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**The Lives of the Philosophers (1696)**

[...]

**The Life of Bion**

[...]

He has left to posterity several remarkable tracts, and an infinite number of sentences very grave and profitable, as for example: He was upbraided by a certain person, that ‘he had not detained a certain young man to his house.’ To whom returning this answer: ‘Tis not an easy thing,” said he, “to hang a green cheese upon a hook.” Another time he was asked ‘who were least troubled by care?’ “They,” said he, “that give themselves the least trouble to spend the day in quiet.” He was also asked ‘whether it were good to marry a wife?’ (for this repartee is also ascribed to him): “If thou marriest a deformed woman,” said he, “thou wilt always be in discontent; and if thou marriest a beautiful woman, she will be common.” He called old age the haven of all diseases (for that all our miseries and sufferings seem to be unladen and put there ashore); that honour was the mother of years, beauty a good passenger, and riches the sinews of business. To one that had spent his estate in lands, “The earth,” said he, “formerly swallowed Amphiarus, but thou has devoured the earth.” He was wont to say, ‘twas a great evil not to be able to suffer evil. He reprehended those that buried the bodies of the dead, as if there remained no feeling after death. He was used to say, that ‘twas better to pleasure others with his beauty than to seek the satisfaction of his own lust, for that he who did otherwise wasted both his body and his understanding.’ He argued against Socrates in this manner: ‘either, he might make use of Alcibiades or he might not; if he could and would not, he was a fool; if he had a mind to and could not, ‘twas no virtue in him.’ He said that

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1 The complete title of the following translation is *The Lives, Opinions, and Remarkable Sayings of the Most Famous Ancient Philosophers. Written in Greek by Diogenes Laertius; Made English by Several Hands*. Following the prefatory material, the translators are identified.

2 From Book IV, pp. 304-305. Book IV was translated by J. Philips, Gent[leman]. This is perhaps the poet and classicist John Philips (1676-1709). *Bion* Bion of Borysthenes (c. 325-c. 255 BCE), Greek philosopher who espoused the Cynic position that social conventions, riches, and status were valueless, and that physical modesty in sexual matters was senseless; he believed that the greatest happiness involved being most adaptable to circumstances.

3 sentences wise sayings.

4 common sexually licentious.

5 Amphiarus one of Jason’s group of heroes, known as the Argonauts, Amphiarus was swallowed up by the earth, along with his war chariot, as he was retreating from battle.

6 suffer endure.

7 make use i.e., in a sexual sense. Alcibiades (c. 450-404 BCE). Athenian general and statesman, was a pupil of Socrates. Plato’s *Symposium* (216c-223d) recounts Socrates’ relationship with Alcibiades, including Socrates refusal to engage in a sexual relationship with his enamored pupil.
'certainly the way to hell was easy to find, because all men went thither blindfold.' He blamed Alcibiades, saying that 'in his youth he had debauched men from their wives, but when he came to be a man, he debauched women from their husbands.'

[...]

From The Life of Zeno

[...]

In his diet he was very sparing, a short pittance of bread and honey, and a small draught of sweet wine satisfying his hunger. He rarely made use of boys; and once he took to his bed an ordinary maid-servant that he might not be thought to hate the sex. He lived in the house of Persaeus, who, thinking to please him, one time among the rest, brought him home a young minstrel; but so little did he regard his friend’s kindness that after he had stripped her, he delivered her back to the embraces of Persaeus.

[...]

Being wantonly affected towards Chreonides, when the lad and Cleanthes sat down, he rose up. At which Cleanthes (admiring), “I have heard,” said he, “the most skilful physicians say that the best cure for a swelling is rest.”

Two persons at a banquet, lying upon the same couch, and Zeno observing, that he who lay uppermost, and next to himself, bobbed the lowermost in the tail with his foot, he fell a-butting the bum of the next to him with his knee. Upon which the uppermost turning about: “What’s the matter?” said he. “Dost think thy neighbour felt any pleasure?”

To a great lover of boys: “I fear me,” said he, “those masters will never have much wit that are always conversing with children.”

[...]

They allow a wise man to be in love with lads that carry in their more beautiful aspects the marks of ingenuity and a propensity to virtue; as Zeno in his Commonwealth, and Chrysippus in his Lives, and Apollodorus in his Ethics declare. “For love,” say they, “is an endeavour to gain friendship for the sake of appearing beauty; nor is it for the sake of coition, but of friendship.”

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8 From Book VII, pp. 462-465. Book VII was translated by an individual identified only as R.M., Gent. Zeno of Citium (c. 333-262 BCE), Greek philosopher of the Stoic school, who believed that virtue was the only real good, and moral weakness the only real evil.

9 Cleanthes Stoic philosopher, and successor to Zeno.

10 he i.e., Zeno.

11 swelling i.e., referring to Zeno’s obvious erection.

12 tail bottom.

13 They Chrysippus and Possidonius. Diogenes is in the midst of discussing their opinions concerning the virtuous life.

14 Zeno See n8. His Commonwealth or Republic is lost.

15 Chrysippus (c. 280-207 BCE), Stoic philosopher, student of Cleanthes and Zeno; his Lives is lost.

16 Apollodorus of Seleucia (fl. 150 BCE), Stoic Philosopher and student of Diogenes; his Ethics is lost.