

Diogenes Laertius Book X - public domain translations

Post by “Eikadistes” of April 16, 2025 at 12:08 PM

[Quote from TauPhi](#)

The attached pdf contains complete Book X of Diogenes Laertius' "Lives of Eminent Philosophers" in Greek and in three English translations (Yonge's, Hicks' and Bailey's) available in the public domain.

GREAT work! The comparative translations are really helpful, because, truly (especially as I've found in my attempts at translating) a number of 19th-century, British scholars literally punted and paraphrased rather than trying to find a way to make a mediopassive verb fit the context. I'm finding some sentences that don't even remotely contain the same verbs, objects, or subjects, and ignore declensions sometimes for the sake of making the concept generally digestible.

Overwhelmingly the translators are great. There are just a few things that most will gloss over that aren't appropriate. The best example I can think of, which [Don](#) discovered, is that all translators (except for Stephen White 2021, as I found) incorrectly gloss over Epicurus' birthday on the "[early] tenth of Gamelion" (i.e. "early tenth" = "20th"), so many translators overlooked the ancient Greek slang of "early tenth", ignored it, punted their creativity, and incorrectly settled on "10th".

No scholar is so infallible in their research that we should trust them 100%, and providing comparative texts really goes a long way in seeing patterns, preferences, and prejudices from the scholars. Thanks again for doing this! This is an unexpectedly pleasant surprise. 😊