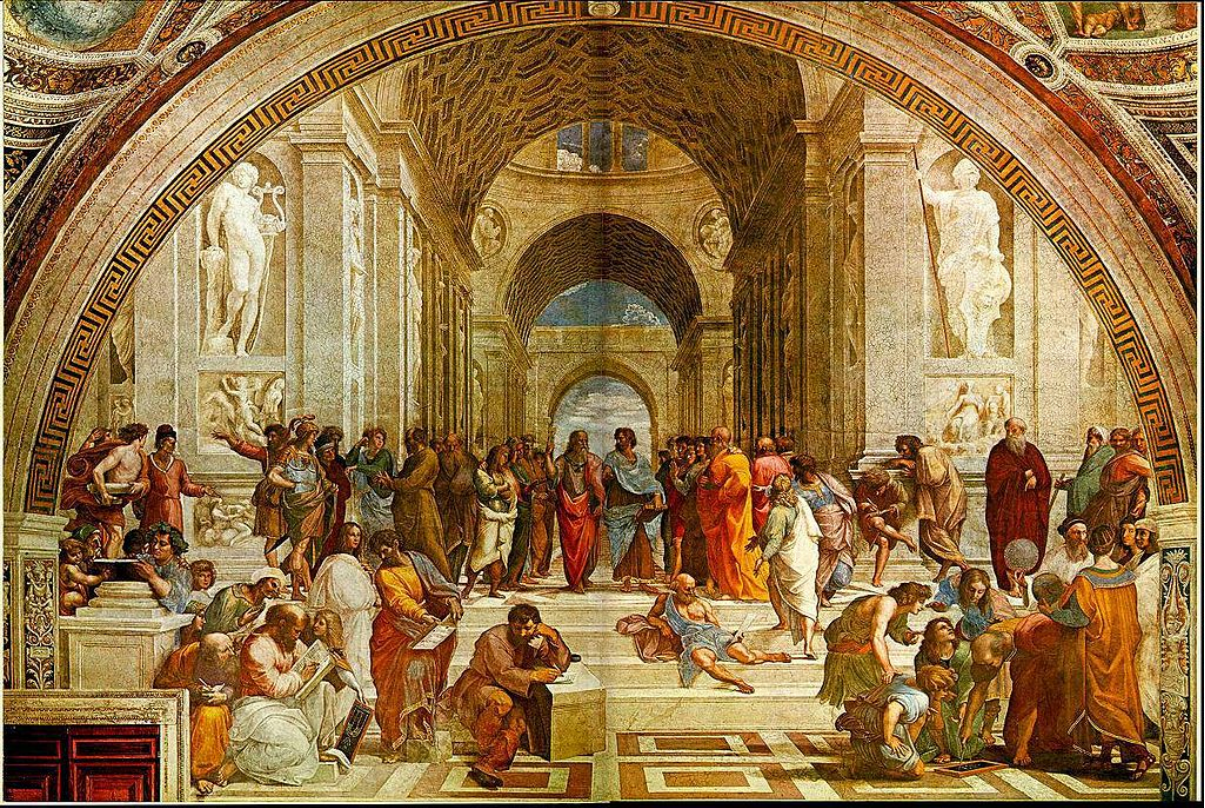


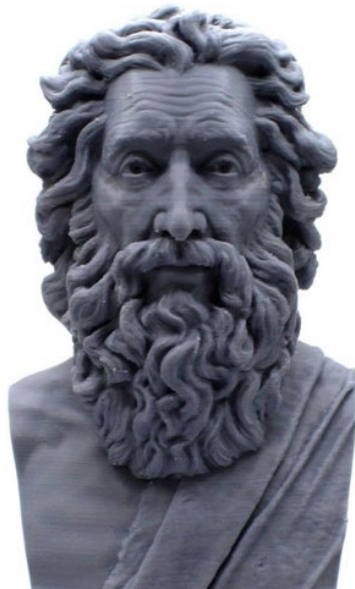
BELLARIA XCI



School of Athens (Raphael)

Diogenes Laertius' *Lives of the Eminent Philosophers*

VIII (iii) DIOGENES (412/404-323 BC)



Sexual attraction, dogs, wrestler-doctor, stone-throwing son of a courtesan



Phryne (Jean-José Frappa, 1854-1904)

61 Seeing an Olympian victor casting repeated glances at a courtesan, 'See,' he said, 'that ram frenzied for battle, how he is held fast by the neck fascinated by a common minx.' Handsome courtesans he would compare to a deadly honeyed potion. He was breakfasting in the marketplace, and the bystanders gathered round him with cries of 'dog.' 'It is you who are dogs,' cried he, 'when you stand round and watch me at my breakfast.'

62 After seeing a stupid wrestler practising as a doctor he inquired of him, 'What does this mean? Is it that you may now have your revenge on the rivals who formerly beat you?' Seeing the child of a courtesan throw stones at a crowd, he cried out, 'Take care you don't hit your father.'

61 ἰδὼν Ὀλυμπιονίκην εἰς ἑταίραν πυκνότερον ἀτενίζοντα, ἴδε, ἔφη, 'κρίον Ἀρειμάνιον ὡς ὑπὸ τοῦ τυχόντος κορασίου τραχηλίζεται.' τὰς εὐπρεπεῖς ἑταίρας ἔλεγε θανασίμφω μελικράτῳ παραπλησίας εἶναι. ἀριστῶντι αὐτῷ ἐν ἀγορᾷ οἱ περισσῶτες συνεχῆς ἔλεγον, 'κύον' ὁ δέ, 'ὕμεῖς,' εἶπεν, 'ἐστὲ κύνες, οἷ με ἀριστῶντα περιστήκατε.'

62 ἀφυῆ παλαιστήν θεασάμενος ἰατρεύοντα ἔφη, 'τί τοῦτο; ἢ ἵνα τοὺς ποτέ σε νικήσαντας νῦν καταβάλης;' θεασάμενος υἷὸν ἑταίρας λίθον εἰς ὄχλον βάλλοντα, 'πρόσεχε,' ἔφη, 'μὴ τὸν πατέρα πλήξης.'

Philosophy, cosmopolitan, sacrifice, harps, theatre, effeminacy



63 On being asked what he had gained from philosophy, he replied, 'This at least, if nothing else—to be prepared for every fortune.' Asked where he came from, he said, 'I am a citizen of the world.' Certain parents were sacrificing to the gods, that a son might be born to them. 'But,' said he, 'do you not sacrifice to ensure what manner of man he shall turn out to be?'

64 To the man who said to him, 'You don't know anything, although you are a philosopher,' he replied, 'Even if I am but a pretender to wisdom, that in itself is philosophy.' When some one brought a child to him and declared him to be highly gifted and of excellent character, 'What need then,' said he, 'has he of me?' Those who say admirable things, but fail to do them, he compared to a cithara; for the cithara, like them, he said, has neither hearing nor perception. He was going into a theatre, meeting face to face those who were coming out, and being asked why, 'This,' he said, 'is what I practise doing all my life.'

65 Seeing a young man behaving effeminately, 'Are you not ashamed,' he said, 'that your own intention about yourself should be worse than nature's: for nature made you a man, but you are forcing yourself to play the woman.'

63 ἐρωτηθεὶς τί αὐτῷ περιγέγονεν ἐκ φιλοσοφίας, ἔφη, 'εἰ καὶ μηδὲν ἄλλο, τὸ γοῦν πρὸς πᾶσαν τύχην παρεσκευάσθαι.' ἐρωτηθεὶς πόθεν εἶη, 'κοσμοπολίτης,' ἔφη. θυόντων τινῶν τοῖς θεοῖς ἐπὶ τῷ υἱὸν γενέσθαι, ἔφη, 'περὶ δὲ τοῦ ποδαπὸς ἐκβῆ οὐ θύετε ...'

64 πρὸς τὸν εἰπόντα, 'οὐδὲν εἰδὼς φιλοσοφεῖς,' ἔφη, 'εἰ καὶ προσποιοῦμαι σοφίαν, καὶ τοῦτο φιλοσοφεῖν ἐστὶ.' πρὸς τὸν συνιστάντα τὸν παῖδα καὶ λέγοντα ὡς εὐφυνέστατός ἐστι καὶ τὰ ἦθη κράτιστος, 'τί οὖν,' εἶπεν, 'ἐμοῦ χρήζει;' τοὺς λέγοντας μὲν τὰ σπουδαῖα, μὴ ποιοῦντας δέ, ἔλεγε μηδὲν διαφέρειν κιθάρας· καὶ γὰρ ταύτην μὴτ' ἀκούειν μὴτ' αἰσθάνεσθαι. εἰς θέατρον εἰσῆει ἐναντίος τοῖς ἐξιούσιν· ἐρωτηθεὶς δὲ διὰ τί, 'τοῦτο,' ἔφη, 'ἐν παντὶ τῷ βίῳ ἐπιτηδεύω ποιεῖν.'

65 Ἰδὼν ποτε νεανίσκον θηλυνόμενον, 'οὐκ αἰσχύνῃ,' ἔφη, 'χείρονα τῆς φύσεως περὶ σεαυτοῦ βουλευόμενος; ἢ μὲν γὰρ σε ἄνδρα ἐποίησε, σὺ δὲ σεαυτὸν βιάζῃ γυναῖκα εἶναι.'

Bad archer, lovers, death, Alexander, education



67 Seeing a bad archer, he sat down beside the target with the words 'in order not to get hit.' Lovers, he declared, derive their pleasures from their misfortune.

68 Being asked whether death was an evil thing, he replied, 'How can it be evil, when in its presence we are not aware of it?' When Alexander stood opposite him and asked, 'Are you not afraid of me?' 'Why, what are you?' said he, 'a good thing or a bad?' Upon Alexander replying 'A good thing,' 'Who, then,' said Diogenes, 'is afraid of the good?' Education, according to him, is self-control to the young, consolation to the old, wealth to the poor, and ornament to the rich.

67 ἰδὼν τοξότην ἀφυῆ παρὰ τὸν σκοπὸν ἐκάθισεν, εἰπὼν, 'ἵνα μὴ πληγῶ'. τοὺς ἐρῶντας ἔφη πρὸς ἡδονὴν ἀτυχεῖν...

68 Ἐρωτηθεὶς εἰ κακὸν ὁ θάνατος, 'πῶς,' εἶπε, 'κακός, οὐ παρόντος οὐκ αἰσθανόμεθα;' πρὸς Ἀλέξανδρον ἐπιστάντα καὶ εἰπόντα, 'οὐ φοβῆ με;' 'τί γάρ,' εἶπεν, 'εἶ; ἀγαθὸν ἢ κακόν;' τοῦ δὲ εἰπόντος, 'ἀγαθόν,' 'τίς οὖν,' εἶπε, 'τὸ ἀγαθὸν φοβεῖται;' τὴν παιδεῖαν εἶπε τοῖς μὲν νέοις σωφροσύνην, τοῖς δὲ πρεσβυτέροις παραμυθίαν, τοῖς δὲ πένησι πλοῦτον, τοῖς δὲ πλουσίοις κόσμον εἶναι.

Freedom of speech, Muses, public acts, breakfast



The nine Muses: uncovered in Turkey, 2014

69 Being asked what was the most beautiful thing in the world, he replied, 'Freedom of speech.' On entering a boys' school, he found there many statues of the Muses, but few pupils. 'By the help of the gods,' said he, 'schoolmaster, you have plenty of pupils.' It was his habit to do everything in public, the works of Demeter and of Aphrodite alike. He used to draw out the following arguments. 'If to breakfast be not absurd, neither is it absurd in the market-place; but to breakfast is not absurd, therefore it is not absurd to breakfast in the marketplace.'

69 Ἐρωτηθεὶς τί κάλλιστον ἐν ἀνθρώποις, ἔφη, 'παρρησία.' εἰσελθὼν εἰς διδασκάλου καὶ Μούσας μὲν ἰδὼν πολλάς, μαθητὰς δὲ ὀλίγους, 'σὺν θεοῖς,' ἔφη, 'διδάσκαλε, πολλοὺς μαθητὰς ἔχεις.' εἰώθει δὲ πάντα ποιεῖν ἐν τῷ μέσῳ, καὶ τὰ Δήμητρος καὶ τὰ Ἀφροδίτης. καὶ τοιούτους τινὰς ἠρώτα λόγους· εἰ τὸ ἀριστᾶν μηδὲν ἐστὶν ἄτοπον, οὐδ' ἐν ἀγορᾷ ἐστὶν ἄτοπον· οὐκ ἔστι δ' ἄτοπον τὸ ἀριστᾶν· οὐδ' ἐν ἀγορᾷ ἄρα ἐστὶν ἄτοπον.

Training for health and virtue



70 He used to affirm that training was of two kinds, mental and bodily: the latter being that whereby, with constant exercise, perceptions are formed such as secure freedom of movement for virtuous deeds; and the one half of this training is incomplete without the other, good health and strength being just as much included among the essential things, whether for body or soul. And he would adduce indisputable evidence to show how easily from gymnastic training we arrive at virtue. For in the manual crafts and other arts it can be seen that the craftsmen develop extraordinary manual skill through practice. Again, take the case of pipe-players and of athletes: what surpassing skill they acquire by their own incessant toil; and, if they had transferred their efforts to the training of the mind, how certainly their labours would not have been unprofitable or ineffective.

70 Διττὴν δ' ἔλεγεν εἶναι τὴν ἄσκησιν, τὴν μὲν ψυχικὴν, τὴν δὲ σωματικὴν· ταύτην καθ' ἣν ἐν γυμνασίᾳ συνεχεῖ γινόμεναι φαντασίαι εὐλυσίαν πρὸς τὰ τῆς ἀρετῆς ἔργα παρέχονται. εἶναι δ' ἀτελεῖ τὴν ἑτέραν χωρὶς τῆς ἑτέρας, οὐδὲν ἧττον εὐεξίας καὶ ἰσχύος ἐν τοῖς προσήκουσι γενομένης, ὡς περὶ τὴν ψυχὴν καὶ περὶ τὸ σῶμα. παρετίθετο δὲ τεκμήρια τοῦ ῥαδίως ἀπὸ τῆς γυμνασίας ἐν

τῇ ἀρετῇ καταγίνεσθαι· ὁρᾶν τε γὰρ ἐν τε ταῖς τέχναις ταῖς βαναύσοις καὶ ταῖς ἄλλαις οὐ τὴν τυχοῦσαν ὀξυχειρίαν τοὺς τεχνίτας ἀπὸ τῆς μελέτης περιπεποιημένους τοὺς τ' αὐλητὰς καὶ τοὺς ἀθλητὰς ὅσον ὑπερφέρουσιν ἑκάτεροι τῇ ἰδίᾳ πονήσει τῇ συνεχεῖ, καὶ ὡς οὗτοι εἰ μετήνεγκαν τὴν ἄσκησιν καὶ ἐπὶ τὴν ψυχὴν, οὐκ ἂν ἀνωφελῶς καὶ ἀτελεῶς ἐμόχθουν.

Practice makes perfect, contempt for conventional pleasure, Heracles

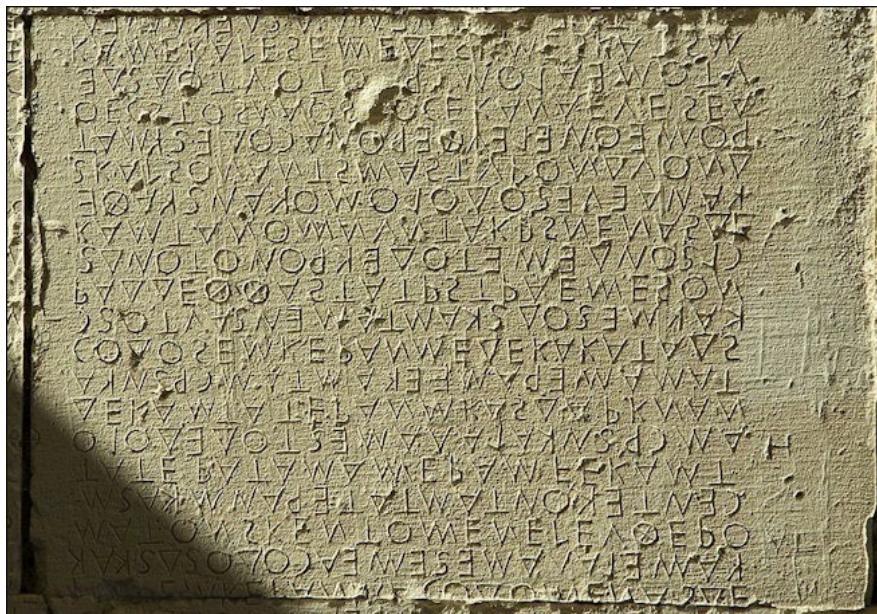


Getting into practice

71 Nothing in life, however, he maintained, has any chance of succeeding without strenuous practice; and this is capable of overcoming anything. Accordingly, instead of useless toils men should choose such as nature recommends, whereby they might have lived happily. Yet such is their madness that they choose to be miserable. For even the despising of pleasure is itself most pleasurable, when we are habituated to it; and just as those accustomed to a life of pleasure feel disgust when they pass over to the opposite experience, so those whose training has been of the opposite kind derive more pleasure from despising pleasure than from the pleasures themselves. This was the gist of his conversation; and it was plain that he acted accordingly, adulterating currency in very truth, allowing convention no such authority as he allowed to natural right, and asserting that the manner of life he lived was the same as that of Heracles when he preferred liberty to everything.

71 Οὐδέν γε μὴν ἔλεγε τὸ παράπαν ἐν τῷ βίῳ χωρὶς ἀσκήσεως κατορθοῦσθαι, δυνατὴν δὲ ταύτην πᾶν ἐκνικῆσαι. δέον οὖν ἀντὶ τῶν ἀχρήστων πόνων τοὺς κατὰ φύσιν ἐλομένους ζῆν εὐδαιμόνως, παρὰ τὴν ἄνοιαν κακοδαιμονοῦσι. καὶ γὰρ αὐτὴ τῆς ἡδονῆς ἢ καταφρόνησις ἡδυτάτη προμελετηθεῖσα, καὶ ὥσπερ οἱ συνεθισθέντες ἡδέως ζῆν, ἀηδῶς ἐπὶ τοῦναντίον μετῆσιν, οὕτως οἱ τοῦναντίον ἀσκηθέντες ἡδίων αὐτῶν τῶν ἡδονῶν καταφρονοῦσι. τοιαῦτα διελέγετο καὶ ποιῶν ἐφαίνετο, ὄντως νόμισμα παραχαράττων, μηδὲν οὕτω τοῖς κατὰ νόμον ὡς τοῖς κατὰ φύσιν διδούς· τὸν αὐτὸν χαρακτῆρα τοῦ βίου λέγων διεξάγειν ὄνπερ καὶ Ἡρακλῆς, μηδὲν ἐλευθερίας προκρίνων.

Property, gods and the wise, the law, ridicules fame, the true state



Law code of Gortyn (450 BC)

72 He maintained that all things are the property of the wise, and employed such arguments as those cited above. All things belong to the gods. The gods are friends to the wise, and friends share all property in common; therefore all things are the property of the wise. Again as to law: that it is impossible for society to exist without law; for without a city no benefit can be derived from that which is civilized. But the city is civilized, and there is no advantage in law without a city; therefore law is something civilized. He would ridicule good birth and fame and all such distinctions, calling them showy ornaments of vice. The only true political system was, he said, that which is as wide as the universe.

72 Πάντα τῶν σοφῶν εἶναι λέγων καὶ τοιούτους λόγους ἐρωτῶν οἷους ἄνω προειρήκαμεν· πάντα τῶν θεῶν ἐστὶ· φίλοι δὲ τοῖς σοφοῖς οἱ θεοί· κοινὰ δὲ τὰ τῶν φίλων. πάντα ἄρα τῶν σοφῶν. περί τε τοῦ νόμου ὅτι χωρὶς αὐτοῦ οὐχ οἷόν τε πολιτεύεσθαι· οὐ γὰρ φησὶν ἄνευ πόλεως ὄφελός τι εἶναι ἀστείου· ἀστεῖον δὲ ἢ πόλις· νόμου δὲ ἄνευ πόλεως οὐδὲν ὄφελος· ἀστεῖον ἄρα ὁ νόμος. εὐγενείας δὲ καὶ δόξας καὶ τὰ τοιαῦτα πάντα διέπαιζε, προκοσμήματα κακίας εἶναι λέγων· μόνην τε ὀρθὴν πολιτείαν εἶναι τὴν ἐν κόσμῳ.

Expert in ruling men, Xenocrates applauds him

74 Further, when he was sold as a slave, he endured it most nobly. For on a voyage to Aegina he was captured by pirates under the command of Scirpalus, conveyed to

Crete and exposed for sale. When the auctioneer asked in what he was proficient, he replied, 'In ruling men.' Thereupon he pointed to a certain Corinthian with a fine purple border to his robe, the man named Xeniadēs above-mentioned, and said, 'Sell me to this man; he needs a master.' Thus Xeniadēs came to buy him, and took him to Corinth and set him over his own children and entrusted his whole household to him. And he administered it in all respects in such a manner that Xeniadēs used to go about saying, 'A good genius has entered my house.'

74 Καὶ πρᾶσιν ἤνεγκε γενναϊότατα· πλέων γὰρ εἰς Αἴγιναν καὶ πειραταῖς ἀλοῦς ὧν ἦρχε Σκίρπαλος, εἰς Κρήτην ἀπαχθεὶς ἐπιπράσκετο· καὶ τοῦ κήρυκος ἐρωτῶντος τί οἶδε ποιεῖν, ἔφη, 'ἀνθρώπων ἄρχειν.' ὅτε καὶ δείξας τινὰ Κορίνθιον εὐπάρυφον, τὸν προειρημένον Ξενιάδην, ἔφη, 'τούτῳ με πῶλει· οὗτος δεσπότης χρήζει.' ὠνεῖται δὴ αὐτὸν ὁ Ξενιάδης καὶ ἀπαγαγὼν εἰς τὴν Κόρινθον ἐπέστησε τοῖς ἑαυτοῦ παιδίοις καὶ πᾶσαν ἐνεχείρισε τὴν οἰκίαν. ὁ δὲ οὕτως αὐτὴν ἐν πᾶσι διετίθει, ὥστε ἐκεῖνος περιωὴν ἔλεγεν· 'ἀγαθὸς δαίμων εἰς τὴν οἰκίαν μου εἰσελήλυθε.'

Fear, the mark of the slave



75 Cleomenes in his work entitled *Concerning Pedagogues* says that the friends of Diogenes wanted to ransom him, whereupon he called them simpletons; for, said he, lions are not the slaves of those who feed them, but rather those who feed them are at the mercy of the lions: for fear is the mark of the slave, whereas wild beasts make men afraid of them.

75 Φησὶ δὲ Κλεομένης ἐν τῷ ἐπιγραφομένῳ Παιδαγωγικῷ τοὺς γνωρίμους λυτρώσασθαι αὐτὸν θελήσει, τὸν δ' εὐήθεις αὐτοὺς εἰπεῖν· οὐδὲ γὰρ τοὺς λέοντας δούλους εἶναι τῶν τρεφόντων, ἀλλὰ τοὺς τρέφοντας τῶν λεόντων. δούλου γὰρ τὸ φοβεῖσθαι, τὰ δὲ θηρία φοβερὰ τοῖς ἀνθρώποις εἶναι.

Diogenes' grave and epitaph

78 Over his grave they set up a pillar and a dog in Parian marble upon it. Subsequently his fellow-citizens honoured him with bronze statues, on which these verses were inscribed:

Time makes even bronze grow old: but thy glory,
Diogenes, all eternity will never destroy.
Since thou alone didst point out the lesson of self-sufficiency
For mortals, and the easiest path of life.

78 ἐπέστησάν τ' αὐτῷ κίονα καὶ ἐπ' αὐτῷ λίθου Παρίου κύνα. ὕστερον δὲ καὶ οἱ πολῖται αὐτοῦ χαλκαῖς εἰκόσιν ἐτίμησαν αὐτὸν καὶ ἐπέγραψαν οὕτω·
γηράσκει καὶ χαλκὸς ὑπὸ χρόνου, ἀλλὰ σὸν οὔτι
κῦδος ὁ πᾶς αἰὼν, Διόγενες, καθελεῖ·
μοῦνος ἐπεὶ βιοτᾶς αὐτάρκεα δόξαν ἔδειξας
θνατοῖς καὶ ζωᾶς οἶμον ἐλαφροτάταν.

Next week: The Easter story from St Mark