

UNPUBLISHED STUDIES ON PHILODEMUS' *ON GODS*, BOOK 1*

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ABSTRACT

*The article presents some unpublished studies on Philodemus' On Gods, Book 1 (PHerc. 26) which I discovered while preparing a new edition of the Herculaneum papyrus, last edited by Hermann Diels in 1916. These materials include two copies of Diels' edition annotated by Peter von der Mühl and Samson Eitrem; the drafts of a new edition of the papyrus by Knut Kleve and Pål Tidemandsen; a draft of a monograph on Epicurean theology, titled *Physis Theon*, by Knut Kleve; and an English translation by David Armstrong.*

KEYWORDS

Philodemus' On Gods Book 1, Hermann Diels, unpublished studies, Knut Kleve, Epicurean theology

The extensive philosophical work of the Epicurean Philodemus of Gadara, preserved solely in the charred scrolls of the Villa of the Papyri's library at Herculaneum, included the treatise *On Gods*, organised into multiple books. Among the unrolled scrolls from the collection, only the first book, transmitted by *PHerc. 26*, has survived.¹ This book serves as a primary source for reconstructing Epicurean thought on divinity, addressing one of the Garden's fundamental doctrines: how to remove the fear of the gods, which, along with the fear of death, is the greatest obstacle to achieving Epicurean pleasure, understood as the absence of pain.

* This article is part of the research work conducted within the framework of the project FIS Starting Grant LACUNA — Leveraging innovative Approaches to Comprehensively Understand Ancient Epicurean Texts. Towards the First AI-Enhanced Editions of Herculaneum Theological Papyri, funded by the Fondo Italiano per la Scienza 2022–2023 (project code FIS-2023-01833, P.I. Marzia D'Angelo). I am grateful to Pål Tidemandsen for helping me to clarify the state of the unpublished research on this text and for providing me with his material. I am also grateful to Professor David Armstrong for kindly providing me with a draft of his translation of Diels' edition.

¹ In the *subscriptio* of *PHerc. 26* the title Περὶ θεῶν Α can be read (DEL MASTRO 2014, 42–45); the presence of the numeral confirms that the entire work must have contained at least another book.

The last complete edition of the text remains the «superb and brilliant»² one published by Hermann Diels in 1916.³ The following year, Diels released an edition of what was then considered the third book of the same work (*PHerc.* 152/157).⁴ Both editions lack a full translation; partial translations of the best-preserved columns are housed in the commentary. With these publications, Diels provided the scholarly community with a primary source for the advancement of the studies of Epicurean theology. However, as Diels explicitly states in the preface, neither edition was based on direct examination of the originals.⁵ The outbreak of World War I prevented him from travelling to examine the material firsthand. Consequently, he never saw the papyrus housed at the *Officina dei Papiri Ercolanesi* in the National Library of Naples, nor could he consult the original drawings made by the English Reverend John Hayter during his stay in Naples (1802–1806) and later transferred to the Bodleian Library in Oxford. As for the first book, which is the focus of my discussion, Diels was only able to publish the text thanks to a collation of the copies of Hayter's drawings⁶ made by Reverend Cohen,⁷ the columns transcribed by Neapolitan academics published in the *Collectio Altera* in 1862,⁸ and previous readings published by Walter Scott in the *Fragmenta Herculansia*.⁹

The scholarly community unanimously welcomed Diels' publication with enthusiasm and praised his expertise in textual reconstruction and exegesis. However, scholars also pointed out the limitations due to the

² GIGANTE 1990, 51.

³ DIELS 1916.

⁴ DIELS 1917. The title in the *subscriptio* of this scroll is *Περὶ τῆς τῶν θεῶν διαγωγῆς*. The long-standing idea that this was the third book of the work *Περὶ θεῶν* was based on the reading in the *subscriptio* of the numeral *gamma*, the presence of which is not actually confirmed by the re-examination of the original: see ESSLER 2007, 130 n. 41, and DEL MASTRO 2014, 64–67. A new edition of the work is currently being prepared by Holger Essler.

⁵ DIELS 1916, 3–6; DIELS 1917, 5.

⁶ O I 33–58.

⁷ The copies of these drawings had been made by Reverend J.J. Cohen for Theodor Gomperz. After his death in 1912, Gomperz's Herculaneum material was put up for sale. Thanks to Diels' mediation with Heinrich Gomperz, Theodor's son, it was purchased by the University of Vienna's library, where Diels was able to consult the copies of the drawings. These copies have been missing since 1982. See JANKO–BLANK 1998, 173. See also DORANDI 1999, 248 n. 105. On the letters between Diels and Heinrich Gomperz, see BRAUN–CALDER–EHLERS 1995, 183 s.

⁸ *VH*² V 153–175.

⁹ SCOTT 1885, 205–251.

lack of direct comparison with the original manuscripts.¹⁰ In 1973, Knut Kleve, who approached *PHerc.* 26 with the aim of producing a new edition, noted that many of Diels' conjectures either altered the readings found in the drawings or were incompatible with the extent of the gaps in the text. Kleve also discovered groups of unpublished columns that Diels had overlooked in his edition.¹¹ As a result of Kleve's questioning of the reliability of Diels' reference edition, scholarly interest in the text declined. It became clear that a new, comprehensive edition, rigorously based on direct examination of the original, was necessary. A century later, such an edition is yet to be produced. There have been publications offering textual contributions and new readings of the papyrus, but they remain relatively few in number, despite the book's unique significance.¹²

During my research in preparation for a new edition, I was surprised to discover that, despite the limited published contributions, there is a considerable amount of unpublished material on *PHerc.* 26. To the best of my knowledge, this consists of:

- a copy of Diels' edition annotated by Peter von der Mühl;
- a copy of the same edition annotated by Samson Eitrem;
- the drafts of a new, unpublished edition of the papyrus by Knut Kleve and Pål Tidemandsen, as well as the draft of a monograph on Epicurean theology entitled *Physis theon. Die epikureische Lehre von der körperlichen Beschaffenheit der Götter. Eine Studie mit Ausgangspunkt in Ciceros De natura deorum I*;
- an English translation of Philodemus, *On Gods* Book 1 with personal notes by David Armstrong.

Each of these contributions, to varying degrees, constitutes an advance on Diels' text and attests to the hermeneutic effort of scholars that

¹⁰ Among the earliest reactions, see CRÖNERT 1930, 144: «Es ist schade, daß die schönste und gediegenste Textausgabe auf unserm Gebiete, Philodems 1. und 3. Buch Über die Götter, von Diels (AbhBerl. 1916, 1917) ohne Nachprüfung geschaffen werden mußte». Crönert criticised above all the unreliability of the text, which dragged with it the errors in the drawings («viel Unrat»). Marcello Gigante too, while noting that «le lezioni e integrazioni del Diels non sempre sono comprovabili o accettabili», pointed out (GIGANTE 1953, 15, n. 1) that «il Diels portò nella sua ricostruzione un acuto senso storico sì che essa resta un importante contributo all'intelligenza della teologia epicurea da lui definita 'Aufklärungstheologie' e alla storia della religione greca». On the criticism of Diels' edition, see in general DORANDI 1999, 248–250.

¹¹ KLEVE 1973 and 1996. Correspondences between P (*PHerc.* 26), DIELS 1916 and KLEVE 1996 are now recorded in D'ANGELO 2024, 113–114.

¹² For a complete list of the textual contributions on *PHerc.* 26, see D'ANGELO 2024, 111 n. 1.

engaged with it. In this article, I aim to bring these contributions to light, in the attempt of ensuring that these scholars receive the recognition they deserve in the history of Philodemus studies.

1. The Copy of Diels' Edition Annotated by Peter von der Mühl

Among the extensive *Nachlass*¹³ of Peter von der Mühl (1885–1970), acquired by the Universitätsbibliothek Basel in 1971 and preserved there, is his annotated copy of Diels' edition of Philodemus' two theological books.¹⁴ The Swiss philologist, a professor of Greek language and literature at the University of Basel, was a distinguished expert on Epicurus. In 1922, he published Epicurus' writings as transmitted in the tenth book of Diogenes Laertius,¹⁵ updating Hermann Usener's *Epicurea*¹⁶ by incorporating the *Gnomologium Epicureum Vaticanum*, which had been discovered only a few months after the publication of Usener's collection in 1887. Notably, von der Mühl's *Kleine Schriften*, published posthumously, contain no works on Philodemus or theology. His interest in Diels' edition can be attributed to his broad philological expertise as well as to his deep engagement with Epicureanism.

Von der Mühl's copy of Diels' edition contains undated handwritten annotations in pencil. However, some dates can be inferred from the bibliography he noted on the page preceding the title page, just below his ownership signature. For the first book, he mentions two works by Philippson dated 1916 and 1918, respectively;¹⁷ for the so-called third book, he cites a contribution by Arrighetti from 1955 and one by Grilli from 1957.¹⁸ Von der Mühl, however, may not have annotated the editions of both books simultaneously, nor do we know if his interventions date back to the same time or were made in several stages. The fact that Marcello Gigante's 1953 re-readings¹⁹ are not mentioned in the

¹³ For a full description of the *Nachlass* I refer to DORANDI 2006.

¹⁴ I was able to consult it through scans sent to me by the Universitätsbibliothek Basel.

¹⁵ *Epicuri Epistulae tres et ratae sententiae a Laertio Diogene servatae. Accedit gnomologium epicureum Vaticanum*, «Bibliotheca Scriptorum Graecorum et Latinorum Teubneriana» (Leipzig 1922). See DORANDI 2006, 2. Von der Mühl entertained the idea of publishing the entire work of Laertius; the project, left unfinished, was later taken up by DORANDI 2013.

¹⁶ USENER 1887.

¹⁷ PHILIPPSON 1916 and 1918.

¹⁸ ARRIGHETTI 1955 and GRILLI 1957.

¹⁹ GIGANTE 1953.

bibliographic notes on the first book is not enough to say that the interventions on this edition were prior to this date.

From the nature of the notes, it is clear that the scholar's intent was not to produce a new edition of the text but rather to conduct a meticulous study of the existing edition. Most of the annotations consist of a collation between Diels' 1916 text and Robert Philippson's re-readings, which were published the following year.²⁰ In very few cases there are original conjectures. Significantly, in one of these (col. I 9 Diels) von der Mühl proposes *καθρ[ό]ως καὶ φιλοτίμως* instead of Diels' conjecture *καθ' ἑ[ω]λόν φιλοτ[υμίαν]* and Philippson's *καθρ[ό]ως ἢ φιλοτ[όμως*. Von der Mühl's conjecture *φιλοτίμως* is indeed very apposite, as the adverb has been recovered from the autopsy of the papyrus.²¹ The Swiss philologist's annotations extend beyond the text itself to the commentary, where he adds parallels and bibliographic references (e.g., pp. 52, 54) or corrects typographical errors (pp. 92, 100). He also marks the final index of cited names, with numerous checkmarks next to the entry «Epicurus». This underscores his interest in this work in connection to the founder of the Garden, a figure he had previously studied in 1922 for his publication of the writings transmitted by Diogenes Laertius. It seems plausible that the scholar was examining Philodemus' text for possible quotations from the Master that could be incorporated into Usener's *Epicurea*.

2. The Copy of Diels' Edition Annotated by Samson Eitrem

Another annotated edition of the first book *On Gods* by Diels belonged to Samson Eitrem (1872–1966).²² Eitrem was professor of Classical philology at the University of Oslo from 1914 to 1945 and an expert in ancient magic and religion.²³ As one of the founders of Papyrology in Norway, he

²⁰ PHILIPPSON 1916.

²¹ D'ANGELO 2024, 117–118.

²² I owe the news of the existence of this volume to Pål Tidemandsen, who kindly sent me a scan of it. The volume, which belonged to Kleve and was also consulted by Tidemandsen, is currently not present in the Kleve archive held at the Nasjonalbiblioteket in Oslo, which I personally consulted in 2018, nor in the library of the University of Oslo (I thank Tidemandsen and his wife Lisa, librarian at the University of Oslo, for checking this on my behalf); it is possible that it is located in Kleve's private collection owned by his heirs and not donated to the library.

²³ On the Eitrem's figure, see AMUNDSEN 1967 and KLEVE 2007. On his works, see AMUNDSEN 1968. See also the entry dedicated to him in the *Norsk Biographic Lexicon* available online (https://nbl.snl.no/Sam_Eitrem, last access 29.11.24).

established the original core of the Oslo papyrus collection, which he edited alongside his student Leiv Amundsen.²⁴

Eitrem's copy of Diels' edition was a gift from Diels himself as the latter was touring Scandinavia, as indicated by the undated dedication: «Prof. Dr. S. Eitrem m(it) fr(eundlichen) Grüßen d(es) Verf(assers)». This copy eventually found its way into the hands of Knut Kleve, who was Eitrem's student at Oslo. Although Eitrem had already retired when Kleve began his classical studies at the University, he continued to mentor him in the back-ground, guiding Kleve's doctoral research along with his supervisors, Henning Mørland and Eiliv Skard.²⁵ This culminated in 1963 with the publication of the dissertation *Gnosis theon*, an analysis of Epicurean theology based on the first book of Cicero's *De natura deorum*.²⁶ Kleve fondly recalls their discussions on various subjects, including Epicureanism, noting that «Eitrem was well informed on all topics»:²⁷

I took also the opportunity to discuss my own scholarly problems, at the time within the Epicureanism, as Eitrem was well informed on all topics. I have in my possession Hermann Diel's (*sic*) edition of one of the Herculaneum papyri with a personal dedication to Eitrem. The pages are filled with Eitrem's pencilled comments. I remember we had a lengthy discussion on how the Epicurean gods, being atomic compounds, could still be regarded as eternal, a problem on the scale of the quadrature of the circle. But Eitrem never got tired, he followed the conversation with a boyish fervour, a *nonagenarius* who had forgotten to grow old.

Eitrem's pencil annotations reveal meticulous philological work on the Greek text established by Diels. Although he lacked access to the original papyrus, in some instances Eitrem suggested conjectures that deserve consideration in the next edition. For example, at col. XX 19 he suggested

²⁴ The collection created by Eitrem in Oslo was formed through the acquisition of papyri during several trips to Egypt (1910, 1920, and 1936), and was later enriched by further acquisitions made by Amundsen during his participation in the excavations at Karanis led by Professor Francis Kelsey (University of Michigan) during the 1927/28 and 1928/29 seasons. Part of the collection, which now holds more than 2,000 inventory numbers, was published in the series *Papyri Osloenses* (P. Oslo), with Eitrem publishing volume I in 1925, followed by volumes II (1931) and III (1936), co-edited with Leiv Amundsen, as well as in the journal «Symbolae Osloenses».

²⁵ See KUBBINGA 2018, 322, and INDELLI 2023, 115.

²⁶ KLEVE 1963.

²⁷ KLEVE 2007, 190.

θαυμ]άζοντες in place of Diels']άζοντες. This conjecture is particularly apt, as θαυ[μ]άζοντες can indeed be confirmed upon direct examination of the papyrus. On the other hand, many of Eitrem's suggestions, being based solely on Diels' edition rather than the papyrus itself, do not align with the actual spacing or traces found in the papyrus. For example, at col. IV 12 Eitrem proposed θεοφο[ρονμένοις instead of Diels' θεοφό[ροι, yet the papyrus clearly reveals part of the name Theophrastus (Θεοφρ[).

3. The Norwegian Contribution: Knut Kleve and Pål Tidemandsen

Kleve's Archive and Methodology

A special place in the history of the study of Philodemus' *On Gods* Book 1 is held by the Norwegian philologist Knut Kleve and his pupil Pål Tidemandsen. Kleve's work spanned from the 1970s to the 1990s, while Tidemandsen continued the research from the mid-1990s to the early 2000s.

Knut Kleve, who served as Professor of Classical Philology from 1963 at the University of Bergen and from 1974 to 1996 at the University of Oslo, devoted almost his entire academic life to Epicureanism.²⁸ This is evident not only from his extensive list of publications on the Herculaneum papyri and the Epicurean texts they preserve,²⁹ but also from his vast private archive, which has been housed at the National Library of Norway since his death in 2017.³⁰ The archive consists of hundreds of photographs, transcriptions, and notes related to various Herculaneum papyri that have been layered over the years.

Of the 13 folders in the archive, four pertain to *PHerc.* 26, which contains Philodemus' *On Gods* Book 1. Kleve worked on this papyrus for more than 20 years with the aim of producing a new edition, a project which unfortunately never came to fruition. Without his archive, our knowledge of his work on this book would be limited to the partial results published in 1973 and 1996, which present new readings of Diels' text. However, the unpublished documents of the archive reveal a much richer picture. Kleve had meticulously gathered all existing archival materials on *PHerc.* 26, including 19th-century drawings of the fragments in both

²⁸ See the commemoration read by ANDERSEN 2017, 94 s.

²⁹ A list of Kleve's bibliography updated up to 1996 is provided by HAALAND 1996. On his commitment to Herculaneum papyrology see also LONGO AURICCHIO–INDELLI–DEL MASTRO 2017, KUBBINGA 2018, and INDELLI 2023.

³⁰ A complete catalogue of the archive has been published by D'ANGELO 2020.

the Neapolitan and Oxonian series as well as the 1862 *editio princeps* in the fifth volume of *Herculaneensium voluminum quae supersunt. Collectio altera*.³¹ He personally photographed all the fragments during his visits to the Officina dei Papiri Ercolanesi (National Library of Naples) and made pencil transcriptions of all the text columns.

Kleve was among the first to tackle the challenge of photographing the Herculaneum papyri. In 1970s he developed a particular microphotographic technique, which was first tested on *PHerc. 26*.³² Initially, he took more photographs of the same fragment under a microscope, obtaining microfilms with partial enlargements. By projecting each microfilm onto a sheet with a bottom-lighting system, he made a pencil sketch of the fragment, reproducing the letters or traces of letters as precisely as possible. Finally, by assembling the partial reproductions, he constructed a new, comprehensive drawing of the fragment on graph paper (fig. 1).

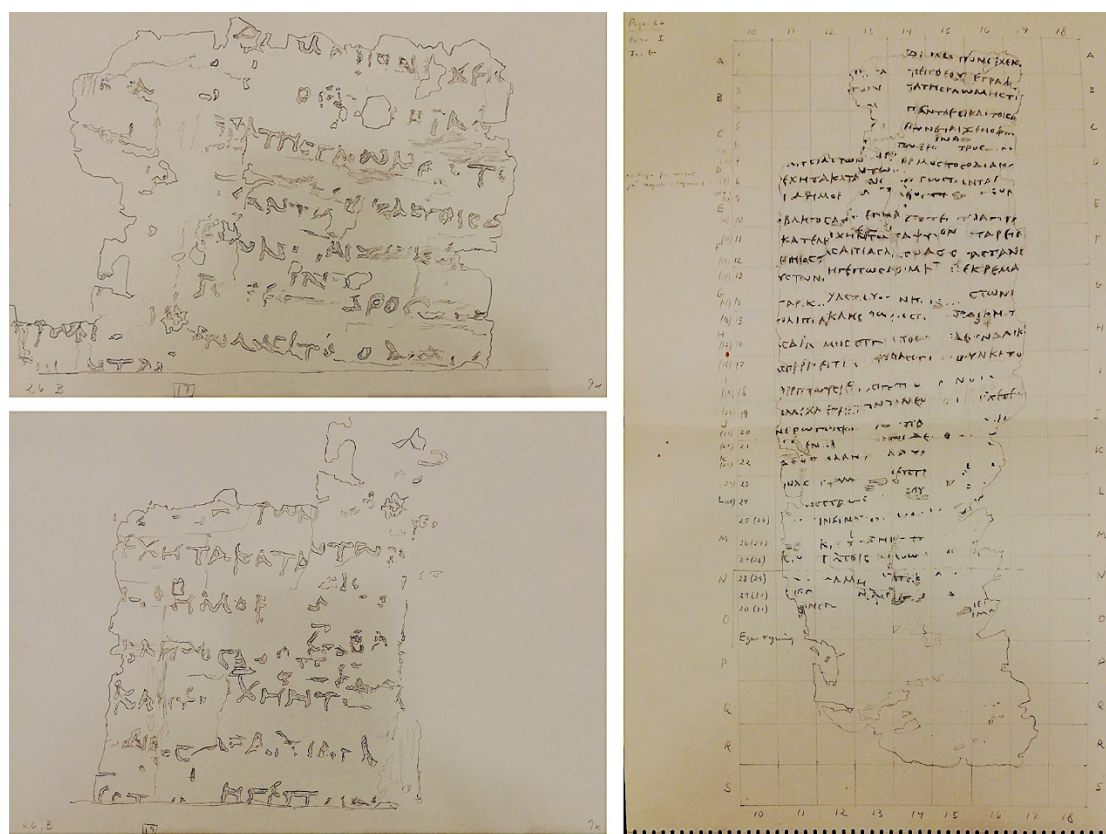


Fig. 1. Left, partial reproductions of *PHerc. 26* cornice 1, fr. b with tracing of the script. Right, transcription of the fragment, later published in KLEVE 1996.

³¹ *VH² V*, 153–175.

³² The technique is illustrated in KLEVE 1975. It was also used in later years for the photographic reproduction of papyri opened with the Oslo method (see KLEVE *et al.* 1991, 117–124, «Third guide. How to take pictures»).

The scholar used this method to produce pencil transcriptions of all the fragments of *PHerc.* 26, systematically comparing his new text with that found in the *disegni* and Scott's edition (fig. 2).

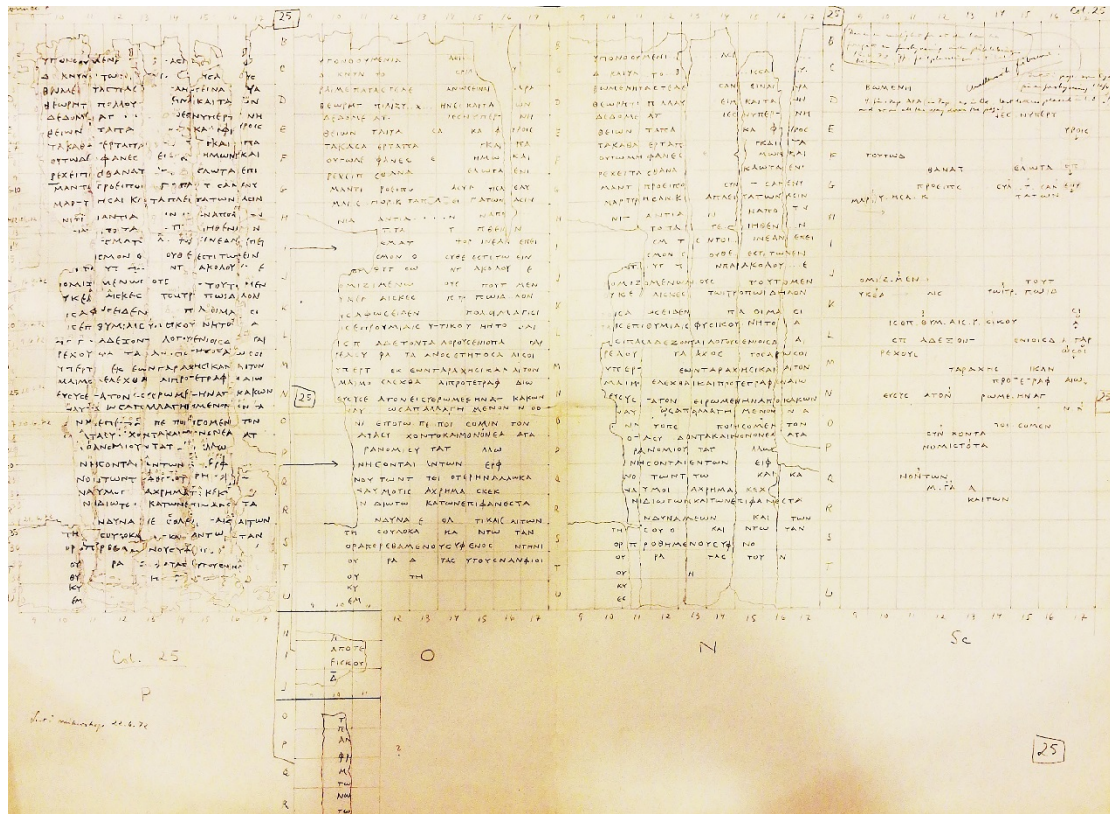


Fig. 2. Collation between the Kleve's transcription of col. 25 (P), the text witnessed by the Oxonian (O) and Neapolitan (N) drawings, and Walter Scott's previous readings (Sc).

As can be guessed, this technique relied on freehand drawing which, though executed with meticulous care, resulted in a new representation that could never perfectly match the original. This discrepancy arose from the potential for reproducing shadows or fracture marks as letters and from the risk of losing stratigraphic details during the sketching process, i.e. not recognising the presence of multiple layers of papyrus attached above or below the visible column surface (the so-called *sovrapposti* and *sottoposti*). As a result, this method often led to inaccuracies in transcription, and thus to conjectures based on misreadings.³³ Once again in

³³ Reading errors caused by this method can be found in Kleve's transcriptions of the fragments of *PHerc.* 26, cornice 1 (KLEVE 1996), which have now been partly re-read in D'ANGELO 2024. For a discussion of the limitations of this technique in the transcription and identification of texts, see CAPASSO 2014, esp. 146 and 154, regarding

the editorial history of *PHerc. 26*, the distance from Naples entailed the problem of the impossibility to check the original papyrus. By the late 1990s, as his advanced age led him to cut back on visits to the Officina, Kleve continued to pursue the transcription project through the eyes of his doctoral fellow, Pål Tidemandsen.

The Kleve–Tidemandsen Edition Drafts

Pål Tidemandsen spent several months working at the Officina dei Papiri between 1996 and the early 2000s, aiming to produce an edition of *PHerc. 26*. After 2003–2004, he was unable to devote much time to the project, and unfortunately the edition was never published. However, he made significant progress in studying the text and submitted to Kleve several instalments of his transcriptions, apparatus, translation and commentary over the years, which I found in the Kleve archive in Oslo. I owe it to Espen Ore, a long-time colleague and friend of Kleve, that after a long search I was finally able to get in touch with Pål and to have a fruitful discussion with him about his work.

Although he did not publish any preliminary findings, Tidemandsen completed a provisional transcription — the first based on autopsy under the microscope — of the 25 columns edited by Diels, including additional partial columns omitted from Diels' edition. To maintain consistency with Diels' numbering system, newly transcribed fragments were designated with identifiers like column + alphabet letter. Tidemandsen included transcriptions of coll. 4B, 4C, 9C, 9D, 10B, and small *sovrapposti* identified at coll. 3–4. Each transcription is accompanied by detailed palaeographic and philological apparatus, as well as English translation. Brief personal notes provide a commentary. As this is preliminary work, it lacks both an introduction and a virtual reconstruction model (*maquette*) of the scroll, which will be essential for re-establishing the correct order of the columns and repositioning the misplaced layers. The final version of his work was kindly sent to me by the author himself, who has authorised me to reference his conjectures in my forthcoming edition.

In terms of content, in an unpublished paper presented at a Classics Seminar at the University of Oslo in October 2003, Tidemandsen correctly observed that «the extant text of Περὶ θεῶν *Ā* is not so much about the gods as about fear of the gods, more precisely the disturbance

originating from this fear». According to him, at least four main sections can be identified in the text:

1. The first section extends from the (lost) beginning of the text to col. 2, 7. This is suggested by the presence of a *coronis* (identified by Tidemandsen for the first time), which marks a break in the text and signals the transition to a new line of argumentation.
2. The second section begins at this point and may continue up to col. 11, 33.
3. At col. 11, 33, Philodemus introduces a new section discussing whether humans or animals experience greater mental disturbance («we will show that beings without reason have the analogous disturbance»);
4. The final section begins at col. 16, 19–20, and addresses whether fear of the gods or fear of death is more distressing («the disturbance arising from false opinions concerning the gods or the (disturbance) concerning death we shall now examine»).

Between col. 2, 7 and col. 11, 3 at least one more section exists, as suggested by another *coronis*, which I have identified in the final inter-columnium of *cornice* 2, *pezzo* 3. This fragment follows *pezzo* 1 of the same *cornice*, which contains columns 3 and 4.

Kleve's Unpublished Books

The primary motivation behind Kleve's interest in producing a new edition of Philodemus' *On Gods* Book 1 was his profound engagement with Epicurean theology. Since the publication, in 1963, of the monograph *Gnosis Theon. Die Lehre von der natürlichen Gotterkenntnis in der epikureischen Theologie*,³⁴ his «masterly study»,³⁵ Kleve had aimed to reconstruct a comprehensive picture of Epicurean thought on gods. As stated in the Preface, *Gnosis Theon* was envisioned as the first in a series of three volumes dedicated to Epicurean theology, structured according to the tripartite division that the Epicureans themselves applied to their doctrine: gnoseology, physics, and ethics. Unfortunately, the volumes on physics and ethics were never completed.

In Kleve's archive I have found the draft of the second volume on physics in a bound undated manuscript of 133 typed pages entitled *Physis theon. Die epikureische Lehre von der körperlichen Beschaffenheit der*

³⁴ KLEVE 1963.

³⁵ So described by FARRINGTON 1966, esp. 229 in his review.

*Götter. Eine Studie mit Ausgangspunkt in Ciceros De natura deorum I.*³⁶ The book delves into the Epicurean doctrine concerning the physical nature of the gods. It draws primarily on the first book of Cicero's *De Natura Deorum*, which presents a dialogue between the Epicurean Velleius and the Academic Cotta on whether the gods should be understood as physical entities or as mental images, but also on passages from the theological works of Philodemus preserved in the Herculaneum papyri. Kleve explores the Epicurean notion of the gods' anthropomorphism and addresses the long-debated problem of reconciling their existence as both corporeal beings and as blessed and incorruptible entities.

The table of contents of *Physis theon* includes four chapters:

1. *Die körperliche Vollkommenheit und Schönheit der Götter;*
2. *Die Menschenähnlichkeit der Götter durch den Analogieschluss gezeigt;*
3. *Das Prinzip der gleichen Verteilung (ἰσονομία) im Universum und die Götter;*
4. *Die Ewigkeit und Unsterblichkeit der Götter.*

As stated in the Preface, the fourth chapter is not included in the book as the author directs readers to a previously published paper on the subject, *Die Unvergänglichkeit der Götter im Epikureismus*, which appeared in 1960 in the journal «Symbolae Osloenses».³⁷ A handwritten draft of the fourth chapter is attached to the volume as loose sheets enclosed in a green cover.

The book is also accompanied by a 50-page typewritten blue notebook with the Norwegian title «To forarbeider til *Physis Theon*», i.e. «Two preparatory works to *Physis Theon*». It contains the drafts of the second and third chapters of the book. In the notebook's preface, Kleve offers insights that help clarify the structure and timeline of what would eventually become the unpublished monograph *Physis Theon*.

Besides the two articles in this booklet, I have submitted two other preliminary works for the thesis 'Physis theon, die epikureische Lehre von der körperlichen Beschaffenheit der Götter', namely 'Dio è bello, ma com'è la sua apparenza?' and 'Die Unvergänglichkeit der Götter im

³⁶ D'Angelo 2020, 235. I am grateful to Per Kleve, Knut's son, for giving me permission to study this material. He also confirmed me *privatim* that probably «*Physis Theon* was intended as part of a series of publications following *Gnosis* (1963)».

³⁷ KLEVE 1960.

Epikureismus' (S.O. 36, 1960). The works are planned as four chapters in the thesis in the following order:

1. Dio è bello, ma com'è la sua apparenza?
2. Die Menschenähnlichkeit der Götter durch den Analogieschluss gezeigt.
3. Das epikureische Prinzip der *ἰσονομία* und die Götter.
4. Die Unvergänglichkeit der Götter im Epikureismus.

The works will be partly tightened and partly expanded with new material, including a position on recent scientific literature. An overall conclusion will also be prepared. In addition, I have a large collection of material for further work on Epicurean theology. The fact that I have not yet managed to finish 'Physis theon' and other works, this is partly due to the administrative duties I have had. Another important reason is my dissatisfaction with existing editions of the Herculaneum papyri, which has led me to begin work on an edition of Philodemus' *περὶ θεῶν*.

[my translation from the original Norwegian]

The preface reveals that the first chapter of *Physis Theon*, titled *Die körperliche Vollkommenheit und Schönheit der Götter*, is a reworking of the paper *Dio è bello, ma com'è la sua apparenza?*, which Kleve presented as a lecture at the University of Padua in 1971, a copy of which is preserved in his archive. It follows that *Physis Theon* was surely assembled after 1971.

It is also noteworthy that Kleve attributed his inability to complete the monograph to his dissatisfaction with the existing editions of the theological works. In fact, it was during the 1970s that he began studying the first book *On Gods* by Philodemus, publishing some preliminary findings in 1973.³⁸ Kleve's comments highlight a key principle in the study of the Herculaneum papyri: a comprehensive investigation of the philosophical texts they contain is only possible with reliable editions. The incomplete status of his monograph *Physis Theon* is closely linked to the fact that he never completed a new edition of *PHerc.* 26.

³⁸ KLEVE 1973.

<p style="text-align: center;">ΦΥΣΙΣ ΘΕΩΝ</p> <p>1. Die körperliche Vollkommenheit und Schönheit der Götter 153</p> <p>2. Die Menschenähnlichkeit der Götter durch den Analogieschluss gezeigt 204</p> <p>3. Das Prinzip der gleichen Verteilung (ισονομία) im Universum und die Götter 269</p> <p>4. Die Ewigkeit und Unsterblichkeit der Götter (se Symb. Ost. 35 (1960) pp. 116 - 126)</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">INNHALD</p> <p>1. Die körperliche Vollkommenheit und Schönheit der Götter 153</p> <p>2. Die Menschenähnlichkeit der Götter durch den Analogieschluss gezeigt 204</p> <p>3. Das Prinzip der gleichen Verteilung (ισονομία) im Universum und die Götter 269</p> <p>4. Die Ewigkeit und Unsterblichkeit der Götter (se Symb. Ost. 35 (1960) pp. 116 - 126)</p>
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Fig. 3. Title and table of contents of *Physis theon*.

It is worth mentioning that in Kleve's Archive there exists another partially unpublished work titled *Cicero und die epikureische Götterlehre. Versuch einer Rekonstruktion der Epikureischen Theologie*. It is a large preparatory text created before 1957, from which Kleve derived materials partly for *Gnosis Theon* (1963) and partly for *Physis theon*, the monograph that remained unpublished. The work is structured into three notebooks:

1. «Innledning til avhandlingene *Cicero und die epikureische Götterlehre*» (18 pages in Norwegian)
2. «Cicero und die epikureische Götterlehre I» (151 pages in German)
3. «Cicero und die epikureische Götterlehre II» (52 pages in German).

In the Preface («Forord») of the first notebook, Kleve writes:

My original plan was to write a comprehensive treatise on the Epicurean doctrine of gods. The following *Introduction*, written in 1957, is a preface to this planned comprehensive treatise. My present plan is to convert the “parts” of the comprehensive treatise into smaller, independent treatises. Writing extensively on the whole of Epicurean

theology is proving to be a year-long undertaking: it will be a relief to me to know that I will be able to deliver complete works on the subject at not too long intervals. I hope it will also be less of a burden for the reader, who will no longer be conscious of having to wade through section after section to arrive at the mammoth final thesis. As far as I can judge, I now have a complete collection of material for all the theses. All relevant modern literature on the subjects has also been examined.

[my translation from the original Norwegian]

In the same notebook, there is an overview of the topics discussed,³⁹ organised into six sections:

- Part 1: *Our knowledge of the Gods;*
- Part 2: *The physical constitution of the Gods;*
- Part 3: *On the life of the Gods;*
- Part 4: *On the religious life of Epicurus;*
- Part 5: *The consequences of the gods for our lives;*
- Part 6: *The Epicureans' position towards those who hold different beliefs.*

From his pencil notes we learn that Part 1 and 2 were respectively incorporated into *Gnosis Theon* and *Physis Theon*. There is no more extensive treatment of the topics announced in the other parts, specifically on ethics, which should have formed the third volume of the trilogy.

4. The English Translation by David Armstrong

Diels' edition of *On Gods* Book 1 includes only a partial German translation in the commentary, covering the best-preserved columns of text. The only other available translation, also in German, is by Wilhelm Nestle, which is based on Diels' text and covers only some columns (2; 13–14; 16–19; 24–25). An unpublished English translation of the first 20 columns was prepared by David Armstrong for Jacob Mackey around 2005. Mackey, who was tasked with a new edition after Tidemandsen, ultimately abandoned the project. Professor Armstrong in 2018 kindly shared a draft of his translation with me, based on Diels' text with personal annotations. He indicated that he found some reasonably certain text only in columns 11–19. Regarding the first columns, he wrote «[Columns] I–XI appear to me to be worthless as they stand: I hardly believe a single phrase». He also told me that one reason he went no

³⁹ «Oversikt over avhandlingene Cicero und die epikureische Götterlehre», at p. 6–18.

further with the translation is that Diels' supplements in many places assumed the wrong spacing, which, as Kleve had already noted, made the text of the edition unreliable.

Conclusions

The recent analysis of unpublished studies on Philodemus' *On Gods*, Book 1, following Diels' 1916 *editio princeps*, reveals that the text has undergone far more extensive scrutiny over the last century than previously acknowledged. Although Diels' edition remains a cornerstone for academic research, it is clear that the lack of direct examination of the original papyrus has significantly impacted both the reception and interpretation of the work.

The contributions of scholars such as von der Mühl, Eitrem and Armstrong relied exclusively on Diels' edition. As for von der Mühl and Eitrem, many of their conjectures turn out to be inapt because they are formulated on Diels' text, which frequently does not accurately reflect what one reads in the papyrus. Had they had access to a more reliable text, their contributions could have been even more significant. In contrast, the drafts of edition of Kleve and Tidemandsen, which include a closer examination of the surviving material, represent a significant advancement in the field. These drafts should be integrated into the new edition of the text where appropriate.

A separate discussion is warranted for Kleve's unpublished monograph, *Physis Theon*. This is a rich and comprehensive work that would deserve to be brought out from the archives of the Oslo library.⁴⁰ As noted in the preface, Kleve decided not to complete the monograph because he was dissatisfied with the existing editions of the theological works he used as sources to reconstruct Epicurean thought on divinity. The Norwegian scholar was referring mainly to the two theological books of Philodemus edited by Diels, preserved in *PHerc.* 26 and *PHerc.* 152/157. As mentioned, new editions of both these books are currently in progress. It is hoped that these updated texts will soon be available, providing a more reliable foundation for their thorough philosophical interpretation.

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⁴⁰ The publication of Kleve's monograph is among the planned outputs of the LACUNA project.

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