Classical Quarterly **42** (ii) 395–415 (1992) *Printed in Great Britain*

AN EPICUREAN SURVEY OF POETIC THEORIES (PHILODEMUS *ON POEMS* 5, COLS. 26–36)

If one wants to know what happened in Hellenistic poetic theory, Philodemus' survey of poetic theories in the fifth book of his *On Poems* is an excellent guide. Even though the survey is well preserved, it has been neglected. Jensen, who published the first complete edition of *On Poems* 5 in 1923, did not discuss this part of the text; and it has been treated only briefly by others.[1] This is a pity because, as Philodemus shows, the Hellenistic period was an era of great diversity and innovation in literary theory. Philodemus gives evidence of: (1) a refined and highly systematic critical vocabulary; (2) a new concern with verbal form; (3) a new notion of mimesis; and (4) in general, a great proliferation of theories that present alternatives to those of Plato and Aristotle. Hellenistic literary theorists studied Plato and Aristotle critically; some revised or elaborated their views, whereas others opposed them. Ancient poetic theory did not come to a standstill with Aristotle any more than philosophy did.

Philodemus' work *On Poems* is preserved only in charred papyri, buried at Herculaneum in the eruption of Vesuvius in A.D. 79 and excavated in the mid-18th century. Book 5 is preserved in two papyri, PHerc. 1425 and 1538, which contain approximately the last 38 columns of the book.[2] The survey occupies the last ten columns (26.23–36.14) of the book. Because these columns formed the inner core of the papyrus rolls, they are generally better preserved than the rest of the book. There are few gaps of more than a few letters, and most of the lines can be made out with certainty.

Philodemus introduces his survey with the announcement: 'By refuting (literally, 'cutting down', ἐπικόψαντες) the opinions found in Zeno, we will end a treatise that is already drawn out'.[3] Since there is no indication that Philodemus wrote more than five books of *On Poems*, the survey probably concludes the entire work. Philodemus took the 'opinions' from his teacher Zeno of Sidon, who was head of the Epicurean school at Athens in the early part of the first century B.C. Philodemus copied out Zeno's list of opinions earlier in *On Poems*, probably in the first, lost part of book 5.[4]

[1] Christian Jensen, ed. *Philodemos Über die Gedichte, Fünftes Buch* (Berlin, 1923). The survey has been discussed only by Pasquale Giuffrida, who erroneously thought the opinions were Stoic (*L'Epicureismo nella letteratura latina nel I secolo A.C.*, v. 1 (Turin, 1940), pp. 146–81); and by Nathan A. Greenberg (*The Poetic Theory of Philodemus* (New York, 1990), pp. 94–113), who offers a translation and brief, useful comments. A new edition and translation of book 5 (with commentary) by Cecilia Mangoni is forthcoming in *La Scuola di Epicuro*, ed. by M. Gigante. Unless otherwise indicated, I have used Jensen's text and numbering.

[2] Whereas PHerc. 1425 covers the whole of the extant columns, PHerc. 1538 covers only from col. 25 to the end of the book, thus supplementing the much better readings of PHerc. 1425. In addition to the actual papyri, two transcriptions (Naples and Oxford) of each papyrus are available; they are reprinted in Jensen's edition.

[3] Col. 26.19–23: ...τὰς παρὰ Ζήνωνι | δόξας ἐπικόψαντες | ἤδη [με]μηκυσμένον | τὸ σύγγραμμα καταπαύ|σομεν.

[4] Philodemus appears to refer to the original text (which he copied out) at col. 32.22–3, when he suggests a possible omission by the scribe. Part of Philodemus' earlier list is preserved in PHerc. 228 (4 Jensen, 3 Mangoni); see below, notes 12 and 64. Jensen (p. 94 of his edition) conjectured that PHerc. 228 was part of the same papyrus roll as PHerc. 1425; the latter has the subscript 'Philodemus' *On Poems* 5' and has lost the beginning of the book. In her recent edition of PHerc. 228 ('Il PHerc. 228', *CErc.* 19 (1989), 179–86), Cecilia Mangoni doubts (p. 186)

As the few remnants of this list show, it consisted of a sequence of opinions, stated succinctly and without critical comment. In his critical survey, Philodemus takes up one opinion after another, adding objections to each.

Zeno's list was an analytic survey rather than a historical report of opinions proposed by specific individuals. No names are attached to any of the views. Instead, Zeno offers a systematic review of possible and actual theories, arranged in his own sequence of argument. The opinions follow each other dialectically, in such a way that the failure of one opinion generates (more or less closely) another. This arrangement implies that Zeno refuted each opinion in turn. Even though Philodemus does not mention such a refutation, there is little doubt that he is indebted to Zeno not only for the opinions, but also for much of his criticism.[5]

Philodemus does not give us Zeno's complete list, but only a representative list. For he says in his concluding statement: 'it is easy to see from the previous examination in what respect the remaining opinions fail.'[6] Although we lack the complete classification, therefore, the part that Philodemus has made available gives a rough idea of the full range of positions criticised by the Epicureans and so provides valuable information about the positions actually developed in the Hellenistic period.

Philodemus' attack is very compressed and often difficult to understand. The chief obstacle to understanding is that we lack most of the discussion that preceded the survey. Philodemus' aim is to 'cut down', with swift blows, the opinions that he enumerated previously. This enumeration is already a distillation of views that are discussed in detail elsewhere, with references to individual authors. In his final survey, Philodemus offers no argument at all in support of the opinions; and he delineates them only roughly, in an elliptical, shorthand style of notation. He spends most of the little space he has reserved on the objections. These are also highly condensed; for they are themselves summaries of previous refutations.

Nonetheless, a scrutiny of Philodemus' text soon reveals merits. The arguments, however compressed, are incisive and lucid. This is hardly surprising. Zeno was admired even by his opponents as an astute and articulate philosopher. Cicero calls him the 'most acute' (*acutissimus*) of the Epicureans;[7] and he commends Zeno for speaking 'clearly, weightily, ornately', unlike most Epicureans.[8] Zeno had wide interests and wide learning, including an interest in literary matters. Among his many works – all of them lost except for epitomes and excerpts by Philodemus – is a treatise *On Grammar*, which probably included a discussion of poetic criticism, as well as a work *On the Use of Poetry*.[9] Philodemus, who admired Zeno and shared many of his interests, contributed considerable literary talent of his own. He used this talent both to educate others (by his prose treatises) and to delight them (by his poetry). In *On*

whether PHerc. 228 belongs to PHerc. 1425 or even to *On Poems*. However, the obvious link of frs. 4 and 6 (3 and 1 in Mangoni's numbering) of PHerc. 228 with PHerc. 1425 is strong evidence that PHerc. 228 belongs to *On Poems* 5.

[5] Philodemus knew Zeno's teachings at first hand, as well as from reports (oral and written) by other students. For example, in *De signis* Philodemus draws on his own conversations with Zeno, on a report by another student of Zeno, Bromius, and on a written summary of Zeno's arguments by Demetrius (cols. 19.4–11 and 28.13–14). As illustrated by *De signis*, Zeno typically stated his opponents' views in summary form before responding to them.

[6] Col. 36.10–14: τοὺς δὲ λοιποὺς ἐκ | τῶν πρότερον διηρασ|μένων ῥάιδιον κατὰ | τί διαπίπτουσιν ἐπιβλέ|ψαι.

[7] Cicero, *Tusculan Disputations* 3.38.

[8] Cicero, *De natura deorum* 1.59 ('distincte, graviter, ornate'); cf. *Academica* 1.46.

[9] Following Wilhelm Crönert (*Kolotes und Menedemos* (Munich, 1906), p. 119), I have suggested in 'Epicurean Poetics', *Proceedings of the Boston Area Colloquium in Ancient Philosophy*, ed. J. Cleary, v. 7 (1991), 63–93 that Sextus Empiricus drew on Zeno's *On Grammar* for the arguments that he sets out at *Adv. math.* 1.277–98.

Poems, Philodemus draws on Zeno's arguments; but his appreciation of poetry is enhanced by his own creative ability as composer of the most elegant epigrams of his time.

The sequence of opinions in Philodemus' survey may be divided roughly into thirteen distinct views. The divisions are not hard and fast, since some opinions are reformulations of a preceding opinion. There are roughly three groups of opinions: the first six form a progression leading from a consideration of sound to thought; the next four are a collection of diverse theories; and the last three form a progression at the highest level of generality.

The first six opinions are ordered in pairs of three. Their arrangement is based on a distinction between the thought of a poem, *διάνοια*, and the verbal composition, *σύνθεσις λέξεως* (*λέξεων*) or *σύνθεσις* simply. The first three opinions all define the goodness of a poem by reference to its verbal form, or *σύνθεσις*; the next three opinions also take into consideration a poem's content, or *διάνοια*. The six opinions are arranged in a dialectical progression, each succeeding opinion being a response to objections raised against a previous opinion. The method of refutation is itself dialectical: Philodemus uses not only his own views, but also those of others, to defeat his opponents.

The first opinion proposes that a poem is good 'whenever there is composition that delights the hearing or moves along beautifully and expresses the thought powerfully'.[10] This formulation is puzzling and disappointing as it stands. Not only is the articulation (made by 'or' and 'and') unclear, but also the criteria appear absurdly trite. It looks as though Zeno has thrown assorted commonplaces together into a heap. But this initial impression is deceptive. In the absence of Philodemus' previous enumeration, which might have contained greater precision, a comparison with the next two opinions helps to show what is distinctive about the proposal. The second opinion is that 'verbal composition that signifies (*σημαίνουσα*) the underlying thought vividly and suggestively' makes a poem good.[11] The third requires composition 'that makes clear (*διασαφοῦσα*) the underlying thought clearly and concisely along with preserving a poetic style'.[12] In both of these definitions, the verbal composition is viewed as a bearer of meaning, as shown by the terms 'signify' and 'make clear'. In each case, the goodness of a poem is defined as a relationship between words and their meaning. By contrast, as will become clearer, the first opinion treats the verbal composition as sound. It situates the goodness of a poem in the sound, or (more precisely) in a relationship between sound and listener or between sound and meaning. As sound, the verbal composition has the function of delighting the hearing, or moving along beautifully, or 'expressing' (*ἐκφέρουσα*) the thought powerfully.

One of the most significant new developments in Hellenistic literary theory is the importance assigned to sound. While theorists varied in their estimation of sound,

[10] Col. 26.25–30: ... *ὅταν σύνθεσις | ᾖ τέρπ[ουσ]α τὴν ἀκο|ὴν ἢ κ[αλῶ]ς φερομέ|νη καὶ τ[ὴν] διάνοιαν | κεκρατημένως ἐκφέρου|σα* ...

[11] Col. 27.6–10: *ἡ δὲ | σύνθεσις λέξεων ἐναρ|γῶς καὶ ἐμφατικῶς τὴν | ὑποτεταγμένην διάνοι|αν [σ]ημαίνουσα[[ν]]*.

[12] Col. 28.7–10: *ἡ δὲ σύνθε|[σ]ις σαφῶς καὶ συντόμως | ⟨τὴν ὑποτεταγμένην διάνοιαν διασαφοῦσα⟩ | σὺν τῶι τηρεῖν τὸν [ποι]ητικὸν | χ[αρα]κ[τῆ]ρ[α* ... Jensen has supplied *⟨τὴν ὑποτεταγμένην διάνοιαν διασαφοῦσα⟩* between lines 8 and 9 on the basis of PHerc. 228 fr. 4 (Mangoni 3 B), where the opinion is summarised as: ... *σα]φῶς καὶ συ[ντόμως δια]|σαφοῦσαν σὺν τῶ[ι μὴ] ἐκβαίνειν τὴν [ποι]|ητ[ι]κ[ὴν] | χ[αρα]κ[τῆ]ρ[α*. I suggest that Philodemus omitted the participial construction in his survey, as something that could readily be understood; hence there is no need for Jensen's supplement.

some took the extreme view that the goodness of a poem resides entirely in good sound, or 'euphony' (εὐφωνία). The best known proponent of this view is Crates of Mallos, who called himself a 'critic', κριτικός. Crates defined the 'critic' as a kind of master craftsman to whom the grammarian is subordinate; for the critic has a complete knowledge of language, he said, whereas the grammarian deals only with unusual meanings, prosody, and the like.[13] We know Crates' theory of poetic criticism from Philodemus' detailed attack against him earlier in book 5 of *On Poems*. Crates held that the critic's knowledge begins with an analysis of elementary letter sounds.[14] He also proposed that, in judging the sound of a poem, a person must judge 'not without the thoughts', even though he must not judge the thoughts themselves.[15] The critic, therefore, judges the sound in relation to the thought, even though he does not pass judgement on the thought itself. Crates' programme may appear strangely one-sided, because it elevates sound into the exclusive criterion of a good poem. It is in fact as ambitiously broad as it is bold, since it requires a comprehensive knowledge of words and their meanings.

The 'critics' in general seem agreed on making euphony the criterion of a good poem. Earlier in *On Poems*, Philodemus summarises the position of the 'critics' as follows:

> It remains fixed as though on a stele for all the critics that the supervening euphony is [the] distinctive [task of the poet], whereas thoughts and diction are outside [the craft] and must be gathered as common [materials].[16]

According to the critics, the thoughts and words of a poem are materials gathered by the poet from outside, as a common fund that is available to all. The poet's distinctive job is to arrange the words (together with the thoughts) into a verbal composition, σύνθεσις, so as to produce good sound. Philodemus describes the sound as an 'epiphenomenon', that is, as an immediately perceptible feature that supervenes on the verbal structure.[17] What makes the sound good is the arrangement of elementary sounds – individual vowels, semi-vocalic sounds, and non-vocalic sounds – into a verbal pattern. As an example of euphony, Philodemus cites the verse: Σέριφος ἅλμηι ποντίαι περίρρυτος ('Seriphos washed all around with the salty sea').[18] This verse may be taken to satisfy all the criteria in Zeno's first opinion: it delights the hearing by its collocation of letter sounds, moves along beautifully by the smoothness of its sound, and expresses the thought powerfully by the adaptation of sound to sense.[19]

Philodemus is utterly hostile to the critics. He calls their euphonies 'uncreated';[20] and he accuses them of neglecting what is most important in a poem, its thought. In response to the cited tenet, he denies that 'the composition moves the soul

[13] Sextus Empiricus, *Adv. math.* 1.79; cf. 1.248. On Crates and the 'critics' in general, see further Asmis, 'Crates on Poetic Criticism', *Phoenix* 46 (1992), 44–75.

[14] See col. 26.7–11.

[15] *On Poems* 5, col. 25.23–9.

[16] PHerc. 1676, tr., 3, col. 17(6).2–9 Sbordone: ... καὶ τὸ τὴν μὲν | [ἐ]πιφαι]νομένην [ε]ὐφωνί]αν ἴδιον [εἶν]αι, τὰ δὲ νοή{ι}|ματα καὶ [τ]ὰς λέξεις ἐκτὸς | εἶναι καὶ κοινὰ συνάγεσ|θαι δεί[ν, πα]ρὰ πᾶσι μὲν ὡς | ἐν [στήλ]ηι με[ν]ει τοῖς κρι|τικοῖ[ς]...

[17] Philodemus repeatedly describes sound as an 'epiphenomenon' of the composition, for example, at *On Poems* 5, cols. 20.28 and 21.31. This is not an 'epiphenomenon' in the modern sense of having no causal force.

[18] PHerc. 1676, tr. 3, col. 18(7).9–10 Sbordone.

[19] The verse also exemplifies the 'smooth' style of composition, as defined by Dionysius of Halicarnassus (*De compositione* 23, p. 234 Roberts): it uses 'euphonious' words that move along (κεκινῆσθαι, φέρεσθαι) continuously, like things that flow (ῥέοντα) and never stay still.

[20] *On Poems* 5, col. 18.15–17: ταῖς ἀγε[νή]|τοις εὐφωνίαις τῶν κ[ρι]|τικῶν.

(ψυχαγωγεῖν) by itself, bringing in no other good'. Verbal composition, he contends, 'is praised because it also presents thoughts by which [poets] move the soul, not taking them from someone, but creating them themselves, from themselves'.[21] In an isolated fragment of *On Poems*, Philodemus responds with passion to an opponent who claims that 'it doesn't harm one bit if the thought is not understood':

> How is it, o Corybantes, that all of us think of a poem not as twanging and clanging, but as diction that signifies thought as a result of being put together in a certain way...[22]

Just as the Corybantes are driven into ecstasy by musical sounds, these lovers of poetry are driven out of their minds by the sound of poems, not realising that, unlike musical sounds, the sounds of a poem are words that have meaning.[23] We may take 'Corybantes' in this passage as a term of abuse for 'critics'.

Philodemus' denunciation should not mislead us. As previously noted, Crates held that the sound must be judged in conjunction with the thought. Some critics seem indeed to have held that it is not necessary to know the thought, or that there is no need for coherent thought or even any thought at all.[24] But this does not imply that the critics proposed to disregard the thought when it is understood. The basic point, on which all critics seem agreed, is that the kind of thought makes no difference: what matters is the vocal expression.

It is difficult to glean much sophistication in the euphonists' position from Philodemus' fragmentary and hostile accounts. But his discussion of Crates reveals an interesting subtlety. Crates held that even though a good poem pleases the hearing, the criterion of goodness is not the pleasure produced by the sound, but the fact that the poem has been worked out according to certain principles of sound.[25] What makes a poem good, according to Crates, is not the subjective experience, but the objective cause of the experience. Strictly speaking, a poem is good, not whenever the sound delights the hearing, but insofar as the sound has certain qualities that make it delightful.

Philodemus' first opinion, I suggest, dimly reflects this distinction. The first part of his formulation, 'whenever there is composition that delights the hearing', may be taken as a general statement of the claim that poetic goodness resides in pleasing sound. It is ambiguous between a subjective and an objective criterion. The remainder of Philodemus' formulation, by contrast, presents two objective criteria, 'moving along beautifully' and 'expressing the thought powerfully'. Depending on how strictly the distinction between objective and subjective criteria is made, the latter two criteria may be seen as either an explanation of the first or as alternatives to it. Philodemus' elliptical use of 'or' and 'and' leaves the precise relationship of subjective to objective criteria vague. What it suggests, on the other hand, is that there were various ways of explaining good sound, including a distinction between subjective and objective sound.

Among those who recognised euphony as a component, but not the whole, of poetic goodness, are the Stoics. Our main evidence is Philodemus' criticism, earlier in

[21] PHerc. 1676, tr. 3, col. 17(6).23–7 Sbordone.

[22] PHerc. 1074+1081, fr. c, col. 2.5–11 Sbordone: *τίνα γ[ε τ]ρόπον, ὦ | Κορύβαντες, ὅ[λως τ]ὸ πόημα | πάντες οὐχ ὡ[ς] τερέτισμα | καὶ κροῦμα νο[ο]ῦμε[ν], ἀλ|λὰ λέξεις ἐκ τοῦ [π]ως συντι|θεσθαι διανόημα σημαι|νούσας*. I prefer Hausrath's tentative *ὅ[λως]* to Sbordone's *ὅ[ν]*.

[23] Plato similarly uses the term 'Corybantes' to describe people whose experience of poetry is irrational (*Ion* 533e–34a, 536c). 'Longinus' (*On the Sublime* 39.2) uses the noun 'corybantism' (*κορυβαντισμός*) to designate the state of being driven out of one's wits by the sound of the flute.

[24] *On Poems* 5, col. 20.13–21; see pp. 184–5 of Asmis, 'The Poetic Theory of the Stoic "Aristo"', *Apeiron* 23 (1990), 147–201.

[25] *On Poems* 5, cols. 24.33–25.4.

On Poems 5, of a Stoic who has traditionally been identified as Aristo of Chios.[26] This Stoic demanded both good thought and good composition in a poem, and under good composition he included 'euphony'. Philodemus says nothing specifically about this Stoic's notion of euphony, except that he introduced it from the 'critics' and supposed that it is judged by 'experienced hearing' (*τῆι τριβῆι τῆς ἀκοῆς*).[27] But there is further information about another Stoic, Cleanthes. As Seneca reports, he used an analogy to explain the special power of poetic and musical diction. Cleanthes said that just as a trumpet produces a clearer sound than the unaided voice, so 'the compressed necessity of song makes our perceptions (*sensus*) clearer'. Seneca takes Cleanthes to imply that poems impress the meaning of words more forcefully on the mind than prose:

> The same things are heard more carelessly and strike us less when they are spoken in prose. When rhythm is added and precise metrical measures have compressed an exalted sense (*sensum*), the same opinion is hurled as though with a fuller throw.[28]

Cleanthes' explanation, then, appears to be this: just as the trumpet, which acts on breath, makes the sound clearer, so metre and melody, which are added to words, make the message clearer. The similarity is accompanied by an important difference: in both cases, there is a clearer awareness; but whereas the trumpet produces only a clearer sensory perception, metre and melody also produce a clearer intellectual grasp.

Seneca's interpretation agrees with what Philodemus says about Cleanthes in *On Music*. According to Cleanthes, 'poetic and musical examples are better' than prose; for plain prose 'does not have diction that is proper (*λέξεις οἰκείας*) to divine greatness', whereas 'metres, melodies, and rhythms come as close as possible to the truth of the contemplation of divinity'. In the case of songs, there is a double 'incentive' (*παρόρμησις*), for the incentive comes not only from the thoughts, but also from the music.[29] Seneca and Philodemus together offer a coherent picture: according to Cleanthes, metre and melody impress the thought more clearly on the mind, so that the impression is both closer to the truth and more stimulating. In particular, when the thought is about virtue or the gods, the listener is excited with a greater impulse toward them.

We do not know what sort of metres and melodies Cleanthes associated with virtue and divinity, but there is a long tradition, represented most conspicuously by Plato (in *Rep.* 3), of musicologists and philosophers linking certain rhythms and melodies with certain types of character. In general, Cleanthes' appeal for diction that is proper

[26] The name of the Stoic is preserved only as '...*ων*' (col. 13.30). Philodemus' criticism occupies cols. 13.28–21.22.

[27] Cols. 18.14–7 and 20.26–33.

[28] Seneca, *Epistle* 108.10. The whole passage is: 'nam, ut dicebat Cleanthes, quemadmodum spiritus noster clariorem sonum reddit, cum illum tuba per longi canalis angustias tractum patentiore novissime exitu effudit, sic sensus nostros clariores carminis arta necessitas efficit. eadem neglegentius audiuntur minusque percutiunt, quamdiu soluta oratione dicuntur; ubi accessere numeri et egregium sensum adstrinxere certi pedes, eadem illa sententia velut lacerto excussiore torquetur.'

[29] Philodemus, *On Music* 4 (col. 28.1–22): *εἰ μ[ὴ τῶι π]αρὰ Κλεάν[θ]ει λέ|γειν [ἴσ]α θελήσουσιν, ὅς φησιν | [ἀ]μείνο[νά] τε εἶναι τὰ ποητικὰ | καὶ μ[ουσ]ικὰ παραδείγματα | καὶ τοῦ [λόγ]ου τοῦ τῆς φιλοσο|φίας ἱκανῶς μὲν ἐξαγ[γ]έλ|λειν δυναμένου τὰ θεῖα καὶ | ἀ[ν]θ[ρ]ώ[πινα], μὴ ἔχοντος δὲ | ψειλοῦ τῶν θείων μεγεθῶν | λέξεις οἰκείας, τὰ μέτρα καὶ | τὰ μέλη καὶ τοὺς ῥυθμοὺς | ὡς μάλιστα προσικνεῖσθαι | πρὸς τὴν ἀλήθειαν τῆς τῶν | θείων θ[ε]ωρίας, οὗ καταγελα|στότερον οὐ ῥάιδιον εὑρεῖν. | οὔτε γὰρ αἱ διάνοιαι μὲν οὐ|κ ὠφελο[ῦ]σιν, ὅταν δὲ μελω|δηθῶσι[ν], ἐξ ἀμ[φ]οτέ[ρ]ων ἡ | παρόρ[μη]σις [γίν]εται. καὶ γὰρ | ὑπὸ διανο[η]μάτων αὐτῶν | γίνετ' οὐδ[ὲ] μετρία, μετὰ δὲ | τῶν μέλων μ[ε]ιζων.*

(οἰκεία) to divinity agrees with the Stoic requirement for language that is 'fitting' (πρέπον), defined as 'diction that is proper to a thing' (λέξις οἰκεία τῷ πράγματι).[30] It also agrees with the widespread assumption that certain kinds of sound enhance a 'great' subject matter, whereas others diminish it. Writers such as Dionysius of Halicarnassus and 'Longinus' (in *On the Sublime*) give detailed accounts of what sorts of metres and letter sounds heighten or diminish a subject matter; for example, anapaests and dactyls make for greatness, whereas tribrachs and trochees belittle a thing.[31]

Although the Stoics assigned special power to poetic diction and might well have endorsed all three of Zeno's criteria of good sound, they sharply repudiated the first definition, since they considered the thought of a poem no less important than the sound. Even so, Philodemus thinks that the Stoics greatly overemphasised sound. In response to Cleanthes, he declares that, to be obliging, one could say poetic or musical form provides the same incentive as plain prose; but, to speak the blunt truth, it weakens the incentive for a variety of reasons – pleasure, the distraction caused by the pleasure and by the loudness and peculiarity of the sounds, the continuous, unnatural diction, the times and places of listening, and so on.[32] In short, Philodemus does not believe that poetic sound is conducive to expressing meaning 'powerfully'.

In *On Poems*, Philodemus briefly makes four objections to the proposal to define poetic goodness by sound. First and most important, he brings his favourite charge of mindlessness against the sound theorists: 'the sound (ἦχος)' – that is mere sound, considered apart from meaning – 'does not delight in a verbal composition'.[33] In his earlier criticism of Crates, Philodemus insisted that the hearing is not delighted by anything in a poem except its rhythm.[34] His point now seems to be that the mere sound of the letters of a poem does not produce pleasure. Instead, Philodemus implies, what pleases is the verbal composition as a bearer of meaning.

The remaining three objections are relevant also to other definitions of poetic goodness and are used by Philodemus repeatedly: the definition fails to delineate what, or of what sort, the thought should be; the meaning of the key terms, specifically 'beautifully' and 'powerfully', is unknown; and 'some people would say' that the definition fails to demarcate good poems from a certain kind of prose.[35] Whereas Philodemus is himself committed to the first three objections, he adds the last dialectically as an objection made by others. All of his objections raise serious problems. In particular, any theory of poetry needs to confront the questions: what is the relationship of sound to thought; what sort of explanation do such basic terms as 'beautiful' and 'powerful' admit of; and how does poetic discourse differ from prose? As we have seen, Cleanthes tried to explain 'powerfully' by an analogy, while differentiating poetry from prose. Philodemus is surely right to seek further clarification.

The second and third opinions in Philodemus' survey are a response to the objection that a poem is not just noise. They offer alternative views of poetic meaning. The first alternative is a surprisingly innovative attempt to define what is unique about poetic discourse. It recognises two virtues of poetic composition: signifying

[30] Diogenes Laertius 7.59.

[31] Dionysius, *De compositione* 17 (pp. 170–2 Roberts); and Longinus, *On the Sublime* 39.4 and 41.1.

[32] *On Music* 4, col. 28.23–35 Neubecker.

[33] *On Poems* 5, col. 26.30–2: διέψευσται μὲν τ[ῶι] | μὴ τέρπειν ἦχον ἐν | συνθέσει ποήματος.

[34] *On Poems* 5, cols. 23.36–24.3.

[35] Cols. 26.32–27.6. Epideictic oratory, with its smooth and pleasing collocation of letters and its strong rhythms, is a plausible candidate for this kind of prose.

thought vividly (ἐναργῶς), and signifying it suggestively (ἐμφατικῶς). The rhetorical handbooks furnish definitions of both qualities. ἐνάργεια, vividness, is to state things in such a way as to put them right before our eyes or our senses; it is said to exceed 'clarity', σαφήνεια.[36] ἔμφασις likewise has a precise, technical sense in rhetorical theory. The author of *Ad Herennium* supplies the standard definition: it 'leaves more to be understood than is put down in words'.[37] According to Quintilian, ἔμφασις provides a 'deeper meaning' than is stated.[38] The favourite handbook example of ἔμφασις in poetry is the Homeric verse, spoken by Odysseus: 'we went down (κατεβαίνομεν) into the horse'. The verb is said to 'imply' the great size of the Trojan horse.[39] To say something ἐμφατικῶς is to 'imply', or 'give the impression of', something that is not stated directly.[40] There is no good English equivalent; 'suggestive' comes close in meaning. Although the term can mean 'expressive' and this sense can slide off into 'forceful', it is misleading to translate ἐμφατικός as 'emphatic' or 'forceful', as is often done.[41]

The two qualities complement each other: poetic diction is not to be so explicit as to put everything before the eyes and leave nothing to the imagination; nor is it to be so allusive as to show nothing openly. Vividness and suggestiveness also reinforce each other: greater vividness is conducive to greater suggestiveness, and conversely.[42] Together, they capture two commonly recognised aspects of art: sensuous

[36] The author of *Ad Herennium* defines ἐνάργεια (*demonstratio*) as follows: 'cum ita verbis res exprimitur ut geri negotium et res ante oculos esse videatur' (4.68); cf. 4.69. Quintilian (8.3.61) points out that vividness (*evidentia, repraesentatio*) is something more than clarity (*perspicuitas*) and defines it as: 'clare atque, ut cerni videantur, enuntiare'; cf. 6.2.32. Dionysius of Halicarnassus defines ἐνάργεια at *Lysias* 7 as: δύναμίς τις ὑπὸ τὰς αἰσθήσεις ἄγουσα τὰ λεγόμενα.

[37] Translating ἔμφασις by *significatio*, the author of *Ad Herennium* (4.67) defines it as: 'res quae plus in suspicione relinquit quam positum est in oratione'. The author goes on to divide *significatio* into various types, as produced by hyperbole, ambiguity, logical consequence, aposiopesis, and comparison. Similarly, ps.-Plutarch (*De vita et poesi Homeri* 2.26) writes that ἔμφασις 'extends what is said by a submerged meaning (δι' ὑπονοίας)', that is, 'provides a larger notion'. *Suspicio* corresponds to ὑπόνοια.

[38] Quintilian 8.3.83 ('altiorem praebens intellectum quam quem verba per se ipsa declarant'); cf. 9.2.3. At 8.3.83, Quintilian divides ἔμφασις into two kinds: meaning more than one says, and meaning also what one doesn't say.

[39] Quintilian 8.3.84; ps.-Plutarch, *De vita et poesi Homeri* 2.26; and Trophon, Περὶ τρόπων Spengel v. 3, 199. The verse is at *Od.* 11.523. Another example is Strabo's claim (1.1.7) that Hera's reference to Oceanus in the *Iliad* (14.200–1) implies (ἐμφαίνει) that it encircles the earth.

[40] Related to the literary use is the logical use of ἔμφασις to denote the type of implication in which 'the conditional is true whenever the consequent is contained potentially (περιέχεται δυνάμει) in the antecedent' (Sextus Empiricus, *Outlines of Pyrrhonism* 2.112). Sextus suggests that this type of implication presumably excludes duplicated propositions of the sort 'if it is day, it is day', since it is impossible for something to be contained within itself. The term was also used in Academic epistemology to denote an apparently true, or persuasive, presentation (Sextus Empiricus, *Adv. math.* 7.169).

[41] In his article 'ΕΜΦΑΣΙΣ in Ancient Literary Criticism and *Tractatus Coislinianus* c. 7', *Maia* 40 (1988), 125–9, Ian Rutherford cites the occurrence of ἔμφασις in ps.-Aristides, *Art of Rhetoric* 1 (c. 119, Schmid 46–8) as the earliest unambiguous example of the sense 'force'. Ps.-Aristides lists σφοδρότης, ἔμφασις, and τραχύτης as closely related virtues of style. The examples of ἔμφασις cited by ps.-Aristides do indeed support some such sense as 'force'. I suggest that the meaning is, more precisely, 'expressiveness' (or 'impressiveness'), and that this is a natural extension of the basic sense, 'creating an impression' or 'expressing' something in a non-literal way.

[42] Demetrius (*On Style* 50–1) points out that a more vivid word is ἐμφατικώτερον, as well as more powerful. Similarly, he notes (*On Style* 212) that repetition can produce vividness and 'greater ἔμφασιν'.

particularity; and figurative meaning. In painting, the two aspects may be exemplified by a desolate seascape, let us say, that expresses sadness, or a contorted face that expresses pain. In poetry, vividness and suggestiveness together offer an analysis of metaphorical style, which is typically both sensuous and allusive, or of any style that is both vivid in its direct sensory appeal and rich in non-literal meaning.

This analysis of poetic merit is associated in antiquity more closely with the visual arts than with theories of discourse.[43] Aristotle proposed a single virtue of diction (*λέξεως ἀρετή*) for both rhetoric and poetry: clarity (*τὸ σαφές*), together with fitting elevation.[44] Although he requires vividness in the representation of a tragic action, he gives no special attention to it as a distinct quality of style.[45] In his revision of Aristotle's literary theory, Theophrastus distinguished four virtues of diction: purity, clarity, the fitting (*πρέπον*), and elaboration (*κατασκευή*).[46] The Stoics added conciseness, *συντομία*, as a fifth virtue.[47] Other stylistic qualities are generally listed as types of elaboration. In particular, *ἐνάργεια* and *ἔμφασις* are usually classified, together with a host of other qualities, as optional, occasional qualities, not as necessary, pervasive virtues of style. It is not surprising that modern critics have accused the ancients and their followers of underrating the importance of imagery, allegory, irony, and the like in works of literature.[48]

Philodemus reveals that the rhetorical classifications do not show the complete picture. Some theorists were not content to define poetic style in terms of rhetorical style. They differentiated poetry from prose by substituting vividness, *ἐνάργεια*, for

[43] The importance of *ἐνάργεια* in painting is highlighted by the numerous famous anecdotes of how lifelike a painting is – so lifelike, for example, as to make birds peck at painted grapes (Pliny, *N.H.* 35.65–6). From Xenophon on, writers value the expression of character and emotion in representations of the face and body; and the term *ἐμφαίνειν* (along with others) was used to refer to this type of expressiveness (e.g. Plutarch, *Alexander* 1.3). When Pliny says of Timanthes that 'only in his works more is always understood than is painted' ('in unius operibus intelligitur plus semper quam pingitur,' *N.H.* 35.74), he is praising him for the quality of *ἔμφασις*. Perhaps the most poignant example of *ἔμφασις* in ancient art is Timanthes' way of portraying the extreme sorrow of Agamemnon at the sacrifice of his daughter: whereas Timanthes showed all the others grieving openly, he veiled Agamemnon's face (ibid., 35.73, cf. Cicero, *Orator* 74)).

[44] *Rhet.* 3.2, 1404b1–4 and *Poet.* 22, 1458a18. What creates elevation is strange adornment, such as 'glosses' (unusual terms), metaphor, lengthening, and 'everything contrary to proper [language] (*παρὰ τὸ κύριον*)' (*Poet.* 1458a21–3, cf. *Rhet.* 1404b6–11).

[45] *Poet.* 1455a21–6, cf. 1462a17.

[46] Cicero, *Orator* 79; cf. *De oratore* 1.144, 3.37, and 3.91. The Latin translation of *κατασκευή*, *ornatus*, involves a shift of meaning that has tended to reinforce the impression that *κατασκευή* is a piece-by-piece application of ornaments. *κατασκευή* is, properly, the artistic preparation or fashioning of the whole work.

[47] Diogenes Laertius 7.59. Diogenes Laertius may have derived this list from Diogenes of Babylon, whom he cited just previously. In substantial agreement with the Stoics, Dionysius of Halicarnassus recognised three essential, 'underlying' virtues of style, purity, clarity, and conciseness, together with a host of 'additional' (*ἐπίθεται*) virtues and 'the fitting' (*τὸ πρέπον*) as the 'most authoritative' virtue (*Letter to Pompeius* 3, cf. *Thucydides* 22–3). Dionysius lists *ἐνάργεια* as the first of the optional qualities (*Letter to Pompeius* 3), but does not mention *ἔμφασις* in his list. In *Partitione oratoria* (19), which is Academic in origin (139), Cicero offers an alternative list of five stylistic virtues: *dilucidum* (*σαφές*), *breve* (*σύντομον*), probabile (*πιθανόν*), *illustre* (*ἐναργές*), and *suave* (*ἡδύ*). These qualities are not divided into necessary and optional.

[48] For example, René Wellek and Austin Warren write that 'we may charge older literary study with treating externally and superficially' the stylistic features of image, metaphor, symbol, and myth, and that these were viewed 'for the most part as decorations, rhetorical ornaments' and 'detachable parts of the works in which they appear' (*Theory of Literature*, 3rd ed. [Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1977], p. 193).

clarity and adding ἔμφασις as its complement. The two qualities together are both necessary and sufficient for poetic goodness. This position is clearly distinct from that of Philodemus' third group, who assigned to poetry two virtues that it shares with rhetoric, clarity and conciseness, together with whatever features 'preserve a poetic character'. The third group defines good poetry as a species of discourse by using the logical categories of genus and differentia, whereas the second group tries to define good poetry as a type of discourse that differs fundamentally from prose. Heraclides of Pontus seems to have been a precursor of the latter group. It appears from a rather badly preserved discussion earlier in *On Poems* 5 that Heraclides demanded conciseness and vividness as basic qualities of poetic style, and richness and weightiness as additional, optional qualities.[49]

It is therefore rather startling, though entirely to the point, that Philodemus immediately objects to the second opinion that it proposes 'a virtue that is common to all discourse'.[50] He follows up with an even more sweeping charge: 'and in general it does not touch on anything distinctive about the goodness of a poem, especially of composition.' Unerringly, Philodemus goes to the heart of his opponents' contention: they think they have found what makes poetic discourse unique; Philodemus thinks they are deluded. Philodemus, it seems, is prepared to revise traditional views by accepting vividness and suggestiveness as necessary virtues of poetry; but he extends these virtues to prose.

In addition, Philodemus objects that the two qualities are not sufficient for poetic goodness. He maintains that clarity, seemliness, and 'all the other attainments' – those numerous qualities listed in the handbooks – are also required. From this profusion of requirements it follows, according to Philodemus, that one should not enumerate specific stylistic qualities, but state what 'pervades' them.[51] It seems that Philodemus' opponents attempted to do just this by proposing vividness together with suggestiveness as basic qualities of style. According to Philodemus, the proposal is both too broad, since it extends to prose, and too restrictive, since it excludes other qualities.

How can Philodemus claim that all good discourse has the virtue of vividness and suggestiveness? In his work *On Rhetoric*, Philodemus writes: 'Every craft (τέχνη) is unable to utter a sound if deprived of the use of metaphors.'[52] If vividness and suggestiveness characterise metaphorical speech, then Philodemus' objection is entirely appropriate. His insight seems modern; however, it has ample precedent. Aristotle previously drew attention to the importance of metaphor in both poetry and rhetoric, as well as in ordinary conversation.[53] He also advocated a witty style of

[49] *On Poems* 5, cols. 3–5. Jensen restored the name of Heraclides in fr. 2 of his edition, but held that Neoptolemus was responsible for the theory that Philodemus reports subsequently. Jensen changed his mind in his article 'Herakleides vom Pontus bei Philodem und Horaz', *Akademie der Wissenschaften, Berlin, Sitzungsberichte*, philos.-hist. Kl., 1936, 292–320. I agree with his revised view that Philodemus criticises Heraclides from fr. 2 to col. 9.

[50] Col. 27.10–12: κοι|[ν]ή τ[ίς ἐσ]τι καὶ λόγου παν|τὸς ἀρετή[[ς]].

[51] In this criticism (col. 27.17–33), Philodemus mentions conciseness as a third requirement along with vividness and suggestiveness; it may be taken as implied by the other two qualities.

[52] *On Rhetoric* 4, col. 15.15–18 (Sudhaus v. 1, 175): καὶ πᾶσα τέχνη | φων[ὴ]ν οὐ δύναται προ[ίεσ]|[θαι στερ[η]θεῖσα τῆς ἐκ τῶν | μεταφορῶν εὐχρησ[τίας].

[53] Aristotle held that 'by far the most important thing' about the use of individual words in poetry is the use of metaphor (*Poet.* 1459a5–6). Metaphor has even greater scope in rhetoric because prose speakers, unlike poets, use other kinds of strange language only rarely; rhetorical speakers are free to use metaphors, just as all people do in conversation with each other (*Rhet.* 3.2, 1404b28–34, cf. 1405a4–10). In agreement with Aristotle, Quintilian notes that metaphor is 'the greatest adornment of speech' ('in qua maximus est orationis ornatus', 8.2.6).

speechmaking, which uses metaphor and puts things 'before the eyes'.[54] In a much-cited passage, Theophrastus warns that a speaker should not state everything explicitly, but should leave some things for the listener to understand for himself.[55] All good discourse, it appears, has some degree of vividness and allusiveness; and poetry at best, Philodemus might say, has more of it than prose.

The immensely intricate theory of figures in ancient rhetoric also implies that all discourse is pervasively suggestive. At the level of rhetorical classification, the scope of ἔμφασις is indeed narrowly circumscribed. Not only is ἔμφασις demarcated from other ways of expressing non-literal meaning, such as metaphor, allegory, and irony, but there is also a tendency in the rhetorical handbooks to narrow its meaning to 'innuendo'. This restriction, however, does not prevent authors of all kinds, including literary theorists, from using ἔμφασις and its grammatical variants in the broadest sense of 'meaning more than is said'. In his treatise *On Style*, for example, Demetrius shows how various kinds of stylistic features, – including repetition, sound patterns, the use of particles, witticisms, humour, fable, allegory, and improvisation – 'imply' (ἐμφαίνει), or 'give the impression (ἔμφασιν) of', a certain moral character or emotion, grimness, charm, greatness, weakness, beauty, and so on.[56] Although ancient grammarians and philosophers do not seem to have developed this insight into a general theory of language, it did not escape them that words 'connote' as well as 'denote' (to use modern terminology).[57] The terms ἔμφασις and ἐνάργεια correspond roughly to these two aspects of meaning. The literary theorists who assigned these two kinds of 'signification' (to use their term) to poetry believed that they serve to distinguish poetic discourse from prose. Philodemus is quick to note that all signification, whether in poetry or in prose, has both aspects. A likely response to his objection would be that, unlike prose, poetry is wholly saturated by these qualities.[58]

Among the many types of ἔμφασις recognised in the Hellenistic period, allegory deserves special notice. Defined as 'saying one thing and meaning another', it rose to

[54] *Rhet.* 3, chapters 10–11, esp. 1411b22–3.

[55] Demetrius, *On Style* 222. Theophrastus appears to be elaborating on Aristotle's discussion of wit (τὸ ἀστεῖον).

[56] Demetrius, *On Style* 57 (particles expressing mourning); 61, 140, and 212 (repetition implying multiple possessions, charm, greater impressiveness); 63 (syndeton implying countless numbers); 105 (a combination of unpleasant sounds implying greatness of a person); 130–1 (witticisms expressing grim seriousness); 158 (a fable expressing charm); 171 and 259 (humour implying character and expressing force); 274 (a comparison giving the impression of beauty); 285 (an allegory implying political weakness); 300 (improvisation implying anger). Dionysius of Halicarnassus gives numerous examples of how certain stylistic features 'imply' or illustrate something about the author or the style; e.g. *Lysias* 12, *Demosthenes* 5, 9, 48, 50. The author of *De vita et poesi Homeri* points out that in Homer 'thoughts are implied (ἐμφαίνεται) through riddles and myths', with the comment that what is signified δι' ὑπονοίας is more appealing than what is said openly (2.92); see also his use of ἐμφαίνει at 2.68 and 2.71. 'Longinus' (*On the Sublime*) illustrates how asyndeton produces an ἔμφασις of vigorous action (19.2) and how hyperbaton creates an impression of vigour and improvisation (22.3).

[57] On the connotation of individual words, see esp. Aristotle's analysis of beautiful words at *Rhet.* 1405b6–34 and Theophrastus' elaboration of this view, as reported by Demetrius (*On Style* 173–4) and Dionysius of Halicarnassus (*De compositione* 16, pp. 164–6 Roberts).

[58] G. Zanker argues in his article 'Enargeia in the Ancient Criticism of Poetry' (*Rheinisches Museum* 124 [1981], 297–311) that 'ἐνάργεια was considered particularly exemplified in poetry, even by the rhetoricians' (p. 300). Zanker also suggests that the term was borrowed by literary critics from contemporary philosophy, in particular Epicureanism (p. 309). There are certainly links (which are worth exploring further) between the literary and philosophical uses of both ἐνάργεια and ἔμφασις; but ἐνάργεια has a development in literary theory that is largely independent of philosophical theory.

new prominence under the philosophical leadership of the Stoics.[59] Poetic tales were interpreted by the Stoics and others as allegories, or 'symbols' (*σύμβολα*), that convey ultimate truths about the universe. For example, whereas some non-Stoics interpreted the story of the birth of Athena from Zeus' head as a 'symbol' (*σύμβολον*) that the mind is situated in the head, the Stoic Chrysippus held that the tale 'implies a different symbol', namely that knowledge issues from the mouth through speech.[60] Philodemus dismisses this entire allegorising trend as a craze verging on madness. He comments wryly that some people want Homer to say something other than what he means right from the word 'wrath', *μῆνις*.[61]

Philodemus' second opinion makes a rather pitiful appearance in its polemical setting. But enough appears to suggest that it was a rich and bold theory, admitting of numerous variations, from a recognition of simple associative meaning to allegorical or symbolist interpretations. The third opinion, by contrast, seems dull. The demand for clarity and conciseness, together with features that demarcate poetry from prose, avoids the fatal flaw, as Philodemus see it, of proposing a virtue that is common to prose. But it avoids this flaw at the cost of utter inanity, it seems. For, as Philodemus points out, it fails to specify how poetry differs from prose. The theory has the merit, on the other hand, of trying to fit poetry into a general theory of discourse. While it conforms in general to what we know of Hellenistic theories of diction, it appears indebted to the Stoics in particular for the joint requirement for clarity and conciseness.

These qualities in turn provoke another objection from Philodemus: clarity and conciseness are not in fact always desirable. Not every type of clarity, he maintains, is permitted to poets, nor is the permitted kind believed to fit all thoughts; and some thoughts need to be elaborated, or lingered over, or stated periphrastically.[62] Whereas Philodemus previously objected that vividness and suggestiveness are not sufficient for poetic goodness – since clarity and so on are also required – he now objects that clarity and conciseness are not necessary. We can save consistency by supposing that Philodemus held that vividness and suggestiveness must always be present, whereas other stylistic qualities are necessary only upon occasion. There is no need to strain for consistency, however, since Philodemus demolishes theories by gathering objections from a variety of sources.

Philodemus considers it a basic flaw of all three opinions discussed so far that they disregard the thought of a poem.[63] The next three opinions attempt to correct this fault. The fourth demands wise thought, the fifth useful thought, and the sixth exceptional thought.[64] These requirements proceed from the impossibly strict to the

[59] For definitions of 'allegory', see, for example, *Ad Herennium* 4.46, and Quintilian 8.6.44.

[60] SVF 2.908 and 909 (including: *ἄλλου τινὸς συμβόλου ποιοῦντ' ἔμφασιν*). Chrysippus also interpreted many non-allegorical poetic statements as 'implying' philosophical truths. For example, he understood numerous verses in Homer and other poets to imply that the heart is the unitary seat of the desires, emotions, and reason (see esp. the use of *ἐμφαίνει* at SVF 2.904–5). Another type of allegory consists of proverbs that serve as a 'symbol' of something not said, for example, 'the cicadas will chirp from the ground' (Demetrius, *On Style* 243).

[61] *On Poems*, PHerc. 1676, tr. 3, col. 2 (fr. 2) Sbordone.

[62] Col. 28.18–32, including (29–32) *οὔτε | τῆς συνχωρουμένης | ἅπασι τοῖς νοουμένο[ις] | ἁρμόττειν δοκούσης. δοκούσης* shows that Philodemus again appeals to the views of others.

[63] In his criticism of the second opinion, Philodemus remarks that 'these [theorists] and many who were previously examined and who will be considered later are far from characterising the sort of thought that is required to underlie [the words]' (cols. 27.34–28.7, reading *πολλ[οὶ]* instead of Jensen's *πολλὰ* at col. 28.2).

[64] Col. 28.33–6; col. 29.3–7; and cols. 29.36–30.4. Fr. 4 (3 Mangoni) of PHerc. 228 contains an additional opinion. Immediately after the third view (see above, n. 12), it continues: 'some

helplessly weak. The requirement for useful thought obviates the difficulty that wise thought is impossible; the requirement for exceptional thought obviates the objection that it is not the function of a poem to teach what is useful.

Much has happened in poetic criticism since Plato demanded that a poem be not only pleasing, but also useful for human life.[65] Although many Hellenistic thinkers followed Plato, others proclaimed that a poet should be free to present any subject-matter at all. All who endorsed Philodemus' first three opinions implicitly rejected the demand for useful thought. The Stoics were among those who followed Plato; and Philodemus presents a rough outline of their view in the fourth opinion. As mentioned earlier, Philodemus criticised in detail the theory of a certain Stoic, who may have been Aristo of Chios.[66] This Stoic demanded good thought, as judged by reason, and good composition, as judged by experienced hearing. Like all Stoics, he identified good thought with wise thought. In effect he put forward something very like Philodemus' fourth opinion, which states that a poem is good whenever the thought is wise and the verbal composition 'delights the hearing by its elaboration (*κατασκευή*)'. Philodemus dismisses this opinion abruptly: each of the two components, he says, makes it 'abortive' (*ἐκβόλιμος*). He does not want to say once more that Stoic wise thought is impossible, and that verbal composition cannot be judged by the hearing.

Philodemus has not got tired, on the other hand, of rehearsing arguments against poetic utility. The fifth opinion is that the composition should 'express useful, even if not wise, thought, powerfully and suggestively with respect to the hearing'.[67] Against the requirement for useful thought, he objects that it eliminates many very beautiful poems. This objection has, of course, no force against utilitarians such as Plato, who are quite prepared to throw out the poems they love. But Philodemus also brings one of Plato's own arguments against his stern moralism. Even if poems benefit, Philodemus claims, they do not benefit as poems (*καθὸ ποήματ'*). In *On Music*, Philodemus claims likewise that if poets were to know virtue, they would not know this as (*καθό*) poets. He implies that they would know it as philosophers.[68] In Plato's *Ion*, Socrates tried to show the rhapsode Ion that if he were to know horsemanship, generalship, or any craft besides rhapsody, he would know this as (*ᾗ*) an expert in the particular craft, not as a rhapsode.[69] Applying this argument to the poet, Philodemus contends that if a poet were to know what is useful, he would know this as an expert in the particular discipline, not as a poet. For Philodemus, this argument is sufficient to show that a poet need not present useful thought. Plato avoided this consequence by requiring that a poet must observe guidelines set by a law-giver who knows what is useful, even if the poet does not.

Against the stylistic component of the fifth opinion, Philodemus repeats that 'powerfully' demands an explanation. He adds that 'suggestively with respect to the hearing' is not only obscure, but does not even make sense.[70] It makes no sense to

[suppose that good composition] contains wise thoughts, others that it contains these thoughts by means of an elaboration that delights the hearing, others...'. In his critical survey, Philodemus does not bother to list the demand for wise thought only.

[65] *Rep.* 607b. [66] See n. 26 above.

[67] Col. 29.3–7: [*ἢ γ*]*ε διάνοια*[*ν ὠφέλιμον* | *εἰ κ*]*αὶ μὴ σοφήν, κε*[*κρατη*]|*μένως καὶ πρὸς τ*[*ὴ*]*ν ἀ*|*κοὴν ἐμφατικῶς ἐκφέ*|*ρουσαν*. I supply [*ἢ γ*]*ε* instead of Jensen's [*τῆι γ*]*ε*. The accusative *ἐκφέ*|*ρουσαν* may be accounted for by assuming an elliptical suppression of *σύνθεσιν* (cf. col. 30.1). For further discussion of the fourth and fifth opinions, see pp. 5–7 and 10, Asmis, 'Philodemus's Poetic Theory and *On the Good King According to Homer*', *Classical Antiquity* 10 (1991), 1–45. [68] *On Music* 4, col. 26.4–7. [69] *Ion* 540d–e.

[70] Col. 29.22–7. *νοῦν* (line 27) is probably a pun.

Philodemus because he holds that the hearing cannot grasp anything of the meaning of words. Philodemus also reiterates his stand against specific stylistic features: 'someone will claim', he says, that clarity is required no less than suggestiveness, and that sometimes there is need for conciseness, seemliness, subtlety, and 'many other kinds of elaboration'.[71] For Philodemus, it seems, the whole enterprise of specifying virtues of style is doomed. He thinks that one should state the general quality that pervades particular qualities of style. But it is not at all clear what this quality would be, other than one of the qualities he rejects, or whether, if it is general enough, it admits of an explanation, as Philodemus demands.

According to Philodemus, the fifth opinion also fails to demarcate poetry from prose: for 'it will be thought (*δόξει*) to apply also to demonstrative discourse (*ἀποδεικτικῶν λόγων*)'. Whereas Philodemus previously extended the qualities of vividness and suggestiveness to all prose, he now extends (with a dialectical appeal to the authority of others) utility, forcefulness, and suggestiveness to the proofs used by philosophers and rhetoricians.

The sixth opinion consists of a disjunction: a poem is good if the composition 'teaches something exceptional (*περιττότερον*) by means of the poem or resembles this'.[72] Philodemus objects that 'exceptional' ('in excess') is unclear; and the reader is likely to agree. He suggests two possibilities: 'in excess of non-technical' works, or 'in excess of prose'. The first, he says, will disqualify many fine poems from being good; the second will qualify many that are bad. Philodemus seems to have something like this in mind: a poem can teach something 'exceptional' by presenting technically correct material, that is, expert knowledge, or by adding poetic form. The expertise may presumably belong to any field – ethics, medicine, generalship, and so on. Poetic form, on the other hand, might be thought to elevate the message into something sublime, along the lines proposed by Cleanthes. If this is right, Philodemus' objection would be that neither technical knowledge nor versification makes a poem good. In addition, he rejects the disjunct 'resembling this' on the ground that it applies to all praiseworthy poetry and so is properly not a disjunct. Perhaps his opponents intended to draw a distinction between explicitly and implicitly didactic poetry.

By the end of Philodemus' sixth opinion, it seems that he has more or less covered the territory. Philodemus has dealt with sound, verbal style, and meaning; and he has dealt with two traditionally recognised aims of poetry, pleasure and instruction. His presentation so far has much in common with a parody offered by Northrop Frye.[73] Frye suggests that you take any three 'big names' in poetry and match them against each other; his examples are Shelley, Shakespeare and Milton. Shelley is rejected because he is 'immature in technique and profundity of thought'; Milton is too obscure; and Shakespeare reflects life, without attempting to improve it. Conversely, each poet is praised for his special qualities. This is a sterile exercise, according to Frye; and Philodemus would agree. But Philodemus has not yet exhausted the possibilities. He now proposes an assortment of definitions that cut across the distinction between style and content.

Philodemus' seventh opinion is strikingly novel. It marks a fundamental change in the attempt to define poetic goodness. We know the theory best from Roman

[71] Col. 29.28–33.

[72] Cols. 29.36–30.4: *ἢ δὲ | σύ[νθεσιν λέξ]εων προσ|δι[δάσκουσάν τι περιτ]τ[ό|τερον διὰ ποιήμ]ατος [ἢ τ]α[ύ]||τηι γ' ὁμοιωμένην*. Jensen's supplements are secured by their occurrence in the rest of the column.

[73] *Anatomy of Criticism* (Princeton University Press, 1957), pp. 23–4.

literature, particularly the writings on rhetoric; but the practice is exemplified ubiquitously in Hellenistic and Roman poetry. Zeno's list, which is our earliest evidence for the theory, shows that it was already well developed in the Hellenistic period before the Romans took it over. The new proposal is: 'to imitate well the [poems] of Homer and [others] who have been similarly handed down'.[74] In brief, poets are to imitate the ancients.

This view looks to the poetic tradition itself for an answer to the question of what makes a poem good. It offers an entirely new concept of 'imitation'. Instead of looking to the external world for objects of imitation, it proposes models from within the realm of literature; and instead of proposing general principles or rules to be followed by the poet, it proposes examples to be emulated. The new paradigms are poems sanctioned by tradition, beginning with Homer. This might be called a poet's view of what good poetry is. It betokens a faith in the poetic text, or perhaps a flight to it, away from the pontifications of those who would impose rules on it from outside.

That poets should imitate poets does not imply, of course, that they should stop imitating things. The ancients never abandoned the view that a poem represents some kind of reality. But the new notion of imitation gives priority to the imitation of poets over the imitation of things. What determines poetic goodness is how well a poem fits into a tradition of poetry, not how accurately it mirrors reality, whatever it may be. There is a tacit recognition that poets themselves determine criteria of truth. As the author of *On the Sublime* explains in a later period, the great authors of the past fill others with inspiration as though from a holy source. As a result, they 'will somehow lead the souls' of their imitators to 'the standards that are presented as images'.[75] The imitation is not a theft, but 'like an impression taken from beautiful forms or figures or works of craftsmanship'.[76] By replacing Plato's Forms, the new poetic models offer a way out of Plato's strictures on poetry. Although a poem is an imitation – even more so, in a sense, than in Plato's view, for it is an imitation of another poet's imitation – it is not trapped in falsehood. For the imitation raises the poet to a divine source of truth.

Philodemus offers some sharp criticisms of this new theory. The first is intended to jolt the reader into abandoning it at once: Homer and the others won't be good poets, he observes, because they didn't imitate themselves.[77] The new internalist view collapses because it leaves the creators of the tradition without models for themselves. Philodemus goes on to point out that the proposal does not agree with the ordinary notion of a good poem. Invoking the Epicurean theory that all judgements are made by reference to preconceptions (*προλήψεις*), he says that this is not how 'we have preconceived' (*προειλήφαμεν*) the goodness of a poem.[78] It is as though someone were to define justice as the imitation of Aristides, wisdom as the imitation of Epicurus, and so on. In sum, the selection of models is wholly arbitrary, so that the judgement of a poem becomes a matter of decree, *θεματικήν*.[79] Instead of replacing arbitrary standards, it turns out, the new standards are themselves arbitrary.

Philodemus reaffirms the need for external standards by arguing that since it is not considered 'right' (*ἐπιεικές*, with the connotation of 'decent') to imitate Homer, Euripides, and other admired poets in every respect, one needs to know what is appropriate and in what respect they are admirable.[80] The consideration of what is

[74] Col. 30.25–8: *τὸ εὖ μεμιμῆσ|θαι τὰ* ['*O*]*μήρου καὶ τῶν | ὁμοίω*[*ς π*]*αραδεδομέ*|*νων.*
[75] *On the Sublime* 13.2–4 and 14.1 (*τὰς ψυχὰς ἀνοίσει πως πρὸς τὰ ἀνειδωλοποιούμενα μέτρα*).
[76] *On the Sublime* 13.4.
[77] Col. 30.28–32.
[78] Col. 30.32–6.
[79] Col. 31.3–17.
[80] Col. 31.17–33.

'right' triggers mention of Euripides along with Homer. Philodemus is probably thinking of the erotic excesses for which both Homer and Euripides were notorious. The upshot of this argument is that we are thrown back to the need for general principles of good diction and thought.

The word 'well' in Philodemus' formulation is worth special attention. Later rhetorical authors, such as Quintilian, warn that the ancients are not perfect, and that writers imitate badly if they imitate the vices of the models.[81] 'Well' is a hint that the ancient models are to be used with discretion. Philodemus' subsequent objection that Homer, Euripides, and others are not to be imitated in every respect makes this clear. The new theory of imitation might be understood to imply the superiority of the ancients to the moderns; but it need not be interpreted in this way. Nothing in Philodemus' brief sketch or in the more detailed later accounts implies that a modern poet cannot match or surpass some ancient models at least by practising selective imitation. Later writers stress that the imitator is a rival of his predecessor, trying to outdo him in zealous competition.[82] By gathering what is best in various predecessors and contributing talent of their own, imitators may reach the very height of perfection. Dionysius of Halicarnassus tells the famous story of how the painter Zeuxis, when painting Helen naked, was allowed by the Crotonians to see their daughters naked, so that by selecting the best features of each, no matter how ugly she might be in other respects, he might produce a perfect form, *τέλειον εἶδος*. In the same way, Dionysius points out, it is possible to fashion 'immortal beauty', and not an 'image that will vanish in time', by uniting in one's own work the best features of previous writers.[83]

So far in his survey, Philodemus has not confronted either Plato or Aristotle directly. Although their influence is apparent in the formulations he has adduced, Philodemus has not dealt specifically with any of their proposals. In the eighth and ninth opinions, he touches upon statements made in their writings, even though he still does not engage with the ideas that a modern reader is likely to consider most important.

The eighth opinion is: 'to proffer diction that fits (*πρέπουσαν*) the characters who are introduced'.[84] This view hardly seems a complete theory of poetic goodness. Unless the poet-narrator is included as a 'character who is introduced', the definition seems to apply only to dramatic poetry, and then it omits much. The main reason it appears in Zeno's survey, I suggest, is that he has swept up as many explanations of poetic goodness as he could find. Foolishness does not disqualify any opinion; it simply underscores Zeno's main point, the inadequacy of literary theory. At the same time, Zeno has reason to take the opinion seriously. For, however foolish it was in its original setting, it admits of being expanded into a viable theory of poetic goodness and indeed was so reformulated in the Hellenistic period.

In the form presented by Philodemus, the opinion may be traced to Plato's *Ion*, where it appears as an explanation of poetic expertise and so may be taken as a definition of poetic goodness. When pressed by Socrates to admit that the rhapsode has no knowledge of crafts such as fishing and medicine, Ion proposes that the rhapsode knows 'what it is fitting (*πρέπει*) for a man to say, and what sort of things

[81] Quintilian 10.2.14–18; cf. Seneca, *Epistle* 114.17–20.

[82] See esp. *On the Sublime*, 13.2–4 and Quintilian 10.2.9–10.

[83] *De imitatione* 417, including: *πάρεστι καὶ σοὶ ... οὐκ ἐξίτηλον χρόνῳ γενησομένην εἰκόνα τυποῦν ἀλλ' ἀθάνατον τέχνης κάλλος*. Many versions of the story circulated, including one by Cicero (*De inventione* 2.1–3).

[84] Cols. 31.35–32.2: *τὸ λέξιν προσφέ|ρεσθαι πρέπουσαν τοῖς | εἰσαγομένοις προσώ|ποι*[s].

for a woman, and a slave and a free person, and a subject and a ruler'.[85] Since the rhapsode derives his knowledge from the poet, the same expertise, or lack of it, belongs to the poet. In the Hellenistic period, Panaetius transformed Ion's opinion into a definition of poetic decorum: poets observe the fitting (*quod deceat*), he said, 'when what is done and said is worthy of each character'.[86] Others, as we shall see, proposed more generally that poetic goodness consists in observing the 'fitting'.

Philodemus first objects to the scope of the definition. Sounding a refrain, he alleges that the definition is '[common] to prose, or if not [to all prose] to historical prose or, at any rate, to dialogues'.[87] Since not all prose contains direct speech, the definition could apply to the whole of prose only if the author is viewed as a character in his own composition. The reference to historical prose rests on an analogy between history and epic; both include direct speech along with narrative. At the very least, the definition would apply to dialogues, which correspond to dramatic poetry.

To view an author as a character in his own work may seem anachronistic. In rhetorical theory, however, the author-speaker acts as a character, *πρόσωπον* (Latin *persona*), in his own speech. The rhetorical handbooks emphasise the need for the speaker to fit the language to his own character, as well as to other characters.[88] In poetry, a distinction was made between the poet speaking in his own person, as narrator, and the poet impersonating the characters.[89] In either role, the poet could be viewed as adapting language to character. Especially when speaking in the first person, the poet may be regarded as assuming a role to which he must fit proper diction; but even simply as a producer of poems he has a role – as educator, entertainer, and so on – that he must express in fitting speech. If poet and speaker are indeed analogous in this way, then Ion's definition has much broader import than he recognised.

Predictably, Philodemus also objects that the definition is too narrow. He reiterates a point to which he is strongly committed: the proposal 'talks only about diction and dismisses thoughts (*νοήματα*), which have more authoritative power (*κυριωτέραν δύναμιν*)'.[90] The opponent might reply that the definition does not ignore thoughts, since these are expressed in the words spoken by a character. This is surely the intent of Ion's proposal. Philodemus takes up this possibility: 'If one should also supply thought (*διάνοιαν*), or the scribe omitted it, it is crazy to assign to the craft of poetry a knowledge of speech (*λόγων*) that fits each character'.[91] In this reformulation, the theory requires not just *λέξις*, but *λόγοι* – significant discourse, having both linguistic form and meaning. Against this broader view, Philodemus uses the same line of argument brought by Socrates against Ion. When Ion is reduced to claiming that the rhapsode knows 'what is fitting' for a man or woman, and so on, to say, Socrates asks: Does a rhapsode know what a slave who is a cowherd, or a woman who weaves, and so on, should say?[92] Generalising, Philodemus claims that the poet cannot possibly know what it is fitting for every character to say. At the same time, he admits

[85] *Ion* 540b: *ἃ πρέπει ... ἀνδρὶ εἰπεῖν καὶ ὁποῖα γυναικί, καὶ ὁποῖα δούλῳ καὶ ὁποῖα ἐλευθέρῳ, καὶ ὁποῖα ἀρχομένῳ καὶ ὁποῖα ἄρχοντι.*

[86] Cicero, *De officiis* 1.97: '... tum servare illud poetas quod deceat dicimus, cum id, quod quaque persona dignum est, et fit et dicitur.'

[87] Col. 32.2–6 (continuing the text cited in n. 84): *...[κοινὸν γὰρ] καὶ | τῶ[ν] πε[ζ]ῶν ἐστι λό|γων, εἰ δὲ μήγε, τῶ[ν] ἱστο|ρικῶν ἢ τῶν γε δ[ι]αλό|γων.* Jensen's supplement *κοινὸν* is strongly supported by the context, and by Philodemus' fondness for this type of objection (see, for example, line 32 of the same column).

[88] See, for example, *Ad Herennium* 1.8 and 3.11.

[89] Plato first elaborated this distinction in *Rep.* 3, see esp. 393a–b.

[90] Col. 32.6–10. [91] Col. 32.20–8. [92] *Ion* 540b–e.

that it is possible for poets to 'imitate' fittingly in a poem whatever they want to imitate.[93] Philodemus accepts the demand for fitting speech so long as the poet is free to select the subject-matter.

The last main problem that Philodemus raises about Ion's definition is: what makes diction 'fit' the characters? Singling out two types of characters. Philodemus says that 'to hint that a certain kind of diction suits gods and heroes is [worthy] of silly people'.[94] Most likely, Philodemus is here alluding to the commonplace notion that gods and, by extension, heroes have a special language. He may also have in mind Plato's distinction between two kinds of diction, direct speech and narrative. The former, Plato argues in *Rep.* 3, suits good characters, in particular gods and heroes, who alone deserve to be emulated, whereas the latter must be used to present bad characters.

Even worse, Philodemus continues, is another delusion: 'But it is completely mad to grope for (*παραψηλαφᾶν*) a similarity of diction to the things (*πράγμασιν*) that are shown'.[95] The Greeks developed a broad range of views on the relationship between language and things. At the basis of literary theories is the entirely uncontroversial notion that diction must reflect the type of subject-matter. Aristotle said that diction is fitting 'if it shows emotion and character, and corresponds to underlying things (*τοῖς ὑποκειμένοις πράγμασιν ἀνάλογον*)'; it corresponds, for example, if it is not offhand about grandiose things or solemn about trivial things.[96] Similarly, Hellenistic rhetoricians gave instructions on how to fit diction to both characters (*πρόσωπα*) and things (*πράγματα*).[97] What Philodemus condemns is not the adaptation of style to subject-matter, but the belief that the configuration of sounds somehow bears a resemblance to the things denoted by the words. Socrates explored this view in Plato's *Cratylus*; and the Stoics developed their own version of how words imitate things.[98] Distinguishing between onomatopoeic words and others, Philodemus insists in *On Poems* and elsewhere that it is impossible for sounds to imitate things, rather than just the sounds of things.[99]

Aristotle surfaces in the ninth opinion, although he is difficult to recognise. This opinion differs from all the others in that it defines the goodness of a poem solely by its effect on the listener. The poet, it is proposed, must 'be able to win over the listener even with speech that is contrary to expectation (*παραδοξολογίαις*)'. The tenth opinion is simply a narrower version: it restricts the poet's ability to moving (*κινῆσαι*) the educated.[100] Philodemus pronounces the restricted view more tolerable, on the ground that only the educated have comprehension. In an implicit attack on the

[93] Col. 32.28–32.

[94] Col. 32.10–14. Philodemus adds that it is better to say that a poet should 'imitate' fitting diction. His reason is, presumably, that this formulation does not commit the poet to reproducing the very speech of the gods and heroes.

[95] Col. 32.16–20: *τελείω[ς] | δὲ [μαν]ικὸν τὸ π[αρα]|ψηλαφ[ᾶ]ν ὁμοιότητα | λέξεως τοῖς δηλουμέ|νοις πράγμασιν.*

[96] *Rhet.* 3.7, 1408a10–13.

[97] See, for example, *Ad Herennium* 1.8, 1.13, 3.11.

[98] On the Stoics, see Hülser 643 and 644, and Asmis, 'Crates on Poetic Criticism' (cited above, n. 13). It is possible that Philodemus chose the rare word *παραψηλαφᾶν* to reflect the Stoic view that sounds imitate things in the way that things 'touch' the senses (Hülser 644.13–15).

[99] *On Poems* 4, col. 8.10–13 Sbordone; and *On Rhetoric* 4, col. 5.12–16, v. 1, p. 150 Sudhaus.

[100] Cols. 32.33–33.5: *[ἥ]τε λέ|γουσα τὸ δύνασθαι τὸν | ἀκούοντα [κα]ὶ πα[ραδο/ξολογ]ία[ις προσαγα|γέσ]θαι καὶ ἡ τὸ δ[εῖν μό]|νον κινῆσαι τοὺς πε|παιδευμένους.* I have adopted Mangoni's reading in 32.33. A crucial chunk of the ninth definition is missing from the papyri; but *πα[ραδο|ξολογ]ία[ις]* is supported by *πα|[ραδο]ξολογίαις* (Mangoni) at col. 32.23–4, and *[προσαγα|γέσ]θαι* is plausible.

professional critic, he adds that the educated person understands perfectly (*παντελῶς*) what is beautiful.[101] Against both definitions, he objects that they are common to some forms of prose, and that they make poetic goodness impossible.[102] His main objection is directed at the attempt to define poetic goodness in terms of the effect: it is necessary to say, he protests, what there is about the poem itself that moves the listener.[103]

Then Philodemus adds a criticism that points to the source of both views:

> They seem to prefer most cheap poems, which move [the listener] by reversals, by speech that is contrary to expectation, and by speeches of suffering, to those that are perfectly worked out, but proffer this least of all. Also, [listeners] sympathize and are moved most of all by certain thoughts belonging to the language. But for them, the goodness of a poem lies in the supervening, exceptional elaboration.[104]

Aristotle held that the best kind of tragedy has a reversal, surprises by what is contrary to expectation, and arouses pity and fear by the representation of suffering.[105] As Philodemus sees it, these requirements amount to cheap theatricality; they are nothing but a redundant, superficial adornment. Philodemus prefers carefully crafted poems that are distinguished by the quality of their thought. Along with Callimachus and other advocates of a 'slender' Muse, he implicitly overturns Aristotle's whole ranking of the genres of poetry. There is no doubt that Aristotle had an important influence on Hellenistic poetics; but, equally, there were those who thought that he had been superseded. Philodemus' criticism marks a major turning point in the history of Greek poetics.

In the last three views, Philodemus reverts from a poem's effect to the poetic composition itself. The views are extremely general: (eleventh) the goodness of a poet consists in the 'ability to compose every poem (*ποίημα*) beautifully'; (twelfth) it is the 'ability to compose poetry (*ποίησιν*) that has goodness; and, finally, it consists in the 'ability to preserve what is fitting (*πρέπον*) in every genre of poetry'.[106] The generality of these views invites the objection that they fail to explain precisely what needs explaining – 'beautifully', 'good poetry', and 'fitting'.[107]

That a poet should either compose poems beautifully or compose good poetry covers all possible views. The disjunction is a hypothesis set up by Zeno, rather than a report of opinions that were actually proposed. It is based on a new, Hellenistic distinction between 'poem' (*ποίημα*) and 'poetry' (*ποίησις*). This is roughly a distinction between verse and theme; and it was elaborated in various ways. As Philodemus attests earlier in book 5, the first known author to make the distinction is Neoptolemus of Parion (in the third century B.C.). Neoptolemus defined 'poem' as verbal composition and 'poetry' as theme, and classified them as coordinate divisions (along with 'poet') of the poetic craft. Others, including Philodemus, subordinated 'poetry' logically to 'poem' by defining 'poetry' as a poem with a complete theme. Philodemus cites the *Iliad* as an example of 'poetry', and both the *Iliad* and the first

[101] Col. 33.8–15. [102] Cols. 32.32–33.7. [103] Col. 33.15–21.

[104] Cols. 33.21–34.2: ...*ἐοίκασιν* ⟨*δὲ*⟩ | *τὰ πολλὰ τῶν εὐτελῶν* | *περιπετείαις δὲ καὶ πα*||*ραδο*]*ξολογίαις καὶ παθη*|*τ*[*ικοῖ*]*ς λό*[*γ*]*οις κινοῦν*[*τα π*]*ρο*|*κρίνειν τῶν ἄκρως μὲν πε*|-*ποιημένων, ἥκιστα δὲ* | *ταῦτα προσφερομένων.* | *καὶ συμπαθοῦσι* [*μὲ*]*ν καὶ* | *κινοῦνται μάλιστα προσ*[*όν*]||*τω*[*ν τι*]*νῶν καὶ τοῦ* [*λό*]||*γου δι*[*ανο*]*ημάτων, ἡ δ' ἀ*[*ρε*]||*τὴ τοῦ ποιήματος* [*ἐ*]*ν τῶι* | *διὰ τῆς κατασκευῆς παρε*|*πι*[*φ*]*αινομένωι πε*[*ριτ*]*τῶι* | *γε*[*γονεν αὐτ*]*οῖς.* I follow Mangoni at 33.22–4. [105] See esp. *Poet.* 11, also 9, 1452a1–4.

[106] The three opinions are stated at: cols. 34.3–5 (*ἀρ*[*ετὴ*]*ν εἶναι ποι*|*ητοῦ τὸ δύ*[*ν*]*ασθαι πᾶν* | *ποίη*[*μ*]*α σ*[*υνθ*]*εῖν*[*α*]*ι καλῶς*), 34.24–6 (*τὸ δύνασ*|*θαι σ*[*υνθεῖ*]*ναι ποίησιν ἀρετὴν ἔχουσαν*), and 35.17–19 (*τὸ ἐν παντὶ γένει ποιή*|*σεως τὸ πρέπον δύνασ*|*θαι τηρεῖν*).

[107] Cols. 34.6–13, 34.27–34, and 36.8–10.

thirty lines of it as 'poems'.[108] Whereas 'poetry' is exemplified in our sources only by epic, there is a general tendency to exemplify 'poem' by small-scale compositions, such as epigram or epistle.

According to the basic distinction, then, theories that deal only with verbal style fall under Zeno's first disjunct (composing poems beautifully), whereas those that deal with theme belong to the second (composing good poetry). As Philodemus' careful wording shows, the first group is concerned with the manner of composition ('how'), as expressed by the adverbial form ('beautifully', etc.). Philodemus notes that if 'poetry' is taken in the ordinary sense, so as to include epigrams and the poems of Sappho, there is no difference between the demand for good poetry and the demand for beautiful poems.[109]

The eleven and twelfth views, as I have designated them, are not set off schematically against each other. Rather they are steps in a dialectical progression that comes round in a circle. Philodemus first states the hypothesis that a good poet is one who can compose 'every' poem beautifully. This is one way of understanding a general demand for beautifully composed poems;[110] and it amounts to a very strict requirement. Philodemus then tightens the demand further by hypothesising that the poet needs to be able to compose 'every genre (γένος) of poem' beautifully. In that case, he says, it is completely impossible for a poet to be good, since no one has been able to do this, 'and couldn't, and indeed no poet has been uniformly good in a single genre'.[111] We know from an earlier part of *On Poems* that some euphonists held that good sound is the same in all genres.[112] On this view, it seems, a good poet is able to compose beautifully in every genre – something that Philodemus totally rejects. As the last step in the progression, Philodemus hypothesises that what is required is 'poetry that has goodness'; and this, he ends up suggesting, coincides with a demand for beautiful poems – in effect, his starting point.

Philodemus now tries out a last opinion, which he presents as actually held. That a poet should be able to preserve the 'fitting in every genre of poetry' looks like a version of a more general demand for fitting poetry, just like the previous demand for beautiful composition in 'every genre of poem'. It covers a multitude of theories of decorum. Plato previously proposed the identification of the 'beautiful' with the 'fitting' in *Hippias major*;[113] and Hellenistic thinkers developed the concept of 'fitting' into a major critical category. Like the notions of 'beautiful' and 'good' that it replaces, 'fitting' has moral as well as aesthetic implications.

Philodemus sees the appeal to the 'fitting' as another failed attempt to identify one of many requirements as the only requirement.[114] As we have seen, 'fitting' is one of several stylistic requirements recognised by Hellenistic theorists. Philodemus adds that if 'fitting' is measured by the standard of wisdom, σοφία, it is something impossible. This is an allusion to the Stoic view that only the wise person knows what

[108] Philodemus criticises Neoptolemus' distinction at cols. 11.26–12.17 of *On Poems* 5. Posidonius also defined 'poetry' as a logical subdivision of 'poem': a 'poem', he held, is 'metrical or rhythmical diction, with elaboration, going beyond prose form'; and 'poetry' is 'a poem with meaning (σημαντικὸν ποίημα), containing an imitation of divine and human things' (Diogenes Laertius 7.60, fr. 44 Edelstein–Kidd). Lucilius (339–47 Marx), Varro (*Parmeno* fr. 398 Bücheler), the scholiast on Dionysius Thrax (449.24–6 Hilgard), and the grammarian Diomedes (*Ars grammatica*, GL 1, 473.17–20 Keil) also distinguish between 'poem' and 'poetry'. See further Asmis, 'Neoptolemus and the Classification of Poetry', *Classical Philology* 87 (1992), 206–31.

[109] Col. 35.7–15.

[110] Philodemus' omission of this step may be compared to his omission of the simple demand for 'wise thought' earlier (see n. 64 above).

[111] Col. 34.13–24.

[112] PHerc, 460, tr. 2, frs. 17, 19, and 20, col. 1 Sbordone.

[113] *Hippias maior* 293e.

[114] Col. 35.20–2.

is fitting. Drawing on the Stoics, Cicero claims that the rhetorician must have wisdom in order to present both thoughts and language that are fitting; and he implies that the same is true of the poet.[115] Philodemus adds that if the fitting is simply 'in accordance with each character and thing (*πρόσωπον καὶ πρᾶγμα*)', it is also impossible to realise 'because the poet can preserve the fitting for some [characters and things], but neither knows nor has the ability for others'.[116] Philodemus raised a similar objection against the eighth opinion.

At the end, Philodemus has cut down a wide array of theories of poetic goodness by showing that they are empty of meaning, too broad, too narrow, impossible of fulfilment, or otherwise wrong. The reader may justifiably wonder whether any theory can withstand his criticisms. Where does the Epicurean view fit in? Philodemus has told us that there is a common notion of a good poem; and, according to Epicurean doctrine, common notions are true. Philodemus has also said that the educated person knows perfectly what is beautiful. We all know, therefore, what a good poem is, and some know it perfectly. Philodemus' critical survey does not tell us what makes a good poem, except indirectly. He recognises the need for many different stylistic features; and he considers that what is most important in a poem is the thought, and that it need not be useful. I have suggested elsewhere that his primary demand for good poetry is that it be intellectually pleasing.[117]

It is difficult to see how Philodemus could frame these requirements into a definition that would be invulnerable to his own objections. We might try to state his position as: a poem is good when it presents pleasing thoughts together with pleasing diction. But surely this opinion would require more explanation, among other shortcomings. Yet this may be just Philodemus' point. His entire survey is a dialectical preliminary to further exploration. A summary statement of the Epicurean view would be cut down just like all the listed opinions. The difference is that further philosophical reflection succeeds in setting up the Epicurean view again, whereas the others remain vanquished.

A breath of modernism runs through the whole of Philodemus' survey. Plato and Aristotle appear as distant figures that influence subsequent thinking but are cast in the shade by modern debates. Hellenistic literary theorists may be regarded as emulators of their own distinguished predecessors, vigorous in the pursuit of many different ideas. We can catch a glimpse of their innovations from Philodemus.[118]

The University of Chicago ELIZABETH ASMIS

[115] *Orator* 70–4, cf. 123.

[116] Col. 35.22–32. *πρᾶγμα* may also be understood as 'act'.

[117] Pp. 13–17 of 'Philodemus's Poetic Theory and *On the Good King According to Homer*' (see n. 67 above).

[118] An earlier version of this paper was read at Boston University and the Center for Literary and Cultural Studies at Harvard University. I am grateful to the participants for their comments and suggestions.