

# Episode One Hundred Forty-Eight - "Epicurus And His Philosophy" Part 04 - True Opinions And False Opinions About Epicurus

Post by "Don" of November 13, 2022 at 10:39 PM

I had heard the "make a eunuch a man" quote, but I wanted to look up the origin. Diogenes Laertius quotes this in Book 4.6.43 on Arcesilaus.

[Diogenes Laertius, Lives of Eminent Philosophers, BOOK IV, Chapter 6. ARCESILAUS \(c. 318-242 B.C.\)](#)

Another pleasant story told of him is this. Some one had inquired why it was that pupils from all the other schools went over to Epicurus, but converts were never made from the Epicureans: "Because men may become eunuchs, but a eunuch never becomes a man," was his answer.

"ἐκ μὲν γὰρ ἀνδρῶν γάλλοι γίνονται, ἐκ δὲ γάλλων ἄνδρες οὐ γίνονται."

The word translated "eunuch" is γάλλος

A. priest of Cybele, Schwyzer 633.11 (Eresus, ii/i B. C.), Arr. Epict.2.20.17, AP6.234 (Eryc.), 220 (Diosc.):—fem. form Γαλλαί Lyr.Adesp.121.

II. eunuch, J.AJ4.8.40, PGnom.244, D.L.4.43.

The word translated "man" is ἄνδρες which is man as in male person. Arcesilaus doesn't use ἀνθρωπος "human being" but "manly man."

A γάλλος as LSJ shows was a eunuch but I find the fact that this refers specifically to a priest of Cybele very interesting. Yes, Arcesilaus was obviously referring to the castration part. But, this part in the Wikipedia article is interesting too (emphasis added):

"Most modern scholarship agrees that Cybele's consort, Attis, and her eunuch Phrygian priests (Galli) would have arrived with the goddess, along with at least some of the wild, ecstatic features of her Greek and Phrygian cults."

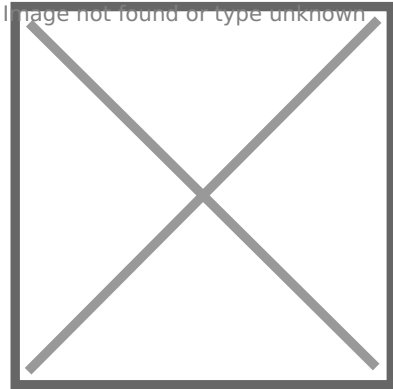
The Epicureans were slandered with saying they took part in wild, hedonistic parties, which would have dovetailed nicely with this Γάλλος epithet.

## Quote

As eunuchs, incapable of reproduction, the Galli were forbidden Roman citizenship and rights of inheritance; like their eastern counterparts, they were technically mendicants whose living depended on the pious generosity of others. For a few days of the year,

during the Megalesia, Cybele's laws allowed them to leave their quarters, located within the goddess' temple complex, and roam the streets to beg for money. They were outsiders, marked out as Galli by their regalia, and their notoriously effeminate dress and demeanour, but as priests of a state cult, they were sacred and inviolate. From the start, they were objects of Roman fascination, scorn and religious awe.

EDIT: I stand corrected on the "ecstatic rites" in Wikipedia. I misinterpreted. See



### [The GALA and the Gallos](#)

The Luwian ritual texts known as the Songs of Istanuwa and the Songs of the Men of Lallupiya are shown to be at once the earliest textual references to the...

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"They are noted for their wailing and lamentation of Attis, Cybele's mythological companion who died after castrating himself. The processions of the galloi, accompanied by the clanging of cymbals, were characterized by ecstatic selfmutilation and bloodletting."

However, that paper goes on to say that...

"The stereotypical gallus of Roman literature wore feminine dress and heavy makeup, had long yellow-tinted hair, and was willing to perform sex acts considered degrading by the Romans."