

# Book: "Theory and Practice in Epicurean Political Philosophy" by Javier Aoiz & Marcelo Boeri

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We are planning to interview Dr. Boeri in the next ten days for a special edition of the Lucretius Today podcast, and interview hopefully Dr. Aoiz in the Spring. If you have any comments or questions you would like us to incorporate in the interview, please comment in this thread. Here are our current thoughts for what the interview is going to cover:

[How Apolitical Were The Epicureans?](#) | [Academia Page](#) | [List of his articles](#) | [ORCID](#) | [Best Bio Information at Guggenheim](#)

[Academia Entry for the book.](#)

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## Introduction

Today we welcome to our podcast Dr. Marcelo Boeri, who is a Professor of Ancient Philosophy at the Institute of Philosophy at the University of the Andes in Santiago, Chile. Born in Buenos Aires, he received a B.A. degree from the University of Buenos Aires. After receiving his Ph.D. from the University of Salvador in Argentina in 1995, he was appointed an Associate and, later, an Independent Researcher (1996-2003) at CONICET. He was also for a time an Associate Professor of Ancient Philosophy at the University of Comahue (1997-98) and a Lecturer in Greek Philosophy (2000-01) at the University of Litoral (2000-01) before joining the faculty of the University of the Andes in 2003.

In addition to his teaching responsibilities, Mr. Boeri has conducted extensive research on ancient philosophies and philosophers both at his home institutions and as a visiting researcher at Georgetown University (1994-95) and at Brown University (2007), as well as a Junior Fellow

<http://www.epicureanfriends.com/thread/2993-book-theory-and-practice-in-epicurean-political-philosophy-by-javier-aoiz-marcel/?postID=26554#post26554>

at Harvard's Center for Hellenic Studies (1999-2000) and as a visiting researcher at that institution (2004).

His publication of more than fifty-five papers and critical reviews on Plato, Aristotle, and the Stoics, as well as his co-editorship of the philosophical journal *Méthexis* (since 2001) and of the International Plato Studies series (since 2007) have firmly established him as one of the world's leading authorities on ancient philosophy. This reputation has garnered him invitations to lecturer from the University of Navarra, Spain (1999); Boston College (2003); the Pontifical Catholic University of Valparaíso, Chile (2005, 2007); Trinity College, Dublin (2007); and the University of Rome Tor Vergata (2007); among others.

His impressive publication list includes "The Stoics on Bodies and Incorporeals" (*Review of Metaphysics*, 54 [2001], 723-52) and "Socrates, Aristotle, and the Stoics on the apparent and real good" (*Proceedings of the Boston Area Colloquium in Ancient Philosophy*, vol. XX, ed. J. J. Cleary and G. Gurtler [Leiden: Brill, 2004]); he provided the introduction, analysis, and translation from Latin and Greek for *Los estoicos antiguos. Sobre la virtud y la felicidad* (Ed. U. de Chile, 2004); he contributed the article "The Presence of Socrates and Aristotle in the Stoic Account of akrasia" in *Metaphysics, Soul and Ethics. Themes from the Work of Richard Sorabji* (Oxford UP, 2005), which Ricardo Salles edited; and he wrote *Apariencia y realidad en el pensamiento griego. Investigaciones sobre aspectos epistemológicos, éticos y de teoría de la acción de algunas teorías morales de la antigüedad* (Buenos Aires: Ed. Colihue, 2007).

## Questions

1. Please tell us about your academic background or anything else about yourself that you think is relevant to an interest in Epicurus.
2. How did you first become interested in Epicurean philosophy?
3. What made you decide to take your interest in Epicurus' attitude toward engagement with society and politics to the level of writing a book about it?
4. You open your book with the statement: "At first glance, their programme seems to suggest - or, more precisely, to call for - a move away from society and politics, as suggested by the two famous Epicurean slogans 'live unnoticed' [λάθε βιώσας] and 'do not participate in politics' [μὴ πολιτεύεσθαι]. This is how the adversaries of the Epicureans (mainly Cicero and Plutarch) presented their views in antiquity. But to distance oneself from contingent politics and society does not necessarily mean a solitary way of life or a lack of interest in society, the existence of which it certainly presupposes (or so we shall argue)." Can you summarize for us your conclusions about what Epicurus expected would in fact be the proper way to approach these questions?
5. Let's first take "live unnoticed"....
6. And then take "do not participate in politics"
7. Epicurus complained in his own lifetime that his teachings were misunderstood and misrepresented. You have mentioned in your work that there is little contextual information about how the clichés about "living unknown" and "avoid politics" developed other than their use by opponents of Epicurus to criticize him. Can you tell us more about

how we can use this same approach - that of examining the context in which misconceptions like this have arisen - to get a better understanding of Epicurean philosophy in general.

8. Another big problem you mention is that people like Cicero have "cherry-picked" the Epicurean materials and left out from the discussion major aspects of Epicurus' positions. For example you talk about how many of the Doctrines and sayings of Epicurus are devoted to discussing "security," and yet Cicero talks if those never existed. Do you have any thoughts or advice for how to use the information buried in the material left by anti-Epicureans such as Cicero or Plutarch to learn more about what Epicurus was really saying?
9. Often we run into people who have focused on reading Diogenes Laertius, Lucretius, and to some extent Cicero for their information about Epicurus, and many of those people are not familiar with the material in Plutarch. Could you give us your view of Plutarch and how best to approach his writings on Epicurus?
10. How do you see these issues as related to Epicurus' views on friendship, which Epicurus clearly stressed?
11. As we close can you let us know the best place for our listeners to find your book and to follow you and your work.