

Hist 240
Diogenes Laertius on Epicurus



LIVES OF THE EMINENT
PHILOSOPHERS
DIOGENES LAERTIUS

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Diogenes Laertius (3rd c. CE): Life of Epicurus.

The Lives of the Philosophers, by Diogenes Laertius, is the most comprehensive ancient account of the lives of the early Greek philosophers. Book 10 contains the life and doctrines of Epicurus.

Epicurus and Epicureanism was widely criticized (81) but unfairly
Epicurus displayed “humanity toward all” “reverence for the gods” “love of country” (82)

Epicurean wise one

1. Reason masters antisocial passions (some masculinist)
2. Wise does not feign ignorance (directed at whom?)
3. ...
4. ...
5. Friends
6. Just say no to sex
7. Mercy and pardon to slaves
8. Not fall in love or worry about burial
9. ...
10. Avoid public speech-making and attention
11. Just say no to sex
12. Marry and have children
13. Avoid some people and some food
14. Not meddle in politics nor strive to be dictator nor cynic (critical activist)
15. Even if blind still live
16. ...
17. Plead own case in law (not be litigious)
18. Leave written works (legacy)
19. Prudent about property
20. Love country life
21. Confront adversity (don't be fatalistic)
22. Be careful about public reputation
23. Take pleasure in festivals (experiences over things)
24. Honor others over self
25. Discuss but don't create
26. Pluralism of wisdom
27. Make money as needed
28. Will serve sovereign on occasion
29. Be corrective towards troubles of others
30. Set up school
31. ...
32. ...