

Was Epicurus Sexually Active?

Post by "Don" of February 24, 2023 at 6:03 AM

For ease of reference, here are my notes from

Characteristic 4:

Hicks: No one was ever the better for sexual indulgence, and it is well if he be not the worse.

Yonge: Marriage (Attalus's site says "Intercourse", otherwise identical to Yonge), say they, is never any good to a man, and we must be quite content if it does no harm;

So, is it marriage, intercourse, or "sexual indulgence"? The original is συνουσίαν which appears to convey sexual intercourse (and can be used in relation to animals copulating) and seems to be used in the sense of letting one's passions run away with them and not the institution of marriage.

The original is: συνουσίαν δέ φασιν ὀνήσαι μὲν οὐδέποτε, ἀγαπητὸν δὲ εἰ μὴ καὶ ἔβλαψε.

So, possible literal translation: Sexual intercourse, they say, on the one hand, never profited or benefited (anyone), and, on the other hand, one must be content if it does not disable or distract the mind.