

Recent Article on Why Stoicism Remains So Popular (Vis-à-Vis Ancient Rivals)

Post by “Pacatus” of January 17, 2025 at 2:44 PM

An interesting recent article on Stoicism in *El Pais*:

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[Why Stoicism will always be in vogue](#)

The popularity of books on Stoicism reflects a widespread search for values in a world where we often feel powerless. However, its philosophical ideas have...

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<http://www.epicureanfriends.com/thread/4228-recent-article-on-why-stoicism-remains-so-popular-vis-%C3%A0-vis-ancient-rivals/?postID=33680#post33680>

The author has some positive commentary on Epicureanism, and questions why Stoicism has had a better survival:

“Stoicism is not the only school of thought that offers practical wisdom for navigating a changing world. Yet, it has proven to be the most popular, even more so than Epicureanism, despite the influence it also had. The French philosopher Michel Onfray wrote in EL PAÍS that “without Epicurus, there would have been no Renaissance, no Montaigne, no libertine thought of the 17th century, no philosophy of the Enlightenment, no French Revolution, no atheism, no philosophies of social liberation.”

“However, during the early centuries of Christianity, followers of Epicureanism were often misrepresented as people who organized banquets and orgies. This was a not true. In reality, the Epicureans advocated for a life centered around friendship and the thoughtful consideration of the consequences of everyday choices. They favored present moderation — such as having just one glass of wine — to avoid greater misfortunes in the future, like a hangover. But they proposed a life far removed from politics, which harmed the school’s influence, as Méndez Lloret points out.”

And: “Sellars points out another key factor contributing to Stoicism’s success: the texts of its leading thinkers are well-preserved and easy to read. Works like The Enchiridion of Epictetus, the letters and treatises of Seneca, and Marcus Aurelius’ Meditations are both accessible and engaging. In contrast, Diogenes left no written records, only fragments of Epicurus remain, and On the Nature of Things by the Epicurean Lucretius is more of a scientific treatise than an ethical or political one.”

[The comment about “*far removed* from politics” might be a bit overly strong - especially considering the adaptations of Roman Epicureans; viz. the essay “Caesar the Epicurean? A Matter of Life and Death” by Katharina Volk, recently shared by Cassius.]