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FRESH THOUGHTS ON DIOGENES OF OINOANDA FR. 68

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Introduction

The Greek inscription set up by the Epicurean philosopher Diogenes of Oinoanda, probably in the second century A.D., comprises several writings or groups of writings, each of which has its distinctive physical and epigraphical features.

Among the writings of which fragments came to light during the French and Austrian investigations at Oinoanda late in the nineteenth century was Diogenes' *Letter to Antipater* on the infinite number of worlds in the universe (fr. 62–67).² In 1970, on my third expedition to Oinoanda, I made a surprising discovery: among the 12 new fragments of Diogenes' inscription recovered that year were four (fr. 69–72), which, while displaying the same physical and epigraphical features as those of the *Letter to Antipater*, have nothing to do with the innumerability of worlds.³ Fr. 69 discusses the problem of why square objects, when seen from a distance, appear roundish; fr. 70 emphasises that choice and avoidance must be determined by our feelings of pleasure and pain; and fr. 71–72 relate to the part played by chance (τύχη) in human affairs. Initially I hesitated to assign the four to a different writing, and indeed I expressed the opinion that at least two of them (fr. 71–72) are part of the *Letter to Antipater*, but soon afterwards, when Diskin Clay had correctly reinterpreted fr. 72,⁴ it became apparent to me that none of them could be part of it, and that all four belong to a second letter,⁵ which dealt with epistemological and moral questions, or possibly to more than one writing.⁶

After it had become evident that fr. 69–72 come from a previously unidentified writing (or writings), I assigned, albeit without complete confidence, fr. 73 and 74 to the same group. Fr. 73, in which Diogenes declares that he has no fear of death, was discovered by Georges Cousin and Charles Diehl in 1885, but was inadequately published by Cousin⁷ and has never been rediscovered, and not until I examined the French squeeze in Athens in 1975 did it become possible to say that it cannot belong, as Alberto Grilli and C. W. Chilton thought, to the *Physics*.⁸ I suggested that it is most likely to belong to the “new” group, but did not rule out the possibility that it belongs to the *Ethics*.⁹ Fr. 74, on the correct attitude to be adopted to physical affections, was discovered by Rudolf Heberdey in 1902, but first published by me in 1979;¹⁰ despite having a 15-line column, whereas fr. 69–72 have 14-line columns, it

¹ Fragment (fr.) numbers of Diogenes of Oinoanda are those of M. F. Smith, *Diogenes of Oinoanda: the Epicurean inscription* (Napoli, 1993), while NF denotes a new fragment of Diogenes (i.e. a fragment found in 1969–1997) as published before republication in my 1993 edition or, in the case of NF 125–135, discovered after 1993.

² The only passage of the letter not found in the nineteenth century is fr. 66.I (NF 107), which came to light in 1977.

³ The finds made in 1970 were first published by me in: New fragments of Diogenes of Oenoanda, *AJA* 75 (1971) 357–389. Fr. 69 = NF 9, fr. 70 = NF 10, fr. 71 = NF 8, fr. 72 = NF 7 in the first publication.

⁴ D. Clay, Sailing to Lampsacus: Diogenes of Oenoanda, New Fragment 7, *GRBS* 14 (1973) 49–59.

⁵ For my change of mind, in the light of Clay's article, see my *Thirteen new fragments of Diogenes of Oenoanda* (Wien, 1974) 20 n. 39.

⁶ See M. F. Smith, Diogenes of Oenoanda and l'École française d'Athènes, *BCH* 101 (1977) 353–381, at 377–378; *Diogenes of Oinoanda* (n. 1) 514.

⁷ G. Cousin, Inscriptions d'Oenoanda, *BCH* 16 (1892) 1–70, at 13, 44. Cousin did not provide a drawing or any measurements.

⁸ The squeeze revealed that fr. 73 has *paragraphai*, which never occur in the *Physics*.

⁹ See Smith, Diogenes of Oenoanda and l'École française (n. 6) 377–378; also Smith, *Diogenes of Oinoanda* (n. 1) 521.

¹⁰ M. F. Smith, Eight new fragments of Diogenes of Oenoanda, *AS* 29 (1979) 69–89, at 74–78 (NF 108).

must belong with them, unless (which is certainly not impossible) it is the only survivor of a different group, which was carved in 15-line columns.¹¹

Although one cannot prove that the fragments in the “new” group (from membership of which, in view of the uncertainty about them, I shall henceforth in this discussion exclude fr. 73–74) are all part of a single writing, there is no good reason for thinking that they are not. It might be thought that the epistemological fragments (fr. 69–70) belong to one writing, the ethical fragments (fr. 71–72) to another, but fr. 70, which is ethical as well as epistemological, shows that it is plausible to assign all four fragments to the same writing, and henceforth I shall assume that they are passages of a single letter.

In fr. 70 Diogenes addresses ὦ μακάριοι (II.2) and uses the second person plural throughout. The second person plural is used also in fr. 72.III.11–12. The names of the addressees are not revealed in either passage, but, five years after fr. 69–72 came to light, a useful discovery was made. Among the new texts recovered in 1975 was fr. 68 (NF 58). The fragment is small (height 27 cm., width 24 cm.,¹² depth 18 cm.) and broken below and left, preserving just the top-right quarter of what will have been a 14-line column of letters averaging about 1.8 cm., but what survives is not without significance. The spaciousness of the upper margin (7 cm. tall) suits only the *Letter to Antipater* and the “new” group, and in line 2 there is an address to Dionysius, no doubt the same friend, apparently a Rhodian, of whom Diogenes makes grateful mention in his *Letter to Menneas* (fr. 122.II.9–10). Although it is not absolutely impossible that in fr. 68 Diogenes is quoting to Antipater a conversation which he had with Dionysius, just as in fr. 63, part of the *Letter to Antipater*, he quotes to Antipater a conversation which he had with Theodoridas, it is very unlikely, not least because it seems from fr. 63 that the whole of his treatment of the innumerability of worlds was cast in the form of a dialogue with Theodoridas,¹³ and we have no indication that anyone else participated in the discussion. It is natural to assume that Dionysius is the addressee of a different letter, the letter to which the “new” group of fragments belongs. It is natural to assume, too, that καί at the end of fr. 68.2 connected Διονύσιε to the name of a second addressee. I made this assumption when I first edited the fragment,¹⁴ and I have continued to adhere to it, despite the caution expressed by Angelo Casanova,¹⁵ for, as we have seen, fr. 70 and 72 at any rate are addressed to more than one individual. I have also adhered to my first suggestion as to the likely identity of the second addressee, and I shall reiterate the suggestion later in this article, the purpose of which is to present a revised reconstruction of fr. 68.

Preserved text

]λαμβανον
] Διονύσιε και
]ιοδωποιου
]αδηλουμενω
 5]γφαινομε . .
]. τομ . . [
] . [

¹¹ For arguments in favour of fr. 74 belonging with fr. 69–72, see Smith, *Diogenes of Oinoanda* (n. 1) 522.

¹² Maximum width only 19 cm., where the surface is preserved.

¹³ A. Casanova, *I frammenti di Diogene d'Enoanda* (Firenze, 1984) 56, suggests that “Dionisio potrebbe essere ad esempio uno degli interlocutori del ‘dialogo con Teodorida’ e il frammento appartenere quindi alla lettera ad Antipatro”.

¹⁴ M. F. Smith, Fifty-five new fragments of Diogenes of Oenoanda, *AS* 28 (1978) 39–92, at 53–54.

¹⁵ Casanova (n. 13) 56–57.

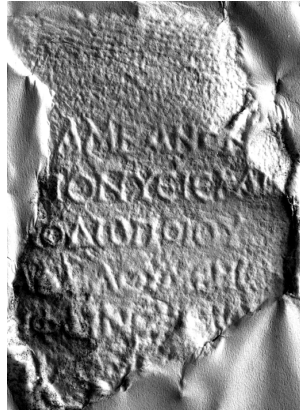


Fig. 1. Diogenes of Oinoanda fr. 68:
squeeze (photograph by M. F. Smith)

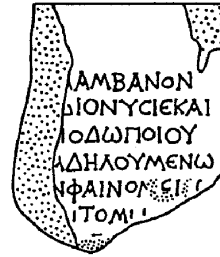


Fig. 2. Diogenes of Oinoanda fr. 68:
scale-drawing (12 : 100) by M. F. Smith

My drawing of fr. 68 (Fig. 2)¹⁶ is based on examination of my squeeze, as well as of the stone itself. For a photograph of the squeeze, see Fig. 1.¹⁷ For a photograph of the actual stone, see M. F. Smith, *The philosophical inscription of Diogenes of Oinoanda* (Wien, 1996) pl. 33 fig. 99.

Proposed reconstruction, with translation and commentary

Sometimes, when only the right or left part of a column is preserved, restoration of the missing half is fairly straightforward. Fr. 68 is not such a case. In fact, there are so many uncertainties that it must be admitted at the outset that sure reconstruction is not possible. This is my third attempt, and, while I hope that it is my best attempt so far, the suggestions are still to be regarded only as tentative ones. In the two earlier attempts¹⁸ I printed few restorations in the actual text, but included further suggestions in the explanatory or critical notes, and some of these suggestions are included in the present reconstruction.

[ταῦτα]
[οὖν περι]λαμβάνον-
[τες αἰεί], Διονύσιε καὶ
[Κᾶρε, περ]ιόδῳ ποιοῦ
[δὴ τινος] ἀδήλου μένω-
5 [μεν ἐκ τῶ]ν φαινομένων[ν]
[παρ' ἡμεῖν] ἢ τὸ μὴ [ἀντι]-
[μαρτυρεῖσ]θ[αι ἢ τὸ ἀν]-
[τιμαρτυρεῖσθαι]

[So always including these considerations], Dionysius and [Carus, in an investi-
gation] of [any] kind of thing not evident to sense, [let us await from] pheno-
mena [here on earth] either absence [of non-contradiction or contradiction].

1–2 περιλαμβάνω occurs also in fr. 14.5 and 67.II.5 in the sense “surround”. My choice of the compound here, in the sense “include (in)”, “encompass (with)”, is based on the assumption that the verb governs περιόδῳ. Compare, for example, Isocrates 8.141 οὐ δύναμαι . . . τῷ λόγῳ περιλαβεῖν, ἃ τυγχάνω τῇ διανοίᾳ καθορῶν.

¹⁶ The drawing was first published in M. F. Smith, *The philosophical inscription of Diogenes of Oinoanda* (Wien, 1996) 144.

¹⁷ Also Smith, *Fifty-five new fragments* (n. 14) pl. II d.

¹⁸ Smith, *Fifty-five new fragments* (n. 14) 53–54; *Diogenes of Oinoanda* (n. 1) 261.

2 αἰεί is the form used by Diogenes elsewhere four times out of five (fr. 5.II.4, 44.III.4, 126.I.8, NF 131.8).¹⁹ The exception is at fr. 32.III.11 in the phrase καὶ νῦν καὶ αἰεί. Before Διονύσιε perhaps ὦ.

3 Κᾶρε. I admit that one cannot be absolutely certain that a second addressee was named here (one could fill the space with, for example, ἐν τῇ), but, if fr. 68 belongs, as it almost certainly does, to the same letter as fr. 70 and 72, which, as I have pointed out, are addressed to more than one person, a second name is required. But why Κᾶρε? Above all, because in fr. 122, which contains the closing passage of Diogenes' *Letter to Menneas*, he mentions that, when he was ill on Rhodes, he was assisted both by Menneas himself and by Carus and Dionysius (ὕπό τε σοῦ . . . τοῦ τε θαυμασίου Κάρου καὶ Διονυσίου τοῦ ἡμετέρου).²⁰ Since Dionysius and Carus, both presumably Rhodians, are mentioned together in the *Letter to Menneas*, they may well have been addressed together in the letter to which fr. 68 belongs. There is the further point that, while one cannot be sure exactly how many letters are missing to the left of the preserved text of fr. 68, seven seems about right in lines 1–5, in which case a four-letter name would be suitable here. Μεννέα, which might otherwise be considered a possible alternative, would probably be too long. Elsewhere I have refuted Luciano Canfora's arguments that Diogenes' Carus is Lucretius.²¹

[περ]ιόδω is almost certainly right. There seems to be no credible alternative. But what does it mean? There are two main possibilities. One is "orbit" or "revolution" of a celestial body, as in Epicurus, *Pyth.* 97. Since celestial bodies and their movements are classified by the Epicureans as ἄδηλα, "not evident to sense" (see, for example, fr. 13.III.3), because one cannot obtain a near, clear view of them, and we may well have ἀδήλου in line 4, this meaning cannot be ruled out. But, if it is supposed to be right, it is difficult to see how the passage can be plausibly restored: for one thing, it would presumably be necessary to have a word for "celestial body" at the beginning of line 4, and yet the obvious choice, ἀστέρος, would not be acceptable after ποιοῦ at the end of line 3, because the reading would involve a hiatus which is contrary to Diogenes' normal practice.²² I consider the second possibility much more probable. This is that περίοδος means "review", "survey", "investigation", as in Epicurus, *Hdt.* 83: ὅσοι δὲ μὴ παντελῶς αὐτῶν τῶν ἀποτελουμένων εἰσίν, ἐκ τούτων καὶ κατὰ τὸν ἄνευ φθόγγων τρόπον τὴν ἅμα νοήματι περίοδον τῶν κυριωτάτων πρὸς γαληνισμόν ποιοῦνται. This sentence, which is the last of the *Letter to Herodotus*, seems to have been known to Diogenes, who, if my restoration of fr. 29.III, part of the preface to his *Ethics*, is correct, echoes it there.²³

3–4 ποιου . . . ἀδηλουμενω. The letters are easy to read, but it is not so easy to know to what words they belong. In the first publication of fr. 68 I tentatively suggested ποιοῦ|[μεν καλῶς] ἢ δηλοῦμεν, ὦ | [φίλοι], which would be a strange statement. I also mentioned ποιοῦσι and ποιοῦντες as possible alternatives to ποιοῦμεν, but in fact ποιοῦ|ντες is not possible, because the word would have been divided ποιοῦν|τες. I pointed out that in line 4 we could have ἀδηλοῦμεν, ἀδηλουμένω or ἀδήλου μενω. At that stage I had not correctly read and restored [τῶ]ν φαινομένων[v]: this reading emerged when I edited the fragment the second time. On that second occasion I suggested, in the critical notes, that one might read something like ποιοῦ | [τινος ἔτι] ἀδήλου, μένω|[μεν]. I believe that this suggestion is on the right lines, and in fact I have adopted it in the reconstruction above, with the minor alteration of τινος ἔτι to δὴ τινος. Certainly I cannot think of any other reading which gives good sense.

¹⁹ For NF 131, see M. F. Smith, *Excavations at Oinoanda 1997: the new Epicurean texts*, *AS* 48 (1998) 125–170, at 158–160.

²⁰ Fr. 122.II.

²¹ See especially L. Canfora, *Diogene di Enoanda e Lucrezio*, *RFIC* 120 (1992) 39–66; M. F. Smith, *Did Diogenes of Oinoanda know Lucretius? A reply to Professor Canfora*, *RFIC* 121 (1993) 478–492; M. F. Smith, *The chisel and the Muse: Diogenes of Oinoanda and Lucretius*, in K. A. Algra, M. H. Koenen and P. H. Schrijvers (eds), *Lucretius and his intellectual background* (Amsterdam, 1997) 67–78; Smith, *Excavations* (n. 19) 160.

²² See Smith, *Diogenes of Oinoanda* (n. 1) 112.

²³ Compare Diogenes' [εὐπρο]σόδω [τρόφω χωρὶς φθόν]γου with Epicurus' κατὰ τὸν ἄνευ φθόγγων τρόπον.

Unless I am much mistaken, our text is epistemological and describes the correct attitude to be adopted to τὰ ἄδηλα, “things not evident to sense”, things which include celestial phenomena, certain terrestrial phenomena such as earthquakes and volcanic eruptions, and the atoms and void which are the ultimate constituents of the universe. In investigating these, we must still always be guided by sensation, the primary criterion of truth for the Epicureans: taking phenomena of our immediate experience (τὰ παρ’ ἡμῖν φαινόμενα) as “signs” (σημεῖα, τεκμήρια) and making use of analogy, we can often make inferences about things which are unperceived or imperfectly perceived. See, for example, Epicurus, *Pyth.* 87 σημεῖα δ’ ἐπὶ τῶν ἐν τοῖς μετεώροις συντελουμένων φέρειν (φέρει Kühn) τῶν παρ’ ἡμῖν τινα φαινομένων, and Diogenes Laertius 10.32 ὅθεν καὶ περὶ τῶν ἀδήλων ἀπὸ τῶν φαινομένων χρῆση σημειοῦσθαι. Our inferences concerning ἄδηλα, when tested against the evidence of sensation, may meet with contradiction (ἀντιμαρτύρησις), in which case they must be discarded. In certain cases confirmation (ἐπιμαρτύρησις) may be possible, but usually the best that can be achieved is absence of contradiction (οὐκ ἀντιμαρτύρησις), and if, as often happens, several theories pass this negative test, all must be considered possible (Epicurus, *Hdt.* 79–80, *Pyth.* 86–87; Lucretius 5.526–533, 6.703–711; Philodemus, *De signis* passim; Diogenes fr. 13.III). If my restoration of fr. 68 is on the right lines, Diogenes is thinking of those ἄδηλα, the great majority, where the result of the test will be not contradiction or confirmation, but contradiction or absence of contradiction.

ἡμῖν is constantly used by Epicurus to mean “of our experience”, “here on earth”. See *Pyth.* 87 (quoted above in the previous note), 88, 94, 95, 96, 97, 98, 108. The usage is very common also in Philodemus, *De signis*: for references, see H. Usener, *Glossarium Epicureum* (Roma, 1977) 504. In my 1993 edition I proposed [ἐπ]ιτομή (without παρ’ ἡμῖν). I now consider the proposal very unlikely.

Position of fr. 68 in *Letter to Dionysius*

In my 1993 edition I referred to the “apparently introductory context” of fr. 68²⁴ and placed it before fr. 69–72. However, after my latest work on the fragment, I doubt whether it is introductory. I doubt too whether it came earlier than every other known passage of the *Letter to Dionysius*.

Since epistemology before ethics is the orthodox order for an Epicurean, I still think that it is right to place the epistemological fr. 69 before the ethical fr. 71–72, with fr. 70, which is both epistemological and ethical, in between. But I should now prefer to place fr. 68 after fr. 69. I shall explain why. In fr. 68, as we have seen, Diogenes seems to be describing how τὰ ἄδηλα are to be investigated, while in fr. 69 he is explaining that square objects, when viewed from the distance, appear roundish, because the filmy images emanating from them are battered and blunted by the air through which they pass on their way to our eyes. So in fr. 69 he is dealing not with τὰ ἄδηλα, but with τὰ πρόδηλα, “things open to view”: although a square tower cannot always be perceived accurately from the distance, it is possible to go near it and obtain the clear view which will provide either confirmation (ἐπιμαρτύρησις) or absence of confirmation (οὐκ ἐπιμαρτύρησις) of our sense-impression of the distant tower. It is natural to assume that τὰ πρόδηλα were discussed before τὰ ἄδηλα, and therefore that fr. 69 preceded fr. 68.²⁵

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²⁴ Smith, *Diogenes of Oinoanda* (n. 1) 515.

²⁵ I am grateful to Phillip De Lacy for his comments on this paper.