

BOOK REVIEW

Philodemus: On Poems, Books 3–4. With the Fragments of Aristotle, On Poets. By RICHARD JANKO. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2011. Pp. xvi + 629. Hardcover, £105.00/\$175.00. ISBN 978-0-521-11016-7.

Is traveling summer after summer to Naples in order to read the world's most recalcitrant (“illegible” is not always strong enough) papyri your idea of a good time? It is for Richard Janko, who describes one part of a his plan to make sense of the scraps before him—a part an ordinary classicist might regard as tedious—as “enthraling.” Having already published full-scale scholarly text and commentary of Book 1 of Philodemus’ *On Poets* (Oxford 2000; see my review at <http://bmc.brynmawr.edu/2002/2002-06-16.html>), a mere eleven years later he has produced a similarly impressive volume on Books 3–4. “Mere,” by the way, is not meant to be snarky; first, the time from submission of the typescript until publication of a text this complex could not have been short; moreover, few people can equal Janko’s industry, as is shown by the fact that while other scholars are working on other texts for the Philodemus Translation Project, only Janko has so far published; and now twice (Dirk Obbink’s equally impressive text/commentary on Phil. *Piety* I is not part of the Project.) He has, furthermore, already produced a rough text of Book 2 and has begun his commentary. (Book 5, long known from Jensen’s 1923 edition, will be edited for this series by David Armstrong, Jeff Fish and Jim Porter, but in the book under review Janko has occasion to quote his own transcriptions of many as-yet unpublished passages from Book 5.)

Ordinary papyri may come in incomplete jigsaw puzzle sets, but for the most part they lie flat and can be read with the naked eye, with a binocular microscope providing further help in reading abraded letters. Those from Herculaneum have been steam heated, stuck together like a newspaper brought in from the rain and left to dry, now impossible to unroll without significant physical loss. Janko, however, not only does the best he can with whatever has been separated over the two and a half centuries since discovery, he even learns from the stiff curved surfaces what is denied papyrologists reading rolls found in Egypt. By calculating diameters of curved sections containing only a few columns, he can determine the

length of the original roll and hence the length of the book. $C = \pi d$ is only the beginning of pages of painstaking calculations most of us have forgotten how to read. (Janko in the introduction is right to thank his father for forcing him to learn algebra when all he wanted to do was read Greek.)

If reading the papyri is not enough—with naked eye, with binocular microscope, with photographs taken through an infrared lens, with computer enhancement—there may also be the *disegni* now in Naples and Oxford, the drawings made in the eighteenth century of layers that were then destroyed in order to get to the layer stuck below. Further, as is the case with *Poet.* Book 4, there may be a vast amount of unpublished notes made by scholars over the last two centuries. Janko has tracked down, even discovered, many of these; and learned of notes made by Jensen that were destroyed during World War II.

This has been a long prolegomenon to hint at Janko's extensive proppattomena. Book 3 is included in this volume (if indeed it is from the third book) along with the meatier Book 4 because there is too little for it to be published separately, but has little solid to offer.

Book 4 is of great interest because in it Philodemus discusses poetic theorists, beginning (perhaps) with Democritus. As usual, Philodemus' *modus operandi* is to review *seriatim* the views of his opponents (Janko calls them "adversaries," which has a nice devilish ring). This produces great obstacles for modern readers, as the fragmentary nature of the papyri often makes it quite difficult to determine whether a particular sentence (which may in itself be largely comprehensible) is a belief of Philodemus or an opponent. Janko's keen sense of Greek style is valuable here, as he examines even the smallest passage for hiatus (assiduously avoided by Philodemus) and particularities of vocabulary usage, such as *μίμησις*, which Janko translates as "representation" when Philodemus is quoting Aristotle, and as "imitation" when part of Philodemus' own words.

The passage on Democritus is exiguous but still useful:

---.....]ν Δημοκ[ριτ---
 ---.... εἰ]δωλα τ[---
 --- (.) παρι]στάμεν[α
 --- μου]σικ[---

"Democritus ... images ... that present themselves ... music(?)"

Even if Janko's "music" is wrong, Philodemus' context alone sets this passage in such a context. Scholars have often tried to find a unified field theory that would explain all of Democritus' views, usually his scientific and ethical theories—an especially good attempt is C. H. Kahn, "Democritus and the Origins of Moral Psychology," *AJP* 106 (1985) 1–31—, but now Janko can show how his views of the inspired poet can also be folded into this unity (pp. 208–213), giving powerful support to the conclusions reached by I. G. Dellis, "Οἱ ἀπόψεις τοῦ Δημοκρίτου γὰρ τὴν ποιητικὴ ἐμπνευσι," in L. G. Benakis, *Proc. 1st Int. Cong. on Democritus* (Xanthi 1984) 469–83. My only objection is that Janko makes too much of the subtitle given the Democritean work, ἡ προνοίης, which has been added to *περὶ εἰδώλων*, as if it were Democritus' own, but surely this is Thrasyllus' addition, just like his subtitles to Plato's dialogues, using what can be thought of as an exegetical ἦ. Still, whether due to the author or to Tiberius' astrologer, it must say something about the contents of *περὶ εἰδώλων*, itself not necessarily a title given the work by Democritus himself; cf. J. Mansfeld, *Prolegomena: Questions to be Settled before the Study of an Author, or a Text* (Leiden 1994) 71–4 (on subtitles), 97–104 ("Thrasyllus on Democritus").

Among other topics, epic and lyric poetry are discussed, often, it would seem from the number of other poets named (e.g., Sophocles, Archilochus, Xenophanes), in comparison with and contrast to other genres, in order to point out ἴδια, "particularities" as Janko translates, which distinguish one genre from another. This could have been done without naming individuals, but—and this is an important part of Janko's argument—Philodemus is here discussing the views of Aristotle, who likes to support his general points with references to individual poets, as we see in his *On Poetry*. Since ancient testimony strongly suggests that he did this even more so in his *On Poets*, Janko makes a very good case that Philodemus' opponent for much of this book (and into Book 5) is Aristotle, chiefly for his views in this no-longer-extant dialogue. His name can be found for sure only once: col. 104.6–9 [τῶν περὶ τὸ]ν Ἀριστοτέ[λην]. (In fr. 3 col. i.7, ἀρισ[τοτέλης] was supplemented as Ἀρισ[τοτέλης] by Sbordone, but not by Janko.)

Janko has no trouble arguing that the phrase οἱ περὶ τὸν δεῖνα can mean ὁ δεῖνα himself, here Aristotle, but sometimes it can indeed simply mean the school of ὁ δεῖνα, in this case the Peripatus. Still, given Philodemus' regular practice, *einmal* is surely much more than *zweimal*. Moreover, Janko has no trouble finding Aristotelian origins or parallels for many of the passages in this section. The question is whether the references are, as he argues at length, to Aristotle's lost dia-

logue *Περὶ Ποιητῶν* or to one or another of his other works, especially given the number of parallels Janko himself cites from the *Poetics* or *Rhetoric*.

Believing that the former is indeed the case, Janko now gives us as the third part of his book the largest number of fragments ever ascribed to *On Poets*, one of the few Aristotelian dialogues not to have its own separate edition, such as those *On Ideas* (Fine), *Justice* (Moraux), *Philosophy* (Untersteiner), and the *Protrepticus* (Düring). Appearing here as a natural outgrowth of *Phil. Poems* 4, however, this long section cannot serve as a stand-alone commentary on its own, as would be desired by Aristotelians, since for the most part the brief commentary on the fragments refers the readers back to discussions tightly embedded in Janko's discussions earlier, within the Philodemus sections.

More important, though, is the question of how surely Janko's new fragments can be assigned specifically to *On Poets*. As with his equally problematic list of Theophrastan titles, Diogenes Laertius' compendious list seems to contain variants as separate works. The Theophrastus team (Fortenbaugh, Huby, Sharples, and Gutas) took the bull by the horns and simply arranged the many fragments ascribed to Theophrastus by subject matter, for the most part not bothering with assigning individual fragments to individual titles. For all the detailed argumentation Janko brings to bear on the nature of Aristotle's *Poetics* 2 and *On Poets* 1–3, absolute proof is lacking, barring a new papyrus discovery.

Nonetheless, even if my doubts (which is all they are) are valid, the crucial point is that Janko's reconstruction of the text would not be weakened in any way if Philodemus were arguing against one or more unidentified works of Aristotle—or even an unnamed Peripatetic associated with οἱ περὶ τὸν Ἀριστοτέλη. As with his first volume, which won the APA's Goodwin Award, and as no doubt will also be true of his forthcoming third volume on Philodemus' *On Poems*, Janko has produced a monument of classical scholarship.

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