

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

Post by "Cassius" of January 28, 2020 at 8:03 AM

Let me see if I can post the full article, but in the meantime here is the opening page of one well-researched one, and Mike you'll find the section in red of particular interest -- if Chilton is correct this IS an example of the reworking of the text to fit pre-conceived (negative) stereotypes! Unfortunately, Chilton follows the stereotype himself, and tosses out what the manuscript clearly says!

THIS SECTION of Diogenes' life of Epicurus reads as follows in all the manuscripts:

καὶ μὴν καὶ γαμήσειν καὶ τεκνοποιήσειν τὸν σοφὸν ὡς Ἐπίκουρος ἐν ταῖς Διαφορίαις καὶ ἐν ταῖς Περὶ φύσεως κατὰ περίστασιν δὲ ποτε βίου γαμήσειν καὶ διατραπησεσθαι τινὰς οὐδὲ μὴν τήρησειν ἐν μέθῃ φησὶν ὁ Ἐπίκουρος ἐν τῷ Συμποσίῳ

There are many difficulties in this curious passage which Bailey justly describes as "scrappy and incoherent" and it is, I think, true to say that no two editors agree on text and punctuation. The passage is, however, rather important since the first part of it is the only reference we have in the Epicurean corpus to the Master's views on marriage and the begetting of children – a subject which must surely have been treated by a moralist with his views on human happiness.

Let us then begin by considering the passage up to βίου γαμήσειν. As it stands the text asserts positively that the wise man will marry and beget children. But ever since Epicurean studies began in modern times this has been queried, and the great scholar Gassendi felt bound to follow Casaubon in emending καὶ μὴν καὶ to καὶ μὴδὲ, in other words, to print the exact opposite of the MS reading. In more recent times Usener, Bailey, and Diano revert to the MS but Hicks in the Loeb edition agrees with Gassendi. The principal reason for the emendation is clear enough; in the first place it has seemed to many scholars from Casaubon onwards to be impossible to reconcile approval of marriage with Epicurus' own well-attested views on human happiness in general and sex in particular; in the second, all references by later writers to the Epicurean view of marriage agree in depicting the Epicurean as an opponent of wedlock and the family.

The key to a happy life, Epicurus taught, is ἀταραξία, freedom from worry (*Ep.* III, 128), a freedom to be won only by restricting the needs of the present and our hopes for the future, by pursuing self-sufficiency (αὐτάρκεια – *Sent. Vat.* 77), and by refusing to give hostages to fortune (*Sent. Vat.* 47). It would certainly seem more consistent with this attitude