

Usener 163: Hoist your sail!

Post by "Don" of March 28, 2020 at 10:53 AM

παιδείαν δὲ πᾶσαν, μακάριε, φεῦγε τὰκάτιον ἀράμενος.

I really like this one! My own translation is "Flee from all indoctrination, O blessed one, and hoist the sail of your own little boat."

The "flee" φεῦγε is the same word that Epicurus uses as the title of his work commonly called "On Choices and Avoidances," and I've shared my thoughts on that word elsewhere in the forum.

μακάριε "blessed (one)" is the same word used in PD 1.

I've chosen "indoctrination" here for παιδείαν since that is what Epicurus seems to consider the prevailing system of education in his time to be, nothing more than indoctrination. I also like the image of the τ(ο) ἀκάτιον, "a small boat or skiff with a single sail." That's why I chose "little boat" instead of ship, for example, but didn't choose a specific kind of boat because who (other than one who sails) knows the difference among skiff, dinghy, skow, etc. It's just a small craft. My perspective is that this encapsulates the Epicurean concept of self-reliance perfectly! However, it doesn't include the idea of friendship. So, maybe we need to find our own path, our own art of living; but, once we've embarked, we'll find like minded individuals with whom to walk the path with us - to join our small flotilla to keep the metaphor of this saying. The journey comes first. We find companions along the way.

NOTE: DeWitt seems to back me up in Chapter 2 of his book: *There is extant a saying of Epicurus which may be rendered: "To sea with your swift ship, blessed boy, and flee from all education (paideia}." To Epicurus this meant the Platonic curriculum of education then in vogue, that is, geometry, rhetoric, and dialectic.*