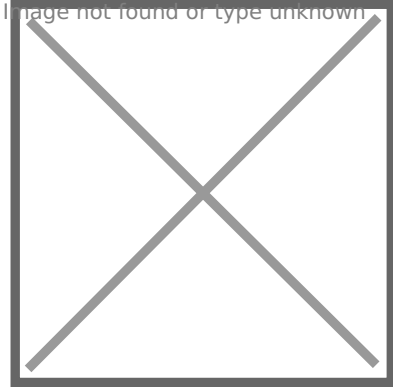


# Epicureanism as the spiritual essence or 'religion' of an entire community

Post by “Don” of October 4, 2023 at 11:02 PM

An interesting paper on the topic of ancient letter writing theory:



[Ancient Epistolary Theory: a Brief Overview](#)

Ancient Epistolary Theory: a Brief Overview

[www.academia.edu](http://www.academia.edu)

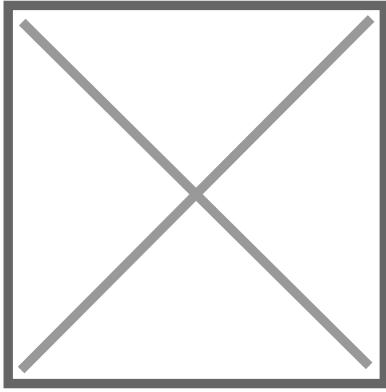
Some quotes:

*The oldest preserved letter that contains the epistolary formulas typical for the subsequent epistolographic practice is the letter of Cyrus to Cyaxares, inserted in Xenophon's Cyropaedia (Κύρου παιδεία) (Xen. Cyrop. 4.5. 27-33). Cyropaedia was written around 370 BC. The letters that the manuscript tradition assigns to Plato are also dated to this period approximately.*

*In the Second Philippic, Cicero calls letters amicorum colloquia absentium 'conversation between absent friends' (Cic. Phil. 2.4).*

Interesting to me, the paper also includes numerous types of letters written in the ancient Greek world.

Here's another one:



[‘Paul’s Letter Opening and its Relationship to Ancient Greek Letters: A Study in Epistolary Presence,’ in S.E. Porter and Sean A. Adams \(eds.\), Paul and the Ancient Letter Form \(PAST 6; Brill, 2010\), 33-55.](#)

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*The study of epistolography and Paul is a vital undertaking if we are to understand Paul’s relationship to the Greco-Roman world of letter writing. Paul did not write in a vacuum, but was rather trained in the letter writing principles of his day.*

*Personal letters constitute the most common letter tradition of the ancient world, whose general format remained fairly constant from the third century B.C. to into the third century A.D.1*

*Most openings are short, direct and with very little expansion, with the overwhelming number of letter openings having the following formula: A to B, Greetings with an occasional health wish.*

*It is clear from his letters that Paul's standard greeting is not the traditional *χαρειν*, but rather he employs his now signature "Grace to you and peace" with the additional !from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ."*

*It is interesting to evaluate the nature of *χάρις υμίν και ειρηνη*. It is clear that there is a relationship between *χαρις* and *χαρειν*, in that they both are derived from the same root.44*

*This similarity is beyond chance and suggests that Paul was adapting his letter greeting from the traditional *χαρειν* form.45 Furthermore, Paul’s use of peace is parallel to the Hebrew letter form. As mentioned above, Ezra 4:17-22 and 5:7-17 both utilize the "To Y, Shalom" formula. However, in the LXX the word used toto translate "shalom" is *ειρηνη*. It appears that Paul was incorporating the Hebrew greeting into his letters and combined it with the noun form of the verb *χαρειν* to create his letter greeting.*

I'll stop quoting there, but it seems to me that Paul is simply part of a letter writing tradition within the larger Greco-Roman and Jewish culture in which he lived. I see no reason to try to establish a link specifically between Epicurus's letter writing and Paul's activity.

<http://www.epicureanfriends.com/thread/3359-epicureanism-as-the-spiritual-essence-or-religion-of-an-entire-community/?postID=26379#post26379>