

ATHENAEUS OF NAUCRATIS
THE DEIPNOSOPHISTS
TRANSLATED BY CHARLES BURTON GULICK

Dr. D's introduction: The Deipnosophists, which has been translated as anything from "the wise men at dinner" to "the dinner-geeks," is purportedly a recounting by the author, Athenaeus, of clever conversations by groups of witty friends, with often differing opinions, on various topics; the interlocutors support their points with extensive quotes from poets, playwrights, and other writers (though often the original work does not survive). This chapter, "On Women," discusses a number of topics having to do with wives, hetairai, pederastic relationships, and related issues. I have edited it heavily for length, eliminating sections where there are dozens of quotes and anecdotes that have much the same point. A lot of this chapter has anecdotes of witty sayings of hetairai, the humor of which is pretty well incomprehensible to the average non-ancient-Greek, but serve to show how tough, bold, and clever a hetaira might be.

Although the comments and anecdotes are attributed to different speakers in the original, there is not a coherent theme of opposed positions (as there is in Plato's Symposium) so I have more or less eliminated references to the speakers, and left us only with the miscellaneous attitudes and anecdotes as our focal point for our interpretations of Greek experiences and literature about love, sex, and the lack or opposite of both.

There are a great many names here, since myths and anecdotes about historical personages are used as supporting material for the expressed views of women and love. Do not be confused by them or think that you need to know all of them – I don't even get all the references. Just follow the thematic issues for the meat of it – the attitudes toward women, men, love, and hate.

My notes are in brackets. The dialog is free-flowing and covers a lot of topics, so the bold/italic brackets note the topics under discussion, and the plain italic brackets explain miscellaneous references.

[Athenaeus (the author) is reporting a dinner conversation about love, of women in particular:]

[First topic: the odd marriage habits of Spartans] ...In Lacedaemon [*i.e. Sparta*] all the young girls used to be shut up in a dark room, the unmarried young men being locked up with them; and each man led home, as his bride without dower, whichever girl he laid hold of. Hence they punished Lysander [*a Spartan general*] with a fine because he abandoned the first girl and plotted to marry another who was much prettier. Clearchus of Soli says in his work *On Proverbs*: "In Lacedaemon at a certain festival the married women pull the bachelors round the altars and thrash them, the object being that the young men in trying to avoid the humiliation of this treatment may yield to the natural affections, and enter upon marriage in good season.

[How the more normal Athenians established lawful marriage from primitive promiscuity:] In Athens Cecrops [*a mythical ancient king*] was the first to join one woman to one man; before his time unions had been loose and promiscuity was general. This is why, as some have thought, he is regarded as having a two-fold nature; earlier men did not know who was their own father, there were so many." [...]

[Customs of the Persians, who were regarded as having degenerate practices typical of the East:] Among the Persians the queen tolerates the large number of concubines because the king rules his wife as absolute monarch, and for another reason, ... because the queen is treated with reverence by the concubines; at any rate they do obeisance to her. So, too, Priam has many wives,

and Hecuba feels no annoyance. Priam, for example, says: "Nineteen sons were born to me of one womb, but all the rest were born by the women within my halls." But among the Greeks the mother of Phoenix [we read this, in the Iliad excerpts] does not tolerate the concubine of Amyntor.

[Interpretation of some Greek myths in the light of Eastern customs:] And Medea, though she knows that the practice of concubinage obtains among the barbarians, cannot put up with the marriage of [her husband Jason] to Glauce any the better because she has now changed her habits of life so as to accord with habits more civilized and Greek. Again, Clytaemnestra flew into a passion and killed Cassandra along with Agamemnon himself, because her lord and master had brought Cassandra with him to Greece, having become used to barbarian marriage customs. " [We will read about these.] [...]

Heracles [a.k.a. Hercules, the most significant mythic hero of the Greco-Roman world] , who won the reputation of having had very many wives (he was, in fact, very fond of women), had them in succession, as would be natural in one who was always marching on expeditions and arriving in various localities; that is why he had such a large number of children. Yet it is true that in the space of five days he deflowered fifty daughters of Thestius, as Herodorus records. [A mythical Athenian King,] Aegeus, again, was another hero who had many wives; the first that he married was the daughter of Hoples; after her he married one of Chalcodon's daughters. But after yielding them both to friends Aegeus kept company with many women without marrying them. Later he took to wife Aethra, the daughter of Pittheus, and after her Medea. As for Theseus [his son], he carried off Helen [yes, that Helen], and soon thereafter carried off Ariadne also. Istrus, at any rate, when giving a list of the women associated with Theseus, in the fourteenth book of his *History of Attica*, says that some of them became his through love, others by rape, and still others through lawful wedlock; by rape, Helen, Ariadne, Hippolyte, and the daughters of Cercyon and Sinis; but he married lawfully Meliboea, the mother of Ajax. [...]

[Real-world dangers of multiple wives] Philip of Macedon [father of Alexander the Great] did not, to be sure, take women along with him on his campaigns, as did Darius, the [Persian king] who was deposed by Alexander; for Darius, although engaged in a war in which his entire empire was at stake, took round with him three hundred and sixty concubines, according to the account given by Decaearchus in the third book of his *History of Greece*. Yet Philip always married a new wife with each new war he undertook. [...] [after marrying a number of times,] he acquired also the kingdom of the Molossians by marrying Olympias, by whom he had Alexander [the Great] and Cleopatra. After all these women he married [a different] Cleopatra, with whom he had fallen in love... and by bringing her home to supplant Olympias, he threw the entire course of his life into utter confusion. For immediately, during the celebration of the wedding itself, Attalus remarked, 'But now, I warn you, princes will be born who will be legitimate, and not bastards.' Alexander, on hearing that, threw the goblet which he held in his hand at Attalus, and he retaliated upon Alexander with his own cup. After this Olympias fled to the country of the Molossians, while Alexander went to Illyria...

Another man who was fond of women was the poet Euripides.... "When somebody remarked to Sophocles that Euripides was a woman-hater, Sophocles answered: 'Yes, in his tragedies; for certainly when he is in bed he is a woman-lover.'" [Note this comment for our Aristophanes reading.]

[A discussion of the dangers of prostitutes; all the women mentioned here are well-known courtesans; the rhetorical device is to compare these women to the dangers Odysseus faced in the Odyssey] And Anaxilas says in *The Chick*: "Any man who has ever had an affair with a harlot would be unable to name a more lawless creature. For what savage dragon, what fire-breathing Chimaera, or Charybdis, or three-headed Scylla, that sea-bitch, or Sphinx, Hydra, she-lion, viper, and the winged broods of Harpies, have ever succeeded in surpassing that abominable class? It can't be done; these women surpass all the pests in the world. We may pass them in review, starting first with Plangon, who, just like the Chimaera, sets all the foreigners afire; but one cavalier alone

purloined her substance; he left her house dragging all her furniture after him. Again, isn't it true that the men who keep company with Sinope are now keeping company with a Hydra? She herself, to be sure, is an old hag, but Gnathaena is an offshoot from her just next door, so that when they have quitted the first, they have a pest that's twice as bad. As for Nannion, how do you think she differs today from Scylla? Didn't she throttle two of her companions, and isn't she still on the hunt to catch the third? And Phryne, somewhere not so far away, acts the part of Charybdis, and grabbing the skipper has swallowed him up, ship and all. Is not Theano a defeathered Siren? The eye and voice of a woman, but her legs are the legs of a grackle. ... To cut it short, not one of the wild beasts is more devastating than a harlot."

[The troubles of marriage, and the problems with dowries, a sum of money settled on a woman by her father at marriage:] Leonides, spurning the very thought of marriage, cited this group of verses from *The Soothsayers* of Alexis: "Oh, unlucky we, men who are married! We have sold our right of free speech and our comfort in life, and live as slaves to wives instead of being free. But then, you say, in holding the dowry do we not submit to paying the price? Ay, dowry! Bitter that, and filled with woman's bile. For a husband's bile is honey compared with hers; men, when injured, will forgive, but these dames add insult to injury: they, when they injure, throw the blame for it on the husband. Whom they should not they rule, and whom they should rule they neglect; they forswear themselves, and though they have nothing at all the matter with them, they always say they are ill." And Xenarchus says in *Sleep*: "Are not the male cicadas a happy lot? Their females haven't a bit of voice in them."

[The relative advantages of hetairai over wives] "How melting, great Zeus, and soft is [*the hetaira's*] eye! No wonder there is a shrine to the Companion everywhere, but nowhere in all Greece is there one to the Wife." And Amphis in *Athamas*: "Besides, is not a companion [*hetaira*] more kindly than a wedded wife? Yes, far more, and with very good reason. For the wife, protected by the law, stays at home in proud contempt, whereas the harlot knows that a man must be bought by her fascinations or she must go out and find another."

[A good woman is hard to find:] Eubulus says in *Chrysilla*: "To perdition go the wretch, whoever he was, who was the second man to marry a wife; the first man I will not blame. For he, I fancy, had had no experience of the evil, but the second must have learned what an evil a wife is." And going on, he says: "O most worshipful Zeus! Shall I then ever blame women? I swear, may I die if I do, she is the best of all our possessions. Even if Medea was an evil woman, yet Penelope, at least, was of great worth. Someone will say that Clytaemnestra was an evil woman; I match against her the good Alcestis. But perhaps one will blame Phaedra; surely there must have been some good woman; - - yes, but who? Unlucky that I am, alas, the good women have given out all too quickly for me, while I still have many bad women to tell of."

[Wars caused by women:] Helen was the cause of the Trojan War, Chryseis of the pestilence, Briseis of Achilles' wrath: and the so-called Sacred War, as Duris says in the second book of his *Histories*, was caused by another married woman, a Theban by birth, named Theano, who had been carried off by a Phocian. [... *Many other examples follow, then the philosophers talk about the nature of love.*]

[Eros as a pure rather than sexual figure] And the Athenians were so far removed from apprehending Eros as a god presiding over sexual intercourse, that right in the Academy, which was quite obviously consecrated to Athena, they enshrined Eros and joined his sacrifices with hers. Further, the people of Thespieae celebrate the Erotidia as religiously as Athenians the Athenaea or Elians the Olympia or Rhodians their Halieia. And speaking generally, Eros is honoured at all public sacrifices. Thus the Lacedaemonians offer preliminary sacrifices to Eros before the troops are drawn up in battle-line, because they think that their safe return and victory depend upon the friendship of the men drawn up. So, too, the Cretans post their handsomest citizens in the battle-lines and

through them offer sacrifice to Eros, as Sosicrates records. Again, the so-called Sacred Band [*an elite fighting force*] in Thebes is composed of lovers and their favourites [*ie. erastes/eromenos*], thus indicating the dignity of the god Eros in that they embrace a glorious death in preference to a dishonourable and reprehensible life.

... [**Eros and moderation**] Theophrastus, in his essay *On Love*, quotes the tragic poet Chaerephon as saying that just as wine is mixed to suit the character of the drinkers, so also is the emotion inspired by Eros; when he comes in moderation, he is gracious, but when he comes too intensely and puts men to utter confusion, he is most cruel... "Who denies that lovers live at hard labour? Why, in the first place, they must ever be on the war-path, their bodies must be able to endure toil to the utmost, and they must be most patient in pursuing their desire; inventive, impulsive, eager, skilfully managing the unmanageable, in utter misery while they live!" ... "For anyone who loves only the ripe beauty of the body, but knows no other reason for loving, is a lover of his pleasure, not of his friends, and though a mortal, plainly wrongs Eros, a god, because he makes Eros distrusted by all the pretty boys."

[**Love of boys**] It is a fact that even in ancient times they loved boys, as Ariston has said, whence it came about that those who were loved were called "paidika." For in truth, as Clearchus says ...: "Neither in boy, nor in gilded maid, nor in deep-bosomed matron is the countenance fair if it be not modest. For it is modesty that sows the seed of beauty's flower." And Aristotle also has said that lovers look to no other part of their favourite's body than the eyes, in which dwells modesty. And Sophocles, I believe, representing Hippodameia as discoursing on the beauty of Pelops, says: "Such is the charm to ensnare love, a kind of lightning-flash that Pelops has in his eyes; with it he is warmed himself, but scorches me with flame, measuring me with even glance of eye, just as the craftsman's rule is laid straight when he proceeds according to pattern-line." [*Miscellaneous quotes follow, emphasizing the power of the eyes in perceiving beauty and love*]

[**Shaving as a sign of possible degeneracy**] Now you Stoics take your favourites about with their chins shaven The philosopher speaks as follows: "The custom of shaving the beard increased under Alexander, although the foremost men did not follow it." ... "If you see a man whose hair has been removed by pitch or by shaving, one or other of two things ails him: either he plainly means to 'go on a campaign' and do all kinds of things inconsistent with a beard, or else some vice peculiar to a rich man is descending upon him. For really, what harm do our hairs do us, in the gods' name? By them each one of us shows himself a real man, unless you secretly intend to do something which conflicts with them." -- "Again, Diogenes, seeing a man with a chin in that condition, said: 'It cannot be, can it, that you have any fault to find with nature, because she made you a man instead of a woman?' ... At Rhodes, although there is a law which forbids shaving, there is not so much as a single prosecutor who will try to stop it, because everybody shaves. And in Byzantium, although a fine is imposed on the barber who has a razor, everybody resorts to him just the same." [...]

[**The value of beauty**] And yet I too praise beauty. Indeed, in the contests of physical fitness they select the handsomest boys and command them to be the first among the carriers [*of sacred items in religious festivals*]. But in Elis there is actually held a contest of beauty, and to the winner of the first prize is assigned the duty of carrying the vessels of the goddess, to the winner of the second, leading the ox, while the winner of the third lays the preliminary offerings on the fire. ...[I]n Sparta the handsomest man and the prettiest woman are admired above all things, the prettiest women in the world being born in Sparta. Hence they say of King Archidamus, that when a beautiful woman was presented to him, along with another who was ugly and rich, and he showed an inclination to take the rich woman, the Ephors [*council members*] fined him, adding the remark that he was preferring to "beget princelings instead of princes for Sparta Is not even the philosopher Socrates, who scorns all things, overcome by the beauty of Alcibiades? Even so the most august Aristotle, by that of his pupil from Phaselis. As for ourselves, do we not prefer even those inanimate objects which

are most beautiful? The Spartan custom, also, of stripping young girls before strangers is highly praised. And on the island of Chios it is very pleasant just to walk to the gymnasia and running-tracks and watch the young men wrestling with the girls.

[Unseemly interest in prostitutes] "Now a courtesan," as Antiphanes says in *The Farmer*, "is a calamity to the man who keeps her; indeed, he rejoices in keeping a mighty pest in the house." Wherefore a man is brought on the scene by Timocles in *Neaera* bemoaning his fate: "But I, unlucky that I was, fell in love with Phryne in the days when she was picking up capers here and there and did not yet have all the wealth she has today; and in spending huge sums for each visit I came to be excluded from her door." [... a lot more of the same follows] Wherefore I advise you, "Thessalian of the decorated chariot-board," to limit your embraces to the ladies who run the houses and not squander unprofitably the cash belonging to your sons.

[Brothels are nasty – but convenient] "Dreadful, dreadful, and utterly intolerable, are the practices of the young men in our city. For here there are very pretty lasses at the brothels, whom the boys may see basking in the sun, their breasts uncovered, stripped for action and posted in battle-line; of these one may select the girl that pleases his fancy, thin or fat, tubby or tall or squat, young, old, middle-aged, over-ripe, and not be obliged to set up a ladder and climb in secretly, nor crawl in through the smoke-hole below the roof, nor be trickily carried in under a heap of straw. Not at all! For the girls themselves use force and pull them in, dubbing those who are old, Daddy, and those who are younger, Big Boy. And any one of these may be visited fearlessly, cheaply, by day, at evening, in any manner desired; but the married women you either cannot see, or if seen, you cannot see them plainly, but always in a state of tremor and fright...in fear, and carrying your life in your hands.

.... So ... I urge you to keep away from the high-priced prostitutes ... "What a great difference there is between sleeping at night with a nice girl and with a strumpet! Ah! Her firm, young body, her complexion, her sweet breath, ye gods! Everything not being so very ready for business but that one has to struggle a bit, be slapped and receive blows from soft hands; it is pleasant indeed, by Zeus most mighty."

[Praise of hetairai] "I told you first of beautiful dancing prostitutes, and now I do not speak to you of flute-girls just beginning to be ripe, who have very quickly, and for a price, undermined the strength of sailors aboard the freighters;" no, I have spoken of the real "companions," that is, those who are capable of preserving strictly a friendship without trickery, and whom Cynulcus insolently reviles, although they are the only women in all the world who are addressed by the title of "friendly," or who derive their name from that Aphrodite who, among the Athenians, is called "the Companion Aphrodite." Concerning her, Apollodorus of Athens says in his work *On the Gods*: "The Companion Aphrodite is she who brings companions together, male and female; that is, women friends." ...

Now concerning prostitutes Ehippus has the following to say in *Merchandise*: "And then, let me tell you, if one of us happen to come in feeling downcast, she greets him with pleasant flattery; she kisses him, not tightly pressing her lips together, as if he were hateful to her, but opening her mouth as fledgling sparrows do; she gives him a chair, she speaks consoling words, she makes him cheerful, and soon takes away all his gloom, and renders him jolly again." ...Anaxilas in *The Chick*: "But if a girl who is tolerably well off as to money submits herself in service free to those who ask for certain favours, she gets from that act of companionship the name of 'companion.' And so in this instance, the girl with whom you have fallen in love is not, as you say, a common woman, but a companion; but is she, at the least, really so single-minded? More than that; she's a lady, so help me Zeus!"

[Male Prostitutes] Now your philosopher-boy-lover is of the same breed that Alexis or Antiphanes brings on the stage in *Sleep*: "For these reasons this male whore on all occasions at dinner with us never took any leeks either; this was because he did not want to offend his lover when

he kissed him." And Ehippus in *Sappho* puts it well concerning such persons: "For when one who is young furtively enters another man's house and lays upon the food a hand that does not pay its share, you may believe he pays the reckoning for the night." The orator Aeschines says the same thing in his speech *Against Timarchus*.

[Valuable, helpful prostitutes] Concerning the professional "companions" Philetaerus says this in *The Huntress*: "No wonder there is a shrine to the Companion everywhere, but nowhere in all Greece is there one to the Wife." ... "The Aphrodite of Samos, whom some call by the title 'In the Reeds,' others, 'In the Swamp,' was dedicated by Athenian prostitutes who accompanied the army of Pericles when he was laying siege to Samos, after they had earned sufficient funds by their seductions." *[Other examples of monuments dedicated by prostitutes follow]*

...[O]n the subject of prostitutes; I will begin with the beautiful city of Corinth, since you have referred with insults to my residence there as a sophist. It is an ancient custom in Corinth, as Chamaeleon of Heracleia records in his book *On Pindar*, whenever the city prays to Aphrodite in matters of grave importance, to invite as many prostitutes as possible to join in their petitions, and these women add their supplications to the goddess and later are present at the sacrifices. When, accordingly, the Persians invaded Greece... the Corinthian prostitutes entered the temple of Aphrodite and prayed for the salvation of the Greeks. Hence also, when the Corinthians dedicated in honour of the goddess the tablet which is preserved even to this day, recording separately the names of the prostitutes who had made supplication on that occasion and were later present at the sacrifices, Simonides composed the following epigram: "These women were dedicated to pray to Cypris, with Heaven's blessing, for the Greeks and their fair-fighting fellow-citizens. For the divine Aphrodite willed it not that the citadel of Greece should be betrayed into the hands of the Persian bowmen." Even private citizens vow to the goddess that, if those things for which they make petition are fulfilled, they will even render courtesans to her. ... "The city celebrated a festival of Aphrodite for the prostitutes, but it is a different one from that held separately for freeborn women. On these days it is customary for the prostitutes to revel, and it is quite in the mode for them to get drunk here in our company."

[Notable men who spent a lot of time with prostitutes] *[A comic poet says:]* "Alcibiades, that dainty one, Oh Earth and Gods! whom Lacedaemon wants to arrest as an adulterer," -- although he was loved by the wife of *[the Spartan king]* Agis, used to leave the married women of Sparta and Attica alone to break in at the doors of prostitutes. For example, he conceived a passion for Medontis of Abydus on mere report of her charms, and sailing to the Hellespont in company with Axiochus, who was captivated by Alcibiades' beauty, as the orator Lysias asserts in the speech against him, he shared her with Axiochus. And further, Alcibiades always led about with him two other prostitutes, Damasandra, mother of the younger Lais, and Theodote; the latter, when he died as the result of a plot by Pharnabazus, gave him burial in Melissa, a village of Phrygia. ...

[Love of persons never before seen; a Persian folktale] We need not wonder that people have fallen in love with others on mere report, seeing that Chares of Mytilene in the tenth book of his *Histories of Alexander* asserts that many, having seen in a dream certain persons whom they had never seen before, fell in love with them; he writes as follows: "Hystaspes had a younger brother named Zariadres; concerning both of them the natives say that they were the sons of Aphrodite and Adonis. Now Hystaspes was overlord of Media and the territory below it, whereas Zariadres ruled over the region above the Caspian gates, as far as the Tanais river. And Homartes, who was king of the Marathi, beyond the Tanais, had a daughter named Odatis; of her it is recorded in the histories that she saw Zariadres in a dream and became enamoured of him, while the same passion for her attacked him in the same way. At any rate they continued to long for each other in the imaginings of sleep. Now Odatis was the most beautiful woman in Asia, and Zariadres also was handsome. So

Zariadres sent to Homartes in his eager desire to marry the woman, but Homartes would not agree to the match, because he lacked male children and wanted to give her to a male of his own household. After a brief interval Homartes gathered the princes of the kingdom together with his friends and relatives, and proceeded to celebrate the nuptials without announcing to whom he intended to give his daughter. Well, when the drinking was at its height the father summoned Odatis to the symposium, and in the hearing of the guests he said: 'My daughter Odatis, today we are celebrating your nuptials. Look around, therefore, and after inspecting all the men take a gold cup, fill it with wine, and give it to the man to whom you wish to be married; for his wife you shall be called.' And the poor girl, after looking all around, turned away in tears, yearning as she did to see Zariadres; for she had warned him that the nuptials were to be celebrated. He, meanwhile, was encamped at the Tanais river, which he crossed without the knowledge of his army, and accompanied solely by his chariot-driver he started off at night in his chariot, traversing a large territory for a distance of about 800 stades. And getting near the village in which they were celebrating the nuptials he left the chariot-driver with the chariot in a certain place and proceeded on his way disguised in Scythian clothes. Passing into the court he spied Odatis standing in front of the sideboard weeping, while she slowly mixed the cup; and taking his stand beside her he said, 'Odatis, I am here according to your desire, I, Zariadres.' And she, perceiving a stranger there who was at once handsome and like the one she had seen in her sleep, was overjoyed, and gave the cup to him; he, catching her up, carried her off to his chariot and escaped with Odatis as his bride. Meanwhile the slaves and the serving-maids, conscious that this was a love affair, lapsed into silence, and although the father commanded them to speak out they professed not to know where the young man had gone. Now this love affair is held in remembrance among the barbarians who live in Asia and it is exceedingly popular; in fact they picture this story in their temples and palaces and even in private dwellings; and most princes bestow the name Odatis on their own daughters." *[A similar Greek story follows.]*

[Prostitutes as mothers of worthy men] *[A number of examples are given, one is:]* Timotheus, the Athenian general, was known to be the son of a prostitute of Thracian birth, otherwise respectable in her manners. For when such women change to a life of sobriety they are better than the women who pride themselves on their respectability. And when Timotheus was once jeered at because he came from such a mother he answered, "Yes, and what is more, I am grateful to her because she made me the son of Conon." ...

[Cheeky prostitutes and their smart remarks] ... But of Lamia, again, Machon writes thus: "Once upon a time at a drinking-party, King Demetrius was showing all kinds of perfumes to Lamia. Now Lamia was a flute-girl whom, they say, Demetrius was very sweet on and for whom he itched greatly. But she rejected all the perfumes and looked with very haughty disdain upon the king; so with a nod he ordered some spikenard to be brought and kept ready, while with his hand penem fricans tangensque digitis, 'Hoc quidem, inquit, olfacito, Lamia, et senties quantum praestet aliis omnibus unguentis.' *[Don't you wish you knew Latin now???*] And she, with a laugh, replied, 'You wretch, I think this smells by far the most putrid of all.' But Demetrius answered: 'Yes, but as the gods are my witnesses, Lamia, I would have you know that this is made from a royal gland.'" ...

To show that Mania was witty in her answers Machon records the following about her: "The pancratiast *[martial arts fighter]* Leontiscus was once the lover of Mania, and kept her for himself alone like a wedded wife. He later discovered that she was being seduced by Antenor, and was very angry. But she said: 'Let that not bother you at all, sweetheart; for I just wanted to make sure and find out for myself what two athletes, victors at Olympia, could do, stroke for stroke, in a single night.' "And at a symposium, so they say, in Mania's house, one of the guests, a very vicious man, took his turn to embrace her. And when he asked, 'Do you wish to come together from before or

from behind?' she said with a laugh, 'From before, good sir. For I am rather afraid that otherwise you will bite off my braids.'"

Machon has collected memorable sayings of other prostitutes as well, which it will not be out of place to record in order here. Of Gnathaena he has the following: "Diphilus, drinking once at Gnathaena's house, remarked, 'That vessel you have is cold, Gnathaena.' 'Yes,' she said, 'we make it so on purpose; for we always pour in some of your plays, Diphilus.' [hahahahaha] ... "Once Gnathaena was at dinner with the courtesan Dexitheia, and when the latter set aside almost all the choices relishes for her mother, Gnathaena said, 'By Artemis, if I had known of this, I should have taken dinner with your mother, instead of with you, woman.'

"After Gnathaena had advanced in years and was by that time, as all agreed, nothing but a perfect corpse, they say she went out into the market-place, and as she gazed at the dainties there she kept asking how much each cost. Finally she chanced to see a very nice butcher's boy, very young in years, at the meat-scales, and she said: 'You, there, my lad, you pretty one, tell me in the gods' name how you weigh your meat?' And he replied with a smile, 'Stooping over, at the cost of threepence.' 'But who,' she said, 'will allow you, you wretch, to use Carian measures when you are in Athens?' [Get it?]

[A very lengthy section relates a number of witty sayings by hetairai, mostly to men who try to show them up, or deceive them, treat them disrespectfully or ask improper sexual services.] "In Athens there was a very gifted coppersmith; now Gnathaenion had about retired from her profession, and no longer wanted to be a common prostitute because she was content with Andronicus, the actor; but at the time he was away on tour -- from him she had had a male child; although, as I say, Gnathaenion did not wish to earn any fee, the coppersmith by entreaty and importunity finally won her, expending upon her a vast deal of gold. But being a rude person, completely vulgar, he, as he sat with some others in a cobbler's shop, passed the time in slandering Gnathaenion, saying that he had never consorted with her in any other way, sed ab illa se quinquies deinceps inequitatum esse. [try <http://archives.nd.edu/latin.htm>, if you really want to know. But you probably need LAT 101, offered every semester, to make sense of it. End of ad] Andronicus, hearing soon after of what had happened, for he had just returned from Corinth, was angry, and in bitter reproach he said to Gnathaenion while they were drinking together, that although he had asked for this favour she had never granted him that posture, whereas others, rascally jail-birds, had revelled in it. Thereupon, they say, Gnathaenion replied: 'I did not think fit, you poor fool, to clasp in my arms a man who was covered with soot up to his mouth; so I gave way, after receiving a large sum in gold, and I cleverly contrived to touch the part of his person which projects farthest and is smallest.'

... Continuing, Machon records this also: "They say that Lais, the Corinthian courtesan, once saw Euripides in a garden, with his writing-tablet and stilus hanging to his belt. 'O poet,' said she, 'answer, what did you mean when you wrote in a tragedy, "To perdition, you perpetrator of foul deeds?"' And Euripides, amazed at her impudence, said, 'Why, what are you yourself, woman? Are you not a perpetrator of foul deeds?' But she responded with a laugh, 'What is foul, if it seems not so to those who indulge in it?'

"Demophon, the [male] favourite of Sophocles, once kept as his mistress, when he himself was still young, the 'she-goat' Nico, although she was older. She was nicknamed She-goat because she had once devoured that tall lover, Greensprout Thallus; for he had come to Athens to buy dried russet-figs and take away a cargo of Hymettus honey. Now the woman in question is said to have had a very beautiful derriere, which Demophon once desired to possess. And she said with a laugh, 'Very good, dearie; take it from me and pass it on to Sophocles.'

"Moerichus was asking Phryne, the courtesan from Thespieae, for her favours; when she then demanded a mina [something like \$5,000-7,000], Moerichus said, 'Too much; didn't you, the other

day, stay with a stranger after you had received only two gold pieces?' 'Well then,' said she, 'you too wait until I feel like indulging myself, and I will accept that amount.'

...There were other courtesans also who thought very highly of themselves, going in for culture and apportioning their time to learned studies; hence they also were quick in making answers. For example, *[the rhetorician]* Stilpo was once accusing Glycera, while they were drinking together, of corrupting the young men, as Satyrus tell in his *Lives*, when Glycera interrupted: "We both fall under the same charge, Stilpo. For they say that you corrupt all who meet you by teaching them good-for-nothing, eristic *[argumentative]* sophistries, while I in like manner teach them erotic. *[Eris = strife, Eros = love]* It makes no difference, therefore, to people who are ruined and injured, whether they live in the company of a philosopher or of a courtesan." In fact, as Agathon says: "Truly a woman, just because she is inactive in body, need not for that reason carry an inactive mind within her."

[Prostitutes who have received extraordinary honors] ...[A]fter the death of Pythionice Harpalus summoned Glycera from Athens; on her arrival she took up her residence in the palace at Tarsus and had obeisance done to her by the populace, being hailed as queen; further, all persons were forbidden to honour Harpalus with a crown unless they also gave a crown to Glycera. In Rhossus they even went so far as to set up an image of her in bronze beside his own.

[Is a woman spoiled when ...] Aristippus every year spent two months with Lais in Aegina, at the time of Poseidon's festival; and being reproached by Hicetas because, as he said, "you give her so much money, whereas she wallows with Diogenes the Cynic for nothing," he answered: "I give Lais many bounties that I may enjoy her myself, not that I may prevent another from doing so." When Diogenes said to him: "Aristippus, you cohabit with a common whore. Either, then, you should be a Cynic like me, or stop it entirely," Aristippus said, "You don't think it out of place, Diogenes, to live in a house in which other men have lived before?" "Not at all," he replied. "How about sailing in a ship in which many have sailed?" "Nor that either," he said. "That being the case, then, it isn't out of place to consort with a woman whom many have enjoyed."

[More important men with prostitutes (including Pericles with Aspasia)] As for Aristotle of Stageira, did he not beget Nicomachus from the courtesan Herpyllis and live with her until his death? So says Hermippus in the first book of his work *On Aristotle*, adding that she received fitting provision by the terms of the philosopher's will. And was not our noble Plato in love with Archeanassa, the courtesan of Colophon? So much so that he sang these lines to her: "Archeanassa, the courtesan of Colophon, is mine, though upon her wrinkles now rests a passion bitter. Ah, ye wretches who encountered her youth in its first course, through what hot flame did ye pass!" Again, take the Olympian Pericles, as Clearchus says in the first book of his *Love Stories*: "On account of Aspasia -- not the younger, but the one who associated with Socrates -- although he had acquired so eminent a reputation for political sagacity and influence, did he not for her sake, throw all Greece into turmoil? He was a man in fact very prone to love affairs. Why! He even consorted with his son's wife.... [W]hen in love with Aspasia he would go in and out of her house twice a day to greet the wench, and once, when she was prosecuted on a charge of impiety he, while pleading in her behalf, wept more tears than when his life and property were endangered. Again, when Cimon consorted unlawfully with his sister Elpinice and she was later given in marriage to Callias, after Cimon had been sent into exile, Pericles took as the price of Cimon's restoration the privilege of lying with Elpinice. Pythænetus in the third book of his work *On Aegina* says that Periander saw in Epidauras the daughter of Procles, Melissa, dressed in the Peloponnesian fashion (that is, she wore no cloak, but was clad in a simple tunic while she acted as wine-pourer for the workmen in the fields) and falling in love he married her. As for Pyrrhus, the king of Epeirus, third in descent from the Pyrrhus who invaded Italy, his mistress was Tigris of Leucadia, whom Olympias, the young man's mother, murdered with poison."

[Many, many stories follow of important and respected public figures who kept mistresses or consorted with famous hetairai. A few more:] That the orator Demosthenes had children by a courtesan is common report. He himself, at any rate, in the course of his speech *On the Bribe of Gold*, brought the children out before the court to excite compassion through them, unaccompanied by their mother, although it was customary for defendants in a trial, if they had wives, to produce them; but this he did from shame, to avoid the scandal. The orator was unbridled in sexual matters, according to Idomeneus. At any rate, having fallen in love with a lad named Aristarchus, because of him he attacked Nicodemus in a drunken fit and gouged out his eyes. It is a well-known tradition that he spent money lavishly on dainty foods, young boys, and women. Hence his clerk once said: "What can one say of Demosthenes? For all that it has taken him a year of industry to acquire, one woman in one night has spoilt completely." He is said, at any rate, to have taken even into his house a young lad named Cnosion, although he had a wife; she, in turn, lay with Cnosion to show her resentment.

[Hetairai become girlfriends through sharing a guy] ... A celebrated courtesan, also, was Plangon of Miletus; she was of extraordinary beauty, and loved by a Colophonian lad, who had as mistress Bacchis of Samos. When the lad made proposals to Plangon, she, hearing of the beauty of Bacchis and wishing to divert the lad from his passion for herself, demanded, since that proved impossible, the necklace of Bacchis was the price of an assignation, the necklace being celebrated. And he being passionately in love entreated Bacchis not to permit him to die. So Bacchis, when she saw the young man's eagerness, gave him the necklace. But Plangon, seeing the unselfishness of Bacchis, sent the necklace back to her, and consorted with the young man. And from that time on the girls were friends, entertaining their lover in common. In admiration of these acts the Ionians, according to Menetor in his work *On Votive Offerings*, called Plangon "Pasiphile." Archilochus is a witness to her in these lines: "Like a fig-tree among the rocks, which feeds many crows, Pasiphile of easy virtue welcomes strangers."

Harpalus, the Macedonian who plundered large sums from Alexander's funds and then sought refuge in Athens, fell in love with Pythionice and squandered a great deal on her, though she was a courtesan; and when she died he erected a monument to her costing many talents [a talent = about \$400,000] ...

[Aristocratic and worthy hetairai] Again, the courtesan from Eresus, who bore the same name as the poetess, Sappho, was famous as having loved the handsome Phaon, according to Nymphodorus in his *Voyage 'Round Asia*. And Nicarete of Megara was a courtesan of no mean birth, but, so far as parentage and culture go, she was very desirable; she had studied with the philosopher Stilpon. Again, Bilistiche, the Argive courtesan, was of high repute, deriving her ancestry from the Atreidae, as the writers on Argive history record. Of high repute also is the courtesan Leaena, mistress of Harmodius the tyrannicide; she, when put to the torture by the agents of Hippias, the tyrant, died in torment without uttering a word. ...

[More smart guys who burned with love...] "Such was the madness for Theano that bound with its spell the Samian Pythagoras; yet he had discovered the refinements of geometric spirals, and had modelled in a small globe the mighty circuit of the enveloping aether.

"And with what fiery power did Cypris, in her wrath, heat Socrates, whom Apollo had declared to be supreme among all men in wisdom! Yea, though his soul was deep, yet he laboured with lighter pains when he visited the house of Aspasia; nor could he find any remedy, though he had discovered the many cross-paths of logic.

[Poets who feel and praise love] Archytas -- the one who wrote on the theory of music -- says, according to Chamaeleon, that Alcman led the way as a composer of erotic songs, and was the first to publish a licentious song, being prone in his habits of life to the pursuit of women and to poetry of that kind. Hence he says, in one of his songs: "Once again sweet Eros, to grace Cypris,

overflows and melts my heart." He says, too, that Alcman fell immoderately in love with Megalostrate, who was a poetess and able to attract lovers to her by her conversation. He speaks thus of her: "This is the gift of the sweet Muses, which she, happy maiden, the golden-haired Megalostrata, hath shown forth." Stesichorus, also, was immoderately erotic and has composed that type of songs; these, as is well known, were of old called "paideia" and "paidika." So active was the pursuit of love-affairs, since no one regarded erotic persons as vulgar, that even a great poet like Aeschylus, and Sophocles, introduced in the theatre love themes in their tragedies -- the first, that of Achilles and Patroclus, the second, that of the boys in *Niobe*: hence some call the tragedy "Paederastia;" and the audience gladly accepted such stories.

When Pindar calls to mind Theoxenus of Tenedos, with whom he was in love, what does he say? "Meet it were, my heart, to cull the flowers of love in due season, in thy prime; but whosoever, once he hath seen the rays flashing from the eyes of Theoxenus, is not tossed on the waves of desire, hath a black heart forged, in cold flame, of adamant or of iron, and having no honour from Aphrodite of the quick glance, he either toileth brutally for wealth, or else through some woman's boldness his soul is borne along on every path while he serves her. But I, to grace the goddess, like wax of the sacred bees when smitten by the sun, am melted when I look at the young limbs of boys."

[Love of boys and overthrowing tyrants go hand in hand] Altogether, many persons prefer liaisons with males to those with females. For they maintain that this practice is zealously pursued in those cities throughout Hellas which, as compared with others, are ruled by good laws. ...

Hieronymus the Peripatetic declares these love affairs with boys became widespread because it often happened that the vigour of the young men, joined to the mutual sympathy of their companionship, brought many tyrannical governments to an end. For if their favourites were present, lovers would choose to suffer anything whatever rather than incur a reputation for cowardice in the mind of their favourites. This was proved, at any rate, by the Sacred Band organized at Thebes by Epameinondas, and by the murderous attempt on the Peisistratidae made by Harmodius and Aristogeiton; and again in Sicily at Agrigentum, by the love of Chariton and Melanippus. The latter was Chariton's favourite, according to Heracleides of Pontus in his work *On Love Affairs*. It transpired that they were plotting against Phalaris, but on being put to the torture and compelled to speak, they not only refused to name their accomplices but even moved Phalaris to pity for their tortures, so that he released them with hearty praise. ... Notorious are also the things that happened in the case of Cratinus of Athens; for he was a handsome lad at the time when Epimenides was purifying Attica by the sacrifice of human blood, because of some ancient acts of abomination, as recorded by Neanthes of Cyzicus in the second book of his work *On the Rituals of Initiation*; and Cratinus voluntarily gave himself up in behalf of the land that had nurtured him; following him his lover Aristodemus also died, and so the terrible act was atoned for. Because of these love affairs, then, tyrants, to whom such friendships are inimical, tried to abolish entirely relations between males, extirpating them everywhere. Some even went so far as to set fire to the wrestling-schools, regarding them as counter-walls to their own citadels, and so demolished them; this was done by Polycrates, the tyrant of Samos.

[Anecdotes about boy love] Sophocles was fond of young lads, as Euripides was fond of women. The poet Ion, at any rate, in the work entitled *Sojournings*, writes as follows: "I met Sophocles the poet at Chios when he was sailing as general to Lesbos; he was playful in his cups, and clever. A Chian friend of his, Hermesilaus, who was the proxenus of Athens, entertained him, when there appeared, standing beside the fire, the wine-pourer, a handsome, blushing boy; Sophocles was plainly stirred and said: 'Do you want me to drink with pleasure?' And when the boy said 'Yes' he said, 'Then don't be too rapid in handing me the cup and taking it away.' When the boy blushed still more violently he said to the man who shared his couch: 'That was a good thing Phrynichus wrote

when he said: "There shines upon his crimson cheeks the light of love." ...Sophocles returned to his conversation with the boy. He asked him, as he was trying to pick off a straw from the cup with his little finger, whether he could see the straw clearly. When the boy declared he could see it Sophocles said, 'Then blow it away, for I shouldn't want you to get your finger wet.' As the boy brought his face up to the cup, Sophocles drew the cup nearer to his own lips, that the two heads might come closer together. When he was very near the lad, he drew him close with his arm and kissed him. They all applauded, amid laughter and shouting, because he had put it over the boy so neatly; and Sophocles said, 'I am practising strategy, gentlemen, since Pericles told me that whereas I could write poetry, I didn't know how to be a general. Don't you think my stratagem has turned out happily for me?'

Hieronymus of Rhodes says in his *Historical Notes* that Sophocles lured a handsome boy outside the city wall to consort with him. Now the boy spread his own cloak on the grass, while they wrapped themselves in Sophocles' cape. When the meeting was over the boy seized Sophocles' cape and made off with it, leaving behind for Sophocles his boyish cloak. Naturally the incident was much talked of; when Euripides learned of the occurrence he jeered, saying that he himself had once consorted with this boy without paying any bonus, whereas Sophocles had been treated with contempt for his licentiousness.

[Statue love] Cleisophus of Selymbria. For he, becoming enamoured of the statue in Parian marble at Samos, locked himself up in the temple, thinking he should be able to have intercourse with it; and since he found that impossible on account of the frigidity and resistance of the stone, he then and there desisted from that desire and placing before him a small piece of flesh he consorted with that. This deed is mentioned by the poet Alexis in the play entitled *A Picture*: "Another case of a like sort occurred, they say, in Samos. A man conceived a passion for a stone maiden, and locked himself up in the temple." And Philemon, mentioning the same, says: "Why, once on a time, in Samos, a man fell in love with a stone image; thereupon he locked himself in the temple." Now the statue is the work of Ctesicles, as Adaeus of Mytilene says in his work *On Sculptors*.

[Animal love] What is more, dumb animals have fallen in love with human beings: ... "He summoned also the boy of Iasus. For near this city lived a boy named Dionysius who, in company with the other boys of the wrestling-school, went to the seashore and began to dive in. A dolphin came up to him out of the sea, and taking him on his back swam off with him a very great distance, setting him down again safely on the shore." Moreover, the dolphin is a most friendly animal to man and extremely intelligent, and knows how to repay kindness with gratitude. Phylarchus, at any rate, says in the twelfth book: "Coeranus of Miletus saw that some fishermen had caught a dolphin in their net and were on the point of cutting it up; after entreating them and paying them money he let the dolphin go in the sea. Some time later he met with shipwreck off Myconos, and when all the rest were lost, Coeranus alone was saved by a dolphin. When he died in old age in his native city his funeral chanced to take place in Miletus by the seashore; and a school of dolphins appeared that day in the harbour, a short distance from the company attending the remains of Coeranus, just as if they were joining in the funeral and the mourning for the man."

Phylarchus, again, records in the twentieth book what great affection the animal known as the elephant had for a baby. He writes as follows: "With this elephant was kept a female elephant which they called Nicaea; when the wife of the Indian keeper was dying she placed her month-old baby in its care. On the woman's death a remarkable affection for the child arose in the animal; in fact she could not endure the baby's being separated from her, and she was distressed whenever the baby was out of her sight. So, whenever the nurse had satisfied the child with milk, she would place it in its cradle right between the animal's feet. Whenever she failed to do this, the elephant would refuse to take food. Then, throughout the livelong day, she would take the stalks from the fodder set before her and brush away the flies from the baby while it slept; and whenever it cried, she would

rock the cradle with her trunk and put it to sleep. And the same thing was often done by the male elephant also."

[Beautiful women are a good thing] And to you, my companions, I say that there is nothing so likely to delight the eye as a woman's beauty. Many women have been renowned for their beauty (indeed, as Euripides says, "an aged bard can still celebrate Memory"). Among them was Thargelia of Miletus, who had been married fourteen times, and who was very beautiful in looks as well as clever, according to the Sophist Hippias in his work entitled *A Collection*. Dinon, in the fifth book of his *Persian History*, first part, says that the wife of Bagabazus, who was a step-sister of Xerxes by the same father, and named Anoutis, was the most beautiful of all the women in Asia, and the most licentious. Phylarchus, in his nineteenth book, says that Timosa, the concubine of Oxyartes, surpassed all other women in beauty. This girl had been sent as a present by the king of Egypt to Statira, the king's wife. ...

[Beauty contests] I know also of a contest of feminine beauty that was instituted once; Nicias, recounting this in his *History of Arcadia*, says that Cypselus instituted it after founding a city in the plain of the Alpheius river; in it he settled some Parrhasians and dedicated a precinct and altar to Demeter of Eleusis, in whose festival he held the beauty contest; and on the first occasion his own wife Herodice won the prize. This contest is held even to the present day, and the women who enter are called "Chrysophoroe." Theophrastus, too, says that there is a beauty contest of men in Elis, that the trial is held with all solemnity, and that the winners receive weapons as prizes; these, says Dionysius of Leuctra, are dedicated to Athena, and the winner, beribboned by his friends, leads the procession which marches to her temple. But the crown given to the winners is of myrtle, as Myrsilus records in his *Historical Paradoxes*. In some places, the same Theophrastus says, there were female contests also of sobriety and housekeeping [*what fun!*], as among the barbarians; in other places, of beauty, as though this also deserved a reward of honour, as among the people of Tenedos and of Lesbos; but, he says, this honour is a matter of chance or of nature, whereas a special reward for sobriety should be offered. For only so is beauty an honourable thing, otherwise there is danger that it will lead to licentiousness.

Approaches to Athenaëus:

For all answers to these questions, be able to point to a specific anecdote, and that means marking it, since things like that tend to get lost in the flow of this work.

Since our theme is love and hate, we are approaching this text with an eye to determining the ways in which the kinds of anecdotes told at dinner, or in popular works of history, literature, and rhetoric, reflect attitudes toward the role of love and hate (or a mixture of both) in relationships, especially domestic and erotic. Some questions to bear in mind:

(1) Domestic Relationships Many of the domestic relationships portrayed here are contentious, and of course, the contention is viewed from the male side of things.

- Where is the love?
- What is the impetus for married relationships?
- What feelings and necessities does marriage (or other domestic relationships) put on the partners?
- How do relationships work in which there are wives as well as male or female lovers, and what are the emotional tensions that might beset both parties?

(2) Male lovers. Male love can be noble, but is it always?

- What are the noble aspects of it?
- What incidents narrated here show it as a not exactly noble impulse?

- Is the love of young men as fraught with emotional peril as love with women?

(3) Hetairai. The women in the Greek world who were most independent, and often most wealthy, were women who lived outside of the structure of ordinary marriages, through an elite variety of prostitution.

- In what ways are hetairai better or worse than wives?
- What are the dangers of consorting with hetairai – what sorts of behavior do they incite in those who love them?
- What is admirable and or worthy of love and/or inspiring love in hetairai?
- Do hetairai love other people, or is “love” a part of their emotional vocabulary?

(4) Love-hate: One central question: What kinds of hateful things does love (however defined) incite?

Heroic Pederasty:

In what ways can the love between men be particularly inspiring and honorable? Is this sort of honor or nobility possible in relationships with women? To what extent is sex an element of these stories of heroic love between men? How do women fit into this picture (if at all)?