

Recent / New Edition of Diogenes Laertius - And Problems With it!

Post by "Cassius" of January 28, 2020 at 8:00 AM

I agree with Joshua, although as to his point 2 I think that we have to decide whether Epicurus is talking in this entire section about wise men in general (ordinary people who want to be wise) or figures like himself who are primarily devoted to philosophical revolution. As far as I can tell we don't think that Epicurus was married, but we really have no information that I am aware of about any of the other Epicurean founding leaders, or about self-styled Epicureans later. Probably we'll never know the answer to that but my own expectation would be that most of them were probably married at least at times in their lives, and choosing to remain unmarried on principle was probably the exception. That's just my opinion and expectation of course, but I see no reason to presume that any other Epicurean other than Epicurus himself remained unmarried, and as to Epicurus I admit that only because we have a stronger historical record, while at the same time he was apparently accused of relationships with one or more women of the garden, and of course famously stated that he would not know the good but for the pleasures of sex, etc. But of course what we are really talking about here is not sex, but marriage and children, with the pleasures of sex being universally obvious, while the pleasures of marriage and children are much more contextual.

I would add that even in regard to Lucretius and his section on the perils of romance, there are passages where he refers to "our wives" (at least in some translations) and at the end of book four he talks about the benefits of things that we pursue by habit, which has a pretty clear analogy with long term relationships.