

Epicurean Parenting

Post by “Don” of October 1, 2023 at 9:27 PM

Thoroughly enjoyed your post, @Root304 .

As a point of departure for further posts on this thread, I tried to find specific references to children or child-rearing in the extant texts:

Epicurus's will and other citations in Diogenes having to do with child rearing and their education:

Quote from Diogenes Laertius 10.19-23, 85

"And let Amynomachus and Timocrates take care of Epicurus, the son of Metrodorus, and of the son of Polyaeus, so long as they study and live with Hermarchus. Let them likewise provide for the maintenance of Metrodorus's daughter, so long as she is well-ordered and obedient to Hermarchus; and, when she comes of age, give her in marriage to a husband selected by Hermarchus from among the members of the School ; and out of the revenues accruing to me let Amynomachus and Timocrates in consultation with Hermarchus give to them as much as they think proper for their maintenance year by year.

[20] "Let them make Hermarchus trustee of the funds along with themselves, in order that everything may be done in concert with him, who has grown old with me in philosophy and is left at the head of the School. And when the girl comes of age, let Amynomachus and Timocrates pay her dowry, taking from the property as much as circumstances allow, subject to the approval of Hermarchus...

[22] And when near his end he wrote the following letter to Idomeneus :

"On this blissful day, which is also the last of my life, I write this to you. But I would have you, as becomes your life-long attitude to me and to philosophy, watch over the children of Metrodorus."

...

[85] Many others besides you will find these reasonings useful, and especially those who have but recently made acquaintance with the true story of nature and those who are attached to pursuits which go deeper than any part of ordinary education (ἐγκυκλίω). So you will do well to take and learn them and get them up quickly along with the short epitome in my letter to Herodotus.

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62. If parents have cause to be angry with their children, of course it is foolish to resist, and thus not try to beg for forgiveness. But if they do not have cause and are angry without reason, it is ridiculous to make an appeal to one who is irrationally opposed to hearing such an appeal, and thus not try to convince him by other means in a spirit of good will.

εἰ γὰρ κατὰ τὸ δέον ὀργαὶ γίνονται τοῖς γεννήσασι πρὸς τὰ ἔκγονα, μάταιον δῆπουθὲν ἔστι τὸ ἀντιτείνειν καὶ μὴ παραιτεῖσθαι συγγνώμης τυχεῖν, εἰ δὲ μὴ κατὰ τὸ δέον, ἀλλὰ ἀλογώτερον, γελοῖον πᾶν τὸ πρὸς ἔκκλησιν <ἐκκαλεῖν> τὴν ἀλογίαν θυμῷ κατέχοντα, καὶ μὴ ζητεῖν μεταθεῖναι κατ' ἄλλους τρόπους εὐγνωμονοῦντα.

Parenthood

From Epicurus Wiki

While [Epicurus](#) was evidently a devoted and thoughtful son to [his mother](#), and charitable towards his friends' [children](#), the paucity of sources does not allow for a fully developed understanding of his views on **parenthood** in general. Some minimal, practical advice is offered in [Vatican Saying 62](#), although it is always questionable whether this text (like others in this collection) is an authentic, first-hand expression of Epicurus' own views on the matter.

As with [marriage](#), Epicurus approved of parenthood, in certain circumstances.

Reflecting the standard mores of [Roman](#) society, Lucretius unfolds more elaborate concerns about children, parents, and the relationship between the two in [De Rerum Natura](#); he also reveals a warmer attitude towards parenthood in the broadest sense, as he waxes poetic on parental relationships throughout the [animal world](#).

Lucretius 5.1011

.....

Were known; and when they saw an offspring born

From out themselves, then first the human race

Began to soften. For 'twas now that fire

Rendered their shivering frames less staunch to bear,

Under the canopy of the sky, the cold;

And Love reduced their shaggy hardiness;

And children, with the prattle and the kiss,

Soon broke the parents' haughty temper down.
Then, too, did neighbours 'gin to league as friends,
Eager to wrong no more or suffer wrong,
And urged for children and the womankind
Mercy, of fathers, whilst with cries and gestures
They stammered hints how meet it was that all
Should have compassion on the weak.