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CHRYSIPPUS, PHILODEMUS, AND THE GOD MEN

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## CHRYSIPPUS, PHILODEMUS, AND THE GOD MEN

It is a regrettable sign of the fragmentation of classical studies that those who study the cults of the Roman East do not give equal attention to the charred papyri found at Herculaneum, and vice versa. For if they did, this long overdue paper would have been written many years ago.

What am I referring to? There has existed ever since 1810 an "inescapable restoration" to Philodemus' *Περὶ εὐσεβείας* (PHerc 1428) col. V, line 16, which involves the moon-god Men.<sup>1</sup> In this passage the Epicurean philosopher Philodemus (ca. 110 B.C. - 40/35 B.C.) is criticizing the Stoic theology, particularly as represented by Chrysippus, whom he quotes extensively.<sup>2</sup> Among other things, Philodemus attributes to Chrysippus the sentiment that "there are no male or female gods, any more than cities or virtues, but being the same they are merely named in masculine or feminine fashion, like Selene or Men."<sup>3</sup> The restoration of Men's name into the document goes back to one of its earliest scholarly treatments, namely an anonymous reviewer in *The Quarterly Review* 3 (1810) 1-20, of W. Drummond and R. Walpole, *Herculanensia: or Archaeological and Philological Dissertations, containing a Manuscript found among the Ruins of Herculaneum*, London 1810.<sup>4</sup> This author was the first to realize that κα[ῖ Μῆ]να has to be restored. Since he gives the text in majuscules, it is impossible from that alone to know whether he intends the theonym or the common noun, but his comments in which he adduces this passage as confirming the existence of the god Men as reported by Strabo indicate that he thought the theonym was meant. The reviewer did not have the original papyrus in front of him, but examination of it by Prof. Henrichs has revealed traces of the eta, and the text is therefore now written κα[ῖ Μ]ῆνα (Henrichs, *per litteras*).

The remarkable thing is that although this restoration has been around so long, notice of it has never been taken by those who have worked on the cult of Men, including myself. Part of the blame perhaps lies at the door of J. von Arnim, who in his generally accessible, influential, and standard *Stoicorum veterum fragmenta II* (1903) 315, Chrysippus frag. 1076 prints *κελήνην καὶ μῆνα* with small letters, indicating that he views not theonyms but common nouns to be in use here—this in spite of the fact that context clearly implies that we are dealing with gods, not objects.<sup>5</sup> But primarily, as I said before, the fault lies with the increasing compartmentalization of classical studies.

The question then arises, is it likely that Philodemus, a native of Gadara, resident at Herculaneum, neither place a site of Men-cult in antiquity, had any knowledge of this divinity?<sup>6</sup> Do we not have here further proof of the fact that Philodemus is continuing to quote Chrysippus directly in this passage? Chrysippus was from Soli in Cilicia—not Men territory either—but most of his productive life (from ca. 260 B.C. until his death in 207 B.C.) was spent in Athens. Chrysippus thus had a much better chance

<sup>1</sup> Thanks are due to Prof. Albert Henrichs of Harvard University for information and encouragement to write this article. The words "inescapable restoration" are those of Prof. Henrichs, *per litteras*. The latest treatments of the text in question are those of Dirk Obbink, *Cronache Ercolanesi* 24 (1994) 111-135 and Albert Henrichs, *Cronache Ercolanesi* 4 (1974) 5-32, especially 15-16. For general information on the god Men, see E.N. Lane, *Corpus Monumentorum Religionis Dei Menis III. Interpretations and Testimonia* (ERPO 19, 3), Leiden 1976.

<sup>2</sup> The reference to Chrysippus occurs col. IV.13. Presumably what follows is at least a paraphrase of Chrysippus' views, if not a direct quotation.

<sup>3</sup> καὶ μὴ εἶναι θεοὺς ἄρρενας μηδὲ θηλείας ὡς μηδὲ πόλεις μηδ' ἀρετάς, [ὁ]νομάζεσθαι δ[ὲ] μό]νον ἀρρενικῶς κ[αὶ] θ[ηλ]ικῶς ταῦτά ὄν[τα] καθάπερ Σελήνην κα[ῖ Μ]ῆνα in Henrichs' text (see n. 1).

<sup>4</sup> The author's name may have been Elmsley. Henrichs calls him Anon. I.

<sup>5</sup> The author's deliberate neuter ὄντα, rather than ὄντας modifying θεοῦς, may have been a confusing factor.

<sup>6</sup> He is known to have visited Athens (see e.g. M. Gigante, *Philodemus in Italy*, Ann Arbor 1995, 49ff.) but when, how many times, and for how long, we have no way of knowing.

than Philodemus of becoming acquainted with this god, who, significantly, makes his first recorded appearance in Attica at a time not too long before Chrysippus' death. I am speaking of the inscription *IG II<sup>2</sup> 4687a* (Lane, *Corpus Monumentorum Religionis Dei Menis* I, no. 8), now in the Louvre, bearing the inscription Δημήτριος καὶ ἡ γυνὴ Ἐρώτιον Μηνί ἐπι ἱερέα Γλαύκου. Louis Robert (*BCH* 60 (1936) 206ff.) convincingly identifies the ἱέρει(α) Γλαῦκος with the priestess honored by the orgeones of the Great Mother in the Piraeus in *IG II<sup>2</sup> 1314*, an inscription securely dated to 213/2 B.C. Presumably the stone would have been found in the excavations of the Piraeus Metroon in 1855.<sup>7</sup> It thus would appear that Chrysippus had heard of this new-comer god to Athens in the late third century, and found that his masculine name in Greek suited his line of argumentation admirably. Chrysippus' use of Men's name can thus be added to our documentation for the early history of Men-cult in Attica.

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<sup>7</sup> The only other monument that has been claimed as providing an earlier attestation for Men in Attica is Lane, *CMRDM* I, no. 2, a two-sided relief one side of which portrayed Men riding on a ram in front of a large crescent. This is dated by G. Bakalakis, *Ἑλληνικὰ Ἀμφίγλυφα* (1946), to ca. 340 B.C., on the grounds of supposed stylistic similarity with the sculpture of the Mausoleum. In this connection one must also mention the *Μηναγύρται* who are mentioned in various sources. The word is an apparent synonym for the mendicant priests of the Great Mother, the *Μητραγύρται*, who seem to have been active in fourth-century-B.C. Athens. *Μηναγύρτης* is mentioned as the title of a play by Menander and possibly by Antiphanes (*v.l.* *Μητραγύρτης*; *PCG* II p. 394). But the rest of the—not very complimentary—usages of the word revealed by a search of the TLG CDROM are from late authors (Philo Judaeus and onward), who use the word as a mere variant for *Μητραγύρτης*—also a term of disparagement. The question for us is whether the *Μηναγύρται*, assuming they existed, had any connection with the moon-god Men, whose assured appearance in Athens is as we have seen dated to the late third century. Certainly the late-antique lexicographers (Hesychius, Suda) who deal with the subject do not make the connection, rather they are of the opinion that these persons take their name from the fact that they make monthly collections. The most explicit is the Suda s.v. *Μηναγύρτης*: ὁ τῆς Ῥέας ἱερεύς, ὁ κατὰ μῆνα ἀγείρων καὶ συναθροίζων. In spite of the fact that the Piraeus Men-inscription seems to have been found in a Metroon and to mention a priestess of the Great Mother, the connection between her and Men is problematical, and cannot simply be assumed to have existed everywhere. See *CMRDM* III, 81-83.