

## Summary of *Peri oikonomia* by Philodemus

### 1. Introduction

Original economics was practiced by all Greek philosophical schools. Of the Cynics we know that Antisthenes (445-365 BC) wrote a book on the government of the house that is now lost. It has the intriguing<sup>i</sup> title *Victory* (Gr.: *Nικη*). Still two Stoic books with the title *Oikonomikos* are known, one by Hiërocles (fl. 2<sup>nd</sup> century BC)<sup>ii</sup>, and one by Dio Chrysostomos (40 AD – 115 AD)<sup>iii</sup> show this. The Epicurean position is exposed by a later author, Philodemus, (110-35 BC), who not only appropriated the ideas of the first generation of the Epicurean creed about the government of the house but also looked into the books of Xenophon and Theophrastus about this subject in order to find some additional inspiration for his economics. This author lived in Naples, the Italian centre of Epicurean philosophers. His books got buried under the ashes of the Vesuvius in Herculaneum with its outburst of 79 AD. They were excavated around 1860.<sup>iv</sup> Amongst them a book *About Oikonomia*

In the first part (I-XI) of this fascinating booklet Philodemus reviews the two works about the government of the house, that we have presented so far, the *Oikonomikos* of Xenophon and the *Oikonomika* of Theophrastus. After his review of these two authoritative books, Philodemus tells in a second part of the *Peri oikonomia*, what he intends to do.. He is going to expose *the view to take towards acquisition and preservation of resources* (--), (XII, 7-9) (--) and *also towards how much property a philosopher needs..* (XII, 5)

This way the author restricts himself to a small part of economics. He leaves out the government of the family, as he explicitly confirms. *I will not discuss what is living good in the house* (XII, 6/7), that is to say what is the proper way of governing wife, slaves and children. And he also omits the management functions of stowing away and usage, which in his eyes do not mean much. He admits, however, that one could think separately through the function of stowing away, because *the potting order that adds pleasure to the management might be considered a duty of the governor of the house.* (X, 44- XI, 11, 2)

According to Philodemus his selection of subjects should not be a problem because acquisition and preservation of resources is what the *common opinion*<sup>v</sup> *happens to understand by the government of the house and the matters referring to it.* (XII, 10-12) This restriction to the two managerial functions of acquisition and preservation gives this Epicurean economics a ring of business administration. The ‘management theory’ of the Epicureans, however, is not inspired by a goal of profit making, as it is often nowadays. Philodemus wants to show which way of managing the resources will contribute to an undisturbed peace of mind (Gr.: *αταραξία*), which is what the Epicureans strive for.

### 2 Summary

#### 2.1 Summary of Philodemus’ review of the works of Xenophon and Theophrastus.

{What Philodemus has selected from the first 2/3 of Xenophon’s work on economics is severely damaged and only tiny fragments of it are readable. It can nevertheless be made out that Philodemus’ has lifted six subjects from Xenophon’s work:

- the definition of government of the house (oikonomia) ( I)
- the contribution of the wife to the government of the house ( II)
- the motivation of slaves and the way they learn



self-government: the causes which make a governor of the house successful ( III en IV)  
the life style that comes with a small wealth of 5 minae, which Socrates, the philosopher, thought sufficient for a decent living ( V)  
the method that Socrates and Isomachus use to teach and learn (VI and VII)}

Philodemus first states that Socrates when using the common notion of the government of the house wrongly has forgotten to include preservation as a part of the government of the house and only has mentioned acquisition. Neither is it clear that when he talks about `good government`, he includes making the people in the house happy [i.e. includes governing in a morally good way DN].

He establishes that *Socrates considers the wife as a good partner in the house, who when it comes to the good, completely matches her husband.* (II) Philodemus thinks it that Critoboulos wants to learn from (Socrates) if to have a wife contributes to the government of the house of the philosopher and more generally to the undisturbed peace of mind of him. (idem) This is according to him a point to set aside in order to be scrutinized.

Socrates` remark that at some places all slaves are chained but nevertheless run away, while at other ones they are free but stay to work (II) should be investigated as well.

Philodemus thinks that the observation in Xenophon`s text that *on similar farms some governors perish (--), while others get everything they need from it in a large and honest way* (III b) should be set apart by the Epicureans and studied by them too. He pays attention to Socrates`s observation that *those who work hard and realize an income, but nevertheless exhaust their house, are subjects of the most tricky masters, like gluttony, liquor addiction, and ambition.* (IV)

Philodemus then highlights the life style of Socrates, the philosopher, who did not take on many activities. *He thought for himself that 5 minae sufficed for the necessary needs and the bodily desires of people.* (V) Socrates considered wealth in life empty and had put a limit for himself of 5 minae.

Finally, Philodemus assesses the educational aspects of the second discourse in the *Oikonomikos*, the one between Socrates and Ischomachus. He criticizes Socrates` habit to change the meanings of terms during the conversation as well as his acting as if economics may be learned in the time span of one discussion.. Then he moves his attention to Ischomachus (--) *What he says about leadership and training is long, as well when he deals with the theoretical as with practical aspects of agriculture, at the same time showing how people learn.* (--) (VII, 5-10). [Here too the text is incomplete and not clear but still can be read that] Philodemus accepts what Ischomachus says about the possibility of teaching the overseer not to steal. *But I think that what he says about the possibility that the overseer may teach the slaves to become just* (VII, 22-26), is a fantasy.

*But we do not need to occupy ourselves any further with Xenophon`s Oikonomika, because the rest of the book deals with the art of farming, that eventually proofs itself to be the product of practical experience not of philosophy. Furthermore it is not necessary that philosophers have a talent for learning the jobs of the farmer and those are not the kind of tasks that typically are performed by them either.* (VII, 26-37)

[Philodemus then reviews the *Oikonomika* of Theophrastus. He seems to start with a faithful reproduction of the original text, be it without the beginning and the end, but if this is actually the case cannot be proven. This part of the text is almost unreadable, because of the many lacunas. Then follows a review of it.<sup>vi</sup> For practical reasons I have the sentences from Theophrastus which Philodemus in a running comment discusses, copied from the Aristotelian author and put between {brackets}. Philodemus` comments on I have abbreviated and given a grey background.]

The statements by Theophrastus in *Oikonomika* I (1243a 1- 1243 a 17) are superfluous.<sup>vii</sup>  
[Ad *Oikonomika* II (1243a 18-1243b 8), the second, contemplative, chapter of the *Oikonomikos* ]



{Parts of a house are man and property}. **Is relevant** {Because nature first has to be studied in its smallest [parts], this also goes for the house.} **Is original**. {So that according to Hesiod in a house 'first of all a wife and a ploughing ox' have to be present.} **To be investigated**. {For the one (the house) is first of food supply, the other (the wife is the first) of the free ones.} **To be investigated**. {The first [kind of] care for property is the one in conformity with nature; when it comes to conformity to nature agriculture is first, and second are all those from the soil, like mining and the like.} **To be investigated**. [Ad *Oikonomika* III & IV (1243b 9-1244a 8): the government of the wife. Philodemus hardly pays any attention to the issues that Theophrastus had brought forward regarding the government of the wife. In passing the Epicurean author mentions *that a happy life might be possible without her*. (IX, 1-3 )] {Of the sorts of care for people the one for the wife comes first}. **To be investigated**.  
- {Marry a young girl}. **To be investigated**.  
[Ad *Oikonomika* V (1244a 9-1244 b 21): the government of slaves]  
{The first and most necessary of the possessions is the best and most suitable one for the master. That is certainly man.} **To be investigated** {One first has to get proper slaves/.<sup>viii</sup> **To be investigated** {Two sorts of slaves exist: the overseer and the labourer.} **To be investigated**, *because both might be freemen*. (IX, 19-20) {To acquire as children the slaves who are going to be educated into overseers and not buy them as adults on the market.} **To be investigated**  
{The remark that association with slaves (should be) such that there is no brutalizing and no lessening of pressure; and those, who perform the higher jobs be given honour and the labourers be given more of food.} **Is acceptable** {The drinking of wine makes even the free ones unmanageable and many people abstain from it. Therefore slaves should be given no wine or only a bit of it.} *Too rigid, because drink enhances the pleasure and it is common use to provide the hard workers with it*. (IX, 41-44) { Remarks about work, food and punishment} **Common place remarks**. {One should keep words and acts in line.} **Is right** {The slaves that are too defenceless do not hold out and the hot tempered ones do not start well.} **Had better not be adopted** {And one has to determine a goal for everybody.} **Absolutely not necessary**. {And not acquire many slaves from the same people} **Not necessary either** {One should also take them hostage by permitting them to make children the children.} **Is declined in favour of Xenophon's suggestion** **to breed slaves from the good slaves, not from the bad ones**. {The ceremonies and the (opportunities for) pleasures to be organized more because of the slaves than of the free persons} **Rather overdone certainly if taken together with the statement that slaves have more reasons to be attached them** ( X, 26-27).  
[Ad *Oikonomika* VI (1244 b 24 - 1245b 3) The management of resources]  
{The broad pictures of the governor of the house, which he should have with regard to the resources, are four. It is necessary that he is capable of acquiring and preserving. If (he is) not (capable of preserving), the acquisition has nothing useful, because that is to paddle water with a sieve and the proverbial barrel with holes. He has to be skilled to be competent in stowing away the goods he has at his disposal properly and in making use (of them) too. Because for the last two (functions) the first two are necessary.} **The whole argument is declined** *because the function of putting order to (the goods) is nothing more than acquisition and preservation, if putting order is indeed understood as it should* . (X, 39- 43).  
{The fruit bearing ones have to be larger in amount than the ones that do not bear fruits.} *This witnesses love for money, if he means yielding and not yielding but if he means useful and useless than everything should be useful*. (XI, 3- 11) {The daily tasks have to be distributed in such a way, that not everything is at risk at the same time.} **Is accepted, although not considered relevant for philosophers, because they do not take many risks if it is the case that they work and the one who does take too many risks, should be advised not to do this**. (XI, 19-21)  
{The Attical way of preservation, buying as they consume,} **Is troublesome and probably soon disadvantageous**. {The Persian way to see to everything personally.} *Everybody should know that in small governments supervision is always necessary and in governments with an overseer often.* (XI, 26-30)  
{Masters have to rise earlier than slaves and go to bed later.} **Fatiguing and not typical for philosophers**. {Never leave a house without a custodian present there} **This goes without saying**. {To rise and stroll [around the premises] in the night.} **Is declined as being too troublesome for a philosopher**. {To have a porter who is supposed to save the ingoing and outgoing goods and who is not capable of performing other jobs} **To be investigated**.



## 2.2 Summary of Philodemus' exposition of the Epicurean view on acquisition and preservation (XII-XXI)

*Now sufficient clearness exists as to the opinions of them [Xenophon and Theophrastus DN] but we still have to sketch those that please us. Well, we do not want to discuss how in a house can be lived well but to discuss the view to take towards acquisition and preservation of resources (XII, 2-5) (--) as well as the need of property for a philosopher. (XII, 5/6) When we do this we use the common definition of government of the house, not the one that philosophers apply. How much wealth in general a philosopher needs is discussed in my *On wealth, so that the managerial aspect of the acquisition and the preservation of its [wealth DN] will be explained.* (XII, 22-24).*

[Philodemus first offers a long paraphrase of the *On Wealth* of Metrodorus. In this work this disciple of Epicurus had attacked the attitude of the Cynics, who did not possess any goods, because they wanted to keep away from strain.] A life in undisturbed peace of mind and absence of anxiety, as the Cynics defend, is certainly to be preferred but this does not imply that one should abstain from any exertion. Wanting only to possess the goods that are sufficient for one day, like the Cynics did, is not the proper attitude. It is important to be aware of the annoyance we experience if certain possessions are not available to us. *Health for instance brings the body some concern and nuisance, but when absent, it annoys us more in uncountable ways. In the same way a dedicated friend may provide us some grief, but he hurts us more by being absent.* (XIII, 11-15) At times one has to be prepared to do physical work. The good person needs many things, which would make him *susceptible to passion, if he would not possess them and some of them would disturb him, when he would loose them.* (XIII, 15-19) Therefore not everything, what comes forward and brings fuss, concern and tension should be avoided. *Some things have to be chosen and wealth is one of them, because when present, it is a lesser burden, at least when seen over a whole life, not at a particular moment.* (XIII, 34-39)

One should not exclusively follow the rule: avoid all exertion. The question here is what exertion contributes as much as possible to the most sublime way of life. *Wealth does not seem to cause any harmful trouble per se but by the wickedness of those who make use of it.* (XIV, 5-9) The proper care and vigilance of somebody who manages his wealth in the proper way brings less anxiousness than the one that is caused by possessing nothing and being forced to provide for one's necessities every day, *unless somebody succeeds in demonstrating that natural wealth does not bring much more advantages than living on little brings troubles, which demonstration will have much shortcomings.* (XIV, 17-23)

[So far Philodemus has excerpted from Metrodorus' *On wealth* the reasoning of his predecessor that a philosopher should make a living and that the wealth, which the philosopher acquires in a natural way in principle is an asset for him. He now explains with the help of Metrodorus how an Epicurean philosopher should deal with acquisition, and explains how he never will be chained by it.]

Now, two kinds of annoyance are imminent when a philosopher is engaged in acquisition:

Being disquieted by whatever runs out,

Being fixated on more or less

By them he comes to sit *in a prison for hard labour by his own doings* (XIV, 7-8) and gets deprived of leisure. He should not be possessed by a desire for growth of his possessions nor should he make the mistake to be continuously busy with acquisition and preservation. Rather should *provisions and skill in acquisition go together in such a way that also by his doing the goods can be shared. Because it is proper for the philosopher that he governs the house with an eye on his coming to possess and keeping friends.* (XIV, 44 -XV, 3)

This does not say that *if stocks are running out and are not yet replenished, indolence may reign the management of goods.* (XV, 10-12) One should not indulge in philosophical conversations, whenever hard work is necessary. Sometimes Epicurean assemblies are not able to put an end to their disputes, which endangers their survival.



The person that knows how to avoid the two mentioned annoyances has more ease from his daily acquisition than the person without any means of existence. *For we see that the wealth of such people [who know how to avoid these two annoyances DN] is not maintained in a lesser degree than the one of the people who exert themselves, and if not, at least it does not wear out as fast and is not as insecure.* (XV, 26-31)

This way the philosopher will never be chained by his wealth to such an extent, that he, in order to keep it, is prepared to carry large and non-proportional burdens. *For what makes its use carefree and the pleasure deriving from it pure must be this* (XV, 31-41), that for the wise men the acquisition of wealth is not accompanied by heavy worries how to maintain it. *For as a sound-minded man he is not impatient and because he is full of trust in the future due to his humble and modest provisions and moreover because he knows nature and is led by her, he is inclined toward the more generous in what he wants. On the other hand he does not mind to acquire the things that he really needs, this person whose life is moderate and shared and whose thinking is sound and truthful, even if he not easily will bring everybody to his side. On account of what, then, would anybody who, even if he loses his wealth, has so many means of existence to his disposal in order to live in much ease morally good, be extremely unhappy because of the preservation of his goods?* (XV, 45- XVI, 18)

[So as to acquisition and preservation one should strive for ataraksia, even in the worst case. Now follow some objections to the Epicurean norm for acquisition and their counterarguments]  
*But for a person who is as we described, the goods he has will not be in an insecure condition. For one will also not say that he is a bad governor of the house with regard to the use of its goods and indeed, neither with regard to their management and preservation.* (XVI, 18-25) Philodemus continues: *Not to maintain would be very silly, in as far as one's burden is not larger than appropriate and unless one does not forget to use whatever one really needs, for the things given by nature are available to us. Although managing a house according to this criterion is not easy, he [the person described DN] will not fail in its application.* (XVI 25-34) Neither will he fail in the application of the common knowledge about what is enough for the management of the available goods but not sufficient for commerce on a large scale. *For everybody can easily discern the things that according to this (criterion) are useful and lie in the middle' for (the kind of people, who are not heaping up but are managing the property at their disposal.* (XVI, 38-44) One may keep the extra's that one acquires in tranquillity but not what one gathers with trouble and pain. *The philosopher, however, cannot be mentioned an artisan or worker in large and fast acquisition. For in fact there is knowledge and expertise necessary for carrying on commerce, to which the honest man does not want to be a party.* (XVII, 2-9) It is the money-lover who has this (kind of knowledge and expertise).

Nevertheless when it comes to the defence against shortages each one of us does not perform too poorly. We are for instance capable of baking sufficient bread, even although experts on baking exist. *It turns out, that like the other areas where good artisans exists, everybody of us, when it comes to defend himself against shortage is capable enough to – so to say – end up well, as we see with the preparation of bread and pastes. For everybody is capable enough to perform such tasks in such a way that he has no lack of anything, even if knowledge of artisans exists in that area. This seems to hold for the acquisition and preservation of the resources too.* (XVII, 28-30) Although no experts in gathering and guarding and not all the time occupied with it, apparently many (of us) are creative in finding what they need and not absolutely incapable to perform these two functions, even the serious-minded man amongst us.

Objections that the serious-minded man is not creative and capable may be countered by showing that he is an expert in measuring the amounts that are necessary to reach the natural goal of life. Objections that this way he is only occupied with the useful should be countered by the answer that he is totally different from others<sup>vi</sup>. And even more by the answer *that by the words of the wise the people who are courageous with the small can be exhorted to become donators of everything*<sup>vii</sup>. (XVIII, 2-7)

[Now he explains that the Epicurean manages by way of calculating the pleasure of maintaining it against its burden. But he also knows how much he should give away.]



*We therefore certainly should not say that if we have taken away the burden from him with regard to the acquisition, we also have expelled the being rich. For it is not the case that the burden remains when this (being rich) occurs. And it is not only preserved for those who put the most energy in hard working for this matter, although this (hard working) accompanies most of their activities; maintaining (one's wealth) can happen without foolish exertions. (XVIII, 7-20)*

But here is even more at stake than lifting of oneself the suffering involved in the foolish way of preserving one's possessions. The wise also takes into consideration what he should give away, in opposition to the mass. *When the mass qualifies the work on and preservation of property as 'good', it leaves no space to benevolence and donating, acts for which there do not exist numbers (XVIII, 31-37). With benevolence one cannot calculate the more from the few (the net advantage) nor maintain the produced. So he will by far in the best way calculate the useful as to acquisition as well as to preservation, in order not to have more burdens than pleasure from the resources. (XVIII, 40-44)* The wise of course knows the exertion for and pleasure from acquisition. *Therefore he is more than anybody else capable of grasping and keeping in mind how the one exceeds the other. He, however, will not be capable of the largest and most rapid acquisition nor of perceiving in what way the more increases mostly, as long as he judges nothing by its goal and everything by its more or less. Neither will he intently preserve the goods at his disposal all the time. (XIX, 1-12)* The troubles this requires are really large, while nature clearly shows, if one only (only) looks at her, why one easily can deal with little. *Wealth, however, makes that a certain degree of sorrow and toil counterbalances the aid it offers. (XIX, 16-23)*

That somebody else than the philosopher as assistant will take up those activities of large and fast acquisition is not disagreeable, like this happens with the making of bread, but *that the philosopher himself would get involved in such activities is inappropriate. For such acquisition, when calculated, does not bring an advantage which counterbalances its burden.*

*So, if this is the attitude of the wise man towards the care for and preservation of his resources, the wealth that he has will not bring him trouble and if it does, he will make that it does not trouble him anymore than it will give him pleasure. And in the same way the advantage [of pleasure over burden DN] will follow the wise man with regard to acquisition. (XIX, 28-42)* Maybe it is the philosopher, who should be called the good business man, *because he acquires, uses and cares with a view on the contribution of wealth. (XIX 46-XX, 1)*

[Philodemus takes a crossroad to discuss the definition of a 'good businessman', departing from its definition by the Sophists, so called 'philosophers', who make their business from speech acts in public.]

The Sophists use to bend the meaning of the term 'good business man' on the sly by using it in the daily meaning, this way making it impossible to apply the term to the philosopher. One should use the term 'good business man' properly<sup>xiii</sup>. *If one defines 'good business man' as 'a person who acquires and takes care for wealth with a view on the advantage of it', the philosopher has to be called one and if one prefers to define 'a good business man' as 'a person who with ability and skilfully, without misbehaviour and lawfully, acquires much', than one had rather call others than philosophers 'good businessmen'. (XX, 16-32)* This is the case, even when with this acquisition his pleasure is larger than his burden.<sup>xiv</sup> For we want to distinguish ourselves from those who want to acquire much and fast, because they take it that this would be advantageous for life. *And those so called philosophers! While we can say for which reasons the wise primarily acquires and preserves resources with a view to his advantage and (from there on) can indicate the best way of management in general, (XX, 45-XXI, 4)* they do not do that but only try to bring the wise under their definition from everyday language. This is because they do not want to reason according to the approach described above. *They are formidable, because they let themselves draw to negations of the facts by logical routines and from thereon start to teach as if they refute the mass, if this says something different from them, or (from thereon) teach something about the things, that are not yet known. Aristotle suffered from this in his essay On Wealth about the good man being a good business man and the bad man also a bad businessman, as Metrodorus has shown. (XXI, 17-34)*

[Philodemus describes now what can be learned from Metrodorus.]

*Those who prefer this may understand from these (words of Metrodorus):<sup>xv</sup>*



*How much acquisition one should take care of,  
Which and what kind of government of the house<sup>xvi</sup> we assume in our discussion,  
In what way the philosopher might be called 'a good governor of the house' and in what way not,  
And likewise 'a good businessman'  
And in what way government of the house is an art and in what way it is not an art, so that it can be  
practiced accordingly by the mass as well as by the philosopher, (XXI 35-48)  
And why the approach discussed contributes to and is useful for an excellent prosperity, while the  
other one is not useful and burdening,  
And with what attitude one should perform one's caring tasks. (XXII, 1-6)*

*One may also distinguish some points about the questions from what sources and how one has to  
acquire and preserve. However, he [Metrodorus DN] continuously came back to the point that the  
disturbances, cares, and labours, which are occasional, are far more advantageous for the best way of  
life than the opposite choice[i.e. the choice of continuous disturbances, cares and labours DN]. (XXII,  
6-9)*

### **2.3: Philodemus' exposition of the Epicurean way of dealing with acquisition and preservation (PO XXII-XXVIII)**

*Some matters regarding the from where and how of acquisition and preservation should be  
investigated for a second time. (XXII, 6-9)*

[Ciphers 1 → 12 are mine.]

The requirement for the Epicurean government of the house to calculate sorrows and burdens with its implication that the Epicureans are capable governors, denies the claim of many authors, often biographers of famous politicians, like Gellias the Sicilian, Skopas the Thessalian and Kimon and Nicias the Athenians<sup>xvii</sup>, *that acquisition, which us fought by the spear en their use of acquisitions is the best.* ( XXII, 20-23) Which would imply that only active, successful politicians possess the abilities to govern a house and that philosophers, contemplative people dedicated to the truth, do not have this capacity and that one will ask oneself what is left for them. These authors hold *that philosophers lack the necessary power to reach their goal, or do not realize anything important or they sustain that if they (philosophers) become governors of a town this will become an ordeal.* (XXII, 41- XXIII, 1)

It is ridiculous to think than one should abstain from working, or stay away from slavery work or crafts, so that one may live a life of philosophy. *Working with one's hands is not improper and neither arise improprieties from living with and (using) the experience of slaves nor from the crafts.* (XXIII, 18- 22) The point is that they come on the second and third place. The philosophical discussions have priority. *The first and most beautiful is to be rewarded for philosophical discussions, with receptive men, with gratitude and even reverence as happened to Epicurus.* (XXIII, 23 - 30) The competitive disputes for money, which the sophists and professional debaters use to hold, on the other hand, are not the right kind of philosophical discussions.

The main point of the Epicurean view on acquisition and preservation of recently and in former years acquired goods is, that one has to make sure that one's desires come lightly and one's fears are little and small. Nothing uses to wear off and ruin the most illustrious and richest houses more than gluttony(--) *and also overdone fear for the gods and death, and for pain and for what one considers the cause of pain.* (XXIV, 3-6). Whoever is free from them will acquire and preserve as it is appropriate.

*Injustice too is thought to bring about both [acquisition and preservation DN], but, in fact, afterwards it takes away most not only of what one has gained but also of what one already possessed. From which it follows that the governor should strive for justice, because then he will provide for and preserve his goods without danger.* ( XXIV, 11-19)

*And the absence of friends seems to unburden a governor from expenditures, but who does not have friends, will not be helped, is held in contempt by everybody and cannot count on sympathy, from which not any income that is worth mentioning nor any preservation that is safe will proceed, so that one is more successful in both respects when one keeps friends.* (XXIV, 19-28)



*And lack of a donating attitude as well as lack of civilization in a person do much damage and leave men helpless and even may cause that the material basis of their existence be utterly ravaged. The contrary inclinations, however, bring about the contrary effects(--)* (XXIV, 29- 35) Some seem to consider gifts to friends and other good acquaintances as subtractions from and diminutions of what one has at his disposal, whereas, according to Hermarchus<sup>xviii</sup> *the cares bestowed upon such men are more advantageous acquisitions than (those for) lands, and they are the safest treasures against fate. But who wants also to gather something in the future and preserve what is gathered, should according to Epimarchus<sup>xix</sup>, not do well in the present, because not only expenditure is jerked away but also the predicted profits, but also be intent on the future.* (XXIV, 46- XXV, 12) For this brings not only hope but, once realized, also satisfaction.

*And one should not only do that, but often give something from one's own goods away, like lending one's sowers.* (XXV, 14-18) This increases the harvest of the receiving party, while the giving party does not lose anything.

*And one should make expenditures in proportion to one's means and not buy with the much or few money ([asking price DN] as a guide. (XXV, 23- 26) for what for the one is expensive is for the other cheap. And what for the one is blameful buying, because he would fast decimate his capital, for the other is not.*

*It is also absurd, as said before, to again and again stow away according to the month and to supply for a year<sup>xx</sup>, because it sometimes proves necessary to spend much more, even something from the accrual, like some Romans do; to distribute expenditures over luxurious goods; furniture; replacements of the stock and fresh supplies, just like circumstances and moral obligations sometimes force one not too furnish one's house or to save but to measure out expenditures to the business affairs and to pleasing gifts.* (XXV, 31- XXVI, 1)

*But it is really necessary that one, to the degree that one acquires more, accommodates the harmless desires of oneself and one's friends.* (XXVI 1-4) In the same way one has, if a 'hole is fallen', to fight this by reducing the expenditure, and more those for oneself than those for one's friends. *And then should more attention be paid to inspections, assisting some (and) setting time schedules, without feeling shame or believing that this harms philosophy. For to have excessively is shameful but to have in as far as is useful is dignified, while shameful again is having absolutely nothing.* (PO XXVI, 9-17) *When it comes to the choice of capable overseers and their assistants, of properties and transactions and of everything that has to do with the government of the house, one should not only follow one's own opinion but also ask for advice the friends that are most useful and most experienced in every matter.* (XXVI, 18- 28) There is no need to enter here into the subject of the acquisition and use of slaves. It can be read elsewhere. *The varied acquisitions from the one-product fields seems to make that you will be disappointed less and not to the same extent. From the other ones [acquire all product from one large area DN] is the case, that they cause to get terribly without means* (XXVI, 34-38).

*And of (the wealth) from acquisition is so called 'streaming along wealth'<sup>xxi</sup> not inferior but sometimes safer and reliable.* (XXVI, 39-43)

It seems not difficult to explain that one should acquire and preserve and should not spend too easily. Nevertheless many philosophers do not do this. *If one has friends, however, there should be saved more so that they may have means after one's death and they should be regarded as one's children. On the other hand if one does not have friends, one may ease the more rigid way of governing the house* (XXVII, 5-10), but not the saving.

Therefore consulting Xenophon and Theophrastus, although these authors were no Epicureans, might prove itself to be quite useful for us. *And if somebody will blame us for writing about the subject of the government of the house, than it will suffice for us, that Metrodorus, with Epicurus, personally gave advices and assignments and managed with much care and into large detail, although it seems that the matter was not very much on his mind.* (XXVII, 20-28)

More credible will be somebody who blames us for not having written enough. *Then again we will not be intimidated because we believe that government of the house with an undisturbed peace or mind does not require greater sophistication and that the advantage of wealth over poverty is only small.* (XXVII, 40-46)



At the same time we believe, because a precise definition of the kinds of care is impossible, that these doctrines have to be global and that we write much in other treatises concerning the care and preservation of resources, and chiefly in the treatise 'on wealth and poverty', the one 'on the luxurious and frugal ways of life', the 'on things to be chosen and avoided', and more of those. ( XXVII 46-XXVIII, 10)

<sup>i</sup> Does he describe the way to defeat the desire to possess a house?

<sup>ii</sup> Johanni Stobaei., o.c. p. 696-699.

<sup>iii</sup> Stobaeus inserted two separate short sentences from the book *Oikonomikos* of Dio Chrysostomos about fathering and educating children in his anthology. Johanni Stobaei. *Anthologii. Libri duo posteriores*. o.c. p. 679. Dio Chrysostomos was born in (now) Bursa in Turkey around 40 AD, travelled to Rome to study, was banished and travelled but returned to his city of birth and eventually became an highly estimated citizen of Bursa , where he died around 115 AD .

<sup>iv</sup> The authors of [http://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Herculaneum\\_\(Oudheid\)](http://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Herculaneum_(Oudheid)) state that the papyri of Philodemus are part of the library of Lucius Calpurnius Piso, a very rich Roman and father of Calpurnia, the 4<sup>th</sup> wife of Julius Caesar. Piso built a 4-storey villa with a huge garden around a swimming pool just out of the city-wall of Herculaneum in the first century BC. He was very good friend of Philodemus.

<sup>v</sup> My translation of ἰδιώτης. Bon renders it as *essentially*.

<sup>vi</sup> He does discuss the rest of Theophrastus' book systematically by faithfully following the order of it but he comments often on just a part of the original sentence. He promises to look especially at statements that are different from those of other philosophers (in VII, 44-45), which promise he does not fulfill.

<sup>vii</sup> This is a super-succinct summary of what Philodemus actually says in the way I have shown in the introductory part of this chapter.

<sup>viii</sup> IX, r 14-16. Theophrastus had written here: *one first has to acquire devoted slaves*.

<sup>ix</sup> **Where?**

<sup>x</sup> This expression is read by me as a reference to the ethics of Aristotle, who defends in his *Nicomachean Ethics* the virtues that 'lie in the middle'.

<sup>xi</sup> I understand this to mean that the useful in Epicurean philosophy stands in a completely different perspective; the useful is integrated in the morally good, c.q. in wisdom. In the other philosophical schools both are supposedly separated.

<sup>xii</sup> I understand this to mean that serious minded philosophers are able to convince people to need little and convince them to share even that little with other people, so usefulness here is different, because it contains the social, which makes possible philosophical discussions.

<sup>xiii</sup> According to Philodemus one should use the Epicurean logic. This means that one should start from the general, natural notion (προληψις) of 'good businessman' and then look at how somebody actually does business. If a person acts according to that notion (επιμαρτυρομαι) than it can be properly said that he is a good businessman.

<sup>xiv</sup> This is probably what Philodemus wants to add, here. Two successive lines have a gap.

<sup>xv</sup> The bullet points are mine.

<sup>xvi</sup> In this fragment I have rendered *οικονομία* with *government of the house* and *οικονομος* with *governor of the house*, because I suppose that Philodemus here joins the discussion of Socrates and Critoboulos in the beginning of Xenophon's *Oikonomikos*.

<sup>xvii</sup> The four politicians mentioned all became extremely rich and spent lavishly on public buildings.

<sup>xviii</sup> Hermarchus (c 3250 c. 250 BC) was the successor of Epicurus at his school. He polemized in his (merely lost) writings against Empedocles, Aristotle, Plato and the Pythagoreans.

<sup>xix</sup> Epimarchus was a playwright of comedies from Sicily, who lived at the end of the 6<sup>th</sup> century BC and in the beginning of the 5<sup>th</sup> century BC.

<sup>xx</sup> **To compare with Theophrastus; the interpretations citation and the text here.**

<sup>xxi</sup> **'Steaming along wealth' This is?**

Gewijzigde veldcode