

Episode One Hundred Forty-Seven - "Epicurus And His Philosophy" Part 03 - True Opinions And False Opinions About Epicurus

Post by "Don" of November 7, 2022 at 9:20 AM

One of my favorite fragments is:

163. "Flee from all indoctrination, O blessed one, and hoist the sail of your own little boat." (My own translation) παιδείαν δὲ πᾶσαν, μακάριε, φεύγε τᾰκάτιον ἀράμενος.

I really like this one! The "flee" φεύγε 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. 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.

Plutarch, On Listening to Lectures, c.1, p. 15D: Shall we ... force them to put to sea in the Epicurean boat, and avoid poetry and steer their course clear of it?

Note: In L&S, under παιδεια - 2. training and teaching, education, opposite of τροφή,

τροφή: nourishment, food; that which provides or procures sustenance; a meal ; nurture, rearing, upbringing; education

II.nurture, rearing, bringing up, Hdt., Trag.; in pl., ἐν τροφᾰῖσιν while in the nursery, Aesch., etc.

rearing or keeping of animals

a place in which animals are reared

So it looks to me like τροφή has more of a connection to nature whereas παιδεία has more of a sense of acculturation, something imposed or overlaid on the individual.

On the word for boat:

ἄκάτιον Dim. of ἄκατος Note: τᾰκάτιον = το + κατιόν e.g., ταγαθον

I. a light boat, Thuc., etc.

II. a small sail, perh. a top-sail, Xen., Luc.

Modern Greek = dinghy, small skiff

ἄράμενος middle masculine participle of "lift, raise" (for yourself with middle sense).