

A NEW LOOK AT DIOGENES OF OINOANDA,
FR. 157 SMITH*

To mark Alexander Verlinsky’s sixtieth birthday, I offer a re-edition of a small fragment of the largest-known Greek inscription – the one in which, probably in the reign of Hadrian, the philosopher Diogenes of Oinoanda presented to his fellow-citizens and the city’s visitors the doctrines of Epicurus, which he calls “the medicines that bring salvation” (τὰ τῆς σωτηρίας ... [φάρμα]κα).¹ My choice of Diogenes is fitting, because it was he who first brought Verlinsky and me into contact. That was in 1994, the year after Bibliotheca Classica Petropolitana (BCP) was founded, and the year in which the first issue of *Hyperboreus* appeared. Since then I have witnessed with the greatest admiration and pleasure his fine scholarly achievements, the expansion of BCP, and the valuable contribution made by *Hyperboreus* to knowledge of the classical world in Russia and throughout the world.²

The text I have chosen is part of Diogenes’ treatise in defence of old age against charges that it is a bad thing. To avoid any misunderstanding, let me say that the choice of *Old Age* is unconnected with the age of the

* I warmly thank Jürgen Hammerstaedt for reading and commenting on a draft of this article.

Abbreviations

Fr. = Fragment(s) of Diogenes’ inscription. The numbering is that of Smith 1993.

NF = New Fragment(s) of Diogenes’ inscription.

YF = Yazı Felsefi (Philosophical Inscription). The YF numbers are the inventory-numbers of the fragments of Diogenes’ inscription.

¹ Fr. 3 V 14 – VI 1. For the inscription being “a means of salvation”, cf. fr. 29 III + NF 207 I 9 (Hammerstaedt–Smith 2012, 11 = 2014, 185), fr. 116.6–8.

² Our epistolary (and then e-epistolary!) friendship was consolidated after I went to live, in 1995, on the remote island of Foula in Shetland, a location slightly more hyperborean than St Petersburg and home to a tiny community that, almost uniquely in the United Kingdom, celebrates major festivals, including Christmas, according to the Julian Calendar.

dedicatee, who is to be placed in the second, not the third, of the three age-groups distinguished by Diogenes in the preface to his *Ethics* – the young, those who are neither young nor old, and the old.³

The fragment came to light in 1969, when I was making my second visit to the ruins of Oinoanda, in the mountains of southwest Turkey, in search of Diogenes. I first published the text as NF (New Fragment) 4,⁴ and it is fr. 157 in my editions of the inscription.⁵

The subject of old age was one treated by many philosophical writers in antiquity, although only one work devoted exclusively to it survives intact. That work is Cicero's *De Senectute*. Diogenes of Oinoanda is the only Epicurean writer known to have produced a treatise on it. Naturally, his wholehearted commitment to Epicureanism permeates his treatment, but his arguments have much in common with those of other writers, especially Cicero and Iuncus, the latter being the author (of uncertain identity and date) of a dialogue in Greek that presents arguments against and for old age.

Despite the number of known fragments of *Old Age* having risen from 19 in 1968 to 71 today, the writing is the most lacunose of the three treatises included in Diogenes' inscription. A large part of the explanation for this is the way it was presented on the wall of the stoa which, ironically, Diogenes used for the display of his militantly anti-Stoic writings. Unlike his *Physics* and *Ethics*, each of which, presented in 14-line columns, occupied one horizontal course, *Old Age* was carved in 18-line columns that ran down three horizontal courses. This would not be a problem for us if the inscribed wall were intact, but in fact it was demolished in antiquity and its blocks were dispersed to be reused in new structures around the city, with the result that the pieces of *Old Age* that come to light never carry a complete column or columns and never give us more than eight lines, usually fewer. There are a few cases where texts on blocks in different courses can be joined up, but not many.

Another circumstance that limits the quantity of text yielded by each fragment of *Old Age* is the fact that the letters of the treatise (average ca. 2.9 cm.) are considerably larger than those of the *Physics* and *Ethics* (average ca. 1.8 cm.), the reason for the difference in letter-size being that, whereas the *Physics* and *Ethics* occupied, respectively,

³ NF 207 II–III. Greek text and English translation in Hammerstaedt–Smith 2012, 185–187; 2014, 183–185.

⁴ Smith 1970, 61–62 and pl. 16, fig. 27.

⁵ Smith 1993, 345–346 (text and critical apparatus), 422 (translation), 586 (notes); Smith 1996, 217–218 and pl. 59, fig. 197. The inventory-number is YF 029.

the second lowest and lowest courses of the inscription and were at or near eye-level, *Old Age* occupied the three topmost courses and was above eye-level.⁶

The three courses of *Old Age* are known as A, B, and C, A being the topmost one and C the lowest. Complete blocks are easily assigned to their proper courses by their differences in height and by the appearance of their upper and lower margins, if any.⁷ One distinctive feature of the C-blocks is a very tall lower margin, the lower part of which is occupied by a deeply-scored band, and this further limits the quantity of text yielded by them.⁸

Fr. 157 was in the middle course, B. It carries parts of two columns – the ends of seven lines of col. I and all but the ends of six lines in col. II. Above the first line (7) preserved of each column there is space for the lower parts of the letters of the preceding line, the upper part of which will have been carved near the bottom edge of the block(s) in the course (A) above. That line, broken off in col. I and obliterated in col. II, will have been the sixth in the 18-line column. As for the last line (13), the letters whose tops are partly preserved in col. I will have been completed at the top of the blocks in the course (C) below; likewise the letters of II 13, of which no traces survive. The C-block(s) below will have carried lines 14–18 of both columns, and it is important to realise that eleven lines are missing between I 13 and II 7.

I now present a cautious text, showing only what can be seen on the stone and those restorations that seem secure. I also present a photograph of the fragment (fig. 1) and reproduce the scale-drawing of it published in Smith 1996 (fig. 2). The preparation of the drawing, like the decipherment and restoration of the text, was based on autopsy of the stone and an epigraphic squeeze as well as on photographs. In presenting the revised text here, I have been able to make use also of a second squeeze which I made in November 1997.

⁶ The total number of inscribed courses was almost certainly seven.

⁷ Course-A blocks have no lower margin, B blocks no margin above or below, C blocks no upper margin above.

⁸ To demonstrate how little text a course-C block of *Old Age* can yield compared with a fragment of the *Physics* of similar size, one can point to fr. 9 V–VI (YF 072) and fr. 147.13–18 (YF 010). The former, which belongs to the *Physics* and measures 46×44.5 cm., carries nearly four times as many letters as the latter, the *Old Age* block, which, measuring 49×46 cm., is slightly taller and wider.

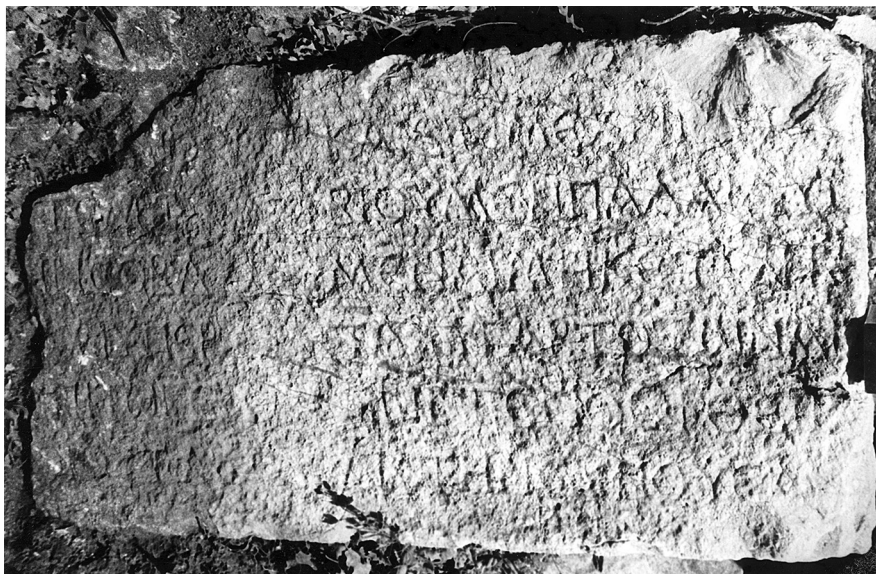


Fig. 1. Photograph of fr. 157.

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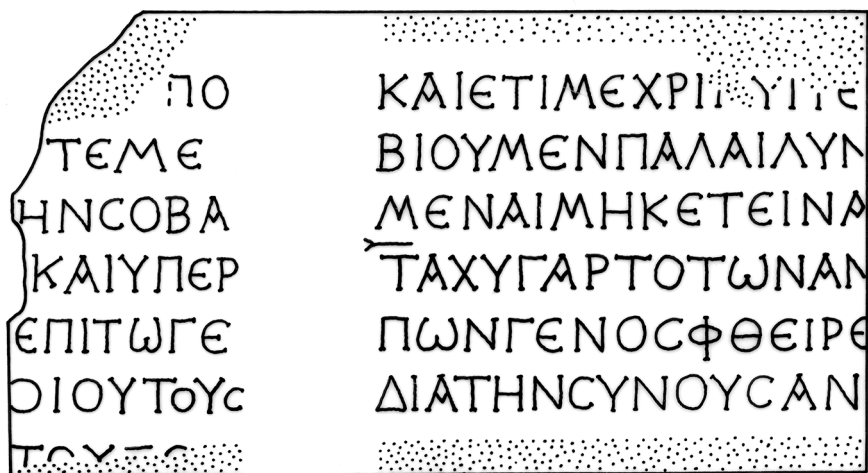


Fig. 2. Drawing (12:100) of fr. 157, as published in Smith 1996, 217.

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I 1–5, on block(s) above, missing; 6 broken off

7]πο-
]τε με-
]ην σοβα-
 10 [ρ - - - -]και ὑπερ-
] ἐπὶ τῷ γέ-
 [ροντι τ]οιούτους
] - - - -

14–18, on block(s) below, missing

II 1–5, on block(s) above, missing; 6 obliterated

7 καὶ ἔτι μέχρι γυν[
 βιοῦμεν πάλαι ἄν[
 μεναι μηκέτ' εἶνα[ι].
 —
 10 ταχὺ γὰρ τὸ τῶν ἀν[θρώ]-
 πων γένος φθείρε[ται]
 διὰ τὴν κυνοῦσαν - -

13–18, on block(s) below, missing

Not enough of col. I is preserved for one to be sure exactly what is going on. σοβα- in 9 must surely be the beginning of a form of σοβαρός or a word connected with it. In Epicurus *Sent. Vat.* 45, the adjective refers to possession of inner self-pride and self-confidence, as opposed to outward boastfulness. But a derogatory meaning, ‘arrogant’, ‘haughty’, is more common. In Philodemus, this is the case with σοβαρῶς (*Lib.* fr. 37. 5, Tab. IV. J. 2) and σοβαρότης (*Lib.* fr. 23. 3–4).⁹ In the case of Diogenes, ‘arrogance’ is, to my mind, supported by what follows: even if my suggestion of ὑπερ/[ηφανίαν] in the tentative reconstruction shown below is incorrect, the words “in the power of the old person [to ...] such people” make me think it most likely that Diogenes is pointing out how the elderly can respond to the undesirable (arrogant) behaviour of others, or perhaps avoid such behaviour themselves. The complaints of some old people that they are harshly treated by their relatives and acquaintances

⁹ The citations are of Olivieri 1914. The text is also given, with an English translation, in Konstan 1998. σοβαρότης is partly restored.

are mentioned and answered by Cephalus early in the first book of Plato's *Republic* (329 b–d), the answer being that their problem is not their old age, but their character: ἀλλὰ καὶ τούτων πέρι καὶ τῶν γε πρὸς τοὺς οἰκείους μία τις αἰτία ἐστὶν – οὐ τὸ γῆρας, ὃ Σώκρατες, ἀλλ' ὁ τρόπος τῶν ἀνθρώπων. This judgement is echoed in Cicero, *De Senectute* 65, with respect to charges that the old are bad-tempered, awkward, and mean: *sed haec morum vitia sunt, non senectutis*. In both passages it is suggested that old people whose behaviour is civilised and good-natured can avoid unpleasantness and discontent, and it is possible that Diogenes made essentially the same point, but in that case a significantly-different restoration of the text from the one below would be required. In this connection, one point to make is that τ]οιούτους (12) need not necessarily refer to people. It could have been followed by, for example, [τρόπους], 'manners', 'behaviour'. What is certain is that Diogenes would agree with Plato and Cicero that there is no need for the elderly to suffer discontent, and that, if they do suffer it, it is their fault.

In col. II 7–12, where all but the last letters of each line preserved, it is clear that the theme is the inevitability of death and the shortness of human life. Proximity to death is one of the complaints against old age refuted by other ancient writers who wrote in its defence, including Cicero (*Sen.* 66–67), Musonius (p. 92 Hense), Seneca (*Ep.* 12. 5–6), and Iuncus (Stobaeus p. 1050. 8–11 W.–H.).

In 1993 I wrote that “it is difficult to see how the content of col. I is linked to that of col. II” and suggested that there may well have been a change of subject.¹⁰ Clearly there has been some development in the argument, but the step from behaviour in old age to the inevitability and nearness of death is not a big one, and it is to be noted that Cicero proceeds directly from the one subject to the other (*Sen.* 65–66).

Although the broad theme of the preserved lines of col. II is clear, and there is no doubt at all about the text and meaning of 10–11, there has been much uncertainty about the restoration and exact meaning of 7–9. The endings of 7 and 8 are damaged or lost, and the first letters of 9 have caused puzzlement: μὲναι looks like the ending of a feminine plural participle, but, if so, to what does it refer?

I suggest the following restoration of the whole fragment, with a renewed warning that the proposals in col. I are very tentative – mostly *exempli gratia*.

¹⁰ Smith 1993, 586.

I

- 7 [εἴ τις ἀ]πο-
[δεικνύασι πο]τε με-
[τ' αὐτοῦ τ]ὴν κοβα-
10 [ρότητα τε] καὶ ὑπερ-
[ηφανίαν], ἐπὶ τῷ γέ-
[ροντι τοὺς τ]οιοῦτους
[ἔστιν ἐπὶ] πο[λ]ὺ π[α]-
[ρορᾶν]

II

- [ὅταν θνήσκωμεν, αἱ ψυχαὶ ἡμῶν εὐθέως διαλύονται, εἰ]
7 καὶ ἔτι μέχρι γυνε[ῖ]
βιοῦμεν πάλαι, δυγ[ά]-
μεναι μηκέτ' εἶνα[ι].
—
10 ταχὺ γὰρ τὸ τῶν ἀν[θρώ]-
πων γένος φθείρε[ται]
διὰ τὴν συνοῦσαν [φύ]-
[σιν θνητὴν]

Translation

I [If ever some exhibit, in their dealings with him, haughtiness and arrogance, it is for the most part] in the power of the elderly person [to take no notice of] such people

II [When we die, our souls are dissolved instantly], even [if] we have still been living up to this moment for a long time, being able to exist no longer. For the generation of human beings quickly perishes on account of its inherent [mortal nature]

Notes

I

9–10. κοβα[ρότητα]. The word is not in LSJ, but is in Lampe and (see above) is also found, partly restored, in Philodemus.

11–13. Cf. Lucretius 5. 42: *quae loca vitandi plerumque est nostra potestas*, referring to places made dangerous to humans by the presence of wild animals.

II

6 (and what preceded). If δυγ[ά]μεναι is correctly read and restored in 7–8, as it surely is, it seems to me that ψυχαί is by far the most plausible

restoration here. εὐθέως is used of the destruction of souls in fr. 39 IV 6. διαλύω is frequently used of the dissolution of atomic compounds: see e.g. Epicurus, *Hdt.* 39, 41, 42, 65, 73; *Sent.* 2: ὁ θάνατος οὐδὲν πρὸς ἡμᾶς· τὸ γὰρ διαλυθὲν ἀναισθητεῖ· τὸ δ' ἀναισθητοῦν οὐδὲν πρὸς ἡμᾶς. Lucretius similarly uses *dissolvo*, including with reference to the dispersal of the soul at death (e.g. 3. 438, 455). The mind (*animus*) and the spirit (*anima*), the rational and irrational components of the soul, are parts of the body and cannot survive death.

7–8. However long we live, death is inevitable. As Lucretius puts it (3. 1090–1091):

proinde licet quot vis vivendo condere saecula
mors aeterna tamen nilo minus illa manebit.

Diogenes set up his inscription in his old age,¹¹ had health problems,¹² and was very conscious that he was near death,¹³ but he was not in the least afraid of it.¹⁴

One can be sure that somewhere in his *Old Age* he made the point that death comes not only to the old but to younger people as well. Why? For three reasons. First, it is a point made by others who wrote in defence of old age: see Cicero *Sen.* 67, Seneca *Ep.* 12. 6, and Iuncus p. 1030. 16–19 W.–H. Secondly, in the known passages of Diogenes' treatise it is pointed out that neither deficiencies of eyesight and hearing nor physical and mental health-problems are peculiar to old age,¹⁵ which means that saying the same about death would be completely in line with those arguments. Thirdly, early death, as well as being a matter of common observation and knowledge, had occurred in Diogenes' own family: like the Elder Cato in Cicero's *De Senectute*,¹⁶ he could have pointed to his experience of having been predeceased by a son. We know this from NF 215, a well-preserved block of his inscription discovered at Oinoanda

¹¹ Fr. 3 II 7–12; fr. 63 II 3–4; fr. 138 by implication; fr. 146 I + NF II 7–12 by implication.

¹² Fr. 117.4–11; fr. 121 II; fr. 122.

¹³ Fr. 3 II 7–12; fr. 117. 4–11.

¹⁴ Fr. 73 I; NF 130, for the full text of which see Hammerstaedt–Smith 2012, 103 = Hammerstaedt–Smith 2014, 163.

¹⁵ On deficiencies of vision and hearing, see fr. 145 + NF 133 in Hammerstaedt–Smith 2012, 31–33 = Hammerstaedt–Smith 2014, 205–207; on physical and mental health problems, see fr. 146 + NF 134. NF 134 was added to fr. 146 in 1997 and published in Smith 1998, 165.

¹⁶ *Sen.* 67–68. Cicero himself had been predeceased by a child, his beloved daughter, Tullia.

in October 2017. The fragment contains the title and opening column of a previously-unknown letter, purporting to have been written by a certain Archelaus to a certain Dion, giving the words Diogenes spoke after the funeral of his son.¹⁷

νυνεί (νυνί) (cf. fr. 6 III 1), a strengthened form of νῦν, here emphasises the moment. I earlier thought of reading γῦν ἐ[πι]/βιοῦμεν rather than γυνε[ῖ] / βιοῦμεν, but in this context the emphatic form of the adverb is very appropriate, and there is no compelling reason to prefer the compound verb, which is not very common and is not used by Diogenes elsewhere.

ἔτι ... βιοῦμεν: cf. NF 207 III 12–13, ὅσον ποτ' ἔτι βιώσονται, referring to those who are already old.

8–9. δυν[ά]/μεναι was first suggested by me in 1974,¹⁸ but I did not print it in Smith 1993 and 1996 because I could not see to what it could refer. For the probable answer, see above, on 6. With [αἰ ψυχαῖ] ... δυν[ά]μεναι μηκέτ' εἶνα[ι] cf. fr. 38. 3–6: καθ' ἑαυτήν ... [ἡ] ψυχὴ οὐτ' εἶναι δύνα[ται] ποτε. See also fr. 37 IV 2–6: [οὐδὲν γὰρ ὦ]φέλησε[ν εἰ ἡ ψυχὴ μηκέ]τι διαμέ[νει καὶ λύεται] ἢ τοῦ σώμ[ατος συνου]σία.

Jürgen Hammerstaedt, commenting on a draft of this article, prefers a different interpretation of 6–9, with a different restoration of the words missing at the beginning. He suggests:

[τοιαῦταί εἰσιν αἱ φύσεις ἡμῶν, εἰ]
καὶ ἔτι μέχρι γυνε[ῖ]
βιοῦμεν, πάλαι δυν[ά]-
μεναι μηκέτ' εἶναι.

[Our natures are like this], even [if] we survive up to now, having for a long time the potential not to exist anymore.

In clarification of his text and translation, he notes: “I meant that our φύσεις, even if we (both Diogenes and his readers) survive until the present, *could* have ceased to exist for a lot of reasons long time ago, almost at any time from our birth onwards”. The proposal is interesting, but I remain convinced that Diogenes is here asserting the inability of souls to survive and avoid death, no matter how long we have lived. My

¹⁷ See Hammerstaedt–Smith 2018, 59–66. Archelaus is made to claim that he obtained a copy of the speech from “some accurate shorthand-writers”, but both the attribution of the letter to Archelaus and the part allegedly played by the shorthand-copyists are to be regarded, in my opinion, as inventions of Diogenes, intended to vary and dramatise his presentation.

¹⁸ Smith 1974, 51 n.

interpretation involves taking πάλαι not, as Hammerstaedt does, with δυνάμεναι, but with βιοῦμεν, which I take to be a “continuative” present, “we have been living”. Such a present is common with expressions denoting past time, and particularly so with πάλαι: cf. e.g. Soph. *Aj.* 20: κείνον ... ἰχνεύω πάλαι, Plat. *Men.* 91a: οὗτος ... πάλαι λέγει πρὸς με, Epic. *Nat.* 25 in *PHerc.* 1191 -6 sup. 7: καθάπερ πάλαι θρυλῶ.¹⁹ In “our” passage of Diogenes the continuation is reinforced by ἔτι.

12. What is to be supplied after συνοῦσαν? Suggestions have included εὐτασιν and ἀσθένειαν. But a specific mention of “mortality” seems most likely. One possibility is θνητότητα, which I first suggested tentatively in 1970²⁰ (the word occurs in fr. 39 V 3 and 125 IV 4, and perhaps also in NF 129 II 14), but I slightly prefer φύσιν θνητήν, for which cf. Aelian *VH* 8. 11: οὐδὲν ἔτι θαυμάζομεν εἰ ἡ τῶν ἀνθρώπων φύσις, θνητὴ οὖσα καὶ ἐφήμερος, φθείρεσθαι αὐτοὺς ἀναγκάζει, a close parallel: “We are in no way still surprised if the nature of human beings, being mortal and ephemeral, compels them to perish”. Another possibility might be something like διὰ τὴν συνοῦσαν [φύ/σιν τῆς ψυχῆς καὶ τοῦ σώματος], “on account of the cohabiting nature of the soul and the body”. Cf. fr. 37 IV 9–13: [ἡ] αἰτία ἡ ἐκ[χάτη τοῦ ζῆν] ἔστιν ἡ ψ[υχὴ συνοῦ]σα ἡ κεχ[ωρικμένη τοῦ σώ]ματος.

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¹⁹ Ed. Laursen 1997, 40.

²⁰ Smith 1970, 62.

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Fr. 157, discovered in 1969 and first published as NF (New Fragment) 4, is part of Diogenes of Oinoanda’s treatise on old age, the only known work on this subject by an Epicurean writer. Despite the increase in the number of known fragments of *Old Age* from 19 in 1968 to 71 today, the work is the most lacunose of the three treatises in Diogenes’ inscription, a major reason for this being the way each of its 18-line columns is split between three horizontal courses of stones, which means that, when one of the now-scattered blocks is recovered, it never contains more than eight lines and usually fewer.

The three courses of *Old Age*, the topmost ones of the inscription, are called A, B, and C. Fr. 157 is a B-block, and the text of its two columns was continued from a missing block or blocks in course A above, and continued on a missing block or blocks in course C below.

The preserved text of col. I is not abundant, consisting only of seven line-endings, but there was a likely mention of arrogant behaviour encountered or, possibly, displayed by old people. Diogenes would have agreed with Cephalus in Plato *Resp.* 329 b–d and with Cicero *Sen.* 65 that there is no need for the old to suffer discontent, and that, if they are discontented, that is their fault.

More of col. II is preserved, but the last letters of 7–8 are damaged or missing, and μέναι in 9 has hitherto caused much puzzlement. The editor reads δυν[ά]μεναι, referring to ψυχαί, which he restores before 7. He also considers what should be restored after διὰ τὴν συνοῦσαν in 12. His preferred suggestion is φύ/ειν θνητὴν, closely followed by θνη/τότητα. The themes of the passage are the inevitability of death, no matter how long we have lived, and the brevity of human life.

Фрагмент 157 трактата Диогена из Эноанды о старости – единственного известного эпикурейского сочинения на эту тему – найден в 1969 году и впервые опубликован как NF 4. Несмотря на то что число известных фрагментов возросло с 19 в 1968 году до 71 в наши дни, труд о старости содержит больше лакун, чем два других трактата в надписи Диогена. Это связано главным образом с тем, что каждая из трех его колонок по 18 строк располагалась на

трех горизонтальных каменных блоках. В результате всякий раз, как находят новую часть этих блоков, на ней никогда не обнаруживается более 8 строк, а чаще еще меньше.

Три верхних блока, содержащих *Ο παρῳστῳ*, обозначаются буквами Α, Β и Γ. Φρ. 157 относится к блоку Β. В нем две колонки. Предыдущая часть текста была написана на одной или нескольких утраченных ныне частях блока Α, располагавшегося выше; следующая – на одной или нескольких утраченных частях блока Γ ниже.

Хотя от колонки Ι сохранилось немного – только семь окончаний строк, похоже, что там упоминалось о высокомерном поведении – либо по отношению к старикам, либо со стороны самих стариков. В таком случае Диоген согласен с платоновским Кефалом (*Resp.* 329 b–d) и с Цицероном (*Sen.* 65), что старики не обречены страдать от недовольства и что если они его испытывают, то они сами в этом виноваты.

Колонка ΙΙ сохранилась лучше, но последние буквы стк. 7–8 повреждены или отсутствуют, а в стк. 9 много затруднений вызывало μεναι. Автор предлагает восстановление δυ[ά]μεναι, относя его к ψυχαί, которое он восстанавливает перед стк. 7. Рассуждая о возможностях восстановления текста после διὰ τὴν συνοῦσαν в стк. 12, он останавливается на варианте φύ/σιν θνητῶν, за которым непосредственно следует θνη/τότητα. Пассаж посвящен краткости человеческой жизни и неотвратимости смерти.

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