

Epicurean Painting: "Hide and Seek in the Garden of Epicurus, Leontium and Ternissa" - William Stott of Oldham (1857-1900)

Post by "Charles" of December 10, 2019 at 11:07 PM



<https://www.epicurusandfriends.com/thread/1306-epicurean-painting-hide-and-seek-in-the-garden-of-epicurus-leontium-and-termissa/>

I recalled seeing this painting somewhere prior to being an Epicurean, and only when I asked members of the Discord if they would like to assist me in finding EP related art, did I attempt to find this again. This painting was acquired back in 1903 when the estate of the painter (Stott) was being executed and categorized. It seems that this painting was inspired by a book written a few decades before the painter's birth:

"Imaginary Conversations and Poems, by Walter Savage Landor" There is a section titled "Epicurus, Leontion, and Ternissa". I haven't read it yet, but [I'll link it anyways](#) for later or for someone else to read through.

Recently, it was added to a gallery of works by the painter from an art charity foundation in the UK creatively named "Art UK". It was chosen by a girl named "**Leah Wilson**" (**Member of the Gallery Oldham Youth Collective**)

Here's what she had to say about it:

Quote

"The garden of Epicurus was a garden which the Athenian philosopher Epicurus bought in 306-307 BC, and used this private garden to do is teaching to followers of his philosophy. The British writer Walter Savage Landor wrote an imagined conversation between Epicurus, Leontion and Ternissa where they discuss hate, love, god, death and grief.

Walter Savage Landor's imagined conversation between Epicurus, Leontion and Ternissa was published in 1828, 29 years before William Stott was born. Personally, I think that William may have used this as inspiration for his painting. It could act as an illustration to accompany the imagined conversation Walter had written.

The thing I like most about the painting personally is the tones of colour Stott used - the contrast of dark greens with pale skin tones and flowers. The dark colours definitely add depth to the painting, and give you a sense of dense foliage in the garden."

There's no doubt that this is a piece of art wholly inspired directly by Epicurus and Epicurean Philosophy. While I have not yet read that imaginary conversation regarding Epicurus, Leontion,

and this "Ternissa", I have a good feeling that we can derive some value from this work of fiction and add Ternissa to our beloved canon of Epicurean characters across art/literature/storytelling.

Oh, and here's the full link to the ebook of that conversation.
<https://ebooks.adelaide.edu.au/l/landor/walte...s/part1.21.html>

Post by "Joshua" of December 11, 2019 at 12:20 AM

Two more excellent finds, Charles. I thought the dialogue was new to me, but I found that the first portion was familiar. I don't know where I might have encountered it.

Having now read the whole of it, I found it a trifle frivolous; but there are passages in it of a higher calibre.

Quote

By indifference to all who are indifferent to us; by taking joyfully the benefit that comes spontaneously; by wishing no more intensely for what is a hair's-breadth beyond our reach than for a draught of water from the Ganges; and by fearing nothing in another life.

Quote

There is no easy path leading out of life, and few are the easy ones that lie within it. I would adorn and smoothen the declivity, and make my residence as commodious as its situation and dimensions may allow; but principally I would cast under-foot the empty fear of death.

Post by "Joshua" of December 11, 2019 at 12:54 AM

Stott (a painter who until now was completely obscure to me) has another work of interest. His "Venus Born of the Sea Foam" begs comparison to "The Birth of Venus" by Sandro Botticelli. In Botticelli's scene the erotic energy of Venus is tempered by Classical order; the demurring and discrete goddess doted upon by the personifications of nature on the shore of a calm sea.

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In Stott's vision, Venus emerges from restless, turbulent waters with a naked, wild and celtic air. As described by Lucretius, a "bird of the air" is first to proclaim her. Almost the only nod to Classical order in this painting is the empty shell of a chambered nautilus covering her breast in reflection, and lying nearly out of scene.

Post by "Cassius" of December 11, 2019 at 6:17 AM

If anyone reads to the end of the "Imaginary conversation" let us know what you think. I find the beginning rather unimpressive.

Is the beginning directed in some broad manner that "hate" should not exist? If so the only point I can imagine about it is some kind stoic-like aversion to emotion, because I see no justification for arguing based on Epicurus that we should take please in everything equally, or that we should ignore an unpleasant feeling. Is that the message put in Epicurus' mouth at the beginning?

Presumably the focus changes as the dialog goes on but I did not get to read very far.

Post by "Cassius" of December 11, 2019 at 6:21 AM

I just skipped to the end looking for a conclusion and am similarly confused. This seems to me to compare pretty unfavorably to "A Few Days In Athens," where Frances Wright's points always seem very clear and precise, but I need to read the full thing before reaching a final judgment.

Post by "Cassius" of December 11, 2019 at 6:27 AM

HMMM - Elli finds what appears to be a different version:

Elli posted:

The painting is beautiful. However, this morning and as I started to read this book by that British Walter Savage Landor entitled: "Imaginary conversations of Epicurus, Leontion and

Ternissa"... frankly, it left me with a feeling of boredom.[Here is this book:](#)

To this I (Cassius) responded:

I only scanned the beginning and end passages, Elli, but that is also my immediate reaction. This is not at all like "A Few Days In Athens" where the dialog is clear and the points made spring clearly from the Epicurean texts. Maybe I will see differently when I read more but the paintings may be much better than the text that may be behind it. But this is definitely of interest so thanks Charles for finding it and posting!

Post by "Cassius" of December 11, 2019 at 6:34 AM

OK the Adelaide version is incomplete - the original appears to start with Leontion making a point somewhat similar to "Ternissa" but the omitted part does make it easier to understand how the conversation has developed. The opening footnote to Cicero and friendship also hints that "friendship" is somehow going to be the theme of the exchange.