

Letter to Menoikeus translation by Peter Saint-Andre

Post by "Elli" of June 11, 2023 at 9:32 AM

[Quote from Don](#)

remain leaning toward the sense of not taking advantage of slaves and women/wives, but now Elli has planted the idea in my mind that... Could the phrase means something like "not enjoying the benefits of children and wives" to go along with an ambivalence toward marriage and children. It seems to harsh, since Epicurus was obviously concerned with the well-being of the children of Metrodorus and was not averse to having children named after him. I don't *think* so... but I'm raising it here for discussion.

Hello and Joy to all the friends.

Frankly, dear friend Don, I do not like to plant such an idea that "enjoyments with paides as boys/children, and women" is an ambivalence of Epicurus toward marriage... this hypothesis is going too far since, it would be and against this: **"The wise man will marry and have children, as Epicurus says in treatises On Problems and On Nature, but only in accord with the circumstances of his life"**.

"enjoyments with paides/slaves and women...and fish"!

All these are considered as "things" i.e. beings without **feelings** and **free will**. All these have masters that decide on how those would live, since all these are not the masters of themselves to decide on how they live in freedom.

We have to understand and point it out of what Epicurus is against, and on what epicureans were accused/slandered by those that do not understand what means "pleasure" for EP. Of course, when speaking about pleasure we do not mean any mania for luxury and wealth, and as I said above: "Thus, it is not a coincidence "why", greeks, made such wars among them. Because, for maintaining and having at the same time not one, not two, but (3) three women with children (legitimate or not legitimate) in their life, they have to be rich! How else?" 😊

We exclude that when Epicurus says "paides" does not mean sex with boys i.e. the paiderasty. It is a false notion that greeks were inclined to paiderasty and homosexuality in general. The love for the young man was inside the gymnasium or in the Academy of Plato, and that was something of a platonean love/eros i.e. more imaginative, and not the sexual intercourse itself. Since for ancient Athenians (and Spartans) - above all - was the production of children by their wives. With homosexuality and paiderasty there is no production of children.

But anyway, with the phrase "enjoyments with paides and women", we said that "paides" means "slaves" and women means "wives". Since we read on the wise man and this: **"The wise man will not have intercourse with any woman whom the laws forbid, as Diogenes says, in his epitome of the Ethical Maxims of Epicurus"**.

Laws did not forbid to a man having intercourse with a hetaira or a mistress, as those women were libertarians. imo laws forbid to have intercourse with a legitimate wife of someone else since this is called "adultery". In ancient Athens the only reprehensible adultery on the part of the husband was the one he committed with the legal wife of another Athenian, and the reason was that by this act he wronged another citizen.

And again, from Demosthenes that is the general picture: **"Because, we have the hetairai/courtesans for the sake of pleasure, the concubines for the daily care of our bodies, but women to bear us legitimate children and to be faithful guardians of our households"**.

Maybe Epicurus with this word "women as wives" had in mind the wife of Pericles Aspasia that was first as hetaira and Pericles made her as his legitimate wife. Please remember the photo I posted with Philodemus with Aspasia. So, that Epicurus maybe he says: we do not enjoy hetaira as a person without free will, but we can see her as a woman that is equal in rights with us, as she is educated same with us, and is able to be next to us, as any legitimate wife that - above all- she must have "parrhesia"/frankness of speech for all the issues concerning life.

The epicurean Leontion that was hetaira and the wife of Metrodorus is an example as Aspasia was for Pericles. in a few words, it is like Epicurus declares: In my Garden, all women are human beings, they can be educated, they are able to speak with "parrhesia/frankness of speech" for all the issues...and not as Plato who excluded them from his academy. 😊