

PRESOCRATIC TEXTS FROM HERCULANEUM

VASSALLO (C.) *The Presocratics at Herculaneum. A Study of Early Greek Philosophy in the Epicurean Tradition.* (Studi Praesocratica 11.) Pp. xxii + 763. Berlin and Boston: De Gruyter, 2021. Cased, £118, €129.95, US\$149.99. ISBN: 978-3-11-072698-5. doi:10.1017/S0009840X2300046X

The main part of V.'s volume, 500 pages long, amounts to an edition and translation of – and selective commentary on – the references to ‘Presocratic’ intellectual figures and their thought found in published Herculaneum papyri. This comes to 195 numbered texts across 40 figures: Acusilaus, Alcmaeon, Anacharsis, Anaxagoras, Anaxarchus, Anaximander, Anaximenes, Antiphon, Critias, Damon, Democritus, Diogenes, Diogenes of Apollonia, Diotimus, Empedocles, Epicharmus, Epimenides, Euryphon, Gorgias, Heraclitus, Hippias, Hippocrates, Ion, Leucippus, Melissus, Metrodorus of Chios, Metrodorus of Lampsacus, Musaeus, Nausiphanes, Orpheus, Parmenides, Pherecydes of Syros, Philolaus, Prodicus, Protagoras, Pythagoras, Thales, Thrasy Machus, Xenophanes and Zeno of Elea.

Well, nearly all. Socrates is not among this list, for reasons unspecified but guessable. (V. does not really give his criteria for inclusion [see pp. 80–4] except in the case of Diogenes of Melos [pp. 78–9].) Hermann Diels, logically, did not include Socrates among the *Vorsokratiker*; and Socrates is said not to have written anything, which evidently distinguishes him from Musaeus, Orpheus, Thales and Pythagoras (though see IV 24.27–31). Still, Socrates was an early Greek philosopher discussed in the Epicurean tradition (see the texts in the volume numbered IV 14, V 28, XI 53, XV 81; and also D. Clay, ‘The Trial of Socrates in Herculaneum’, *CErc* 33 [2003], 89–100; F.J. Campos-Daroca, ‘Epicurus and the Epicureans on Socrates and the Socratics’, in: C. Moore [ed.], *Brill’s Companion to the Reception of Socrates* [2019], pp. 237–65; neither cited). Socrates lived no later than some figures included, notably Nausiphanes and both Metrodoruses. And he seems more philosophically central than, say, Anacharsis and perhaps Epicharmus. (Epicharmus, for instance, is included because there are two references to a putative saying, μή τὸ παρὲν εὖ ποιεῖν, and two more possible echoes; but these seem quite uninformative [despite pp. 489–92]. Where Anacharsis is cited, his saying is not included [III 11].) At any rate, no Socratics are covered.

Sometimes texts are given simply because an earlier scholar has conjectured their relevance, even if doubtful. A text ascribed to Critias, IX 38, seems hardly an allusion to the Sisyphus fragment, as V. recognises but does not affirm (p. 391). (There is another posited but dubious allusion to the Sisyphus fragment in Diogenes of Oinoanda, NF 126, discussed at pp. 644–5.) For some authors, the guessing game might be a bit more fruitful: of the 26 texts ascribed to Democritus, at least nine do not cite him (XI 49, 50, 51, 55, 60, 61, 62, 63, 65).

V. claims several times that scholarship on ancient philosophy has taken inadequate note of the Herculaneum evidence (e.g. pp. ix, 80); he cites A. Laks and G.W. Most’s Loeb edition of *Early Greek Philosophy* (2016) in particular. Giving this evidence its deserved attention leads, V. states, to this project’s major findings: ‘the attribution of an earlier date to the attested tradition of the so-called “scepticism” of Xenophanes; the complete reconstruction of the Epicurean reception of Democritus . . . with particular reference to the problem of the movement of atoms, and of human freedom; a new reconstruction of testimonia to Nausiphanes’ concept of φυσιολογία, Anaxagoras’ physics and theology, and Empedocles’ epistemology; and new texts for better comparing the doxographical sections of Philodemus’ *On Piety* with those of Cicero’s *On the Nature of the Gods*’ (p. ix).

To be sure, the value of the evidence differs by author. Consider two fifth-century thinkers classed by Diels and Kranz among the sophists. Critias of Athens gets three texts. In 37 (*PHerc.* 1077, col. 19.8) Epicurus reproaches Critias, with Prodicus and Diagoras, for excising the gods. Text 38 (*PHerc.* 1251, col. XII Indelli/Tsouana) has someone saying that people follow laws only by threat of death or divine punishment. Text 39 (*PHerc.* 1428, col. 333.18–21) includes, between a passage on Diagoras' belief about the goodness of the gods and Prodicus' account of the origins of human belief in the gods, what looks like a summary of Critias' view of the gods, though that summary is totally lost to a lacuna. Hippias of Elis also gets three texts. 120 (*PHerc.* 1008, col. 18.20–3) cites Plato on Hippias' DIY apparel. 121 (col. 20.24) gives Hippias as an example of a 'know-it-all'. And 122 (*PHerc.* 1108, fr. 1) includes πρὸς Ἰππίων on a line below κ]οὶ δὴ Σοκ[ράτης, conceivably reporting on one of the Platonic *Hippias* dialogues' arguments by Socrates against Hippias. For each text V. sketches out (with varying levels of precision) the history of papyrological scholarship on these passages, but does not dilate on the way in which these *testimonia* might fit the non-Herculaneum evidence about these thinkers. And this is no surprise; doing so would make an already vast project exceedingly more complicated. But that external evidence is often relevant to evaluating the plausibility of any interpretation of the Herculaneum evidence; so, this volume will often need accompaniment by other critical editions of the respective authors. I found this especially so in the discussion of the single Antiphon passage (VIII 36), evidently about his view on the mechanism for the enjoyment of music. The explanation of the view is obscure and is given much less space by V. than the problem of identifying Antiphon and the possible source-text (pp. 385–6).

The first 80 pages of the volume consist of an illuminating introduction to the role of early Greek philosophy in the polemical and dialectical writings of the Epicureans. It could be assigned on its own in an ancient Greek philosophy class that went from the Presocratics to the Hellenistic schools; it would do a nice job linking the early and later parts of the semester. The final 50 pages of the volume analyse the Presocratic remarks in Diogenes of Oinoanda's inscriptions. Though this part does not include a set-off edition, it cites Greek and gives translation of all the relevant fragments. Styled an 'appendix', this is a welcome component of the volume.

The index of ancient names is comprehensive, but I wish it had analytic subheadings. For such a complex reference book, which someone would desire to use to pursue angles on their favourite authors, such points of entry are practically necessary.

Pennsylvania State University

CHRISTOPHER MOORE
c.moore@psu.edu

FRAGMENTS OF GREEK DRAMA

TSANTSANOGLOU (K.) *Tragic Papyri. Aeschylus' Theoroi, Hypsipyle, Laïos, Prometheus Pyrkaeus and Sophocles' Inachos.* (*Trends in Classics* Supplementary Volume 135.) Pp. x + 334, b/w & colour ill. Berlin and Boston: De Gruyter, 2022. Cased, £109, €119.95, US\$137.99. ISBN: 978-3-11-079648-3.

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This work contains many novel readings, supplements and reconstructions, some insightful and plausible, others extremely speculative. As a whole, the volume is rather uneven,

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