it does not seem entirely obvious why Philodemus should

³⁷ Philodemus, "On Rhetoric." V. Cols. xxix-xxx

³⁸ Ibid. II. ff. xiv

³⁹ Ibid. II. ff. xxv

⁴⁰ Chandler, "Philodemus on *Rhetoric* Books 1 and 2: Translation and Exegetical Essays." pp. 141-5

include prose composition as part of sophistic rhetoric. Rhetoric, traditionally, was restricted to composing and delivering speeches, and, though it was common for these speeches to be published, it was not seen to be the same art as prose composition.⁴¹ How, then, does it come to be included under sophistic rhetoric by Philodemus?

In order to shed some light on this problem, it is helpful to study the position of Epicurus on the matter. We know Epicurus wrote a treatise titled *On Rhetoric*, but, sadly, the entire text has been lost. All that remains is Diogenes Laertius' summation of the key argument, when he states:

“He uses plain language in his works throughout, which is unusual, and Aristophanes, the grammarian, reproaches him for it. He was so intent on clarity that even in his treatise *On Rhetoric*, he didn't bother demanding anything else but clarity.”⁴²

There are important points in this quote. First, according to Diogenes, Epicurus' only requirement for rhetoric is that the rhetorician be clear in his meaning. Thus, Epicurus is dismissing the whole of rhetorical style and the rules which had been formulated by rhetoricians, in favour of the style of simplicity. If this argument is true, then it is also worth noting that Diogenes points out that Epicurus uses plain language throughout his works; works which were prose compositions. It would seem, then, that Epicurus did not distinguish

⁴¹ Many of Isocrates' texts were published, and Gorgias wrote and published several orations as demonstrations of his rhetorical skill, and there is no evidence that these were necessarily orally delivered. For analysis of the context with which Philodemus is concerned, see John Vanderspoel, "Hellenistic Rhetoric in Theory and Practice," in *Companion to Greek Rhetoric*, ed. I. Worthington (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2007).

⁴² Diogenes Laertius, "Lives of Eminent Philosophers," ed. R.D. Hicks (Harvard: Harvard University Press, 1925). X.13

between rhetorical style, and prose style, since the aim of both ought to be the same: clarity. This reading is strengthened by the second point to be noted in the quote. This is that Epicurus wrote a treatise on rhetoric, and that he demanded clarity of expression in that work. Philodemus refers to this work throughout his own treatise, so it follows that he was familiar with the arguments contained within. It is thus possible that Philodemus' own views on the nature of sophistic rhetoric are actually a reflection of the views espoused by Epicurus in his work. This is, after all, the argument Philodemus makes for his position, claiming, as it has been seen, that sophistic rhetoric was actually defined by Epicurus.

It is, of course, always a difficult matter to determine the extent to which Philodemus is actually in agreement with Epicurus, or simply defending his position to other Epicureans.⁴³ Similarly, the statement from Diogenes alone does not provide a firm foundation for analysis, since it is a second hand account of the work, and Diogenes is not averse to according his interpretation the status of fact. However, this does point us in the right direction.

Further to this analysis, Dionysius of Halicarnassus says that Epicurus propounded the dictum "writing presents no difficulties to those who do not aim at a constantly changing standard".⁴⁴ Once again, we have the claim that Epicurus favoured a simple style. That is, Epicurus is being represented as a philosopher who rejected the rules and the forms traditionally used by rhetoricians in his period. However, something more interesting is going

⁴³ Scholars are divided between those who perceive Philodemus as an original thinker, or simply copying the works of Zeno and Epicurus. For both sides of the argument see Marcello Gigante, *Philodemus in Italy*, trans. Dirk Obbink (Michigan: The University of Michigan Press, 1995). And Martin Smith, "Herculaneum and Oinoanda, Philodemus and Diogenes: Comparison of Two Epicurean Discoveries and Two Epicurean Teachers," *Cronache Ercolanesi* 33 (2003).

⁴⁴ Dionysius of Halicarnassus, "On the Composition of Words," in *Dionysius of Halicarnassus: The Critical Essays*, ed. Stephen Usher (Harvard: Harvard University Press, 1985). 24

on here. This quote relates back to the criticism Philodemus directs at practical rhetoric and its multiplicity of styles. It seems to imply the argument that pursuing the elaborate, and changing, stylistic rules of the sophists is worthless. All that is needed is clear expression.

This focus on clarity is a reflection of Epicurus' philosophy of language. Epicurus held an atomistic view of language, wherein each word contained a specific meaning, and meaning in a sentence was constructed by the correct combination of individual words.⁴⁵ Epicurus claimed that error was caused by a misapprehension of the (physical) experience of apprehending these individual words.⁴⁶ Thus, in order to avoid error, clarity, and simplicity was required. Elaborate style, and complicated language, according to Epicurus, could only serve to confuse a point. Most important, however, is the fact that this is a general philosophy of language, and not just a discussion of rhetoric or prose. Since Epicurus' requirement of clarity flows from his broader understanding of the very nature of language, it follows that his requirement is the same in both prose, and in speech. Thus, there is no distinction between style in rhetoric and style in prose, since both styles ought to be based on clarity and simplicity of expression.

Returning to Philodemus, it is now clear why prose writing, the composition of speeches and, I would add, philosophical treatises, is included under the umbrella of sophistic rhetoric. This is because Philodemus, like Epicurus, advocates simplicity and clarity above all else.⁴⁷

⁴⁵ Catherine Atherton, "Epicurean Philosophy of Language," in *Cambridge Companion to Epicureanism*, ed. James Warren (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009). pp. 207-9

⁴⁶ Epicurus, "Letter to Herodotus," in *Ancient Philosophy: Essential Readings with Commentary*, ed. Nicholas Smith, Fritz Allhoff, and Anand Jayprakash Vaidya (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2008).

⁴⁷ Philodemus makes this claim at several points. See Philodemus, "On Rhetoric." IV. Col. ix V. ff. 5, for the most intact arguments.

“...as there is a naturally beautiful style, it is a shame to seek another... Therefore the grammarians and philosophers who refuse to follow rules [of the rhetoricians] but write in a simple style and not in the ridiculous style of the manuals write better than the sophists.”⁴⁸

He does not distinguish between the styles of writing and speaking, since they are the same. All style is conflated into the one style, which Philodemus calls ‘naturally beautiful style.’

Thus, sophistic is the art of prose composition. However, Philodemus also sees sophistic rhetoric as an art of epideictic orations. This ties into the role of sophistic rhetoric in the life of the wise man. We saw earlier that, in the context of defending philosophy as opposed to practical rhetoric, Philodemus claimed that, though the philosopher does not enter politics, he benefits the state more than the politician by ‘educating the young to follow the laws’ and, even more importantly, to act justly even if there are no laws.⁴⁹ This is, in fact, one of the two key benefits of philosophy, both in the view of Philodemus, and of most ancient philosophers, the other being that it shows to path to the blessed life, whatever that might entail.⁵⁰ Though a complete discussion of the nature and role of philosophy in the Epicurean metaphysical system is beyond the scope of this study, it is sufficient to note the primacy of this claim in *On Rhetoric*. Aside from the quote already given, Philodemus repeatedly defends philosophy by reference to its role in education, specifically, its role in educating the

⁴⁸ Ibid. IV. Cols. ix-xi

⁴⁹ Ibid. V. ff. xiii

⁵⁰ For a discussion on this role of philosophy see Gisela Striker, “Ataraxia: Happiness as Tranquility,” in *Essays on Hellenistic Epistemology and Ethics* (Harvard: Harvard University Press, 1996); Glenn Lesses, “Happiness, Completeness, and Indifference to Death in Epicurean Ethical Theory,” *Apeiron* 35, no. 4 (2002).

individuals regarding morality and the blessed life.⁵¹ This raises the question of how philosophy teaches, and it is in answer to this that sophistic, and particularly its epideictic nature, gains importance.

As was noted, epideictic oration is oration focussed on praise or blame. Though commonly funeral oration, and thus commonly delivered as speeches in praise of an individual, this praise or blame could be for individuals, or actions.⁵² According to rhetoricians, the goal was to praise what was praiseworthy, and blame what is blameworthy.⁵³ Whereas deliberative and forensic rhetoric had direct applications in politics and the state, epideictic oratory dealt with more abstract discussion of the good and the bad in actions and individuals.⁵⁴ However, for Philodemus, this is why epideictic oratory, under the auspices of sophistic, remains a *techne*. The purpose of praising that which is praiseworthy, and blaming that which is blameworthy, is that it hones the ability of the audience to identify, for themselves, what is praiseworthy and blameworthy. In fact, it educates them, as Philodemus puts it, to “above all, shun injustice as they would fire.”⁵⁵ In short, epideictic oratory is oratory of education.

Philodemus does have an entire section of his treatise dedicated to proving that sophistic is the art of *epideixis*. However, as I have noted earlier, nothing remains of this section except the title. We only know that he intends to discuss the role of *epideixis* in sophistic rhetoric

⁵¹ The whole of books six and seven are dedicated to discussion of philosophy in this role. Philodemus, "On Rhetoric."

⁵² Christopher Carey, "Epideictic Oratory," in *A Companion to Greek Rhetoric*, ed. I. Worthington (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2007). pp. 236-8

⁵³ Ibid. pp. 247, 249

⁵⁴ Andrew Erskine, "Rhetoric and Persuasion in the Hellenistic World: Speaking up for the Polis," in *Companion to Greek Rhetoric*, ed. I. Worthington (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2007). pp. 275-7

⁵⁵ Philodemus, "On Rhetoric." V. ff. xiii

through the title “Sophistic rhetoric is nothing more than the art of *epideixis*” and because he outlines the sections of his argument before this large lacuna.⁵⁶ However, that the above interpretation is correct, can be assumed from two factors. The first relates to the text *On the Good King According to Homer*. This treatise is specifically epideictic in structure, and Philodemus notes that his object is to identify what is praiseworthy in the kingship portrayed by Homer, and analyse it for the benefit of the politician to whom the treatise is dedicated.⁵⁷ However, the analysis of this text is for a later chapter, and it is sufficient for now to note the role of *epideixis* as education in that treatise. The second factor leading to this interpretation is Philodemus’ defence of the role of the philosopher. As he discusses rhetoric in opposition to philosophy, Philodemus frequently leaves hints regarding his position on the role of the philosopher; a role which appears to be founded on the moral education philosophy provides. We have already seen that Philodemus objects to the claim that practical rhetoric can guide the state towards what is good, by pointing out that rhetoric is not able to determine what is good, only persuade.

“... but it [rhetoric] does not indicate what use is to be made of the power it gives, so as to fit in with our principles of justice and honour. Rhetoricians are like pilots who have a good training but may be bad men.”⁵⁸

⁵⁶ Ibid. II. ff. i, xxv

⁵⁷ Who exactly this is remains the subject of debate. Many argue it is Piso. However, it is more important to note that Philodemus does note that it is intended for a politician. See "On the Good King According to Homer." See Asmis' commentary for the interpretations offered here.

⁵⁸ "On Rhetoric." II. ff. xii

Contrast this with philosophy, which teaches how to follow the laws and shun injustice. The philosopher teaches men to be good. This is implicit in the three lines of objection Philodemus directs against encomiastic sophists. Philodemus states that:

“They [the encomiastic sophists] say that men are turned to virtue by their encomia and dissuaded from vice by their denunciations. But the sophists, by their praise of Busiris and similar characters, persuade men to become villains. When they do praise a good man they praise him for qualities considered good by the crowd and not for truly good qualities.”⁵⁹

Note that this objection does not claim that the sophists ought not to be praising and blaming people at all, but that they are incorrect in their praising and blaming, and this is because they are not trained by philosophy to be good men. The next objection Philodemus raises makes this point even more clear. He notes:

“Not only do they fail at times to praise anything useful, but they frequently praise bad things... They are ignorant, too, of the proper time to praise, which we discuss in our work *On Praise*.”⁶⁰

Again, the objection is that the rhetorician cannot praise, because he is not equipped to know what is praiseworthy. Note, also, the significance of Philodemus’ claim that the rhetoricians do not know the ‘proper time’ to praise. This implies that there is a proper time, and that, as always, it is the philosopher who knows what this is.

⁵⁹ Ibid. Col. xxxva

⁶⁰ Ibid. Col. xxxvii. Unfortunately, the work *On Praise* is entirely lost, and so we are unable to cross reference interpretations made here with that treatise. Nevertheless, the fact that Philodemus wrote a work on praise, and apparently considered there to be an appropriate time to praise supports the interpretation provided.

The final objection Philodemus makes supports this interpretation. He says that, in addition to being unable to praise and blame the correct people “the sophists do not excel the poets in their ability to praise, nor even the philosophers”⁶¹ The implication is that the philosophers do, in fact, praise, and to a level at least equal to the rhetoricians, if not even superior. None of these arguments criticise the action of praising and blaming, merely the people who do it. In addition as Gaines points out, if Philodemus admits that sophistic rhetoric is a *techne*, and worthy of pursuit by the wise man (which he must since he, himself, is practicing it), then it must suit the philosopher’s role of providing moral guidance.⁶² How else does the philosopher teach, than by praising that which is praiseworthy, and blaming that which is blameworthy?

Conclusion

Philodemus’ outlook on rhetoric is a simple two part system, founded on the Epicurean belief in the primacy of philosophy. Practical rhetoric is the rhetoric of the sophist and the politician, which aims to persuade people to act in a certain way. This is an invalid pursuit, which requires great toil for no gain, and, even if gains are achieved they are entirely worthless, such as fame, glory, or riches. On the other hand, there is sophistic rhetoric. According to Blank, this is “the result of applying reason to make language the best vehicle for expression.”⁶³ As such, sophistic is the art of composing speeches in what Philodemus calls the ‘naturally beautiful’ style, and it is the art of *epideixis*: praising and blaming in order to achieve moral guidance. Philodemus finds fault in the rhetorician as he finds fault in all

⁶¹ Ibid. Col. xi

⁶² Gaines, "Philodemus and the Epicurean Outlook on Epideictic Speaking." p. 197

⁶³ Blank, "Philodemus on the Technicity of Rhetoric." p. 188

those who do not pursue philosophy; they do not know how to live properly. Only philosophy can teach this.

The most important result of this picture of Philodemus is that it results in sophistic rhetoric being of incredible importance to the philosopher. Though by no means essential, since it is never essential to have more than the basics of survival, any philosopher who aims to educate his fellow man should study sophistic rhetoric. This is the means by which the philosopher expresses his philosophical truths, simply and clearly. Far, then, from the apparent dismissal of rhetoric which Cicero and Plutarch ascribe to the Epicureans, is Philodemus' view.

Philodemus has created a new category of rhetoric which is peculiar to the philosopher, and not the politician. Most importantly, Philodemus demands of sophistic rhetoric only two factors: first, that it be clear and simple, without the ever-changing adornments of the rhetoricians, and second, and related to the first, is that content is paramount. In Philodemus' philosophical prose, the aim is to express a truth, and not create beauty in the use of language. Thus, the heart of sophistic rhetoric, is, or should be, Epicurean philosophy.

Chapter III: Poetry

On Poems is concerned, primarily, with defining poetry, or at least in defining what it is not. Like many of Philodemus' treatises, it is negatively focussed; structured around refutations of other theorists rather than positive arguments for Philodemus' own position. Determining the views of Philodemus, then, requires analysis of the implicit assumptions made in his objections to the definitions of poetry given by his opponents. In the last thirty years, there has been a distinct focus on this goal, which has resulted in a common scholarly consensus regarding Philodemus' position on poetry. It is not the purpose of this chapter to go over such well-trodden ground. Instead, I intend to expand the interpretation through analysis in connection to the previous discussion of Philodemus' views on rhetoric. I shall argue that Philodemus understood poetry to exist in relation to rhetoric, specifically sophistic rhetoric, and that he found its value for the Epicurean sage to be in this very relation. This argument will be constructed in three steps. First, I shall outline the position of Philodemus, according to the interpretation of recent scholarship. In this I shall adhere closely to the argument of Elizabeth Asmis, as propounded in several papers, and also the related works of Sider and Porter. Once the basics of the Philodemean position are understood, I shall analyse this in relation to the previous discussion of rhetoric. It will be proposed that the definition of poetry

as provided actually folds into the definition of sophistic rhetoric, and the Epicurean understanding of philosophy. Finally, this hypothesis will be further illustrated by a discussion of the treatise *On the Good King According to Homer*. This last will, again, closely follow the line of argument conducted by Elizabeth Asmis.

Poetry *qua* Poetry

The key requirement Philodemus demands of any definition of poetry is that it apply to poetry only insofar as it is poetry, *qua* poetry. This phrase, *καθο ποιημα*, is used several times in the text, particularly in refutation of the claim that poetry must be of some moral utility.⁶⁴ An acceptable definition of poetry, Philodemus claims, must apply only to poetry, and nothing else. Accordingly, he dismisses a variety of theories on the basis that their definitions of poetry apply equally well to other arts and pursuits. These include the claim that poetry provides euphonic pleasure, since the same pleasure could be found in music, bird song, etc. He also takes issue with the Stoic and Platonic requirement that poetry provide moral benefit, since prose could provide the same benefit, and in a simpler manner.⁶⁵ Similarly he denies that the essence of poetry is in the thought expressed, and the opposite, that its essence is the diction.

Though he does not provide an explicit, or a clear, definition of poetry at any point, the full picture may be inferred through the objections made. This, quite complex, position is summed up well by Asmis:

⁶⁴ The two most pertinent examples are Philodemus, "On Poems, Book 5," in *Philodemus and Poetry: Poetic Theory in Lucretius, Philodemus, and Horace*, ed. Dirk Obbink (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995). Cols xxxii, xxii. Though it may be inelegant to translate the Greek into Latin, I feel that the Latin reflects the specific meaning of *καθο* as used in context. In this I follow the translation and commentary of David Armstrong. Ibid.

⁶⁵ This rebuttal ties directly into the main thesis of this chapter, and will be further analysed in due course.

“[According to Philodemus] it is the distinctive job of the poet to select appropriate words and arrange them for the purpose of showing this kind of thought. In sum, Philodemus here puts forward the view that it is the function of the poet both to make things known and to select and arrange appropriate diction.”⁶⁶

At the heart of Philodemus’ picture of poetry, then, is what James Porter called his lack of distinction between content and form.⁶⁷ Porter takes this conflation of the two to be a flaw on Philodemus’ theory.⁶⁸ However, this identification of content and form is the very definition of poetry for Philodemus. According to him, poetry is a thought expressed in such a way that the very expression is the thought.

“For this reason, [a poet who does not use] appropriate diction is outside the [poetic craft] even if the diction has provided common benefits in life. For to select appropriate diction and arrange it purposely to show such a thought was [assumed to be] distinctive of him (the poet)”⁶⁹

This combination of thought and diction, or content and form, fulfils Philodemus’ requirement of a definition of poetry *qua* poetry. While other arts, such as cookery, are focussed on shaping given materials into a final product, in poetry the poet both creates and shapes his material. He creates the ‘underlying material’, the thought, and shapes it into a

⁶⁶ Asmis, "Philodemus on Censorship, Moral Utility, and Formalism in Poetry." p. 157

⁶⁷ James Porter, "Content and Form in Philodemus: The History of an Evasion," *ibid.* 100-101

⁶⁸ *Ibid.* pp. 144-5

⁶⁹ Philodemus, "On Poems, Book 5." Col. xii

final work, using diction.⁷⁰ This definition is given in objection to a Formalist opponent. This opponent argued that poetic excellence was found entirely in the diction, or form, of the poem.⁷¹ The opponent specifically objects to those who criticise the thought any particular poem expresses, since they claim that, like the sculptor or cook, it is not the quality of materials used that are to be judged, but the form of the work. In response to this, Philodemus says that the artist, or cook

“...creates the similarity with a different material of the person fashioning it, but he is completely unable to achieve what is distinctive to his craft if he does not have the appropriate material. In claiming that a poet, if he does not take appropriate thoughts and fitting diction, achieves something distinctively poetic, even if he overlooks... he is... blind.”⁷²

It appears, then, that what Philodemus takes to be distinctive to the art of poetry is that it is language that imitates the thought.⁷³ There is no requirement here for moral benefit, or even for euphony. Crucially, however, neither of these are excluded by the definition. Indeed, it allows a poem to be morally beneficial, or harmful, and to be structured euphonicly, but only incidentally. The heart of the poem, the poem *qua* poem, and the only criterion on which

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² Ibid. Col. xv. The ellipses in this quotation indicate breaks in the text. There is not room in any of these sections for more than two or three words, which leaves them unlikely to alter the thought overmuch.

⁷³ A surprisingly modern definition of poetry. For a discussion of its relation to modern theories, see the conference papers in David Armstrong, *Vergil, Philodemus, and the Augustans*.

it may be judged good or bad poetry is whether the diction and thought are in total coherence.⁷⁴ This last is said most explicitly near the end of the same book.

“For either it is reasonable that the words acquire their content of meaning through the hearing only or it is true that in poetics we must judge the thoughts, and never, when we praise the composition, rip that bodily apart from the underlying meanings.”⁷⁵

There is another layer to this definition, which should be noted. This is that Philodemus assumes a certain degree of aesthetic beauty to be in the nature of poetry, or at least of good poetry. Asmis points out that the notion of aesthetic value was present in the very beginnings of Epicureanism. After all, the Epicurean belief in a hierarchy of pleasures, from the basic to the sophisticated, implies an engagement with the belief in aesthetic utility. This is further borne out by Philodemus’ objection to the moral utilitarian view of poetry where he protests that his opponent, Heraclides:

“...banishes from goodness the most beautiful poems of the most famous poets because they provide no benefit whatsoever – in the case of some poets, most poems, in the case of others, all poems.”⁷⁶

⁷⁴ This is a synthesis of the views of Asmis, Porter, and Sider. Each scholar has argued for this position, but from different approaches; Asmis dealing with morality, Porter with poetic style, and Sider with the poem as genre. Nevertheless, the conclusion is explicitly stated by each, and I refer the reader to their papers for a deeper level of analysis. Sider, "The Epicurean Philosopher as Hellenistic Poet."; James Porter, "Content and Form in Philodemus: The History of an Evasion," *ibid.*; Elizabeth Asmis, "Philodemus on Censorship, Moral Utility, and Formalism in Poetry," *ibid.*

⁷⁵ Philodemus, "On Poems, Book 5." Col. xxiii-xxix

⁷⁶ *Ibid.* Col. iv

This objection implies that the goal of poetry, as diction and thought in unison, is to achieve beauty. This would be the specific beauty of language, as opposed to the pleasing forms of painting or sculpture.⁷⁷ Thus, the art of poetry is simply the art of beautiful language, and its primary aim is beauty.

This is the basic picture of poetry according to Philodemus. This is also as far as scholarly interpretation has gone. The role of poetry in the life of the wise man would seem to be that it is a worthy pursuit only in the extent to which it provides the aesthetic benefit of beauty and pleasure. However, I shall now argue that, though this is an accurate representation of poetry *qua* poetry, it is not the full extent of poetry according to Philodemus, and that its role is in fact directly related to moral education.

Poetry as Philosophy

To say that poetry ought to provide moral benefit would, at first, seem inconsistent with the discussion presented so far. We have already seen that Philodemus argued explicitly against the definition of poetry according to moral benefit, even going so far as to say that many of the most beautiful poems provide no moral benefit at all.⁷⁸ These remarks, however, were only made in attempt to provide a definition of poetry *qua* poetry. Philodemus in fact allows for moral benefit, or harm, in poetry, which is evident at several places. Indeed, in the very same place he censures his opponent for leaving out many of the most beautiful poems, he says this:

⁷⁷ Sider raises the interesting notion that this makes poetry the perfection of language. This contrasts with the demand for simple and clear speech made by Epicurus. Sider, "The Epicurean Philosopher as Hellenistic Poet."

⁷⁸ Philodemus, "On Poems, Book 5." Col. iv

“...(he) banishes from goodness the most beautiful poems of the most famous poets because they provide no benefit whatsoever – in the case of some poets, most poems, in the case of others, all poems.”⁷⁹

Note the specific reference to the fact that this banishes all poems in the case of some poets, but only most in the case of others. The fact that he admits that this does not exclude *all* good poetry makes it clear that he allows moral benefit to be present in poetry, and, crucially, in good poetry.

This point is further illustrated when we consider the definition of poetry. Philodemus argues that poetry is unity between thought and diction, with the thought being as important as the diction since poetry is the expression of a thought. If this is so, then it follows that the thought can be morally good, morally bad, or morally neutral. This is clear, since poems, as we see in the quote above, can be morally lacking, and yet remain beautiful poems which Philodemus would be loath to banish as his opponent has done. This step is clear, and has been pointed out by Asmis in her discussion of Epicurean poetics.⁸⁰ Philodemus, therefore, allows poetry to be a morally useful pastime, so long as it expresses a morally useful thought. This does not, however, require that a poem contain a morally beneficial thought, merely that it can do so.⁸¹

We now have a picture of poetry as diction which imitates a thought, and that thought can be morally beneficial, harmful, or neither. This leads us to the final question of how this thought, particularly a beneficial thought, is expressed. This is where poetry relates back to philosophy, since it is philosophy which is the search for the moral good.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ Elizabeth Asmis, "Epicurean Poetics," *ibid.*, ed. Dirk Obbink. p. 31

⁸¹ Ibid.

David Sider takes the first step towards answering this question, in his analysis of the Epicurean messages in Philodemus' poetry. This analysis is approached from the perspective of the poetic genre in the Hellenistic period. Sider's contention is that "Philodemus... has drawn from philosophical literature a number of references and arguments and used them as literary *topoi*"⁸² This results, in the view that

"Philodemus' art is an allusive one, depending not only on poetical allusions, as does much of Hellenistic poetry, but also, given an audience of philosophically and poetically inclined Romans, depending on philosophical allusions."⁸³

Sider's argument is that Philodemus expresses his Epicurean philosophy through his poetry, in a subtler way than the epic of Lucretius, and, perhaps Philodemus would argue, more elegantly. Significant here is the subtlety. An example is Sider's discussion of Epigram 17.

"Thirty-seven years have come, papyrus columns of my life now torn off; now too, Xanthippe, white hairs besprinkle me, announcing the age of intelligence; but the lyre's voice and revels are still a concern to me, and a fire smoulders in my insatiable heart. Inscribe her immediately as the *coronis*, Mistress Muses, of this my madness."⁸⁴

This poem is part of a series wherein the narrator reflects on his maturation and accompanying growth in love for a woman named Xanthippe. For Sider, this poem is an expression of the Epicurean growing to understand the true nature of life, and his role in it.

⁸² Sider, "The Epicurean Philosopher as Hellenistic Poet." p.57

⁸³ Ibid. pp. 56-7

⁸⁴ Philodemus, Epigram 17. This translation is Sider's, and may be found, along with the original Greek, in the same paper under discussion. Ibid. pp. 55-6

First, Sider points out that the very specific number of thirty-seven recalls a specific passage in Aristotle's *Politics* where he claims that this is the perfect age for a man to marry.⁸⁵ In addition, the theme of the poem is obviously one of philosophical conversion, with the narrator reaching the 'age of intelligence'. Nevertheless, he remains concerned with 'revels' and the 'lyre's voice'. Sider takes this to be a reference to philosophy as a 'remedy' for life, which would tie in with the *tetrapharmakos* of Epicurus.⁸⁶

Wigodsky, on the other hand, does not believe that Philodemus' poems attempt to express philosophical matter, instead he believes that they are 'light' poems.⁸⁷ After all, Philodemus explicitly declares that a poem should not be judged according to its moral benefit. However, Wigodsky notes that Philodemus allows philosophical, and thus morally beneficial, content to be contained within poetry. Importantly, Wigodsky reads Philodemus' position to be that

"He (Philodemus) could nevertheless have held that poetic ornamentation, while adding nothing to a philosophical exposition *qua* exposition, might be a source of pleasure in itself even when applied to such material."⁸⁸

⁸⁵ Ibid. p. 54

⁸⁶ Ibid. For the notion of philosophy as remedy, according to Epicurus, see Epicurus, "Letter to Menoeceus," in *Ancient Philosophy: Essential Readings with Commentary*, ed. Nicholas Smith (Oxford: Blackwell, 2008).

⁸⁷ Michael Wigodsky, "The Alleged Impossibility of Philosophical Poetry," in *Philodemus and Poetry: Poetic Theory and Practice in Lucretius, Philodemus, and Horace*, ed. Dirk Obbink (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995).

⁸⁸ Ibid. p. 64

Here we hit on the concept of poetry as philosophy, again. For, even if the poetry of Philodemus does not attempt to contain philosophical exposition, Philodemus would allow a poem of this kind.⁸⁹

This picture is significant, because it results in a picture of the role of poetry in the life of the wise man. To read and write poetry is both a pleasure, and, in some cases, actually a means of practicing philosophy. This leads to the possibility of poetry being read, and interpreted, as a philosopher, and, on the other side of the coin, the philosopher actually writing poetry as philosophy. In fact, this is what Philodemus says "... for only the educated *do* understand (poetry), and most particularly where beauty is in question."⁹⁰

This reading of poetry has the remarkable conclusion of collapsing poetry, at least poetry with philosophical content, into sophistic rhetoric, as understood by Philodemus. We have already seen that sophistic rhetoric is directly tied to philosophy, as the art of expressing a thought most clearly and simply. It is therefore the art necessary to the philosopher who intends to teach, something which, even if not necessary for all philosophers, was obviously a goal for Philodemus. Philosophical poetry, on the other hand, is the expression of a philosophical thought in the diction which imitates that thought. This, too, is the art of expressing philosophy through language. Where they differ is in the aim of clarity, and in the importance of content. In sophistic rhetoric, content is paramount, whereas in poetry, it is only secondary. Philodemus demands a 'naturally beautiful style' from sophistic rhetoric⁹¹

⁸⁹ The implication, here, for the *De Rerum Naturae* of Lucretius is interesting, and has been discussed by Schroeder and Kleve. Frederic Schroeder, "Philodemus: *Avocatio* and the Pathos of Distance in Lucretius and Vergil," in *Vergil, Philodemus and the Augustans*, ed. David Armstrong, et al. (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2004); K. Kleve, "Lucretius in Herculeaneum," *Cronache Ercolanesi* 20 (1989).

⁹⁰ Philodemus, "On Poems, Book 5." Col. xxvi

⁹¹ "On Rhetoric." IV. Cols. ix-xi

whereas poetry is a highly formalised expression, which is naturally less clear in meaning than simple and concise prose. In fact, that is what Philodemus says explicitly, in the sole extant book of *On Music*, where he argues that the formality of Musical expression, along with the pleasure it provides through engaging the mind with beauty distracts the hearer from the moral thought. It would be better, he argues to express this in prose.⁹² It follows that poetry is not suited for teaching philosophy, as is sophistic rhetoric, since poetry requires interpretation by the ‘educated’ whom, we may assume, are the philosophers. Here is the relationship between poetry and prose most clear. The philosopher, in his Epicurean wisdom, is able to understand the philosophical thought expressed in a poem, yet, in order to communicate this thought clearly and concisely, he is required to use the art of sophistic rhetoric. This, though less beautiful than the formal excellence of poetry, is the way in which the philosopher guides others to the path of wisdom. Interestingly, this would then result in the student, hopefully, eventually becoming wise enough to read the poetry without requiring the interpretation in the form of sophistic rhetoric. Poetry is philosophy for the sage, and where aesthetic pleasure meets moral benefit.

The Good King according to Homer

At first, this appears a radical conclusion. We have gone from a treatise which, repeatedly, objects to the definition of poetry along the lines of moral benefit, to the statement that poetry, in the life of the Epicurean sage, is closely tied with the practice of philosophy, by way of philosophical prose. However, I am by no means arguing that this applies to all poetry, since Philodemus states clearly that “...nothing prevents a poet from knowing a

⁹² "On Music Book 4," in *Philodeme de Gadara. Sur la musique Livre IV*, ed. Daniel Delattre (Paris: Universites des France, 2007). Col. xx

subject and representing it poetically without profiting us a bit.”⁹³ Nonetheless, Philodemus does allow that poetry can be morally beneficial, or harmful. The proposed reading of poetry as philosophy deals only with that poetry which expresses a philosophical thought.

Philodemus may not have considered his poetry to be of this kind, though, as we have seen, this is open to debate.⁹⁴ Nevertheless, this poetry does exist, and it is this poetry which becomes significant as a worthy pursuit for the Epicurean philosopher.

This conclusion is further justified by another treatise of Philodemus’: *On the Good King according to Homer*. This is a short text, extant in only one, fragmentary, book, and for this reason it has been little discussed by scholars of Philodemus’ aesthetic theory. This lack of analysis, however, is a grievous error, since, by its very nature, it is closely tied to the poetic theory as interpreted from *On Poems*. That is, *On the Good King* applies the theory of poetry, which is discussed only in the abstract, theoretical attempt to arrive at a definition in *On Poems*, to the practical task of philosophical education. What follows will be a short discussion of this treatise, in the light of the proposed relation between sophistic rhetoric, philosophy, and poetry. As with the interpretation above, large sections of this analysis will be taken from the most significant scholarly work on the subject, the article and

⁹³ "On Poems, Book 5." Col. v

⁹⁴ If, as I believe, Sider is correct, and Philodemus’ poetry does express Epicurean philosophy, in the form of simple tenets, this would make the conclusion even more significant. Unfortunately, apart from noting the existence of the debate, and my own position on it, there is insufficient space for an in depth analysis in this study. For the relevant sides, see Sider, "The Epicurean Philosopher as Hellenistic Poet." Michael Wigodsky, "The Alleged Impossibility of Philosophical Poetry," *ibid*.

accompanying translation by Asmis from 1991.⁹⁵ Asmis' argument is focussed on the moral good Philodemus identifies in the Homeric epics, whereas I shall endeavour to highlight the connection between the aesthetic arts of rhetoric and poetry as evident in the text.

On the Good King, as the title implies, is concerned with providing examples of the chief virtues and skills of a good ruler, taken from the Homeric epics. Significantly, this work is one explicitly published with an educational purpose. The treatise is dedicated to Piso, and is explicitly intended to provide moral benefit and guidance.⁹⁶ It is significant that, as proposed above, it is the role of the philosopher to read and interpret this poetry in order to provide moral benefit. In *On Piety*, Philodemus attacks the great poets of the past, Homer included, for giving bad examples of the gods, and promoting impiety.⁹⁷ Similarly, in his *On Death*, he urges the reader not to follow the example of Odysseus, who laments his death, since, for the Epicureans, death is nothing.⁹⁸ Poets, as was implied in *On Poems*, can thus both harm and

⁹⁵ Philodemus, "On the Good King According to Homer." This article contains the only full, published collection of the fragments of the work. As yet, the original Greek text is entirely unpublished, and any discussion of the treatise must base itself from Asmis' English translation.

⁹⁶ Philodemus' exact relationship with Piso is a matter of some debate. There are many, such as Asmis, who believe that Piso was a patron of the philosopher. However, others argue that he was simply connected to the school, without the formal patron/client relationship. For both sides, see Elizabeth Asmis, "Philodemus' Poetic Theory and 'on the Good King According to Homer'," *Classical Antiquity* 10, no. 1 (1991). Walter Allen and Phillip Delacey, "The Patrons of Philodemus," *Classical Philology* 34, no. 1 (1939). For a more recent analysis of the extent of Philodemus' circle, see Jeffrey Fish, "The Popularity of Epicureanism in Elite Late-Republic Roman Society," *The Ancient World* 43 (2012).

⁹⁷ Philodemus, "On Piety," in *Philodemus, On Piety Part I*, ed. Dirk Obbink (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996). ff.

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⁹⁸ "On Death," in *Philodemus, On Death*, ed. Benjamin Henry (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2009).

Col. 33

benefit; it is the role of the philosopher to avoid the harm, and provide the interpretation which will benefit the reader.

Asmis notes that, perhaps the most important line in the treatise, for any analysis, is the last, which appears to sum up the aim of the work entire.

“...the starting points, Piso, which it is possible to take from Homer,
for the correction of positions of power, and of the examples...”⁹⁹

Though fragmentary, the import of these two lines is clear. Philodemus has laid out, for Piso, and for any member of his future audience, the particular sections of Homer which may be read, and how they may be read, in order to ‘correct positions of power’. This matter of ‘correction’, Asmis points out, is at the heart of his role in the treatise. Philodemus is the moral educator, who, endowed with the ability to discern good from bad, will now demonstrate which is which.¹⁰⁰ Here, we see a similarity with Philodemus’ attacks on the rhetoricians, and their claims to moral education. These rhetoricians, according to Philodemus, “are like pilots who have good training, but may be bad men.”¹⁰¹ It is the philosophers who “teach the young... to act justly even if there are no laws, and to shun injustice like fire.”¹⁰² This is exactly what Philodemus is doing, in *On the Good King*. Piso may not be young, but the comparison with a pilot holds equally well for the politician as for the rhetorician; the politician, untrained by the philosopher, may have good training, and yet be a bad man. It is through the application of sophistic rhetoric, being the art of philosophical prose, written or delivered, that Philodemus fulfils his role as the teaching philosopher. We

⁹⁹ "On the Good King According to Homer." Col. 43

¹⁰⁰ Asmis, "Philodemus' Poetic Theory and "on the Good King According to Homer"." pp. 20-1

¹⁰¹ Philodemus, "On Rhetoric." II ff. xiii

¹⁰² Ibid. V. ff. xiii

must note, further, that he chooses to do this through an analysis of poetry. The conclusion is unavoidable that philosophy is in poetry, if you are wise enough to know where to look. The connection is even stronger. Philodemus teaches his philosophy by means of sophistic rhetoric, writing simple, clear, philosophical prose, about moral truths as found in poetry. The two branches of linguistic expression work together in the practice of philosophy.

Philodemus' discussion ranges across the whole of the Homeric epics, and includes a discussion of the appropriate means to manage an army¹⁰³, notes on the role of the good king in avoiding war¹⁰⁴ and the appropriate ways for a king to spend his leisure time. This last is most interesting. Asmis points out that there is little explicit Epicureanism in *On the Good King*. This is in contrast to the other extant treatises of Philodemus. The rest of his works express distinctly Epicurean philosophy, with explicit reference to Epicurus and the other founding figures, as we have already seen in the case of *On Rhetoric*. In addition, a key aspect of many of Philodemus' writings is his defence of Epicureanism, and the attacks levelled against it by Stoics, Skeptics, and even Epicureans from a different circle than his own.¹⁰⁵ *On the Good King*, however, though concerned with moral education, makes no claim that the moral guidance given is particularly Epicurean, nor, even, a defence of what he has selected to be virtues for the good ruler, and why. Instead, Philodemus is concerned only with providing examples of the good king in Homer; examples which fit his picture of what an Epicurean good king would be.

¹⁰³ "On the Good King According to Homer." Col. 25

¹⁰⁴ Philodemus uses the example of Nestor, and his diplomatic attempts to keep the peace among the Greeks, and the claim that those are 'clanless and lawless who seek civil strife.' *ibid.* Col. 28

¹⁰⁵ An entire section of *On Rhetoric* is devoted to the 'false claims' about Epicureanism. Similarly, *On Piety* is primarily a text with the goal of defending Epicureanism from the charge of impiety. See "On Rhetoric." I. 77-120 "On Piety."

That Philodemus already has a picture of the Epicurean good king is evident in the aforementioned examples of how the king will spend his leisure time. Philodemus uses the examples of the suitors in the *Odyssey* who waste their time throwing the discus and javelins as exactly not what a king will do. The king, like Odysseus, will:

“...at some times play at checkers, but all for the most part either do something worthwhile and useful or give advice or exercise in some athletic activity or armed competition, not only those who are distinguished for virtue but also the more paltry.”¹⁰⁶

This particular column is fragmentary at the beginning, but includes references creating opportunities for drinking, sexual pleasures, playing at dice, and ‘other idleness’.¹⁰⁷ The king, then, seeks the Epicurean *ataraxia* of pleasure, yet only sometimes. At others, he is pursuing the duties befitting his station in life; aiding others, preparing his men, ruling the state.¹⁰⁸

We see this Epicureanism more clearly in Philodemus’ claim that the good king, like Odysseus and Nestor, will be not be controlled by passions.

“It is also necessary for envy to be absent. ... removes great disagreements, so that it is reasonable that Odysseus and Nestor, the wisest of the Greeks, were so far removed from these passions that

¹⁰⁶ "On the Good King According to Homer." Col. 22

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ This is a significant conclusion. Though there is time for pleasure in the life of the good king, we have here an explicit statement that the king will not retire from politics, as does the philosopher, but, in fact, actively work at it the majority of the time. There has been little discussion of this conclusion, but it has been noted, from other treatises in the Philodemian corpus. See Striker, "*Ataraxia*: Happiness as Tranquility." Fish, "The Popularity of Epicureanism in Elite Late-Republic Roman Society."

"neither" in war "did they walk apart nor in counsel, but having a single purpose they told the Argives how it might be best"¹⁰⁹

This quote appears to be part of a larger discussion, now largely lost of the passions, particularly anger. The good king, we see, does not feel these passions, since he will not let them disturb him. This is an example of the Epicurean, detached from passions, which cause only war and strife.¹¹⁰ This implicit Epicureanism signals, again, the teaching role of Philodemus, as philosopher.

In pointing out that, in the extant fragments, Philodemus makes no reference to the moral harm that Homer can cause, which Philodemus clearly believes is possible given the references in other works, Asmis concludes that Philodemus asserts "the philosopher's authority over the poet: Homer is not an independent guide".¹¹¹ This is the heart, not only of the treatise, but of Philodemus' understanding of the relationship between the philosopher and the poet. Though Homer writes beautiful poetry, this poetry ought only to be read by the philosopher, or in the light of philosophical interpretation provided by the philosopher, in a work such as *On the Good King*. Philodemus, far from expelling poetry from the life of the wise man, welcomes its aesthetic beauty, on the condition that it pay service to philosophy.

Conclusion

¹⁰⁹ Philodemus, "On the Good King According to Homer." Col. 29. At the end, Philodemus is quoting the Odyssey, Book III, 127-9.

¹¹⁰ This is, of course, not a unique position, and shares much with the view of the wise man according to the Stoics, and also the philosopher king from Plato's *Republic*. This similarity raises interesting questions regarding Epicurean political involvement, which, unfortunately, cannot be discussed here.

¹¹¹ Asmis, "Philodemus' Poetic Theory and "on the Good King According to Homer"." p. 27

We have seen that Philodemus will not allow that poems be defined as a moral tool. For Philodemus, poetry is the branch of linguistic expression in which the diction imitates the thought; it is the most formalised form of linguistics. In contrast, then, to sophistic rhetoric, which demands clear and concise prose, poetry may be obscure, so long as the obscurity is aesthetically beautiful; since beauty in language is the only criterion required of a poem.

However, since Philodemus posits a unity between content and form, denying the claim that content in poetry should not be judged, he cannot escape the possibility of moral character, good or bad, in poetry. It may even be argued that most poems have a moral character. This character, however, is not in the poem *qua* poem, but merely contained in the thought which the poem expresses. It is therefore possible, not simply for a poem to express philosophy, but also for the poet to do this intentionally. Here, poetry ties closely to the other branch of linguistic expression, being philosophical prose. *On the Good King* shows that the relationship between these two goes beyond merely expression, and, in the life of the true philosopher, as we may assume Philodemus considered himself to be, they worked together under the auspices of philosophy. We have reached the significant conclusion that both poetry and rhetoric are arts important for the philosopher; in practicing these aesthetics, the philosopher is practicing philosophy.

Chapter IV: Music

Thus far, I have argued that the aesthetics, in the case of rhetoric and poetry, play an important role, or at least are able to play an important role, in the life of the Epicurean philosopher. In dealing with both rhetoric and poetry, Philodemus concedes that the effort required to develop the *techne* he has defined does not outweigh the pleasure provided, so long as the activities are conducted under the narrow valid categories he defines.. In addition, in both cases, they are able to bestow a moral benefit, in that they aid in teaching, and applying Epicurean philosophy. The key to both of these is that they engage the *logos*. Rhetoric and poetry are arts of linguistic expression, and, as such, are capable of conveying meaning. In order to apprehend this, the reader, or the hearer, engages their reason, in order to understand the meaning behind the words. Music, however, is a different case.

Unlike the other aesthetics, Philodemus is unwilling to admit that the pleasure provided outweighs the toil put into learning musical theory, and developing musical skill. This is because music, unlike the other two aesthetics, is not, primarily, a means of linguistic expression. Though there is a linguistic component, in the composition of text, there is also the purely musical aspect, which is the melody. This is not to say that Philodemus expels music entirely from the life of the Epicurean, but he does not accord it the same respect he does poetry and rhetoric.

In this chapter, I shall analyse the perspective of music as outlined by Philodemus in his *On Music*. My analysis will primarily be in concurrence with Delattre's reading of the treatise, though it shall differ in some important aspects. I shall argue, as does Delattre¹¹², that Philodemus posits a clear distinction between melody and text, in any musical work. The latter is linguistic expression, requiring the application of *logos*. Melody, on the other hand, is *alogos*, being the irrational pleasure provided by sound. Delattre points out that this relates to the physics of Epicureanism, which I shall discuss briefly.¹¹³ However, I shall then argue that music relates to poetry, in that, in its essence, it collapses into poetry, being a means of providing beauty through language.

The reader will no doubt notice that the analysis of this last member of the treatise is significantly shorter than the others. There are, however, a number of reasons for this. Firstly, the analysis given will depend in large part on concepts and context discussed in the earlier to chapters. Accordingly, rather than going over old ground, I have merely referred to the arguments already presented. Secondly, my interpretation of *On Music* differs very little from the established scholarship, particularly the position of Delattre. It is essentially only my purpose to outline this position, and then relate it to the argument as presented thus far. Finally, as I will argue, music is the least important of the aesthetic arts, in the opinion of Philodemus. His position on music leaves it subordinate to poetry, which is turn subordinate to rhetoric, which is in turn subordinate to philosophy. This means that the interest of this art for the thesis is largely for the completeness of analysis, since there is less depth of analysis presented, or required.

¹¹² Delattre, "Towards the Musical Aesthetics of Philodemus." p. 287

¹¹³ Ibid.

The Irrational Ear

In order to understand Philodemus' position on melody, it is necessary to remember that Epicureanism was an atomist, mechanistic, and materialist philosophy. Epicurus specifically denies that there exists something more ethereal, such as Plato's world of the forms. Though Epicurus admits that humans do have a soul, this is a fully material thing. It is made out of atoms, and resides in amongst the atoms of the human body.¹¹⁴ Thus, any experience is directly caused by the interaction of the atoms of the world around us with the atoms that make up our bodies. In the case of hearing, then, sound atoms directly impact on our ears. When hearing well composed music, this then causes pleasure throughout our bodies.¹¹⁵ It is important to note, however, that the sound atoms do not actually enter the body; they impact only the ears. This is significant because, as Delattre points out, this means that it is the function of the ear to receive atoms, and provide pleasure which radiates out through the body from the ear.¹¹⁶ Sound *qua* sound does not require the mediation of reason in order to convey pleasure.¹¹⁷ Words are a special case, since they contain two layers. The first is the sound of the word itself, the atoms of which impact the ear. The second, and more important aspect, is the meaning that is associated with these sounds. On hearing certain sounds, the mind apprehends a certain meaning, which it has learned to associate with the particular sound of the particular word.¹¹⁸ Note that this only applies to words which the mind

¹¹⁴ The atomism of Epicurus is laid out clearly in his *Letter to Herodotus*. Epicurus, "Letter to Herodotus." See particularly 67-70 for his discussion of the soul. Philodemus presents the same picture of body and soul in his treatise *On Death*. Philodemus, "On Death." Cols. 7-8

¹¹⁵ Epicurus, "Letter to Herodotus." 52-3

¹¹⁶ Delattre, "Towards the Musical Aesthetics of Philodemus." p. 290

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

¹¹⁸ Atherton, "Epicurean Philosophy of Language." pp. 201-3

recognises. In this case, the mind understands that a certain sound; certain atoms impacting the ears in certain ways bears an associated meaning. Thus, without the associated meaning, there is only the first aspect of hearing: the sound impacting on the ears.¹¹⁹

With these basics in mind, we can turn to Philodemus' claim that music is *alogos*. It is immediately obvious that the two layers of sound are the two parts of music. In a song, there is the melody, which is sound that carries no associated meaning, and the text, made up of words which do convey meaning. Once again, we are presented with Philodemus' call for definition. As in *On Poems*, Philodemus objects that the words are not properly music, not music *qua* music. This is because the words are in poetry, and prose. Further, there is music which contains no text whatsoever. Accordingly, words must not be an essential characteristic of music. Instead, the essence of music is the melody; the arrangement of sounds so that they are pleasing to the ear, or, more exactly, sounds which prompt the ear to create a pleasurable effect throughout the body through coming into contact with the 'receiving atoms' of the ear. Here we have the crux of the argument.

“As far as the enharmonic and chromatic musics [are concerned], it is not about their specific perceptions, in which the intellect has no part, that people disagree, but about their opinions.”¹²⁰

We see, here, that Philodemus is explicit in stating that the perception of music is *alogos*. The intellect is not engaged by the beauty of a melody, specifically because the sounds are not associated with specific meanings which are apprehensible by reason. The indiscriminate nature of hearing is repeated later:

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

¹²⁰ Philodemus, "On Music," in *Philodème de Gadara: Sur La Musique Livre IV*, ed. Daniel Delattre (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 2007). Col. 116.15-19

“And if, in the case of these senses at least, [sight and taste] it can happen that, following certain determined dispositions of their organs, their qualitative perceptions present some differences, in the case of the organ of hearing on the other hand there is no difference at all, but all have the same apprehension of the same melodies, and the pleasure they draw out are almost nearly the same”¹²¹

Thus, given Epicurean physics, hearing is an irrational act, unless language is being used to communicate a specific thought, which the mind has learnt to apprehend.

It is necessary to make a distinction. When it is said that music provides an irrational pleasure, it is important that music still provides pleasure. Philodemus, as he is in *On Rhetoric*, and *On Poems*, is anxious to maintain the validity of aesthetic pleasure.¹²² As an Epicurean, Philodemus’ physics inevitably lead to the idea of music as *alogos*. However, as an Epicurean, Philodemus does not expel irrational pleasures from the life of the wise man. In fact, there is a definite role to be played by the bodily pleasures of touch, taste, and, in this case, hearing.¹²³ In fact, Philodemus is more than willing to admit that listening to music provides pleasure. In the quote above, he notes the pleasure that can be experienced by listening to music. Nevertheless, this pleasure is an irrational one.

¹²¹ Ibid., 2. Col. 116.1-15 Own Translation of the French.

¹²² Blank, "*Philosophia and Techne: Epicureans on the Arts.*" pp. 221-3

¹²³ There are many categories of pleasures in Epicureanism, and there is much debate on the hierarchy, if any, of these pleasures. It is sufficient, here to note the validity of the irrational pleasures. For an in depth analysis see Boris Nikolsky, "Epicurus on Pleasure," *Phronesis* 46, no. 4 (2001). And J. Cooper, "Pleasure and Desire in Epicurus," in *Reason and Emotion: Essays on Ancient Moral Psychology and Ethical Theory* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999).

The significance of this claim should be noted. *On Music* is primarily devoted to repudiating the theories of Diogenes of Babylon, a Stoic philosopher. Importantly, we see in Diogenes an argument for the moral and educational utility of poetry. Specifically arguing that music promotes virtue, assists in overcoming sadness, fear of death and so on.¹²⁴ In claiming that music is only an irrational pleasure, Philodemus is explicitly denying this role for the musical art. It is important that Diogenes, like Plato before him, argues particularly that it is the melody which provides the claimed benefits. Certain melodies, constructed according to certain generic¹²⁵ paradigms arouse “moral qualities [like] nobility and lowliness, courage or the lack of it, hesitancy or boldness.”¹²⁶ It is the melody which interacts with the soul in order to improve, or debase, the human person. Clearly, this is directly at odds with the physics we have just seen Philodemus subscribes to, since, according to the Epicurean picture the atoms of the sound never enter the body, and, thus, never interact with the soul. This is the central objection Philodemus makes to the arguments of Diogenes, and the central foundation of the relationship, and distinction between music and the other aesthetic arts.

Text and Literature

As was noted at the beginning of this chapter, Philodemus’ understanding of music is built on the clear demarcation between melody, and text. We have seen that the first is an irrational, but valid, pleasure. There can be no educational or moral benefit to melody. It is simply a pleasure. The case is quite different with text. In the discussion of the physical, atomistic, aspect of this argument, I noted the difference between two levels of sound. First, there was the sound itself, which simply impacts with the ear, and if pleasurable, prompts the ear to

¹²⁴ Philodemus, "On Music." Cols. 89-90 & 88-95

¹²⁵ Here I have used ‘generic’ in the literary critical sense of ‘according to genre’.

¹²⁶ Philodemus, "On Music." Col. 117.28-34

spread a feeling of pleasure throughout the body. The second level, however, is the level of words, and language. Here, even though the actual atoms themselves are no different, the mind has learnt to associate meaning and thought correspondent with specific sounds.¹²⁷ Here, then, there is engagement with reason, since language is not *alogos*. This is the heart of the issue for Philodemus. Whereas, as we saw, in the case of the different kinds of music “the intellect has no part”¹²⁸ In the case of the text, the intellect is engaged, and a thought is expressed.

There are two significant results of this conclusion. Firstly, as is the case with poetry, Philodemus does not deny that music can provide a moral or educational benefit. Just as with poetry, the text of a musical piece may convey a morally educational or virtuous thought, and thus inspire others to follow. However, it is not the role of music to do this. That is, music *qua* music simply provides the utility of aesthetic pleasure, and nothing more.¹²⁹ Philodemus makes this clear.

“...to go into action one must feel drives and intentions; now one can’t imagine that melody arouses, as my adversary says, nor even that it causes to arise, intentions in the hearers”¹³⁰

It is not in the melody, where Diogenes has sought it, that moral benefit will be found, but in the nature of the thought expressed in the text. Again, as in poetry, Philodemus does not claim

¹²⁷ The mind, for example, has learnt to associate the idea of water, with the word ‘water’ and so on.

¹²⁸ Philodemus, "On Music." Col. 116:15-19

¹²⁹ That there is a significant utility to aesthetic pleasure we have already seen in the previous chapter on poetry.

In addition, it is discussed in Striker, "Epicurean Hedonism." See also Asmis, "Epicurean Poetics." Delattre, "Towards the Musical Aesthetics of Philodemus."

¹³⁰ Philodemus, "On Music." Col. 121:36-41

even that music ought to be written to express only philosophically true, educational, or morally beneficial thoughts. To demand that would go beyond the strict definition of music, which we might call 'pleasurable sounds'. According to Delattre, this is Philodemus attempting to defend the authenticity of musical pleasure.¹³¹ Music is, and must be, separate from poetry, and separate from philosophy, according to Philodemus. It is an art in its own right. Since it is the role of philosophy to provide moral benefit, it cannot be the role of music. Since it is the role of poetry to express a thought in a beautiful manner, it cannot be the role of music. Nevertheless, both of these aspects can be, and indeed are, present in musical art.

This leads us to the second significant feature of Philodemus' conclusion; the resulting relationship between music and the other aesthetic arts. If music were to be analysed only along the lines of the text, their construction, form, and appropriateness for expressing a particular thought, according to the definition of poetry I have proposed in my analysis of *On Poems*, then we would be analysing poetry. If poetry is simply a thought expressed in language most suited to that thought, and thus in the most beautiful way, then this, too, is required of text. Thus, poetry is in music, and, significantly, it is poetry which allows reason to engage with music. Music, however, is less effective than poetry simply because of the distraction provided by the aesthetic pleasure simultaneously being conveyed throughout the body by the melody. The tightness of this relationship is less surprising, and more convincing, when we remember the character of music and poetry in the Hellenistic world. Poetry was invariably performed to music, with recitations of Homer commonly presented in

¹³¹ Delattre, "Towards the Musical Aesthetics of Philodemus." p. 290

a chanting mix of lyric and poetry.¹³² The famous lyric poets, at the crossroads of music and poetry, such as Pindar and Simonides are even mentioned by Philodemus in relation to this point.

“I say that... if Simonides and Pindar were musicians, they were also poets and if they composed, as musicians, [melodies] without significance, it is as poets that they composed their texts.”¹³³

In the Hellenistic period, therefore, the lines between poetry and music were already blurred. Philodemus, in fact, has provided greater clarity in his picture, as we see in the quote above. For Philodemus, it is in the role of the poet that the musician writes his text.

This tight relationship between music and poetry is the source of the final, overarching relationship between all the aesthetic arts, for which this whole study has argued. If it is the case, as I have proposed, that the only valid rhetoric is sophistic rhetoric, which is specifically the art of expressing philosophical thought in the most ‘natural and beautiful style’ then there is a clear relationship, almost of necessity, between philosophy and rhetoric, one being the linguistic expression of the other. Similarly, since poetry is not barred from expressing philosophical thought, the relationship to philosophy becomes a similar, though lower down in the hierarchy. That is to say that the philosopher may practise philosophy as a poet, in that he may express a philosophical thought in the poetic form. This is not as clear or natural as in prose, and is thus not necessary. It is a luxury art, and lower on the hierarchy of the arts.

¹³² For a summary of the relationship between poetry and music in the Hellenistic period see Christopher Carey, "Genre, Occasion and Performance," in *The Cambridge Companion to Greek Lyric*, ed. Felix Budelmann (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009); Silvia Barbantani, "Lyric in the Hellenistic Period and Beyond," *ibid.*, ed. Felix Budelmann.

¹³³ Philodemus, "On Music." ff. 142

Finally, in the case of music, insofar as music contains poetry, it has the possibility to contain philosophy. Here, with the added distraction of melody, the thought is even further diluted, which places music at the bottom of the hierarchy of the aesthetic arts. Thus, in music, as in philosophy, it is the role of the philosophy to criticise, to analyse, and it is only the man educated in philosophy who is truly able to appreciate the aesthetic, and philosophical, value of the arts. This thought, repeated in *On Rhetoric* and *On Poems* is again at the very heart of Philodemus' discussion in *On Music*.

“Furthermore, when Diogenes says that “those who practise music have a theory very close to [literary] criticism he is in error, not only (1) in so far as he believes that melody and rhythm have something appropriate and not appropriate, beautiful and ugly, he allows, without discussion, that music is the theory which also judges this, but also (2) similarly in all such considerations he does not allow that those who practise philosophy should be the judges; and, by Zeus! (3) as far as criticism will be, as he believes, very close to music, so he allows not the philosophers but those called critics to judge it.”¹³⁴

Philodemus, once again, founds his objections on his belief in the necessary primacy of philosophy. It is the philosopher, not the musician, and not the critic, whose role it is to analyse music, indeed, analyse all the arts, because it is only the philosopher who has the necessary ability to appreciate, to understand, and to sift through the moral and immoral content. Here is the return of the idea expressed in *On Rhetoric*, that the philosopher benefits the state by teaching the young.

¹³⁴ Ibid. Col. 136: 10-27

Conclusion

Philodemus' position on music is perhaps the closest to what was traditionally understood as the Epicurean position on the arts. As Delattre notes, Philodemus is endeavouring to return music to its proper place; the modest position of a luxury art. This is the inevitable result of Epicurean physics, and the picture presented in *On Music* is identical with that given by Epicurus in his *Letter to Herodotus*. As with the other treatises in the aesthetic trilogy, Philodemus is primarily concerned with providing a narrow definition of the art *qua* art, which removes the (to him) extraneous demands placed on them by the critics and philosophers of his time. It is significant that Philodemus excludes text from his definition, since it results in music's relationship with the other arts being merely 'accidental'. In poetry and rhetoric, though the quality of the thought expressed may differ, they are inherently linked through their nature as arts of primarily linguistic expression. Music, on the other hand, is primarily pleasure alone, through the experience of sound, with the linguistic expression obtained, as it were, parasitically, from the use of poetry. Thus, music is the bottom of the hierarchy, because music is at the furthest remove from the centre of Epicurean life: philosophy.

Chapter V: Conclusion

This study has shown that Philodemus does not possess aesthetic theories for each of the individual arts discussed in his aesthetic trilogy. Instead, it is proposed that Philodemus has a single, unified, aesthetic theory. This study's primary concern has been with the texts of the aesthetic trilogy, and related treatises by Philodemus. Though there has been a resulting lack of evidence used from alternative perspectives in the period, it is the goal of this study to provide a coherent theory according to the Philodemean system, irrespective of previous assumptions regarding Epicurean and Hellenistic aesthetic theories. This point reaches the heart of this study. Though the Philodemean corpus has been worked over by numerous scholars, and admirable progress has been made in the last few decades, this scholarship has been undertaken from the perspective of chronological continuity. That is, scholarship up to this point has approached Philodemus only through the lens of previous assumptions regarding Epicureanism, founded on interpretations of the little extant work of Epicurus, and the comments made by Epicureanism's many opponents. This study, instead, has approached Philodemus' philosophy by taking Philodemus' own writings as a starting point. Such an approach has allowed my analysis to accept disparity between the Philodemean picture, and the traditional understanding of Epicureanism, where traditionally these differences have been downplayed or explained away altogether. It is the aim of this thesis to extend the

previous work by outlining the fundamentals of a Philodemean brand of Epicureanism, in relation to the aesthetic arts.

The significance of the aesthetics for the larger philosophical context, both Philodemus' own and the general philosophical approaches to the aesthetic arts in the late Roman-Hellenistic period, it is hoped, is now evident. Philodemus, I have argued, is willing to consider the arts in specific relationship to philosophy. Though, as we see in *On Poems*, Philodemus will not accept a definition of the arts *qua* philosophy, he by no means denies philosophy a role in the artistic pursuits.

In constructing this argument, I have assumed a coherence between Philodemus' expressed philosophical picture, and the known facts about his life. As I have noted especially in my discussion of *On Rhetoric*, Philodemus is concerned with art as a pursuit which must, on some level, be valid for the Epicurean wise man; a wise man who is necessarily a philosopher. In the same treatise, Philodemus justifies his philosophical pursuits explicitly along the lines of education by means of imparting (Epicurean) philosophical truths. This is corroborated by evidence in both Horace and Cicero where the authors make explicit mention of Philodemus as a teacher. Given this teaching focus, and the apparent popularity of the Campanian school of Epicureanism, I take it for granted that, where the interpretation of Philodemus' philosophy appears to contradict the known facts of his life, the fault lies with the interpretation, and not with Philodemus' supposed lack of commitment to his expressed philosophical beliefs. Thus, in both my discussion of poetry and rhetoric, I have noted that the final picture presented must be coherent with Philodemus as a prolific writer of both poetry and prose. This same assumption of coherence has been extended to the whole of Philodemus' philosophy. Thus, where a statement made in one text is unclear, I have looked to other works in the Philodemean corpus, specifically other works in the aesthetic trilogy, to illuminate the problem.

In the analysis of *On Rhetoric*, we saw that Philodemus defines rhetoric according to the means of expressing a useful and coherent truth, in what he calls the naturally beautiful style. Importantly, we saw that this was the pursuit of writing and delivering philosophical prose. Accordingly, rhetoric is an art that necessarily gains great importance for Philodemus, since it is only through the practice of sophistic rhetoric that Philodemus is able to express the philosophical truths he has attained in his role as philosopher. This relationship of the aesthetics as the linguistic expression of philosophy continued in the discussion of *On Poems*. In this treatise, though eager not to allow poetry to be nothing but philosophy, Philodemus once again espouses a picture of the art which links it tightly with philosophy. This is further expanded by *On The Good King According to Homer*, where Philodemus himself applies the aesthetic art of sophistic rhetoric to the aesthetic art of poetry in order to provide moral and philosophical education. Though without the almost one to one correlation between rhetoric and philosophy, this picture still presents the linguistic aesthetic art as an artistic expression of philosophy. Finally, in *On Music*, Philodemus drives home the relationship between language and philosophy in his discussion of merit in music. It is not the irrational pleasure of melody that makes gives music the ability to persuade or educate. Instead, Philodemus takes the value of music to be in the text, and, specifically, in the thoughts expressed in those text. Again, this is a case of philosophical thought expressed in art.

We must be careful in the claim of such a connection between philosophy and the aesthetic arts. Philodemus is meticulous in providing a definition of each art that makes no reference to moral benefit, or philosophical expression. Nevertheless, it is now evident that he is willing to allow philosophical expression, and moral utility, in the arts, but that these are only provided when the art is subservient to the higher goal of philosophy. We can then posit a distinction between philosophical art, and art for art's sake; and Philodemus will not pass judgement on which is a better form of the art.

There are, however, a few limitations of this particular study. As has been said, this study has attempted to outline the salient features of Philodemus' philosophical system, in relation to the arts. This done, three significant areas of further study are evident. First, as was noted earlier, this thesis has approached the topic entirely through the analysis of Philodemus' writings. Though this approach has the aforementioned benefits, it only lays the groundwork for a further, more context-sensitive, analysis which would endeavour to understand Philodemus' philosophy in the wider picture of Epicureanism across time periods. Second, the study has focussed on the aesthetic philosophy of Philodemus. Though this provides a clear picture of this aesthetic philosopher, the aesthetics are only a small part of what, I have indicated, is a much larger and complete philosophical system. Further, I have shown that there is a degree of disparity between the Philodemean brand of Epicureanism, and the more 'traditional' Epicureanism espoused by Epicurus, Lucretius and others. Thus, the analysis of the aesthetic arts is only the first step in understanding the entirety of Philodemean philosophy, both in conjunction, and disjunction, with traditional Epicureanism. Third, I have shown that Philodemus' aesthetic theory is tightly linked to philosophy. This points to a connection between his philosophical system, and the aesthetics arts of his students, not least among them Vergil. Though there have been studies which analysed the Epicureanism of the Roman poets and prose-writers of this period who were associated with Philodemus, these studies have primarily read the works as an expression of 'traditional' Epicureanism. The proposed differences in the framework of the aesthetic trilogy highlight the importance of another look at the Roman artistic milieu of the period, in order to understand the full influence of Philodemean Epicureanism in the period.

These points, however significant, are the development of the study in hand. This study has merely, by means of a close analysis of Philodemus' aesthetic trilogy, outlined the key

features of a more nuanced, and more unified, aesthetic philosophy as taught by Philodemus, in Rome, in the last century of the Republic.

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