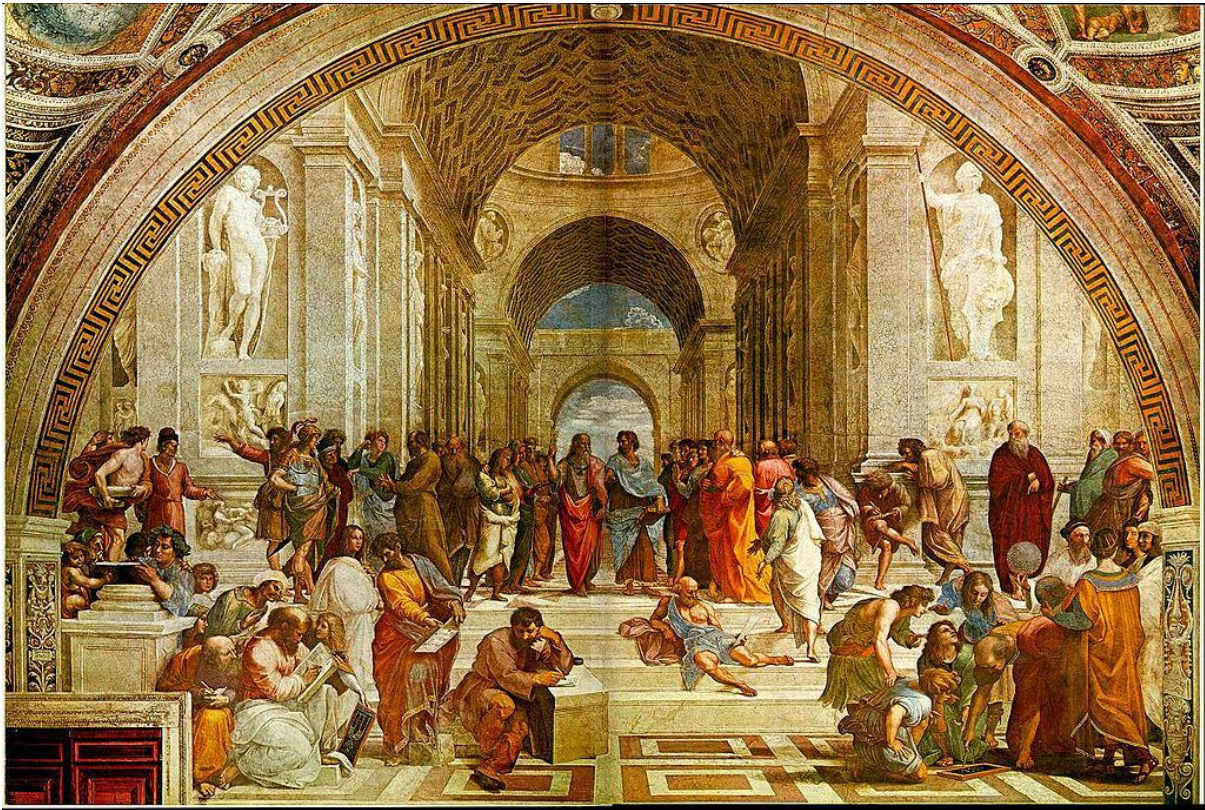


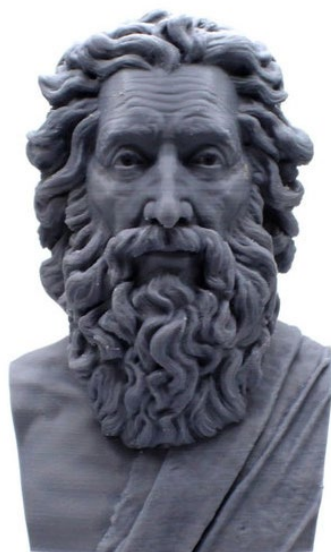
BELLARIA LXXXIX



School of Athens (Raphael)

Diogenes Laertius' *Lives of the Eminent Philosophers*

VI (i) DIOGENES (412/404-323 BC)



Introduction

Diogenes, a Greek from Sinope on the Black Sea, was exiled for financial misconduct and came to Athens c. 362 BC. He associated himself with Antisthenes, taking his doctrine of the simple life to extremes and becoming the poster-boy for the philosophy known as cynicism (lit. ‘doggishness’, Greek *kuôn* ‘dog’, *kunikos* ‘doglike’), though to judge from the first passage murism might have been better (Greek *mus* ‘mouse’). He attacked all forms of belief and convention—family, politics, marriage, city, reputation, wealth, power, literature, music, social, sexual and racial distinctions, and all forms of intellectualism (he believed in doing, not thinking)—in the cause of total self-sufficiency, declaring himself to be a *kosmopolitês* (‘citizen of the universe’). As you will see from the numbering of the passages, this and the next two episodes cover only about a third of his sayings.

Learning from a mouse, sleeping in his cloak, living anywhere



22 Through watching a mouse running about, not looking for a place to lie down in, not afraid of the dark, not seeking any of the things which are considered to be dainties, he discovered the means of adapting himself to circumstances. He was the first, say some, to fold his cloak because he was obliged to sleep in it as well, and he carried a knapsack to hold his victuals, and he used any place for any purpose, for breakfasting, sleeping, or conversing. And then he would say, pointing to the portico of Zeus and the Hall of Processions, that the Athenians had provided him with places to live in.

22 Μῶν θεασάμενος διατρέχοντα, καὶ μήτε κοίτην ἐπιζητοῦντα μήτε σκότος εὐλαβούμενον ἢ ποθοῦντά τι τῶν δοκούντων ἀπολαυστῶν, πόρον ἐξεῦρε τῆς περιστάσεως. τρίβωνα διπλώσας πρῶτος κατὰ τινος διὰ τὸ ἀνάγκην ἔχειν καὶ ἐνεύδειν αὐτῷ, πήραν τ' ἐκομίσατο, ἔνθα αὐτῷ τὰ σιτία ἦν, καὶ παντὶ τόπῳ ἐχρήτο εἰς πάντα, ἀριστῶν τε καὶ καθεύδων καὶ διαλεγόμενος. ὅτε καὶ

τοὺς Ἀθηναίους ἔφασκε, δεικνὺς τὴν τοῦ Διὸς στοᾶν καὶ τὸ Πομπεῖον, αὐτῷ κατεσκευακέναι ἐνδιαιτᾶσθαι.

Mockery of all other philosophers



Peep-show show for fools

24 He was great at pouring scorn on his contemporaries. The school of Euclides he called bilious, and Plato's lectures a waste of time, the performances at the Dionysia a great peep-shows for fools, and the demagogues the mob's lackeys. He used also to say that when he saw doctors, philosophers and steersman at their work, he deemed man the most intelligent of all animals; but when again he saw interpreters of dreams and diviners and those who attended to them, or those who were puffed up with conceit of wealth, he thought no animal more silly. He would continually say that for the conduct of life we need right reason or a noose.

24 Δεινός τ' ἦν κατασοβαρεύσασθαι τῶν ἄλλων. καὶ τὴν μὲν Εὐκλείδου σχολὴν ἔλεγε χολήν, τὴν δὲ Πλάτωνος διατριβὴν κατατριβὴν, τοὺς δὲ Διονυσιακοὺς ἀγῶνας μεγάλα θαύματα μωροῖς ἔλεγε καὶ τοὺς δημαγωγοὺς ὄχλου διακόνους. ἔλεγε δὲ καὶ ὡς ὅτε μὲν ἴδιοι κυβερνήτας ἐν τῷ βίῳ καὶ ἰατροὺς καὶ φιλοσόφους, συνετώτατον εἶναι τῶν ζῶων νομίζειν τὸν ἄνθρωπον ὅτε δὲ πάλιν ὄνειροκρίτας καὶ μάντις καὶ τοὺς προσέχοντας τούτοις ἢ τοὺς ἐπὶ δόξῃ καὶ πλούτῳ πεφουσημένους, οὐδὲν ματαιότερον νομίζειν ἀνθρώπου. συνεχές τε ἔλεγεν εἰς τὸν βίον παρεσκευάσθαι δεῖν λόγον ἢ βρόχον.

Mocks Plato, Spartan boys, whistles, striving for goddess, Odysseus



26 Diogenes once asked Plato for wine, and after that also for some dried figs; and Plato sent him a whole jar full. Then the other said, 'If someone asks you how many two and two are, will you answer twenty? So, it seems, you neither give as you are asked nor answer as you are questioned.' Thus he scoffed at him as one who talked without end ... 27 Being asked where in Greece he saw good men, he replied, 'Good men nowhere, but good boys at Lacedaemon.' When one day he was gravely discoursing and nobody attended to him, he began whistling, and as people clustered about him, he reproached them with coming in all seriousness to hear nonsense, but slowly and contemptuously when the theme was serious. He would say that men strive in digging and kicking to outdo one another, but no one strives to become a good man and true. And he would wonder that the grammarians should investigate the ills of Odysseus, while they were ignorant of their own.

26 Διογένης οἶνόν ποτ' ἤτησεν αὐτόν, τότε δὲ καὶ ἰσχάδας. ὁ δὲ κεράμιον ὅλον ἔπεμψεν αὐτῷ· καὶ ὅς, 'σύ,' φησὶν, 'ἐὰν ἐρωτηθῆς δύο καὶ δύο πόσα ἐστίν, Εἴκοσιν ἀποκρινῆ; οὕτως οὔτε πρὸς τὰ αἰτούμενα δίδως οὔτε πρὸς τὰ ἐρωτώμεν' ἀποκρίνη.' ἔσκωψε δὴ ὡς ἀπεραντολόγον ... 27 Ἐρωτηθεὶς ποῦ τῆς Ἑλλάδος ἴδοι ἀγαθοὺς ἄνδρας, 'ἄνδρας μὲν,' εἶπεν, 'οὐδαμοῦ, παῖδας δ' ἐν Λακεδαίμονι.' σπουδαιολογουμένῳ ποτὲ ὡς οὐδεὶς προσήει, ἐπέβαλε τερετίζειν· ἀθροισθέντων δέ, ὠνείδισεν ὡς ἐπὶ μὲν τοὺς φληνάφους ἀφικνουμένων σπουδαίως, ἐπὶ δὲ τὰ σπουδαῖα βραδυνόντων ὀλιγώρως]. ἔλεγέ τε περὶ μὲν τοῦ παρορούττειν καὶ λακτίζειν ἀγωνίζεσθαι τοὺς ἀνθρώπους, περὶ δὲ καλοκάγαθίας μηδένα. τοὺς τε γραμματικούς ἐθαύμαζε τὰ μὲν τοῦ Ὀδυσσεῶς κακὰ ἀναζητοῦντας, τὰ δ' ἴδια ἀγνοοῦντας.

Praises second thoughts, mastering oneself, do men ring true?



29 He would praise those who were about to marry and refrained, those who intending to go a voyage never set sail, those who thinking to engage in politics do no such thing, those also who purposing to rear a family do not do so, and those who make ready to live with potentates, yet never come near them after all. He used to say, moreover, that we ought to stretch out our hands to our friends with the fingers open and not closed. Menippus tells how, when he was captured and put up for sale, he was asked what he could do. He replied, 'Govern men.' And he told the crier to give notice in case anybody wanted to purchase a master for himself. Having been forbidden to sit down, 'It makes no difference,' said he, 'for in whatever position fishes lie, they still find purchasers.' 30 And he said he marvelled that before we buy a jar or dish we try whether it rings true, but if it is a man are content merely to look at him. To Xeniadēs who purchased him he said, 'You must obey me, although I am a slave; for, if a doctor or a steersman were in slavery, he would be obeyed.'

29 ἐπήνει τοὺς μέλλοντας γαμεῖν καὶ μὴ γαμεῖν, καὶ τοὺς μέλλοντας καταπλεῖν καὶ μὴ καταπλεῖν, καὶ τοὺς μέλλοντας πολιτεύεσθαι καὶ μὴ πολιτεύεσθαι, καὶ τοὺς παιδοτροφεῖν καὶ μὴ παιδοτροφεῖν, καὶ τοὺς παρασκευαζομένους συμβιοῦν τοῖς δυνάσταις καὶ μὴ προσιόντας. ἔλεγε δὲ καὶ δεῖν τὰς χεῖρας ἐπὶ τοὺς φίλους ἐκτείνειν μὴ συγκεκαμμένοις τοῖς δακτύλοις. φησὶ δὲ Μένιππος ὡς ἀλοὺς καὶ πωλούμενος ἠρωτήθη τί οἶδε ποιεῖν. ἀπεκρίνατο, 'ἀνδρῶν ἄρχειν' καὶ πρὸς τὸν κήρυκα, 'κήρυσσε,' ἔφη, 'εἴ τις ἐθέλει δεσπότην αὐτῷ πρίασθαι.' κωλυθεὶς καθίζεσθαι, 'οὐδέν,' ἔφη, 'διαφέρει' καὶ γὰρ τοὺς ἰχθύς ὅπως ἂν κέοιντο πιπράσκεσθαι.' 30 θαυμάζειν τ' ἔφη εἰ χύτραν μὲν καὶ λοπάδα ὠνούμενοι κομποῦμεν' ἄνθρωπον δὲ μόνη τῆ ὄψει ἀρκούμεθα. ἔλεγε τῷ Ξενιάδῃ τῷ πριαμένῳ αὐτόν, δεῖν πείθεσθαι αὐτῷ, εἰ καὶ δοῦλος εἶη· καὶ γὰρ εἰ ἰατρὸς ἢ κυβερνήτης ἦν δοῦλος, πεισθῆναι ἂν αὐτῷ.

Old age, gratitude, raw meat, Demosthenes

34 To those who said to him, 'You are an old man; take a rest,' 'What?' he replied, 'if I were running in the stadium, ought I to slacken my pace when approaching the goal? Ought I not rather to put on speed?' Having been invited to a dinner, he declared that he wouldn't go; for, the last time he went, his host had not expressed a proper gratitude. He would walk upon snow barefoot and do the other things mentioned above. Not only so; he even attempted to eat meat raw, but could not manage to digest it. He once found Demosthenes the orator lunching at an inn, and, when he retreated further within, Diogenes said, 'All the more you will be inside the tavern.'

34 Πρὸς τοὺς εἰπόντας, 'γέρων εἶ καὶ λοιπὸν ἄνες,' 'τί δέ,' ἔφη, 'εἰ δόλιχον ἔτρεχον, πρὸς τῷ τέλει ἔδει με ἀνεῖναι καὶ μὴ μᾶλλον ἐπιτεῖναι;' κληθεὶς ἐπὶ δεῖπνον οὐκ ἔφη παρέσεσθαι· μηδὲ γὰρ πρόην αὐτῷ χάριν ἐγνωκέναι. γυμνοῖς ποσὶ χιόνα ἐπάτει καὶ τᾶλλα ὅσα ἄνω προεῖρηται· καὶ ὠμὰ δὲ κρέα ἐπεχείρησε φαγεῖν, ἀλλ' οὐ διώκησε. κατέλαβέ ποτε Δημοσθένην τὸν ῥήτορα ἐν πανδοκείῳ ἀριστῶντα. τοῦ δ' ὑποχωροῦντος, 'τοσοῦτῳ μᾶλλον,' ἔφη, 'ἔση ἐν τῷ πανδοκείῳ.'

Taught by a child, gods and the wise

37 One day, observing a child drinking out of his hands, he threw away the cup from his knapsack with the words, 'A child has beaten me in plainness of living.' He also threw away his bowl when in like manner he saw a child who had broken his plate taking up his lentils with the hollow part of a morsel of bread. He used also to reason thus: 'All things belong to the gods. The wise are friends of the gods, and friends hold things in common. Therefore all things belong to the wise.' ...

37 Θεασάμενός ποτε παιδίον ταῖς χερσὶ πῖνον ἐξέρριψε τῆς πήρας τὴν κοτύλην, εἰπὼν, 'παιδίον με νενίκηκεν εὐτελείᾳ.' ἐξέβαλε δὲ καὶ τὸ τρυβλίον, ὁμοίως παιδίον θεασάμενος, ἐπειδὴ κατέαξε τὸ σκεῦος, τῷ κοίλῳ τοῦ ψωμίου τὴν φακὴν ὑποδεχόμενον. συνελογίζετο δὲ καὶ οὕτως· τῶν θεῶν ἐστὶ πάντα· φίλοι δὲ οἱ σοφοὶ τοῖς θεοῖς· κοινὰ δὲ τὰ τῶν φίλων. πάντ' ἄρα ἐστὶ τῶν σοφῶν...

Cursed, courage and nature and reason, Alexander, reading



'Get out of my light' (Gaspare Dizian, 1689-1767)

38 All the curses of tragedy, he used to say, had lighted upon him. At all events he was

A homeless exile, to his country dead,
A wanderer who begs his daily bread.

But he claimed that to fortune he could oppose courage, to convention nature, to feelings reason. When he was sunning himself in the Craneum, Alexander came and stood over him and said, 'Ask of me any boon you like.' To which he replied, 'Stand out of my light.' Someone had been reading aloud for a very long time, and when he was near the end of the roll pointed to a space with no writing on it. 'Cheer up, my men,' cried Diogenes; 'there's land in sight.'

38 Εἰώθει δὲ λέγειν τὰς τραγικὰς ἀρὰς αὐτῷ συνηνητέναι· εἶναι γοῦν
ἄπολις, ἄοικος, πατρίδος ἐστερημένος, πτωχός,
πλανήτης, βίον ἔχων τοῦφ' ἡμέραν.

ἔφασκε δ' ἀντιτιθέναι τύχη μὲν θάρσος, νόμῳ δὲ φύσιν, πάθει δὲ λόγον. ἐν τῷ
Κρανείῳ ἡλιουμένῳ αὐτῷ Ἀλέξανδρος ἐπιστάς φησιν, 'αἴτησόν με ὃ θέλεις.'
καὶ ὅς, 'ἀποσκότησόν μου,' φησί. μακρὰ τινος ἀναγινώσκοντος καὶ πρὸς τῷ
τέλει τοῦ βιβλίου ἄγραφόν τι παραδείξαντος 'θαρρεῖτε,' ἔφη, 'ἄνδρες· γῆν
ὄρω.'

Dogs, baths, Plato's 'man', time for lunch



Plato's man

40 When Plato styled him a dog, 'Quite true,' he said, 'for I come back again and again to those who have sold me.' As he was leaving the public baths, somebody inquired if many men were bathing. He said, 'No'. But to another who asked if there was a great crowd of bathers, he said, 'Yes'. Plato had defined 'Man' as an animal, biped and featherless, and was applauded. Diogenes plucked a fowl and brought it into the lecture-room with the words, 'Here is Plato's man.' In consequence of which there was added to the definition, 'having broad nails.' To one who asked what was the proper time for lunch, he said, 'If a rich man, when you will; if a poor man, when you can.'

40 Πλάτωνος εἰπόντος αὐτὸν κύνα, 'ναί,' ἔφη 'ἐγὼ γὰρ ἐπανῆλθον ἐπὶ τοὺς πεπρακότας.' ἐκ τοῦ βαλανείου ἐξιὼν τῷ μὲν πυθομένῳ εἰ πολλοὶ ἄνθρωποι λοῦνται, ἠρνήσατο· τῷ δ', εἰ πολὺς ὄχλος, ὠμολόγησε. Πλάτωνος ὀρισμένου, Ἄνθρωπός ἐστι ζῷον δίπουν ἄπτερον, καὶ εὐδοκιμοῦντος, τίλας ἀλεκτρούνα εἰσήνεγκεν αὐτὸν εἰς τὴν σχολὴν καὶ φησιν, 'οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ Πλάτωνος ἄνθρωπος.' ὅθεν τῷ ὄρω προσετέθη τὸ πλατυώνυχον. πρὸς τὸν πυθόμενον ποία ὥρα δεῖ ἀριστᾶν, 'εἰ μὲν πλούσιος,' ἔφη, 'ὅταν θέλη· εἰ δὲ πένης, ὅταν ἔχη.'

Purification, prayers

42 Seeing someone perform religious purification, he said, 'Unhappy man, don't you know that you can no more get rid of errors of conduct by sprinklings than you can of mistakes in grammar?' He would rebuke men in general with regard to their

prayers, declaring that they asked for those things which seemed to them to be good, not for such as are truly good.

42 ἰδὼν τινα περιρραϊνόμενον ἐπεῖπεν, ὃ κακόδαιμον, οὐκ ἐπίστασαι ὅτι ὥσπερ τῶν ἐν γραμματικῇ ἀμαρτημάτων περιρραϊνόμενος οὐκ ἂν ἀπαλλαγείης, οὕτως οὐδὲ τῶν ἐν τῷ βίῳ; ἐνεκάλει τοῖς ἀνθρώποις περὶ τῆς εὐχῆς, αἰτεῖσθαι λέγων αὐτοὺς ἀγαθὰ τὰ αὐτοῖς δοκοῦντα καὶ οὐ τὰ κατ' ἀλήθειαν.

Next week: Diogenes (ii)