

Epicureanism as the spiritual essence or 'religion' of an entire community

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Has anybody ever experimented with the idea of Epicureanism as a formal spiritual identity capable of defining entire communities? What would Epicureanism look like if it wasn't merely a brotherhood of friends discussing philosophy but was also a sort of quasi religious worldview with its own intricate rituals, symbols and ceremonies covering every aspect of life? Could Epicureanism ever assume a form where it would be able to successfully compete with well-established religious traditions for the hearts and minds of huge numbers of people? I'm aware that Epicureanism did in fact manage to attract a significant following in antiquity but it failed to compete successfully with other traditions and had largely disappeared even before Christianity found its way in the Roman imperial courts. Of course Epicureanism could not possibly be a religion in the traditional sense since it rightly rejects the notion of divine beings or forces playing any role in human affairs. Still, it would be possible to imagine Epicureanism as a sort of atheistic 'religion' in the same sense that for example Confucianism or the Church of Satan founded by Anton LaVey may be branded as such. What would a 'holy book' of Epicureanism look like and what would it contain other than the letters of Epicurus and the poem of Lucretius? To what extent can the views and advice of brilliant therapists or educators like John Gottman, Gigi Engle or Dan Buettner be thought of as Epicurean and admitted in some form in the 'scriptures' and literature of Epicureanism? How would an Epicurean society raise and educate its kids? Since school is so horrendously boring, tedious and unpleasant to children (school is also the only place other than prison where people are quite likely to be bullied and tortured) how would an Epicurean society deal with the problem of educating the new generation? Given that modern Western hyper-liberalism presents society and individuals with many obvious problems that are impossible to deny today what laws, customs and institutions would hypothetical Epicurean lawmakers create to avoid them?