

Epicurean Rings / Jewelry / Coins / Mementos

Post by “Cassius” of October 11, 2019 at 6:25 AM

[Here is the original post at NewEpicurean that Samj mentioned.](#)

What Would You Like Inscribed On Your Ring?

By [Cassius Amicus](#) Published [October 10, 2012](#) [Epicurean Art](#), [Introductory Material](#)

[SculptedWordBookCover-150x150.jpg](#)

The topic of memorable rings has come to my attention today, and that reminds me to discuss another aspect of Epicureanism: the use of images of Epicurus and Epicurean inscriptions on rings, cups, and other mementos.

Bernard Frischer’s book “[The Sculpted Word](#)” provides an excellent background into the use of images by the ancient Epicureans as both a self-help device and a device for recruitment of new converts to the philosophy (the very idea of recruitment being contrary to the view of Epicureanism as hermitic). [The Sculpted Word](#) focuses largely on the monumental seated sculptures of Epicurus himself, a number of which survive at least in pieces from antiquity. In addition, Cicero records the use of rings and cups apparently used in a similar way.

The question I would like to pose today is the title of the post “What Would You Like Inscribed On Your *Epicurean* Ring?” An image of Epicurus is the first obvious choice. Munro records in the overleaf to his translation of *De Rerum Natura* the existence of an oval ring bearing an image that appears to be marked as that of Lucretius.

[Lucretius from Munro overleaf.jpg](#)

We also have busts of Metrodorus and Hermarchus that survive from Herculaneum, so images of those important Epicureans are also available.

But what if you wanted a more simple ring inscribed with only a particularly meaningful phrase? What would that phrase be? Any number of the Authorized Doctrines or the Vatican Sayings lend themselves to this, but selecting one short enough to use is a little trickier. Here are a couple that come to mind:

- [Nothing can be created from nothing.](#) (*Nil posse creari de nilo.*) (Latin from Lucretius Book I)
- [Death is nothing to us.](#)

- Guide of Life, Divine Pleasure (*dux vitae dia voluptas*) (Latin from Lucretius Book II)
- Nothing is enough for the man to whom enough is too little.

At present I think my favorite would be one of the first two, as I think of those as starting points on which the rest of Epicureanism is erected. [Nothing can be created from nothing](#) because a ring is something physical that can be touched, something which has a clear and certain reality, a tangible example that nothing is created from nothing, which leads to all the other physical observations about the universe. [Death is nothing to us](#), as a constant reminder that all the pleasure we seek must be experienced while we live, and that it is worse that folly to worry about a past or future existence of the soul.

I would be interested to know your thoughts and suggestions!



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Figs. 1221–1222



a, b (British Museum)

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