

Episode 183 - "Epicurus And His Philosophy" Part 35 - Chapter 14 - The New Virtues 06 - Honesty

Post by "Don" of July 23, 2023 at 11:23 AM

I believe I remember ya'll discussing the "when in their cups" quote from DeWitt. FWIW, here's my take on that characteristics of the sage:

[Epicurean Sage - Living Unknown](#)

The Epicureans are said to have encouraged *lathe biosas*, living unknown or not calling attention to oneself. This is a controversial fragment, but Diogenes...

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Even when drunk, the wise one will not talk nonsense or act silly. (119)

Hicks: Nor will he drivel, when drunken: so Epicurus says in the *Symposium*.

Yonge: Nor will he ever indulge in drunkenness, says Epicurus, in his *Banquet*,

Mensch: He will not talk nonsense when drunk.

Is the emphasis here on the drunkenness or the "drivel" (to talk stupidly or carelessly). Let's check the original text: οὐδὲ μὴν ληρήσειν ἐν μέθῃ ...

- ληρήσειν "be foolish or silly, speak or act foolishly"
- ἐν μέθῃ "when drunk" (literally, "in strong drink, in drunkenness")
 - "Not, truly, will they act or speak silly in drunkenness..."

So, technically, [from my perspective] the wise one can get drunk, but they need to be careful how they act. The fact that this characteristic is an excerpt from Epicurus's *Symposium* (*Συμπόσιον*) which is a drinking party, is interesting. Chances are attendees were getting drunk and acting silly. To me, Epicurus is saying, "Go ahead and drink, but, *Paian Anax*, don't act the fool!" (According to Norman DeWitt, Epicurus liked to pepper his writings with names of the gods, *Paian Anax* was one of his favorites.)