

PHILODEMUS, *ON PROPERTY MANAGEMENT*

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Translated with an introduction and notes by

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This volume has been many years in preparation. One reason was the parallel work that I had been doing on my book *The Ethics of Philodemus*, which contains material about the treatise *On Property Management*, and also on the French translation of *On Property Management* in collaboration with Daniel Delattre, which appeared in the recent volume *Les Épicuriens* in the series of La Bibliothèque de la Pléiade. Another reason why I took such a long time was that I found it difficult to strike a balance between a fully edited text and the kind of text I had agreed to produce for SBL. However, the present book has profited by the delay in so far as it has been informed by the research and the scholarly input related to those other projects, and also in so far as the finished product is the outcome of many successive drafts of all its parts.

Elsewhere I have had the pleasure of acknowledging my intellectual debts to many Philodemus scholars in Europe and the United States with whom I have interacted during the last two decades. While I shall not mention them here by name, nonetheless I feel as obliged to them for their influence on the present monograph as I do for their help with my other contributions to Philodemian studies. On this occasion I wish especially to mention all those who have been directly involved in the preparation and the production of the volume at hand.

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I dedicate this book to my daughter, Eleni. May she come to see the wisdom of Philodemus's central idea, that the unrestrained pursuit of property and wealth is incompatible with the good life.

I have a pretty child, like flowers  
of gold her form, my precious Cleis;  
whom I would not exchange  
for all of Lydia, or the lovely land.  
(Sappho 132, trans. West)

Athens, Greece, January 2011

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## ABBREVIATIONS

<i>Ad. contub.</i>	Philodemus, [ <i>Ad contubernales</i> ] ( <i>To Friends of the School</i> )
<i>De div.</i>	Philodemus, <i>De divitiis</i> ( <i>On Wealth</i> )
<i>De elect.</i>	[Philodemus], [ <i>De electionibus et fugis</i> ] ( <i>On Choices and Avoidances</i> )
<i>De mort.</i>	Philodemus, <i>De morte</i> ( <i>On Death</i> )
<i>De oec.</i>	Philodemus, <i>De oeconomia</i> ( <i>On Property Management</i> )
<i>Ep. Men.</i>	Epicurus, <i>Epistula ad Menoeceum</i> ( <i>Letter to Menoeceus</i> )
<i>Eth. nic.</i>	Aristotle, <i>Ethica nicomachea</i> ( <i>Nicomachean Ethics</i> )
<i>Fact.</i>	Valerius Maximus, <i>Factorum ac dictorum memorabilium libri IX</i> ( <i>Memorable Deeds and Sayings in Nine Books</i> )
<i>Gorg.</i>	Plato, <i>Gorgias</i>
<i>Hist.</i>	<i>Historiae</i> ( <i>Histories</i> )
<i>Leg.</i>	Plato, <i>Leges</i> ( <i>Laws</i> )
<i>Oec.</i>	Xenophon, <i>Oeconomicus</i> ( <i>On Property Management</i> )
<i>Oeconomica</i>	Theophrastus, <i>Oeconomica</i> ( <i>On Property Management</i> )
<i>Op.</i>	Hesiod, <i>Opera et dies</i> ( <i>Works and Days</i> )
<i>Pol.</i>	Aristotle, <i>Politica</i> ( <i>Politics</i> )
<i>Rhet.</i>	Philodemus, <i>De rhetorica</i> ( <i>On Rhetoric</i> )
<i>Sent.</i>	Epicurus, <i>Ratae sententiae</i> ( <i>Key Doctrines</i> )
<i>Symp.</i>	Xenophon, <i>Symposium</i>
<i>Vitae</i>	Diogenes Laertius, <i>Vitae philosophorum</i> ( <i>Lives of the Eminent Philosophers</i> )



## INTRODUCTION

### THE CONTENTS OF THE WORK

Philodemus is an important Epicurean philosopher of the first century B.C.E. (ca. 110–ca. 40 B.C.E.). Born in the city of Gadara in the Near East, he lived much of his life in Italy under the patronage of L. Calpurnius Piso and became the leader of a group of Epicureans located in one of Piso's country houses at the town of Herculaneum, in southern Italy. That town was completely destroyed by the volcanic eruption of Vesuvius in 79 C.E. In the mid-eighteenth century, archaeologists working in Herculaneum excavated the so-called Villa of the Papyri, which was plausibly identified with Piso's residence and whose library contained charred papyri with works by Philodemus.<sup>1</sup> Many of his writings treat ethical topics from the point of view of virtue ethics, and they make significant contributions to that field.

Philodemus's treatise entitled *On Property Management*, Περὶ οἰκονομίας (*De oec.*, PHerc. 1424),<sup>2</sup> constitutes the last part of the ninth, unusually well preserved book of his work *On Vices and the Opposite Virtues*, Περὶ κακιῶν καὶ τῶν ἀντικειμένων ἀρετῶν, a multivolume ensemble that discusses individual character traits, including arrogance and flattery. Thematically, *On Property Management*<sup>3</sup> is complemented by the writ-

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1. See also below, pp. xli–xliii.

2. The text reprinted in this volume is Jensen 1906 with several new conjectures in the text and many modifications in punctuation (see also below, xliii). Laurenti 1973 contains an Italian translation and commentary on the treatise. Natali 1995 gives a survey of ancient philosophical approaches to οἰκονομία during the fourth century B.C.E. and the Hellenistic era. See also the edition and translation by Audring and Brodersen 2008.

3. Depending on the context, I usually render οἰκονομία as the management or administration of property, management or administration of the household, of one's estate, of wealth and property, of wealth and possessions, or of some combination

ing *On Wealth*, Περὶ πλούτου (*De div.*, PHerc. 163), of which only a few fragments survive.<sup>4</sup> By including it in a group of ethical writings dealing principally with character traits, Philodemus joins a long tradition of “economic” literature that flourished from the fourth century B.C.E. onward. Although οἰκονομία (transliterated *oikonomia*, property management) is not, strictly speaking, a virtue, it occupies a place in that tradition both because it crucially involves the exercise of the virtues and because it can be described as a disposition to have the right attitudes, beliefs, feelings, and so forth with regard to the possession and the administration of wealth. As such, οἰκονομία, according to Philodemus, is opposed to φιλοχρηματία, the love of money, the vice responsible for an excessive and harmful devotion to the pursuit of great wealth.<sup>5</sup> In the treatise *On Property Management*, Philodemus positions himself with regard to the “economic” tradition in two successive steps. In the first surviving part (frags. 1 and 2 and cols. A, B, and I.1–XII.2), he criticizes rival writings on property management, namely, the Οἰκονομικός (*Oec.*) of Xenophon and the first book of Pseudo-Aristotle’s Οἰκονομικά (*Oeconomica*), which Philodemus attributes to Theophrastus.<sup>6</sup> In the second surviving part (XII.2–XXVIII.10), he defends his own views about the administration of property and wealth.

*On Property Management* deserves our closest attention. It contains the most extensive treatment of οἰκονομία (property management) found in any Epicurean author, and, as will become obvious, it is more systematic and philosophical than rival approaches. It offers a thorough critique of the views of Xenophon and Theophrastus and gives us a better understanding of the moral issues generally pertaining to the acquisition

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of the above. Occasionally I use “economics,” “economic,” or “financial” for οἰκονομία and its cognates. These terms take their meaning from the ancient theories that I discuss. They bear no relation to modern conceptions of economics as a theoretical field that involves the study of, for example, value, exchange, money, the organizational management of state revenues, and the like. Natali 1995 remarks that most ancient Greek uses of οἰκονομία preserve the core meaning of the good organization and management of a complex structure.

4. The extant remains of the first book of *On Wealth* are edited by Tepedino-Guerra 1978.

5. Alternatively, opposed to φιλοχρηματία is no single virtue but a cluster of virtues involved in the administration of property according to the principles of Epicurean philosophy.

6. I shall henceforth refer to the author of the *Oeconomica* as Theophrastus, without prejudice to the question whether the attribution is correct.

and preservation of property and wealth. Philodemus asks, and gives a plausible answer to, a cluster of questions that ought to claim our interest: notably, whether the acquisition and maintenance of possessions are essential to our happiness, and to what extent our pursuit of these activities is compatible with the desire to live the good life.

## 1. TRADITIONAL APPROACHES TO PROPERTY MANAGEMENT: XENOPHON AND THEOPHRASTUS

Like the majority of ancient authors of treatises on *οἰκονομία* (property management), Xenophon and Theophrastus both take the administration of property and of the household (*οἶκος*, transliterated *oikos*) to be an art (*οἰκονομικὴ τέχνη*) with ethical and practical dimensions. In so far as it qualifies as such, property management is organized according to regulative principles, circumscribes a precise field of activity, and entails that the truly competent household manager is an expert in that field. Besides, in virtue of its technical character, it is believed to be teachable. The expert (*οἰκονόμος*, transliterated *oikonomos*) is in a position to transmit the general principles of the trade and can also give detailed instructions concerning the application of these principles to specific matters of economic practice. Teachings of this kind have a theoretical basis (*θεωρία*), in virtue of which they are put forward as pieces of advice about how to administer one's estate, supposedly delivered in a knowledgeable manner and with predictably good results.

In both theory and practice, property management is typically divided into four distinct domains, which correspond to four separate capacities of the expert in that art: the acquisition (*κτησίσις*), conservation (*φυλακὴ*), orderly arrangement (*διακόσμησις*), and use (*χρησίσις*) of possessions. The goal of each type of activity, and also of the art of property management as a whole, is to maximize profit and minimize loss (cf. "the more and the less"). In view of that goal, the good property manager perceives money-making (*χρηματισμός*) as a very important thing. One assumption that Xenophon and Theophrastus share is that there is no such thing as too much wealth. The more riches one can procure, the better it is, provided that they come through legitimate means and from socially acceptable sources. Another assumption that these authors make is that the property manager who is successful in greatly and rapidly increasing his estate is endowed with qualities and virtues that become manifest, precisely, in the exercise of his "economic" activities. On the contrary, a manager's failure

to augment and preserve his estate reveals his shortcomings and vices. Generally, while Xenophon and Theophrastus include *οἰκονομία* (property management) among the most important occupations of a well-rounded life, neither of them recognizes that there are potential conflicts between the priorities set by property management and other priorities.

The broad picture emerging from Xenophon and Theophrastus, and generally from traditional treatises on property management, is an ambiguous one. On the one hand, they import ethical categories into the discussion of that field. On the other hand, by attributing to property management a considerable level of autonomy and by endorsing its goals and values as an art, they frequently seem to lose sight of its ethical relevance. The ambiguity is all the more problematic because *οἰκονομία* (property management) is perceived not only as an objective discipline, a *τέχνη* or *ἐπιστήμη*, but also as a stable state of mind (*ἔξις*), a form of practical wisdom (*φρόνησις*).<sup>7</sup> However, it is difficult to see how property management can coincide with a virtuous disposition, when the property manager gives preponderance to financial objectives above all others.<sup>8</sup> This tension constitutes the main focus of Philodemus's criticisms against both Xenophon and Theophrastus.

Xenophon's treatise *Οἰκονομικός* contains two different approaches to the topic of the administration of property, one philosophical, the other mundane. Socrates converses with Critoboulos, a wealthy Athenian who lives beyond his income and who seeks advice in order to remedy his situation. Socrates asks Critoboulos some questions. These help Critoboulos become clearer about the nature of his problem, but they also afford a glimpse into Socrates' own attitude toward property management, in particular the use and value of wealth. Subsequently, Socrates, who asserts that he is ignorant about the art of property management (*Oec.* 2.12–13), narrates the views of Ischomachus, a virtuous gentleman and an expert in that art. It is mainly from him that Critoboulos will learn what he wishes in a single lecture. The features of Xenophon's exposition that constitute the main targets of Philodemus's criticisms are the following. In the first phase of the conversation, Socrates induces his interlocutor to concede

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7. See Natali 1995, 103.

8. The Stoics solve this problem by claiming that only the wise man is an expert in property management and only he possesses the relevant theoretical and practical disposition.

that the good property manager (*ἀγαθὸς οἰκονόμος*) should pursue what is useful or profitable (1.15). Whatever is profitable qualifies as wealth and possessions, whereas whatever is harmful is not wealth but loss. Hence the same things are wealth to those who understand how to use them but not wealth to those who do not (1.10). Money, but also friends, enemies, and possessions, are moral indifferents in that sense (1.12–15). Socrates calls “slaves of their passions” those people who have the required knowledge of *οἰκονομία* (property management) but are unwilling or unable to apply it to the administration of their own estates (1.19–20, 22–23). Although he does not consider Critoboulos one of them, he leads him to realize that he must strike a balance between his income and his needs (2.10). As to Socrates himself, he has found that balance (2.10). He calls himself rich because his small property of five minae is sufficient for his needs (2.2–3), while he calls Critoboulos poor for the opposite reason (2.2–8).

In the second phase of the conversation, Critoboulos learns from Ischomachus’s account how to increase and administer his estate. Salient elements include the detailed instructions that Ischomachus gives to his wife about everything related to the household: how to distribute the income and regulate the expenses per month and per year; how to treat the servants; how to arrange things in the house so as to find them at a glance; how to choose a housekeeper and instill in her loyalty and justice; how to oblige her husband and her children “by the daily practice of the virtues” (7.43); and how to preserve her own natural beauty by going cheerfully about her many tasks. Husband and wife are equal partners in the pursuit of a common goal: “to act in such a manner that their possessions shall be in the best condition possible, and that as much as possible shall be added to them by fair and honorable means” (7.15). Similar instructions apply to the master of the estate. He personally chooses and trains the supervisors (*ἐπίτροπος*), teaching them justice; develops his ability to rule men, in particular his servants and slaves, whom he observes closely; is an expert in all aspects of the agricultural art; and so on. Again, Ischomachus claims that that kind of *οἰκονομία* (property management) is easy to learn and pleasant (6.9), gives beauty and health to the body, and removes most concerns of the mind (6.9–13). It also goes hand in hand with the possession of the virtues.<sup>9</sup>

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9. Agriculture in particular, Ischomachus tells us, provides the surest test of good and bad men (*Oec.* 20.14).

As Philodemus remarks (*De oec.* VII.37–45), Theophrastus’s account is heavily indebted to Xenophon’s but makes additional claims as well. Theophrastus also treats *οἰκονομία* (property management) as an art and, moreover, compares it to the art of politics (cf. *Oeconomica* 1343a1–16).<sup>10</sup> He cites Hesiod’s phrase “homestead first, and a woman; a plough-ox hardy to furrow”<sup>11</sup> to lend support to his own claim that the main components of the household are human beings and possessions, because the latter are essential to nourishment, whereas human beings are the first necessity for a free man (1343a18–23). Regarding the human part of the household, he argues that the relation between a man and his wife is both natural and beneficial and contributes greatly to one’s happiness (1343b8–1344a8). He advises about the functions of the wife, the husband’s treatment of her, the wife’s virginity and habits of sexual intercourse, and her physical adornment. Also, he gives instructions as to how to procure and train both the supervisors of the property and the laborers (1344a23–b22), he regulates the correct apportionment of rewards or punishments, and he suggests ways in which slaves can be encouraged to be efficient.<sup>12</sup>

Like Xenophon, Theophrastus believes that another principal task of property management is to study the activities and arts by which one preserves and augments one’s possessions (1343a23–26). The good

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10. According to Theophrastus, *οἰκονομία* and politics differ in so far as they apply to different communities, the one to the *οἶκος*, the household, the other to the *πόλις*, the city-state, and also in so far as the government of the *οἶκος* is in the hands of one person, whereas that of the *πόλις* is entrusted to many people (1343a1–4). On the other hand, the two arts are similar to the extent that both are concerned with the making or the constitution of their objects, as well as with the use of them (1343a5–10). Theophrastus defines the *πόλις* in terms of “an assemblage of households, lands and possessions sufficient for living well” (1343a10–11) and infers from that that the *οἶκος* was formed before the *πόλις* and that, therefore, the art of household management is older than that of politics (1343a15–16).

11. Apparently the second half of the citation was not in the copy used by Philodemus. On this, see Armstrong 1935, 323–25.

12. For the purpose of understanding Philodemus’s criticisms, note Theophrastus’s recommendations that the master must not allow his slaves to be insolent nor, on the other hand, treat them with cruelty (1344a29–30); that he should give manual laborers abundant food but no wine at all; that he should hold festivals and give them treats; that he should avoid buying slaves who are either too cowardly or too spirited or who belong to the same nationality; and that he should encourage them to breed so as to keep their children and families as hostages for the slaves’ fidelity.



property manager should be skillful in all four traditional domains of *οἰκονομία* (property management): acquisition, as much as preservation, arrangement, and use of goods (1344b22–28). He should make sure that the amount of fruitful possessions exceeds that of unfruitful ones, avoid risking all his possessions at once (1344b28–31), determine beforehand the monthly and yearly expenditures, and generally get personally involved in every aspect of the administration of his estate.<sup>13</sup> For present purposes, it is important to note that the master of the estate should periodically inspect all implements and stores and the orderly arrangement of utensils. Both he and his wife should rise before the servants and retire after them. Both should closely supervise in person their special department of household work. They should never leave their home unguarded, which might mean getting up in the middle of the night in order to watch over it. Finally, they should not postpone any of their tasks (1345a12–18). Like Xenophon, Theophrastus maintains that these habits preserve one's health and are also conducive to virtue (1345a13–14). The same holds for the principal and noblest sources of income: agriculture and farming. However, mining, trade, and the art of war are suitable sources of income as well (1343a26–31).

## 2. PHILODEMUS'S CRITICISMS AGAINST XENOPHON AND THEOPHRASTUS

Philodemus's criticisms address several different aspects of Xenophon's writing, and they vary in scope and strength. We may distinguish between two sets of objections, the one concerning Socrates, the other Ischomachus. The main objections against Socrates are that he distorts the ordinary meaning of terms related to property management, that what he says is vitiated by ambiguity, and that he shows himself to be naïve or even irrational.

At the outset, Philodemus clarifies that the primary function of property management, as it is ordinarily understood, is to govern well one's own home and the homes of others, "with 'well' taken to mean beneficially on a large and prosperous scale" (I.8–10). The person who possesses

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13. Like Xenophon, Theophrastus is an admirer of the Persian and Spartan methods of property management, which require one's personal involvement in most aspects of the administration of one's estate. He also commends the Athenian method of selling and buying at the same time (1344b32–35, 1345a18–19).

the art of governing well will secure such benefits, live happily in his own home, and teach others how to do the same (cf. IIIa.6–16). Philodemus probably thinks that ordinary terms related to property administration, such as “wealth,” “profit” or “benefit,” “possessions,” “poor” and “rich,” “masters and slaves,”<sup>14</sup> and other related words, capture the usual and also the proleptic conception of property management and its functions, a conception based on *προλήψεις* (preconceptions), that is, fundamental notions derived from experience whose propositional content is always true.<sup>15</sup> Moreover, Philodemus seems to assume that so long as enquiry into these matters remains close to the relevant preconceptions, it will proceed smoothly and methodically and will lead to the truth. On the other hand, if one deviates from the familiar use of words, one is likely to ignore the corresponding preconceptions, conduct the investigation at random, and draw false inferences.

These are precisely the errors committed by Socrates.

[Although] ordinary language never uses [these names in this] way, this man crazily tries to deduce it from these names and forces it to have as masters, and as extremely wicked ones at that, the vices that act as hindrances, that is, idleness of the soul, carelessness, gambling, and inappropriate conversation, and turns those people who work and make [profits] for themselves but who [squander their household goods] into the [slaves of bad] masters—gluttony and drunkenness and ambition—things against which one must fight more than against [enemies]. (*De oec.* IV.1–16)

“Slaves” and “masters” refer to people in the household who have these respective positions and roles. By calling “slaves” the masters of an estate and “masters” the vices that afflict them, Socrates extends the ordinary meaning of the terms to a metaphorical meaning causing confusion.<sup>16</sup> A

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14. Recall that traditional treatises on household management discuss these topics and that both Xenophon and Theophrastus explore the roles of and relationships between masters and slaves.

15. Since *προλήψεις* (preconceptions) are criteria of truth, ordinary language is a good (though not infallible) guide to the truth.

16. Philodemus does not object to metaphors as such. His point is probably that Socrates’ metaphor is confusing, given the particular context in which it is used.

similar objection applies to Socrates' use of "possessions." On the basis of the definition of an estate as everything that a person possesses (Xenophon, *Oec.* 1.5), Socrates infers, therefore, that one's estate also includes the enemies that one possesses (1.7). On the other hand, in a fragmentary passage Philodemus remarks that, if "to possess" is understood in the principal sense, it refers to both the house and what one possesses outside the house, but the verb does not have its principal sense in the phrase "certain people possess enemies" (frag. I.19–21). The meaning that Socrates lends to "poor" and "rich" is subject to similar criticisms (IV.29–34). Calling rich a man whose entire estate is worth a small sum, but poor someone whose property is worth a hundred times more, entails speaking "in a manner involving opinion ([δ]οξαστικῶς), not preconception (οὐ προληπτικῶς) in accordance with ordinary usage" (V.2–4). Hence it is likely to obstruct the proper order of investigation and lead to error.

A related charge is that the conversation between Socrates and Critoboulos is vitiated by ambiguity.<sup>17</sup> "They never yet [seem to assume] the same meaning, because of [failure] to distinguish between different meanings" (*De oec.* VI.16–18). For instance, when Socrates says that he will talk about property management (cf. VI.18–19), he means the balance between his needs and his income, whereas Critoboulos has in mind the optimal preservation and increase of his property. Yet another set of criticisms is that Socrates appears naïve, impractical, and even illogical. He gives instructions about property management, although he has said that he has not been taught that subject by anyone (see VI.11–20). He is always out of touch with practical life (V.4–6). Further, some of his claims about money and prosperity are downright crazy. "Besides, as regards his claim that five minae seem to him sufficient for the necessary and natural needs of men, that prosperity in life [is something empty], and that he does not need anything more [in addition to those, it is impracticable and conflicts with reason]" (V.6–14).

Of course, Xenophon could respond that, in fact, Socrates is aware of his own shortcomings and therefore does not undertake himself to teach Critoboulos but defers to Aspasia and especially to Ischomachus, who are real experts in *οἰκονομία* (property management). Philodemus, however, scores several points against Ischomachus as well, some of which

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17. It is unclear whether Philodemus accuses Socrates of using ambiguity out of intellectual dishonesty or merely out of confusion.

apply also to Theophrastus (see *De oec.* VII.37–45). He argues that several instructions issued by Xenophon and Theophrastus are trivial, others have no theoretical justification at all, and others are not applicable in practice. Moreover, many of their doctrines are either irrelevant to the subject matter of property management or incompatible with the philosophical life.

The theoretical pretensions of Xenophon and Theophrastus are punctured in several instances. “[It is easy for everyone] to learn the age [of horses and men, even if no deeper underlying theory is available]. Indeed, Critoboulos was aware of the fact, which is common knowledge, that some men have wives who act in a cooperative manner with the goal of increasing the property, whereas others have wives who act in a very damaging way” (*De oec.* II.1–8). Nor did Critoboulos need the aid of philosophy to learn things about farming, for that art “as a matter of fact derives from personal experience, not from philosophy” (VII.31–33). In fact, one wonders “who has been educated by the doctrines mentioned above, other than the person who has already approved of them” (VII.2–5). Theophrastus also makes trivial claims, for example, about the treatment of servants.

The instructions concerning their [tasks], nourishment, and punishment are commonplace and observed by the more decent type of person, and they are not the special province of the philosopher. As to the precept that one should not use unreasonable methods of punishment, this does equally concern both theory and practice, but it should not have been taken up here in connection with the treatment of slaves. Otherwise, why should only this point be raised? (IX.44–X.7)

Besides, both Xenophon and Theophrastus advance positions that are arbitrary and lack theoretical support. For instance, there is no good reason to suppose that agriculture is in accordance with nature, that it constitutes the first and best source of income, or that mining and other similar activities are suitable for the good person (VIII.40–45). Nor should one accept without argument Theophrastus’s assertions that the house is the principal element of nourishment and the woman the principal element of free men (VIII.32–40). Equally unjustified are Theophrastus’s instructions about the way to approach one’s wife (IX.4–5), about marrying a virgin (IX.8–9), about the paramount importance of

slaves (IX.9–13), and about the recruitment, training, and distribution of tasks in the household to different kinds of servants (IX.13–26). Furthermore, Philodemus questions the practical applicability of Ischomachus's doctrines, in particular with regard to moral matters. Ischomachus does not make clear how one can teach the servants not to steal, let alone how one can develop in the property manager the capacity of making people just (VII.16–26). Ischomachus's idea that the good estate manager knows enough to be completely self-sufficient and does not need any advice is also unsound. "To posit that (beyond what he himself knows his bailiff) has no need of anything else I consider the mark of a fool" (VII.1–2).

Many of these elements fall outside the proper scope of *οικονομία* (property management). For instance, this holds for the analogy that Theophrastus draws between property management and politics, which, according to Philodemus, is both irrelevant and untenable (VII.45–VIII.24).<sup>18</sup> On the other hand, features that do belong to traditional property management are indifferent or harmful to the person who wishes to live the philosophical life. Both Xenophon and Theophrastus prescribe the activities pertaining to property management according to the Persian, Spartan, Libyan, and Attic methods (*De oec.* A.11–27, B.11–18),<sup>19</sup> in particular according to the fourfold division of the activities of the *οικονόμος* (property manager) mentioned above. By contrast, Philodemus contends that, of the four traditional domains of property management, the one that is truly useful for the philosopher is the preservation of possessions. Also, while Theophrastus recommends that the tasks of property management should be distributed in such a way as to avoid endangering all of the property at once, Philodemus replies as follows: "Of course, (this) is good advice for an ordinary person. But the philosopher, properly speaking, does not work, nor, if he ever works, does he seem to put everything at risk so as [to need exhortation] not to do it" (XI.11–21). The meticulous arrangement of possessions is central to the Persian method (A.18–20) and strongly recommended by Ischomachus and Theophrastus; Philodemus, however, views it as a waste of time.

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18. Philodemus seems to concede that *οικονομία* and politics are both arts. The Epicurean will not practice either of them as art, and while, as we shall see, he will practice *οικονομία* nontechnically, he will not practice politics at all.

19. See notes 2–6, 8, and 36.

Particularly interesting are Philodemus's criticisms of the importance that Xenophon and Theophrastus attribute to the wife. First, while they maintain that it is natural and useful to take a wife, Philodemus denies that she is important to the philosopher's happiness. Even if she contributes as much as her husband to the material prosperity of the estate, she is not necessary to one's happiness, if one is a philosophically inclined man (*De oec.* II.8–36). Second, Philodemus appears to object to Theophrastus on hermeneutical and logical grounds.<sup>20</sup> He concedes that Theophrastus's analytic examination of the two parts of the household belongs, on the face of it, to the subject of property management. Nonetheless, he considers mistaken Theophrastus's interpretation of Hesiod's division of the household into two parts, humans and possessions, mainly because of inconsistencies related to the theses that the wife is necessary to the free man and that she is an equal partner in the household. "It is worthwhile to enquire further how (Theophrastus) adds to these remarks that 'consequently, according to Hesiod, it would be necessary that "first and foremost there is a house and a woman," because the one is the principal element of [nourishment] while the other of [free men];' unless the wife is a possession just like food despite being a partner in the management of the household" (VIII.24–32). It seems, then, that Hesiod's phrase cannot be used to support the distinction of the primary parts of the household into human beings and possessions or Theophrastus's justification of it. I am unclear as to just what Philodemus's argument is here, but I think that it runs along the following lines. Theophrastus maintains that the wife is necessary to the free man in a sense analogous to that in which the possession of an estate is necessary to nourishment. This entails that the wife is a possession of some sort, while Hesiod's twofold division of the household into a house (or estate, more broadly) and a woman implies that the wife is something different from mere possessions. Besides, Theophrastus seems to contradict himself. For on the one hand, in the analogy mentioned above, he treats the wife, a human being, in terms of something that the free man needs and gets, that is, a possession. On the other hand, he claims also that the household consists of human beings and possessions, and thus he classifies the wife as a human being, not a possession.

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20. Although this objection may appear tedious, in fact it is difficult to reconstruct it, especially because there is no secondary literature on the relevant passage. Therefore I shall discuss that passage in some detail.

Further tension is caused by Theophrastus's view of the wife as an equal partner in the administration of the household. For if she is a possession, just like victuals are, she cannot be her husband's equal. So, it would seem that, in order to be consistent, Theophrastus would have to drop either the belief in the equality of the spouses or the distinction between two parts of the household, as well as the reasons that he gives in defense of it. In fact, we saw that Philodemus calls arbitrary the contention that the woman is the principal element of free men (VIII.34–35). Subsequently, he argues that this claim is simply not true. “(It is worthwhile to examine) [why], of the preoccupations of the household that deal with people, he assumes the one concerning the wife to be first and foremost, given that there can be a happy life even without her” (VIII.46–IX.3).

Concerning the care of servants and slaves, Philodemus rejects many of his rivals' views because he finds them harsh and even inhumane. Notably, he denounces Theophrastus's claims that no wine should be given to the slaves (IX.26–44) and that the master should bind his slaves to his service by holding their wives and children as hostages, which Philodemus considers even harsher than Xenophon's advice to raise the children of one's good servants but not of the bad ones (X.15–21). On the other hand, he also finds objectionable Theophrastus's instruction that the master should cater to the pleasure and entertainment of his servants, going to considerable trouble and expense for that purpose (X.21–28), for presumably this instruction entails more toils than benefits for the master, and it promotes the servants' pleasure rather than his own.

More generally, Philodemus's view is that the assiduous personal involvement of the property manager in every aspect of the administration of the estate involves practices “wretched and unfitting for the philosopher” (XI.30–31). Habits such as getting up in the course of the night reveal mistakes in the hedonistic calculus: they require toils that outweigh pleasures and therefore hinder our attainment of the moral end.<sup>21</sup>

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21. Philodemus maintains that getting up in the course of the night, especially when the nights are short, is damaging to health as well as to the study of philosophy (XI.38–41). Contrast the pattern of Ischomachus's life, which lends support to the suggestion that hard work is conducive to health and well-being. Ischomachus trains his wife and supervises her doings; thinks a great deal about the building and furnishings of his house and the layout of its contents; selects and constantly checks his servants, housekeeper, and supervisors; rises early, walks to his farm, superintends all the details of farm work, runs back home, has lunch, and returns to work right

A few more criticisms ought to be mentioned. Philodemus accuses Xenophon of introducing Ischomachus not only as a good property manager but also as a man of practical wisdom and virtue (VI.3–8), whereas he says or does things unworthy of such a man. The immediate context does not reveal just what these things are (see VI.1–3), but it seems likely that they are dictated by the goals of *οἰκονομία*, that is, property management, in which Ischomachus is an expert. Not only are they unphilosophical, but they may derive from vice. Moreover, Philodemus complains that the “cosmetic” part of property management does not take its place beside acquisition and preservation in the art of property management, if arranging things in the proper way and place is understood under “cosmetic,” but he does allow Xenophon to prescribe the kind of arrangement that adds pleasure to the useful part of the province of the manager (X.39–XI.3). Subsequently, he makes the point that “it is the mark of a mercenary person to advise having a greater quantity of ‘fruitful’ than of ‘unfruitful’ possessions—if, at any rate, by these (Xenophon) meant lucrative and unlucrative. For if instead he meant useful and useless in general, he should have recommended that everything should be useful and nothing useless” (XI.3–11).

The dialectical part of the treatise *On Property Management* ends near the beginning of column XII (XII.2). Philodemus, however, elaborates the above objections further in the expository part of the work, in particular in the systematic contrast that he draws between the traditional property manager and the Epicurean property manager, who aspires to live the philosophical life.

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afterward; puts an enormous amount of care and toil into the cultivation of his fields; and so on. The duties that he prescribes for his wife are no less cumbersome. She must receive the income, distribute as much of it as must be spent, and save the rest; regulate the expenses of the household per month and per year; make sure that the goods are properly stored or used; supervise, instruct, correct, reward or punish, and care for the servants, thus increasing their market value; and oblige her husband and her children “by the daily practice of the virtues’ (*Oec.* 7.43). Furthermore, she should arrange things in the house so that “a glance will reveal anything that wants attention, and the knowledge of where each thing is will quickly bring it to hand so that we can easily use it” (8.10). She must choose the housekeeper and instill in her the virtues, notably loyalty and justice. She must attend to the possessions herself, if she wishes to have optimal results. If Ischomachus is to be believed, all this labor will help her preserve her physical beauty better than any cosmetics might.



### 3. PHILODEMUS'S APPROACH TO PROPERTY MANAGEMENT AND THE DEBATE BETWEEN THE EPICUREANS AND THE CYNICS

“We shall discuss, then, not how one can live well at home, but what attitude one must take up both with regard to the acquisition and the preservation of wealth, concerning which property management and the property-management expert are in fact conceived specifically, (and we shall do so) without contending at all with those who prefer to make other meanings underlie the terms and, moreover, discussing the acquisition (of property) that is appropriate for the philosopher, [not] for just anyone” (*De oec.* XII.5–17). This passage contains certain programmatic remarks that circumscribe the scope of Philodemus’s approach to *οἰκονομία* (property management) and define the nature of his subject. Unlike Xenophon and Theophrastus, he will narrow down the scope of his treatment of *οἰκονομία* and its practitioners. First, he announces, he will not discuss property management in terms of a general ethical subject pertaining to both public and private aspects of daily life. Rather, he will concentrate on the specifically economic tasks of acquisition (*κτῆσις*) and preservation (*φυλακὴ*) of property on the assumption that these are, in truth, the principal activities indicated by the ordinary use of *οἰκονομία* (property management) and its cognates. Moreover, he will abstain from verbal or semantic debates concerning the ordinary and the technical meanings of such terms. His purpose is not to survey various definitions of property management and other related concepts but rather to examine the main activities involved in estate management and our moral attitudes toward them. Principally, he will address neither the gentleman nor the layman but the philosopher broadly conceived, namely, anyone minded to live according to the principles of the Epicurean doctrine. Further, he will not be concerned with limitless wealth but only with a proper measure of wealth as well as the philosopher’s capacity for managing it. These restrictions place Philodemus’s discussion of Epicurean property management on the right philosophical footing. It does not bear on the pragmatics of the household nor on ways and means of becoming and remaining rich. Chiefly, it aims to determine how and to what extent people who desire to live the philosophical life can engage in property management without compromising their ethical principles or endangering their happiness. The last restriction in particular bears on the objection that the philosopher should not have any property to administer but should provide for his rudimentary needs on a day-to-day basis. Philodemus addresses that

objection by drawing on an older debate between Metrodorus and the Cynics, who had proposed that the philosopher should live in utter poverty in order to be carefree (see XII.29–XIV.23).

According to Philodemus, Cynics and Epicureans agree that the best life is free from toil and worry but disagree as to how it can be attained, especially in respect of the possession and administration of wealth. On the one hand, the Cynics advocate a beggarly lifestyle for the reason that wealth is troublesome and, therefore, harmful to one's peace of mind. On the other hand, Metrodorus maintains that a peaceful and happy life is obtained not by avoiding all toils and efforts but by opting for things that may involve a certain amount of trouble at present but relieve us of much greater concerns in the future. Wealth is such a thing, as are health and friendship. Although its possession and administration doubtless requires thought and labor, it is better to have it than not, for its presence allows the virtuous man to live pleasantly, whereas its absence is responsible for deprivation and distress. The only way in which the Cynics might be able to establish that the possession of natural wealth (*φυσικὸς πλοῦτος*, XIV.19)<sup>22</sup> is less preferable to the daily provision of goods would be to prove that, in fact, the former entails more pains and efforts than the latter. However, following Metrodorus's line, Philodemus suggests that it is highly unlikely that such a proof would be forthcoming. One practical implication of the Epicurean position is that the good person should not reject as useless the wealth that may come his way. The entire argument is based on the rational calculation of pleasures and pains and also makes use of the concept of natural wealth, which is related to the concept of the measure of wealth (*πλούτου μέτρον*).<sup>23</sup> Since Philodemus's presentation of Epicurean *οἰκονομία* (property management) involves both these notions, I shall explain them briefly.

In outline, natural wealth is one of the many objects that we naturally seek in order to satisfy natural desires and thus feel pleasure. In so far as this kind of desire has a limit, natural wealth also has a limit, and, besides, it is easy to obtain (Epicurus, *Sent.* 15) precisely because it is natural (Epicurus, *Ep. Men.* 130).<sup>24</sup> Correspondingly, the measure of wealth that is appropriate for the philosopher covers the range of the philoso-

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22. See note 38.

23. See notes 38 and 39.

24. See note 54.

pher's natural needs. "There is for the philosopher a measure of wealth that, [following] the founders of the school, we have passed down in [the treatise] *On Wealth*, resulting in an account of the capacity to administer the acquisition of this and the preservation of this" (XII.17–25). Further, in so far as the measure of wealth satisfies the philosopher's natural needs, it is slightly superior (*De div.* LI.27–30) or, from another perspective (see *De oec.* XIV.9–23), clearly preferable to poverty. In fact, there is tension in Philodemus's position. On the one hand, he emphasizes the instrumental importance of wealth and its administration for the good life. On the other hand, following the authorities of the school, he holds on to the view that the difference between possessing and lacking wealth, and between preserving it and not preserving it, is but small (XVIII.25–31), and he suggests that the superiority of wealth is mainly practical rather than moral. Roughly, the position that he maintains is the following. "More" wealth may be better than "less," because of the serenity and the material comforts that it affords when it is correctly used. Further, "more" wealth can be interpreted in many ways, since Philodemus does not fix precisely how much money and possessions are optimal for the philosophical life. On the other hand, "more" corresponds somehow to "the measure of wealth" but never amounts to the open-ended goal of traditional *οἰκονομία*, namely, to amass as many riches as possible through decent and lawful means.

Recall that Xenophon and Theophrastus postulate that the administration of property constitutes a domain in which its practitioners manifest important features of their personality and character and, notably, virtues and vices. Philodemus also shares that view, and he bolsters his own position about property management by contrasting two kinds of property manager: the traditional *οἰκονόμος* (property manager); and the philosophically minded manager who acts according to the principles laid down by Epicurus.

Philodemus describes the right approach to property management in terms of a certain easy attitude required of the philosopher toward the acquisition and preservation of possessions and specifies that attitude by referring to the elements deriving from the philosopher's disposition and beliefs. Notably, the philosopher should not care too much about the goal of traditional property management, the more and the less, but should cultivate some kind of emotional detachment with regard to his gains and losses (*De oec.* XIV.23–XV.3). He should be able to do so in great part because he holds true beliefs (or knowledge), first of all, about the nature of our desires and inclinations. He correctly believes that "there are within

us natural [desires] for more goods" (XVI.30–31), on account of which we should choose to preserve our wealth in so far as no unseemly labor is involved (XVI.25–28). But he is also convinced that wealth has no intrinsic value and that he can live happily without it (see XV.31–XVI.18). What makes it possible for the philosopher to feel and act in such a way is, indeed, his confidence that Epicurus was right in saying that natural and necessary desires are easy to satisfy and that their fulfillment is all that the philosopher needs in order to pursue his way of life. At the same time, as mentioned, he has a correct appreciation of the instrumental value of wealth, which motivates his efforts as a property manager and is related to his natural inclination toward "more goods" (cf. XVI.30–31). In fact, if the philosopher acquires more possessions than he had before, he should accept them, provided that they come to him in a blameless and effortless manner (XVI.44–46).<sup>25</sup> Generally speaking, he holds true beliefs about what is and is not profitable and makes choices accordingly (XIII.20–23).

Dispositional elements underlie the philosopher's property management also in so far as he provides for the needs of his fellow Epicureans and makes some of his wealth available to his friends. In particular, Philodemus mentions in many places the philosopher's attitudes of goodwill, benevolence, and gratitude; his generosity and philanthropy; and his thorough appreciation of the value of friendship. The text may or may not contain references to donations that the philosophical property manager makes to the Epicurean school, to communal administration, or to both. For example, "one's readiness to share things very much on one's own initiative" (XV.2–3) may or may not allude to regular contributions to the Epicurean community. Also, Philodemus's statement, that the Epicurean manager is capable of exhorting men "to share all their wealth (freely) inspired by his confidence in the adequacy of few possessions and assisted by the discourses of the sage" (XVIII.4–7), can be taken to imply a reference to communal administration but does not need to be read in that way. In any case, Philodemus's thesis is not merely that the easy attitude of the sage toward the administration of wealth is *compatible* with having friends but that it is in part *shaped* by their presence or absence. "That the wise man administers these goods in such a manner is a consequence of

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25. In this respect, Philodemus's approach to *οἰκονομία* accommodates his audience, which is partly constituted by very wealthy Roman patricians, including Philodemus's patron Piso.

the fact that he has acquired and continues to acquire friends” (XV.3–6). Their needs and pleasures figure prominently in his calculations concerning his monthly and yearly expenses, the distribution of his income, and the manner in which he provides for the future.

Thus the Epicurean *οικονόμος* (property manager) spends money carefully and in proportion to his income (XXV.23–24) without, however, acting like a miser. He keeps flexible the amounts that he spends per month and per year, as well as the ways in which he allocates his income to different things (XXV.31–42), because he occasionally wishes to spend much more than usual on his friends or because the circumstances and his sense of decorum sometimes guide him to offer gifts rather than to buy furnishings for his house or store up his belongings (XXV.42–XXVI.1). When he needs to retrench in his expenses, he makes sure that the cuts are not excessive or undignified and that they primarily affect him rather than his friends (XXVI.1–9).<sup>26</sup> Moreover, the claims of friendship determine the extent to which he needs to save and make provision for the future. “If one has friends, one should save more in order that they may have [means of maintaining themselves] even after one’s death, and one should regard them as one’s children. On the other hand, if one does not have friends, [one should relax] not only the practice of saving money but also the more parsimonious management of property” (XXVII.5–12). Generally speaking, the philosopher acts in these matters “like those who sow seeds in the earth” (XXV.17–18). What he spends on his friends represents a more profitable acquisition than lands (XXV.2–3) and enables him to reap many times more fruits in the future (XXV.16–23). In that sense, caring for one’s friends entails also providing for one’s own future (XXV.11–12). “This strategy both gives us good hopes right now and, when it comes to be present, it makes us happy” (XXV.12–14). As Hermarchus said, it is the treasure that is most secure against the turns of fortune (XXV.3–4).

As to the virtues, the Epicurean property manager is free of greed, the principal vice related to wealth, but possesses the virtue standing opposite to greed, which is not identified in the treatise. We could determine it in negative terms, as the absence of greed or of the love of money (*ἀφιλοχρηματία*).<sup>27</sup> Alternatively, we might identify it as *οικονομία* (prop-

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26. See note 75.

27. The term does exist in the Greek language, although authors rarely use it.

erty management), since Philodemus opposes the good *οικονόμος*, the good property manager, to the *φιλοχρήματος*, the lover of money (XVII.2–14). In any case, that virtue is found together with social virtues, namely, liberality, goodwill, gratitude, and the willingness to return favors, and also coexists with one's disposition to make and keep friends. Additional virtues are manifested in the relationships of the Epicurean manager to his subordinates, especially servants and slaves: mildness of character, sensitivity, humanity, philanthropy, and decency (cf. IX.32; X.15–21; XXIII.4–5, 20–22). We shall see below that he expresses his gratitude to the sages who have instructed him by offering them gifts (XXIII.27–29), and if he himself is a teacher, he gracefully accepts the gifts of his students (XXIII.30–32). His inclination to ask other people for practical advice indicates that he is not afflicted by arrogance and presumption (XXVI.24–28), and his manner of regulating expenditure shows generosity as well as moderation and prudence. Finally, the philosopher does not suffer from the vices that obstruct putting one's desires and fears in good order<sup>28</sup> but possesses precisely the virtues that contribute to the successful preservation of his property (XXIII.36–XXIV.19). He has moderation in his lifestyle, temperance in respect of physical pleasure, modesty and unaffected manners, fortitude with regard to pain, and justice. He does not fear the gods or death and does not suffer from the vices connected with such fears.<sup>29</sup> In short, he cultivates all the major virtues in practicing *οικονομία* (property management) in the belief that to do so is both morally good and financially expedient.

In sharp contrast, the traditional property manager, whom Philodemus describes as an expert,<sup>30</sup> sets it as his goal to have as many gains and as few losses as possible and increase his property to the greatest extent possible by honorable means. The writings of Xenophon and Theophrastus highlight the fact that the expert manager is intensely involved in all four types of activities related to his art (acquisition, preservation, arrangement, and use) but attribute the greatest importance to the acquisition of money and possessions. Comparably to the case of the Epicurean property manager, Philodemus describes the expert's approach to

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28. The idea seems to be that vices are closely related to unruly desires and fears, which drive one to the pursuit of valueless and harmful things; many of these things have to do with the aggressive acquisition and possession of great wealth.

29. See also *De elect.* XXI.2–XXIII.13. Philodemus is probably the author of that work.

30. See below, pp. xxx–xxxiii.

property management mainly in terms of a certain disposition and of the feelings, attitudes, beliefs, and character traits characteristic of that disposition. In addition, he mentions specific practices dictated by the expert's single-minded pursuit of wealth and indicates how they are harmful.

Unlike the philosopher, the traditional *οικονόμος* (property management) is not easygoing concerning matters of his art. He develops "an obsessive [zeal] concerning the more and the less" (*De oec.* XIV.26–27), in virtue of which he is willing to subject himself to grave troubles and the heaviest labors. Because of his zeal, he is very much distressed about his losses and is elated about his gains (cf. XIV.23–25). Trying to maximize his revenues, he often puts all of his eggs in one basket, either by distributing financial tasks in certain ways (XI.11–14) or by investing in possessions belonging only to one kind (XXVI.34–39). These practices lead him to endanger all of his property at once, sometimes reducing himself "to utter poverty" (XXVI.38–39.). More generally, his excessive attachment to the goal of "the more and the less" is responsible for the practical and emotional instability of his life. He makes himself vulnerable to extreme changes of fortune and is also racked by violent emotions, including anxiety and fear about the future. These drawbacks are increased by the fact that the traditional manager has no true friends. Further, he could not have any, since, according to Philodemus, he perceives friends as obstacles to his primary goal, the maximal growth and efficient administration of his estate (XXIV.41–46). Also, the expert manager is indifferent to the calls of society and to the sufferings of other human beings. He resists paying visits to people (XXVI.9) and does not mind making money from his slaves' forced labor in mines (XXIII.4–5).

The expert manager's obsession with wealth is dictated by empty beliefs and the endorsement of worldly values. Unlike the Epicurean manager, he confuses the natural desire for more goods with nonnatural desires whose satisfaction requires great wealth. He sees that kind of wealth as fundamental to his well-being. He considers profitable only what contributes to "the more and the less" and unprofitable the opposite. As we shall see, he ranks highly the sources of income that bring glory or spectacular gains without calculating how much toil and trouble they may involve for himself or for others. Philodemus suggests that such beliefs lead the expert manager to make mistakes in the performance of hedonistic calculations, for example, to judge that the absence of friends is more profitable than their presence. In sum, he lives a life full of concerns, hard work, tension and fear, sudden changes, and personal and social loneliness.

Unlike the Epicurean property manager, the traditional property manager exhibits major vices in pursuing his tasks. The central one is probably the love of money or greed. In addition, Philodemus's criticisms of Xenophon and Theophrastus indicate that the traditional manager is affected by arrogance and stupidity (*De oec.* VII.2), presumption (VII.21–26), harshness (IX.32) and inhumanity (X.15–21), possibly imprudence (XI.11–16), and certainly folly. Philodemus mentions these vices in the second part of his treatise and adds also to the list several other faults of character. Greed is often accompanied by avarice, insensitivity, ingratitude, and a lack of generosity and goodwill. These traits are responsible for the fact that the traditional manager tends to live a friendless life (*ἀφιλία*, XXIV.20). Moreover, deriving one's income from a military career betrays vain glory and a lack of wisdom (XXII.24), deciding to practice the art of horsemanship is dictated by similar traits, and getting revenues from the work of slaves in mines (XXIII.4–5) in most circumstances shows lack of humanity and callousness.

Besides, Philodemus asserts that certain vices hinder the correct management of one's desires and fears.<sup>31</sup>

Of the recommended activities leading to profits and the maintenance both of these and of the possessions that one had beforehand, one must keep in mind that the principal one consists in managing one's desires and fears. For, [usually], nothing drains and ruins the most illustrious and [richest houses] so much as [extravagance in lifestyle], lechery, ostentatious actions, [effeminate behavior], and similar things and, again, the chilling fear of the gods, of death, of pains and of the things that are believed to produce them. Consequently, if one removes from oneself, to the extent that it is possible, the envy of things that are not to be envied and the fear of things that are not to be feared, one will be able both to procure and to preserve (one's property) in the appropriate manner. Injustice, too, is thought to bring about each one of these things (sc. the acquisition and preservation of property), but, in fact, afterwards it takes away the greatest part not just of what one has gained but also of what one has had beforehand. It follows that, if one actually practices

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31. See note 68.



justice, one will both obtain and safeguard the gain acquired in conformity with it. (XXIII.36–XXIV.19)

Philodemus completes his argument by claiming that every major fault of character is bound to affect one's attitudes toward property management and by emphasizing in that manner the close relation between *οικονομία* (property management) and ethics. "Indeed, I believe that absolutely every vice raises obstacles to the pleasant collection and to the maintenance of one's possessions, whereas their opposite virtues contribute considerably to them" (XXIV.35–40).

#### 4. THE EPICUREAN PHILOSOPHER AS A PROPERTY MANAGER

However, Philodemus appears to entertain the following objection. Precisely because the Epicurean property manager administers his estate according to philosophical priorities, he is a bad manager, or at least a worse manager, than the expert in all four domains of property management, namely, the acquisition, preservation, arrangement, and use of wealth. While the traditional or expert manager assiduously concerns himself with "the more and the less," the Epicurean administrator gets sidetracked by ethical considerations and does not aim at the maximal increase of his property. Moreover, virtues such as generosity, philanthropy, and the disposition to care for one's friends are morally desirable, but they harm the growth and preservation of one's estate in ways in which their corresponding vices do not.

Philodemus's response to this charge is complex and ingenious. In the first place, he points out that the philosopher cannot reasonably be called a bad manager in the ordinary sense of the term. On the one hand, regarding the acquisition and preservation of great sums of money, the philosopher falls short of being an efficient manager in the ordinary sense, for "he will not be able to acquire a very large quantity of possessions and in a very short time" (XIX.4–5), and even if he does, it will not be easy for him to keep it (XVIII.37–39). "Nor (will he be able) to examine closely in what manner the greater part of his possessions could increase as much as possible" (XIX.4–7), since he does not measure them according to financial criteria (XIX.7–12). Nor yet will he be able to watch always with eagerness over the possessions that he already has, because this would require a level of worry and effort that he does not deem worth his while (XIX.10–23).

On the other hand, at least in so far as estates of reasonable size are concerned, the philosopher cannot be called a bad manager (XVI.21–25), for he does not waste his wealth but preserves it. Also, a bad manager is not successful in his activities, whereas the Epicurean administrator is. He will not fail “[if he administers] his estate with ease by aid of [reason] itself and of the [common] experience that is adequate for the management of one’s possessions, though not for excessive moneymaking” (XVI.32–39).

In the second place, the preconception (*πρόληψις*) of the good moneymaker (*ἀγαθὸς χρηματιστής*) points to the sage as the ideal moneymaker. Consider the following passage.

We must not, on the other hand, [violate] this (sc. the meaning of the expression “the good moneymaker”) through [the ordinary usage] of linguistic expressions, as sophists do, especially as we would be showing nothing about the acquisition and use (of wealth) pertaining to the wise man. Rather, we must refer to the preconception that we possess about a good moneymaker, ask in whom the content of that preconception is substantiated and in what manner that person makes money, and ascribe the predicate “good moneymaker” [to whomever it may be in whom] those features are attested. For just this reason, if we want to claim that, in the preconception, the good moneymaker is the one who acquires and takes care of wealth in accordance with what is advantageous, then we must proclaim that the sage above all is such a man. But if, on the other hand, in the preconception, we apply the quality of the good moneymaker rather to the man [who obtains for himself] many possessions with ability and expertise, and also not in a dishonorable way but lawfully, however much it may be true that [in this mode of acquisition] he encounters more sufferings than pleasures, then we must affirm that it is people other than sages who belong to that category (sc. of good moneymakers). (XX.1–32)<sup>32</sup>

Philodemus recognizes that the expression “the good moneymaker” is ambiguous and that the relevant preconception can be developed in two different ways, one attaching the property of the good moneymaker to a

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32. See note 57.

good person, the other attaching it to a person who is good at making a maximal amount of money by legitimate means. However, Philodemus relies on the clarity and the criterial power of the preconception in order to unpack the *πρόληψις* (preconception) of the good moneymaker in the right way: it is instantiated in the philosopher, not in the expert, as many people think.

In the third place, Philodemus defends the distinction between the expert property manager and the philosopher, drawing a clear line where the philosopher's involvement with *οικονομία* (property management) ought to stop:

Thus, the wise man perhaps cannot be called in equal measure at one and the same time an expert (*τεχνίτης*) and a producer of possessions (*ἐργάτης*) collected in great quantity and in a short time. For in fact there is an empirical practice (*ἐμπειρία*) and ability (*δύναμις*) specially related to moneymaking, too, of which a good man will not have a share, nor will he watch the opportunities in combination with which even this kind of ability could be useful. For all these things characterize the person who loves money. Nevertheless, (what holds in this case) at any rate appears to be exactly like what holds in the case of several other practices in which, although there exist good professional workmen, each one of us could accomplish quite well, as it were, at least what is sufficient for our needs. We observe this, for example, in the production of bread or in the preparation of food. For everybody is able to make such things for himself to the point of meeting sufficient needs, although there is an empirical practice involving expertise [about] them as well. Now, it seems that something like this holds also regarding the acquisition and preservation of property. For even if we are not, like certain people, experts in amassing and preserving wealth nor earnest and persevering managers of property, [nonetheless] there seem to be many persons who are not bad at this, at least to the point of finding what they need and not [totally] failing in this matter by acting randomly. The good man, too, must be counted among these people. (XVII.2–40).

Philodemus concedes, once again, that there is such a thing as the *τέχνη* of *οικονομία* (the art of property management) and that there exist

experts in that field. On the other hand, he asserts that the philosopher does not possess the art in question, nor does he qualify as an expert in that sense. The main criterion, then, according to which he distinguishes the ordinary manager from the philosopher seems to be cognitive: the former possesses a form of knowledge, an art or τέχνη, that the latter does not possess. It seems reasonably clear that here “art” (τέχνη) is not a strictly rationalistic concept but involves experience as well as theory. In fact, in this work Philodemus generally uses τέχνη as an equivalent to ἐμπειρία or ἔντεχνος ἐμπειρία, that is, an empirical activity involving expertise or artful practice.<sup>33</sup> Thus he describes the expert (τεχνίτης) in terms of the man who has the practical ability to achieve certain results in a regular and knowledgeable manner, rather than conjecturally and at random.<sup>34</sup> In the case at hand, the expert (τεχνίτης) in moneymaking has the ability to gain and preserve money in a certain and predictable way, comparable to that of craftsmen in practical knacks such as breadmaking. On that conception, an art (τέχνη) has theoretical dimensions as well. These mainly consist in the systematization of a body of knowledge according to certain principles or rules and in the attainment of the goal of the art (τέχνη) through their regular application. The contents of Xenophon’s and Theophrastus’s works give us a glimpse into the regulative principles of property management, and we find in Ischomachus an excellent instantiation of a τεχνίτης, an expert, in that art.

On the other hand, Ischomachus can equally well be taken to represent what the philosopher most emphatically will *not* be. The philosopher will not conduct the administration of his property in a technical manner but will rely instead on common experience accompanied by reason (see XVI.34–35), for these suffice to secure the financial means to a stable and tranquil life (XIV.46–XV.1). The reason why the philosopher will always resist becoming an expert in the administration of property is found in the following passage. “It is not, then, disagreeable that there should sometimes be another person of this kind, in the role of a servant, just like the expert in the production of bread. But that he himself (sc. the true philosopher) should be a producer of such things is inappropriate.

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33. See Tsouna-McKirahan 1996, especially 710. On the Epicurean concept of τέχνη and the distinctions pertaining to it, see Blank 1995.

34. See Philodemus’s definition of τέχνη in *Rhet.* 2, PHerc. 1674 XXXVIII.5–19; Longo Auricchio 1977, 123. The text is translated and discussed by Blank 1995, 179.

For this kind of acquisition, when measured against toil, is no longer profitable” (XIX.23–32). Ultimately, the expertise of the ordinary manager and the common experience of the philosopher are not merely a matter of what each one does or does not know, but also of what kind of person each one is. To dedicate the time, thought, and effort that it takes to become an expert in property management, one must endorse the values and objectives set by that art, much as a servant must make his own the values and goals of his master. This the philosopher refuses to do. He knows enough about property management to cater adequately to his needs and those of his friends. More than that would entail abandoning the values of Epicurean philosophy together with all hope of attaining serenity and happiness.

##### 5. PHILODEMUS ON THE APPROPRIATE SOURCES OF INCOME

Predictably, Philodemus’s assessment of the traditional sources of income (XXII.6– XXIII.36) is also conducted according to criteria drawn from Epicurean ethics. The basis of his assessment consists in the kind of reasoning that Metrodorus uses against the Cynics. “His (sc. Metrodorus’s) continuous effort has been to establish that occasional disturbances, cares, and labors are far more useful in the long run for the best way of life than the opposite choice” (XXII.9–18). Following him (cf. ἀκολουθοῦντες, XXII.17–18), Philodemus considers different ways of earning a living in the light of the hedonistic calculus and thus determines which ones are appropriate for the philosopher.

First, Philodemus refutes the traditional view that the best way of earning an income is to practice the military art—winning goods by the spear. In truth, only unwise and vainglorious men make that choice (XXII.17–28), presumably because they do not measure correctly the many pains of the military life against its few pleasures. So, Philodemus undertakes to refute those authors who praise the achievements of men of action and who consider philosophers inferior to such men.

Indeed, they generally appear to attribute these [achievements] to the politicians and the men of action, so that one could often ask what in the world is left for those who [devote themselves to study] concerning the truth and who consider all these issues. For at least according to them, the people who do all the noble deeds that contribute to the tranquillity that derives from the most

important things (sc. politicians and military men) and those who contemplate the truth are not the same people, but obviously they will claim either that the ones who are wonderfully gifted regarding the search for truth [do not have] the excellence that achieves this aim (sc. tranquillity), or that nothing remarkable is accomplished because of it, [or that] if a city or army were led by those who excel in wisdom.... (XXII.28–48)

It is unclear which opponents Philodemus has in mind here. Whatever their identity may be, their accusations against the philosophers imply a complete dissociation of the practical from the contemplative life. They maintain that tranquillity “that is generated from the most important things” (XXII.39–40) results from the actions of politicians and military men, not from the theoretical contemplation of philosophers. “The most important things” are, presumably, things such as the independence of one’s country, personal freedom, material prosperity, and so on.<sup>35</sup> The main assumption underlying the charge is that peace of mind crucially depends on external rather than internal, psychological factors. As Philodemus suggests, there are different ways in which the opponents can press their charge. One may contend that, although philosophers have intellectual virtues, they do not possess the kinds of virtues through which tranquillity is achieved, whereas men of action do. Alternatively, one may concede that tranquillity is the achievement of the philosopher but maintain that it has no value. Another suggestion could be that only some ideal ruler in the future, who would combine the virtues of the contemplative and of practical men, would secure tranquillity for himself and the state (see XXII.46–XXIII.1). Philodemus reacts to these arguments by pointing to facts. The *Lives* of notorious men of action, such as Gellias of Sicily, Scopas of Thessaly, and the Athenians Kimon and Nicias,<sup>36</sup> reveal that they had neither practical nor contemplative wisdom; they were driven by vainglory and led miserable lives (XXII.20–28).

Philodemus evaluates other traditional sources of income on similar grounds.

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35. Contrast the Epicurean meaning of τὰ κυριώτατα, namely, the fundamental principles of Epicurean philosophy (cf. *De elect.* IX.10; XI.8–9).

36. See notes 60 and 62.

It is [utterly] ridiculous to believe that it is good thing to earn an income from practicing the art of horsemanship. Earning an income “from the art of mining with slaves doing the labor” is unfortunate, and as to securing income “from both these sources by means of one’s own labor,” it is a mad thing to do. “Cultivating the land oneself in a manner involving work with one’s own hands” is also wretched, while (cultivating it) “using other workers if one is a landowner” is appropriate for the good man. For it brings the least possible involvement with men from whom many disagreeable things follow, and a pleasant life, a leisurely retreat with one’s friends, and a most dignified income to [those who are moderate]. Nor is it disgraceful to earn an income both from properties rented to tenants and from slaves who have skills or even arts that are in no way unseemly. (*De oec.* XXIII.1–22)

Philodemus does not seem to reject the equestrian art out of hand but simply points out that it is not a good thing, probably because it is strenuous and toilsome. But the possibility is left open, I think, that there might be circumstances in which the philosophically minded person might have to earn a living from engaging in that art. Provided that he does not hold false beliefs about its intrinsic worth, he may have to practice it to the extent that it is useful. Severe restrictions apply to making money from working in mines. It would be “crazy” for the philosopher to make a living by working himself at mining, and it would be “unfortunate” to do so by having his servants work at mining.<sup>37</sup> The former is rejected outright on account of the hedonistic calculus, whereas the latter is merely discouraged probably in the name of Epicurean philanthropy: Philodemus suggests that the philosopher should avoid making money in a manner that involves heavy toil and occasionally death for others, although he tacitly acknowledges, I think, that circumstances might sometimes necessitate such a distasteful course of action. He adopts a comparable attitude toward agriculture: working the land in person cannot be justified in hedonistic terms, but earning an income as a landowner through the agricultural labor of one’s servants is highly recommended as “a most dignified” (*εὐσχημονεστάτην*, XXIII.17–18) source of income. The very occupation that the philosopher should not accept for himself, he should

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37. See note 64.

tolerate and even desire for his farmers. Ultimately, the reason might be egoistic: the farmers' manual labor secures a pleasant life for the philosopher.<sup>38</sup> Two further sources of earning a living, which tradition considers ungentlemanly, are also legitimate on the grounds of the hedonistic calculus: rentals (probably of houses or other buildings, not of land); and the skillful work of slaves. In so far as neither of these sources involves excessive toil, and assuming that the slaves' occupations are not indecent,<sup>39</sup> the philosopher may get revenues from both (XXIII.18–22).

“However, these sources of income come second and third. The first and noblest thing is to receive back thankful gifts with all reverence in return for philosophical discourses shared with men capable of understanding them, as happened to Epicurus, and, [moreover], discourses that are truthful and free of strife and, [in short], serene, since in fact the acquisition of an income through [sophistical] and contentious speeches is [in no way] better than its acquisition through demagogical and slandering ones” (XXIII.22–36). There is a long tradition in Greek literature according to which the occupation of the philosopher is ranked first in order. However, the passage cited above contains the first instance in which the teaching of philosophy is identified as the first and best source of moneymaking: it perfectly suits the philosopher's lifestyle, and in addition it is not really payment, but gifts that the sage receives from thankful students in return for the privilege of conversing with him. This last point is brought out by the contrast between the sage's discourses and the speeches of sophists and demagogues (XXIII.32–36)—whom I take to be mainly teachers or practitioners of forensic or political rhetoric.<sup>40</sup> Unlike them, the sage does not sell his ideas, nor does he use them to get power. He imparts his wisdom in conversation and accepts tokens of gratitude from people who understand and appreciate him.<sup>41</sup> As to the landowner, we may think of him in terms of a gracious host who offers his country property as a peaceful retreat where philosophy flourishes and true enjoyment is attained.<sup>42</sup>

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38. Again, see note 64.

39. As would be, for example, prostitution.

40. See note 56.

41. On the notion of gratitude and its role in contexts concerning payment for teaching, see Blank 1985.

42. See notes 65 and 66.



## THE PAPYRUS

PHerc. 1424 is one of the large collection of papyri excavated from the so-called Villa of the Papyri at Herculaneum in the mid-eighteenth century. These papyri, widely believed to have originated from Philodemus's own library, suffered carbonization during their long burial following the eruption of Vesuvius in 79 C.E. The majority of them were unrolled over the years with varying degrees of success and are still preserved at the *Officina dei papiri ercolanesi*, in the National Library in Naples. Despite their deteriorating condition, they can still be fruitfully read with the help of microscopes and the photographic technique known as multispectral imaging (MSI). In addition, we have the further evidence provided by pencil-drawn fascimiles (known as "apographs" or "disegni") that were produced by draughtsmen, mainly in the early nineteenth century. One set of these, the Oxonian apograph (O), is now in the Bodleian Library in Oxford, while another set, the Neapolitan apograph (N), is preserved in the *Officina* in Naples.<sup>43</sup>

The inventory of the Herculaneum papyri does not mention the name of the person or persons in the *Officina* who unrolled PHerc. 1424. It seems likely that the papyrus was unrolled in 1791 either by Gennaro Casanova or by Antonio Lentari or Gian Battista Malesci. The Neapolitan apograph (N) was probably drawn by Casanova in 1791–1792. In any case, N must have been drawn before the Oxonian apograph (O) prepared under the supervision of John Hayter sometime between 1802 and 1806. A second Neapolitan apograph was drawn by Carlo Orazi, probably in 1814. The autopsy of the papyrus and the use of multispectral images lend support to Jensen's claim (1906, x–xii) that N is far superior to both O and Orazi's Neapolitan apograph, which are in fact similar to each other: N has a fuller text than O; it contains in the margin *sovrapposti* and *sottoposti* (fragments of, respectively, later and earlier layers that need to be distinguished from the proper content of each column) lacking in O; where there are lacunae, the Neapolitan apographist indicates the size and number of the missing letters more accurately than the apographist who drew O; and many details indicate that the Neapolitan apographist was more careful and skilled than his counterpart. Consequently, Jensen's edi-

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43. More information about the Herculaneum papyri can be found, for example, in Gigante 1995 and in the introduction to Sider 1997.

tion is primarily based on N, but also Jensen has marked the discrepancies that O exhibits where they seem to have some value in restoring the text. Information concerning the papyrus itself is found in Jensen's apparatus, and traces of letters found in N but omitted from the edition that Jensen used to establish his own text (Javarone 1827) are found both in Jensen's apparatus and in the *tabula* attached to his edition.

Physically, at the time of Jensen's edition, PHerc. 1424 was estimated to have had a length of approximately 2.20 meters and a width of approximately 20 centimeters. It was (and still is) glued on eight *cornici* (frames). The first frame contains fragments 1 and 2 and columns I, II; the second fragments A and B1, columns III–VI and fragment B2; the third columns VII–X; the fourth columns XI–XIV; the fifth columns XV–XVIII; the sixth columns XIX–XXII; the seventh columns XXIII–XXVI; and the eighth columns XXVII–XXVIII as well as the title of the work. The numbers of lines per column varies from forty-five to forty-nine, while the number of letters per line varies between eighteen and twenty-five. The top and bottom margins of the papyrus are very damaged or completely destroyed. While the first six first columns are extremely lacunose, the subsequent columns are well preserved and serve as the basis of an almost complete text to the end of the work. Five stichometric letters written in the left margin<sup>44</sup> indicate that the scroll initially contained approximately ninety-eight columns. Hence, following Jensen (1906, xvi), we may infer that the extant remains of PHerc. 1424 constitute approximately one quarter of the original papyrus scroll.

Palaeographically, PHerc. 1424 has been classified by Guglielmo Cavallo in Group P, together with other papyri of Philodemus's ensemble *Περὶ κακῶν* (for instance, PHerc. 1008). The letters are even, regular, and clearly separated from one another. There are no abbreviations, ligatures, or, generally, cursive elements. Orthographically, the quality of the writing testifies to the scribe's ability and diligence. There are several idiosyncratic

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44. Jensen (1906, xvi–xvii) indicates five places in which stichometric letters occur: a Π with a line over it, which is a *sovrapposto* in the margin of IV.38 but that belongs in fact to VI.38; an Υ in X.23; a X in XVIII.16; a Ψ in XXII.2; and an Ω with a line over it in XXV.42. As Jensen calculates, the successive stichometric letters of the alphabet occur 180 lines apart; assuming that the scroll begins with an A and ends with the Ω in XXV.42, the scroll probably contained approximately 4,500 lines distributed over approximately ninety-eight columns (for his justification of the numbers, see 1906, xvi–xvii).

elements<sup>45</sup> and also some mistakes that, however, are neatly corrected. When the scribe writes -ει instead of long -ι, he usually corrects the -ει by putting a dot over the -ι (see Jensen 1906, xi). When he makes a mistake of one letter, he usually writes the correction above the line.<sup>46</sup> On the other hand, when he makes a mistake in several successive letters, he corrects the mistaken letters by putting dots over them.<sup>47</sup> Concerning punctuation, the *paragraphos* is marked under the line of the left part of the column. There are three examples of a double *papagraphos* (XVIII.7; XXI.35; XXIV.19). The scribe almost never leaves a space at the end of a sentence. However, he quite frequently adds a point (marked with an asterisk by Jensen) at the end of a sentence, above the line. Besides, both at the end of the refutation of Philodemus's rivals (XII.2) and at the end of the book the scribe draws a *coronis*. Finally, at the left of some verses (frag. II.12; V.5; 13.7) there is a mark that looks like a line slanting upward to the right, but there is no firm indication as to what it may mean (see Jensen 1906, xii).

#### EDITIONS AND CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE TEXT

PHerc. 1424 was first edited by Thom Gaisford in *Herculaneusium Voluminum pars I* (Gaisford 1824), 83–105, and soon afterward by Francesco Javarone in *Herculaneusium voluminum quae supersunt tomus III* (Javarone 1827). Other editions previous to Jensen notably include: Karl Wilhelm Göttling, *Ἀριστοτέλους Οἰκονομικός. Ἀνωνύμου Οἰκονομικά. Φιλοδήμου Περὶ κακιῶν καὶ τῶν ἀντικειμένων ἀρετῶν θ'* (Göttling 1830); Georg Friedrich Schömann, *Specimen observationum in Theophrasti Oeconomicum et Philodemi librum IX de virtutibus et vitiis* (Schömann 1839); Johann Adam Hartung, *Philodems Abhandlungen über die Haushaltung und über den Hochmut und Theophrasts Haushaltung und Charakterbilder, griechisch und deutsch, mit kritischen und erklärenden Anmerkungen* (Hartung 1857); the contributions of Leonhard Spengel in the serial *Gelehrte Anzeigen* (Munich) 7 (1838): 1001–16; 9 (1839): 505–28, 533–36; and Heinrich Perron's Ph.D. dissertation, "Textkritische Bemerkungen zu Philodems Oeconomicus" (1895).

45. See Jensen's index verborum.

46. Jensen notes the two exceptions to that practice: in VII.3 the -α has changed into an -ε, and in XV.9 the -κ has changed into a -χ.

47. A good example is XI.32.

In the present volume, the text of PHerc. 1424 is based primarily on Jensen's text, but it also contains new readings. I have worked from my own readings of the papyrus in 1989–1990 and in 1995, from the originals as well as copies of N and O, and from the multispectral images of the papyrus (MSI). Textual footnotes are intended to serve as a very limited apparatus, indicating the new readings and juxtaposing them with Jensen's text. In some cases a brief explanation or comment is supplied as well. The translation uses square brackets to indicate those places in which a given passage or word is heavily restored, whereas it does not use square brackets for supplementations that appear to me fairly certain. Parentheses are intended to clarify or to complete the meaning of a word or phrase, but neither the parentheses nor what is included in them correspond to anything in the Greek text. Philodemus's parenthetical phrases are placed in between dashes. The text offered in this volume differs in several places from Jensen's text regarding punctuation, in part because of new conjectures indicated in the apparatus and in part because the new punctuation reflects a different sense of the flow, musicality, or structure of the relevant passages of the Greek text. The introduction offers an overview and analysis of the central argument of the text as well as information concerning the papyrus. The Notes section following the text and translation supplies additional comments about textual matters, explains particularly obscure passages and arguments, contains relevant historical or factual information, and points to conceptual and philosophical connections between different parts of the text and also between *On Property Management* and other works by Philodemus and other Epicureans. Importantly, several of these notes highlight Philodemus's intertextuality, the way he reads and engages with the "economic" works of his main rivals, Xenophon and Theophrastus. For *On Property Management* offers a unique opportunity to see Philodemus at work as an interpreter and a critic of treatises that have the same subject as his own book but that reflect different philosophical perspectives.

The present volume aims to be accessible to readers who have an interest in the subject but do not necessarily know Greek. The text and the translation are juxtaposed on left and right pages, respectively, and one can read the one without looking at the other. Although Greek terms are occasionally used in the introduction and the Notes, nonetheless they also are always translated. There is much material for specialists as well—classicists, philosophers, and historians particularly interested in ancient conceptions of *οἰκονομία*, property management, and their admittedly tenuous rela-

tion to modern economics. The subtlety, complexity, and importance of Philodemus's treatment of that topic and also the new readings of the papyrus ought to point to the need for a new critical edition of PHerc. 1424.