

P.HERC. 1015/832: BOOK 15, 16, OR 19 OF
PHILODEMUS' *ON RHETORIC*?¹

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Abstract. — The former identification of *P.Herc.* 1015/832 with Book 8 of Philodemus' *On Rhetoric* is untenable. The book number, which is possibly preserved in its *subscriptio*, is uncertain. Autopsy raises the possibility that the roll corresponds to Book 15, 16, or 19 of the same work.

From the several books of Philodemus' *On Rhetoric* (Περὶ ῥητορικῆς) surviving today in the Herculaneum collection only three have been previously identified with certainty in respect to the book number included in the *subscriptio* preserved in them. They are *P.Herc.* 1427² (A' = Book 1), *P.Herc.* 1672 (B' = Book 2), of which *P.Herc.* 1674 represents another copy,³ and both *P.Herc.* 1423 and *P.Herc.* 1673/1007

¹ I should like to thank the two anonymous referees for their helpful comments and criticism.

² This papyrus has been reedited, after Siegfried Sudhaus, by F. Longo Auricchio, "Φιλοδήμου περὶ ῥητορικῆς libros primum et secundum," in F. Sbordone (ed.), *Ricerche sui Papiri Ercolanesi* 3 (Napoli 1977) 1–22.

³ Both papyri have been reedited, after Siegfried Sudhaus, by Longo Auricchio (n. 2) 23–288. For the relationship between them see, first of all, G. Cavallo, *Libri, scritture, scribi a Ercolano* (Napoli 1983) 63–64; Eund., "I rotoli di Ercolano come prodotti scritti. Quattro riflessioni," *S&C* 8 (1984) 5–30, esp. 18–20, and T. Dorandi, "Per una ricomposizione dello scritto di Filodemo sulla Retorica," *ZPE* 82 (1990) 59–87, esp. 66–67, who maintained, on palaeographical and bibliological grounds, that the latter is a provisional redaction of the former, which would represent the definitive version. This view has been questioned and substantially overcome by D.L. Blank, "Versionen oder Zwillinge: zu den Handschriften der ersten Bücher von Philodems' *Rhetorik*," in G.W. Most (ed.), *Editing Texts, Texte edieren* (Göttingen 1998) 123–140, esp. 127–137, who has also explained the correct interpretation to be given to the term ὑπομνηματικόν which is legible in the *subscriptio* of *P.Herc.* 1674. According to him, this should be intended, not as referring to the provisional redaction of a book or a work, but as a genre designation ("Gattungsbezeichnung") indicating a piece of writing based on an undetailed exposition of the master's lectures. It is known, in fact, that several subjects and polemics tackled by Philodemus in his *On Rhetoric* and even its original inspiration were founded on the reworking of the Athenian lectures of his master Zeno of Sidon. For the similar case of *P.Herc.* 1426 and *P.Herc.* 1506, see below, p. 168 and note 8. Recently G. Del Mastro, *Titoli e annotazioni bibliologiche nei papiri greci di Ercolano* (Napoli 2014) 365–367 has claimed to have read an uncertain B also in the *subscriptio* of *P.Herc.* 1674: "[p]oco più in basso rispetto alla diagonale destra dell'*alpha* del termine ὑπομνηματικόν, si vedono delle tracce di una

(Δ' = Book 4),⁴ two copies of the same book of which the former only includes the first part of the text (τῶν εἰς δύο τὸ πρότερον).⁵ More recently, I questioned the identification of *P.Herc.* 1004 with Book 7⁶ and, besides, I was able to read a Γ' = Book 3 in the *subscriptio* of *P.Herc.* 1506,⁷ of which *P.Herc.* 1426 is another copy,⁸ and a K = Book 20 in the *subscriptio*

lettera. Dovrebbe trattarsi del numerale *beta* (anche perché nel *P.Herc.* 1672 questo numero si legge).” However, from my personal inspection of the papyrus and the corresponding multispectral image (which are both hardly legible) I could not read anything at this point.

⁴ Both papyri were edited by S. Sudhaus, *Philodemi volumina rhetorica* 1 (Lipsiae 1892) 147–161 and 162–225, respectively.

⁵ See G. Del Mastro, “Μέγα βιβλίον. Galeno e la lunghezza dei libri (Περὶ ἀλυσίας 28 Boudon-Millot-Jouanna),” in D. Manetti (ed.), *Studi sul De indolentia di Galeno* (Firenze 2012) 33–61, esp. 50; M. Fimiani, “I papiri del IV libro della *Retorica* di Filodemo: segni, correzioni e caratteristiche bibliologiche (*P.Herc.* 1423, 1673/1007 e relative scorze),” *CERC* 42 (2012) 121–188, esp. 122; G. Ranocchia, “Nuove acquisizioni sulla struttura del Περὶ ῥητορικῆς di Filodemo,” *ZPE* (forthcoming).

⁶ See Ranocchia (n. 5); Eund., “*P.Herc.* 1004 ([Filodemo], [*Sulla retorica*], Libro incerto). Condizione fisica, descrizione bibliologica e storia degli studi,” in T. Derda et al. (eds.), *Proceedings of the 27th International Congress of Papyrology (Warsaw, 29 July – 3 August 2013)* (Warsaw 2016) 1.413–431, esp. 422–424, and also Eund., “Diogene di Babilonia e Aristone nel *P.Herc.* 1004 ([Filodemo], [*Sulla retorica*], Libro incerto). Parte Prima,” *LexPhil* 4 (2016) 95–129, <http://lexicon.cnr.it/index.php/LP/article/view/477>, esp. 115–121.

⁷ See Ranocchia (n. 5). The numeral is partially legible under the third line of the *subscriptio* in correspondence with the η (lost in the papyrus, yet attested by both the Oxonian and the Neapolitan apographs) of ὑπομνηματικόν and above the total number of the *stichoi* between the first two XX indicating the first two thousands. I read the lower part of an upright ending below with a long, slightly curved, apex slanting to the left downward. Besides Γ, P, Y, and T are also possible, but they must be excluded for obvious reasons. The numeral has recently been misread by Del Mastro (n. 3) 335 as “un tratto che doveva avere la funzione di sottolineare lo stacco tra il titolo (con il numerale purtroppo in lacuna) e l’informazione accessoria o di inquadrare il numerale stesso.” Nothing more of its upper part is legible – as instead Del Mastro (ibid.) contends – for the simple fact that it was lost in the horizontal lacuna which goes through the *subscriptio* from side to side.

⁸ For the different hypotheses on the relationship between these two copies, see D. Comparetti, “La Bibliothèque de Philodème,” in *Mélanges Chatelain* (Paris 1910) 118–129, esp. 123–124; R. Philippson, “Philodemos,” in *Paulys Realencyklopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft* 19.2 (Stuttgart and München 1938) 2444–2482, esp. 2453–2454; F. Longo Auricchio, “Per una nuova edizione del secondo libro della “*Retorica*” di Filodemo,” *Rendiconti dell’Accademia di Archeologia Lettere e Belle Arti di Napoli* n.s. 45 (1970) 128; Cavallo (n. 3, 1983) 63–64; Eund. (n. 3, 1984) 18–20. All of these have been superseded by important arguments by Blank (n. 3) 127–137, who has also explained the correct interpretation to be given to the term ὑπομνηματικόν which is legible in the *subscriptio* of *P.Herc.* 1506. For the similar case of *P.Herc.* 1672 and *P.Herc.* 1674, see above, p. 167 and note 3. Recently Del Mastro (n. 3) 291–292, has claimed to have read an uncertain Γ̄ also in the *subscriptio* of *P.Herc.* 1426: “in linea con il primo *rho* del termine ῥητορικῆς si vede (prevalentemente nell’immagine multispettrale), nella linea seguente, la barra che doveva coprire il numerale e il tratto superiore del *gamma*.” However, from my personal inspection of the papyrus the “barra” turns out to coincide with an accidental erasure of the papyrus showing underlying carbonised fibres and the “tratto superiore del *gamma*”

of *P.Herc.* 1669, showing that Philodemus' *On Rhetoric* comprised at least, or precisely, 20 books.⁹

Let us now come to the case of *P.Herc.* 1015/832. This roll, of which *P.Herc.* 1015 represents the upper part and *P.Herc.* 832 the lower part,¹⁰ transmits a book of *On Rhetoric* the final section of which (cols. XLVIIIa/col. 36–col. LVIII) has recently been edited by David L. Blank.¹¹ This scholar does not comment on the surviving traces of the numeral possibly preserved in its *subscriptio*. He just refers to a former reading by Francesca Longo Auricchio, printing it in his draft edition as certain.¹² Longo Auricchio, more than ten years before,¹³ had claimed to have read in the *subscriptio* of this volume, preserved in the final unrolled portion of *P.Herc.* 1015,¹⁴ “the name of the author, the title of the work and below this, in centered position, the upper part, but certain, of an H = 8.”¹⁵ Also Gianluca Del Mastro, in his recent study of titles in Herculaneum papyri, restricts himself to affirming that “Francesca Longo Auricchio has read for the first time the numeral H under the title of the work” without entering into the question.¹⁶ Unfortunately, neither scholar describes in detail the surviving traces of the letter and, hence, we are not allowed to understand on what palaeographical grounds this inference is based, namely which specific portions of the numeral are preserved whose combination allows us to speak, beyond a shadow of a doubt, of a *certain* H, as Longo Auricchio

is not legible at all. Moreover, below the two supposed traces as far as the stichometric notation underneath there is clearly blank space.

⁹ See G. Ranocchia, “Philodemus’ *On Rhetoric* was in Twenty Books,” *JHS* 138 (2018) 202–208, and also Eund (n. 5).

¹⁰ The original roll was broken into two different cylinders already in 1782. See *Papiri / Inventario / Papiri / ed oggetti diversi*, Archivio Storico del Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Napoli, Serie Inventari Antichi No. 43, sub *P.Herc.* 1015 and sub *P.Herc.* 832. The papyri were unrolled separately (*P.Herc.* 1015 between 1803 and 1804 and *P.Herc.* 832 between 1807 and 1808).

¹¹ See D.L. Blank, “Aristotle’s ‘Academic Course on Rhetoric’ and the End of Philodemus, *On Rhetoric* VIII,” *CErc* 37 (2007) 5–47.

¹² Cf. Blank (n. 11) 44, col. LVIII, *subscriptio*, text: Φ[ΙΛ]ΟΔΗ[Μ]ΟΙΟΥ | ΠΕΠΙ ΠΗΤΟΙΚΗΧ | Η; apparatus: η legit Longo^{NE}. Not a word is expended on the matter in either the introduction or the commentary.

¹³ See F. Longo Auricchio, “New Elements for the Reconstruction of Philodemus’ *Rhetoric*,” in B. Kramer et al. (eds.), *Akten des 21. Internationalen Papyrologenkongresses (Berlin 13–19 August 1995)* (Stuttgart 1997) 2.631–635 = “Nuovi elementi per la ricostruzione della Retorica di Filodemo,” *CErc* 26 (1996) 169–171, esp. 171–172 (hereafter I shall only refer to the latter).

¹⁴ The *subscriptio* is preserved in cornice 20, pezzo 1. The numeral is legible only in the papyrus. Neither the Oxonian nor the Neapolitan apograph records it.

¹⁵ See Longo Auricchio (n. 13, 1996) 171.

¹⁶ See Del Mastro (n. 3) 201.

contends. Especially, as also may be inferred from the multispectral image reproduced below (Fig. 1), it would not seem that there is sufficient room in the surviving portion of the papyrus under the title of the work for any numeral. In principle, provided that it was included in the *subscriptio*, this should be sought inside the long horizontal gap (between 4 and 7 lines in height) which, as is known, cuts across this roll from beginning to end and separates its upper part (*P.Herc.* 1015) from its lower one (*P.Herc.* 832).¹⁷ In effect, the title of the work is 0.8 cm vertically distant from the name of the author, and another 0.8 cm below it the long gap in question exactly begins.

If Longo Auricchio alludes to those two minuscule traces of ink lying on the same horizontal axis 0.2 cm distant from one another and 0.5 cm below the title of the work between the ρ and the η of περιητορικης, it is not completely certain that they belong to the numeral indicating the book number because of the small vertical distance (three millimetres less than the reciprocal distance between the first two lines of the *subscriptio*) of these traces from the title of the work. Even admitting that they do so belong, these traces do not authorise us to speak by any means of a certain letter, even less so of an H. Based on my personal inspection of the papyrus, I see a small hook with the curve facing above on the left. This continues to the right with an incipient vertical stroke which probably went on downwards into the major horizontal gap mentioned above. On the right, after a 2 mm wide lacuna and 0.5 mm lower down, the remains of an arch which is arranged horizontally with the curve facing above are still visible in the multispectral image (Fig. 1) and, even better, in the original manuscript by inclining the “tavoletta” downward to the left under the microscope. There are no connecting strokes between the two traces. Palaeographically speaking, if they belong to one letter, combining them can only give us K. The trace on the left would be the top of its upright and that on the right would be a portion of its upper diagonal. As far as H is concerned, only if it were followed by a ligature (as e.g. at the end of col. LVIII 16 Blank: προηκού[ς]ης) would these traces theoretically be compatible with it. But obviously this cannot be the case with a numeral. If, instead, the two traces belong to two different letters, then we are dealing with a compound numeral, all the more if one considers that, differently from what is claimed by Longo Auricchio,¹⁸ the two traces in question are *not* centered with respect to the title of the work, but appear to be placed

¹⁷ See above p. 169 and note 10.

¹⁸ Longo Auricchio (n. 13, 1996) 171.

one and a half letters on the left of its central axis, which is represented by the τ . In this case, the hooked stroke on the left would represent the upper part of an I and the arch on the right would be the upper portion of a round letter such as E, ζ or Θ . The resulting possibilities would be IE, I ζ or I Θ corresponding to, respectively, Book 15, Book 16, and Book 19 of the work.

Since, as I show elsewhere, *P.Herc.* 1669 represents Book 20 of *On Rhetoric*¹⁹ and hands down a text which is undoubtedly different from that preserved in *P.Herc.* 1015/832, the latter cannot also contain Book 20. Hence, K is not possible, unless we assume that it was followed by another letter belonging, again, to a compound numeral like KA, KB, K Γ , etc., of which only the first element survives. However, as Tiziano Dorandi has shown, the content of *P.Herc.* 1669, which resumes in grand style and with richness of arguments the comparison between rhetoric and philosophy ($\text{c}\acute{\upsilon}\nu\gamma\kappa\rho\iota\text{c}\ \tau\eta\varsigma\ \rho\eta\tau\omicron\rho\iota\kappa\eta\varsigma\ \kappa\alpha\iota\ \phi\iota\lambda\omicron\sigma\phi\acute{\iota}\alpha\varsigma$), the dominant subject of the entire work, makes us believe that this was possibly the concluding book of the whole treatise. The ending section of the papyrus, where the superiority of philosophy over rhetoric is solemnly reaffirmed and the main thesis of the work seems to be encompassed in one concise message, appears to take us in that direction.²⁰ So, the only hypothesis which remains is that the surviving traces belong to a compound numeral like IE, I ζ , or I Θ . If this is true, *P.Herc.* 1015/832 represents either Book 15 or Book 16 or else Book 19 of the work, all possibilities which are perfectly compatible with the fact that Philodemus' *On Rhetoric* was in twenty books and with the large number of papyri ascribed on various grounds to it. In fact, it is well known that the papyri which are certainly, probably or else possibly attributable to Philodemus' *On Rhetoric* (fifty-eight according to Tiziano Dorandi²¹) are the most numerous in the Herculaneum collection. In any case, the conditions of the papyrus as well as the position and the shape of the surviving traces of the numeral (if any) do not allow us to say the last word on the matter and, for that reason, a good deal of caution is required in this case.

¹⁹ See above pp. 168–169 and note 9.

²⁰ See Dorandi (n. 3) 73.

²¹ Cf. Dorandi (n. 3) 64.



Fig. 1: *P.Herc.* 1015/832, cornice 20, pezzo 1, multispectral image: *subscriptio* (top) and detail of the possible numeral (bottom).²²

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