

# Prolepsis Citations from Long & Sedley

Post by “Don” of July 3, 2024 at 7:26 AM

I'm going to leave @Twentier 's intriguing suggestion of Epicurus's ingestion of "chemicals that were intended to induce an altered state of consciousness" for later; although I have absolutely zero problems whatsoever with the idea that Epicurus drank wine throughout his life and probably did as part of his participation in the city festivals and definitely, likely undiluted, when he was dying. What I wanted to address here briefly is @Twentier 's mention of Epicurus's participation in the festivals and sacrifices for anyone who finds this a new idea. It is not a new idea, seems relatively well-attested, and we have an Epicurean source to rely on. Thanks to @Twentier for reminding me of this!

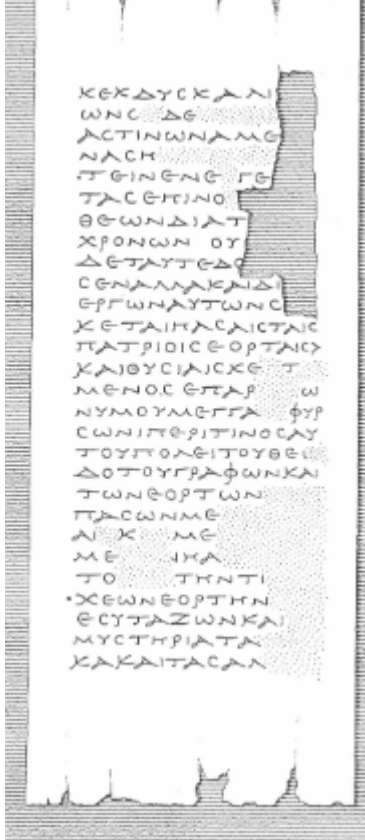
The primary evidence for this (to the best of my knowledge) is the work *On Piety* (scholarly consensus as attributed to Philodemus but also very possibly written by [Phaedrus, a scholar of the Garden](#)).

Col. 28/9: Epicurus wrote to Phyrson during the archonship of Aristonymus (289/8 BCE) about Phyrson's countryman from Colophon, Theodotus, Epicurus says that he (Epicurus) shared in all the festivals... Epicurus celebrated the festival of the Choes and the urban mysteries and the other festivals at a meagre dinner, and that it was necessary for him (prob. Theodotus) to celebrate this feast of the Twentieth for distinguished revelers, while those in the house decorated it most piously (ὁλως) and after making invitations to host a feast for all of them.

My Notes

- For festivals, see <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anthesteria>
- The Choes were part of this festival dedicated to Dionysus
- The "urban mysteries" refer to the Attic Dionysia, either the Lenaea (in the month of Gamelion, Epicurus's birth month) or Lesser Mysteries during 20-6 Anthesteria, both in honor of Dionysus.
- I find it interesting that the festivals mentioned were dedicated to Dionysus. It could just be coincidence that those are mentioned; or Athens had a lot of Dionysian festivals; or Epicurus had an affinity for Dionysian festivals or the god. No way to tell from what I've read so far.

and, btw, Column 28 is fairly well intact for a change:



Col. 29: Epicurus advised them to retain assertions made by means of these and similar expressions, and above all to preserve those made by Zeus himself (maintain the practice of swearing by Zeus by name νή Δία!)... Not merely "it must be so!"

My Notes

- LOL...So, Epicureans, feel free to pepper your writing and conversation with νή Δία! "By Zeus!" 😊

Col.31: Epicurus, in a letter to Polyaeus, writes: "(It is necessary for us) to conceive of their nature as accurately constituting the notion of benefit according to the epistemological standard (kriterion). Let us sacrifice to those gods devoutly and fittingly on that proper days, and let us fittingly perform all the acts of worship in accordance with the laws, in no way disturbing ourselves with opinions on matters concerning the most excellent and august of beings. Moreover, let us sacrifice justly, on the view that I was giving. For in this way it is possible for mortal nature, by Zeus, to live like Zeus, as it seems. And concerning obeisance (προσκυήσεις) in [Epicurus's] On Lifecourses [Περί βίων]"

My Notes

- devoutly and fittingly 'οσιως και καλως
- "in accordance with the laws (νόμους)" can also be translated as in accordance to custom" <http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?do...entry=no%2Fmos2>

- obeisance (προσκυήσεις) refers to "the custom of kneeling, prostration, or throwing kisses before statues of the gods or as marks of honor to important humans." Obbink recounts in the notes the story of Colotes embracing Epicurus's knees during a teaching session when Colotes was overcome with reverence toward his teacher.