

Did Epicurus Advise Marriage or Not? Diogenes Laertius Text Difficulty

Post by "Eikadistes" of June 29, 2021 at 5:23 PM

Right off the bat, I think I need some context into what "marriage" meant to ancient Greeks.

*Were they primarily economic arrangements? Was there a romantic tradition that encouraged the subjective pursuit of passion? Were they as bad at picking partners as our current divorce rates suggest we are? Were couples expected to produce children? Was marriage primarily an institution to promote reproduction? Did ancient Greek marriages suffocate women with domestic roles? Did they put excessive economic strain on men? How prevalent and severe were sexually-transmitted infections at the time? How universally-accepted was pederasty? How tolerant were Greeks on non-traditional sexual practices? For that matter, what **were** the Greeks traditional sexual practices? How old were men and women, on average, when they married? I'm curious because I have no idea.*

Depending on the definition of "marriage" to ancient Greeks, I may have more or less sympathy with Epicurus' position. *Marriage as companionship between two best friends* is utterly different than *marriage as marrying-off your 13-year-old daughter for political gain*. Historically, "marriage" tends to imply "duty" or "social responsibility", which is antithetical to Epicurean philosophy, so if that's the tree up which Epicurus was barking, I definitely agree.