

An Epicurean Understanding of Valentine's Day: Love, Romance, and Free-will

Post by “Kalosyni” of February 6, 2022 at 12:48 PM

Valentine's Day is coming up soon. The origin may go back as far as the Roman festival of Lupercalia, which was later replaced by the Christian day honoring the martyr Saint Valentine.

Quote

Although there is no evidence linking Saint Valentine's Day to the rites of the ancient Roman or ancient Greek cults, popular modern sources claim links to the Roman Lupercalia celebration observed around February 13-15, a rite connected to fertility. Lupercalia was a festival local to the city of Rome. The more general Festival of Juno Februa, meaning Juno the purifier or the chaste Juno, was celebrated on February 13-14. Pope Gelasius I (492-496) abolished Lupercalia. Juno is the ancient Roman name for goddess Hera, the spouse of ancient Greek father of the gods Zeus. In the ancient Athenian calendar the period between mid-January and mid-February was the month of Gamelion, dedicated to the sacred marriage of the couple.

<https://greekreporter.com/2013/02/13/anc...valentines-day/>

Quote

The Feast of Saint Valentine was established by [Pope Gelasius I](#) in AD 496 to be celebrated on February 14 in honour of Saint Valentine of Rome, who died on that date in AD 269.[\[9\]\[10\]](#) The day became associated with romantic love in the 14th and 15th centuries when notions of [courtly love](#) flourished, apparently by association with the "[lovebirds](#)" of early spring. In 18th-century England, it grew into an occasion in which couples expressed their love for each other by presenting flowers, offering confectionery, and sending greeting cards (known as "valentines"). Valentine's Day symbols that are used today include the heart-shaped outline, doves, and the figure of the winged [Cupid](#). Since the 19th century, handwritten valentines have given way to mass-produced greeting cards.[\[11\]](#) In Italy, [Saint Valentine's Keys](#) are given to lovers "as a romantic symbol and an invitation to unlock the giver's heart"...

https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Valentine%27s_Day

Regarding love and romantic relationships, there is not much to go on within Epicureanism.

In *De rerum Natura* Lucretius (Book 4, 1030) mentions the energies which arise in the body, and then further goes on speak of the dangers of pursuing romance with the wandering Venus' -- the courtesans with whom the men of ancient Greece had relationships.

[Lucretius, On the Nature of Things, Book 4 \(English Text\)](#)

So for modern Epicureans, we must look instead to modern psychology for help with our understanding of marriage and long-term relationships. There is an understanding that relationships go through stages, and I have seen it listed as anywhere between 4 thru 12 stages. I will post more soon on this tomorrow. I may even cover one stage per day as we approach Valentine's Day.