

# Did Epicurus Advise Marriage or Not? Diogenes Laertius Text Difficulty

Post by "Don" of July 3, 2021 at 8:27 PM

To try to steer this back to the original question in a roundabout way: I'm leaning toward accepting the Greek text which Bailey provides in his Epicurus: The Extant Remains: <https://archive.org/details/Bailey...e/n160/mode/1up> After looking at some commentary online on the most trustworthy Diogenes Laertius manuscripts as well as the prefatory commentary in Bailey regarding Usener's scholarship in comparing and "correcting" said manuscripts, it seems to me that Bailey is on solid ground. So, until Sedley gives a full translation of DL Book X, I'm going to use Bailey as my source text.

I bring this up because the Greek section(s) in the Oxford Arundel manuscript of DL do not match the sections in the Perseus online edition. So, I felt I needed some authoritative edition. For now, I'm going with Bailey. When I was recently trying to puzzle out the meaning in the "pleasure at other's misfortune" thread, I can't across this discrepancy between Arundel and Usener/Bailey.

So, what does Bailey say about the marriage question?

One of the key relevant passages is at the start of "verse" 119 in Laertius:

Perseus/Hicks: [119] Καὶ μηδὲ καὶ γαμήσειν καὶ τεκνοποιήσειν τὸν σοφόν, ὡς Ἐπίκουρος ἐν ταῖς Διαπορίαις καὶ ἐν τοῖς Περὶ φύσεως. κατὰ περίστασιν δέ ποτε βίου γαμήσειν

Usener/Bailey: [119] Καὶ μὴν καὶ γαμήσειν καὶ τεκνοποιήσειν τὸν σοφόν, ὡς Ἐπίκουρος ἐν ταῖς Διαπορίαις καὶ ἐν τοῖς Περὶ φύσεως. κατὰ περίστασιν δέ ποτε βίου γαμήσειν

The only difference is that Hicks' 2nd word is μηδέ and Usener's is μὴν.

Hicks' μηδέ "(connecting two clauses, used with the same constructions as [μή](#) (μέ)) but not, and not, nor"

which seems to me we would have to look at the preceding phrase and connect it to this one.

Usener's μὴν on the other hand is:

"used to strengthen statements: verily, surely, truly, definitely (after other particles)

(καὶ μὴν) used to introduce something new or convey affirmation"

Hicks' is negative, Usener's is positive, and this is born out on their translations:

Hicks': "Nor, again, will the wise man marry and rear a family : so Epicurus says in the Problems and in the De Natura. Occasionally he may marry owing to special circumstances in his life."

Usener/Bailey: "Moreover, the wise man will marry and raise children..."

Whether or not Epicurus advocated marriage and childrearing depends on the presence or absence of -δε or -ν after μη-. I would dearly like to see images of the manuscripts, but without that we have to decide which scholar we're going to trust. I think I trust Usener/Bailey on the Greek.

All that being said though, Bailey's English translation doesn't make any sense!...

"Moreover, the wise man will marry and have children, as Epicurus says in the Problems and in the work on Nature. But he will marry according to the circumstances of his life."

Saying "he will marry... But he will marry..." However, **\*\*maybe\*\*** he will marry but he will marry according to certain circumstances NOT due to compulsion or cultural convention??