

"Not Neo-Epicurean, But Epicurean"

Post by "Cassius" of July 26, 2019 at 11:19 AM

Not Neo-Epicurean, But Epicurean

1. Not "flourishing," "human potential," "self-actualization," or "meaningfulness," but happiness grounded in the feeling of pleasure.
2. Not "absence of pain" as a full statement of the goal of life, but "the Feelings are two, pleasure and pain" and "Pleasure is the beginning and the end of a happy life."
3. Not virtue for the sake of virtue, but virtue as instrumental for the attainment of pleasure.
4. Not "the greatest good for the greatest number," but "Every desire must be confronted with this question: What will happen to me if the object of my desire is accomplished and what if it is not?"
5. Not "humanism," "transhumanism," "individualism," "collectivism," "egoism," "altruism," "social progress," "Marxism," "democracy," "tyranny," or any "one size fits all" political ideal of any kind, but social structure based on friendship which "is formed and maintained by means of a community of life among those who have reached the fullness of pleasure."
6. Not "hard determinism," but "some things happen from necessity, some from chance, and others through our own choice."
7. Not "supernaturalism," but "materialism."
8. Not "supernatural gods," or "life after death," but confidence in a fully material universe and "for those men for whom wisdom is possible, and who do seek it, such men may truly live as gods."
9. Not only "short term hedonism," but "it is to continuous pleasures that I invite you."
10. Not "rationalism," but "all reason is dependent upon sensations."
11. Not fearful of death nor careless of losing life, but valuing life for the opportunity of pleasure it brings.

Principles: Not Neo-Epicurean, But Epicurean

The following is a short summary of principles which are important for understanding Epicurus and participating in discussion at the EpicureanFriends Forum. It is not intended to address all aspects of Epicurean philosophy. As time allows we will supplement the citations below with more citations and explanatory articles.

1. Not "flourishing," "human potential," "self-actualization," or "meaningfulness," but happiness grounded in the feeling of pleasure.
2. Not "absence of pain" as a full statement of the goal of life, but "the Feelings are two, pleasure and pain" and "Pleasure is the beginning and the end of a happy life."
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4. Not "the greatest good for the greatest number," but "Every desire must be confronted with this question: What will happen to me if the object of my desire is accomplished and what if it is not?"

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9. Not only "short term hedonism," but "it is to continuous pleasures that I invite you."

10. Not "rationalism," but "all reason is dependent upon sensations."

11. Not fearful of death nor careless of losing life, but valuing life for the opportunity of pleasure it brings.

Citations:

1. Not "flourishing" or "human potential" or "self-actualization" or "meaningfulness," but happiness grounded in the feeling of pleasure.

1. Diogenes of Oinoanda: If, gentlemen, the point at issue between these people and us involved inquiry into "what is the means of happiness?" and they wanted to say "the virtues" (which would actually be true), it would be unnecessary to take any other step than to agree with them about this, without more ado. But since, as I say, the issue is not "what is the means of happiness?" but "what is happiness and what is the ultimate goal of our nature?," I say both now and always, shouting out loudly to all Greeks and non-Greeks, that pleasure is the end of the best mode of life, while the virtues, which are inopportunately messed about by these people (being transferred from the place of the means to that of the end), are in no way an end, but the means to the end.

2. Not "absence of pain" as a full statement of the goal of life, but "the Feelings are two, pleasure and pain" and "Pleasure is the beginning and the end of a happy life."

1. Article by Elayne Coulter "[On Pain, Pleasure, And Happiness](#)"

2. Diogenes Laertius: "They affirm that there are two states of feeling, pleasure and pain, which arise in every animate being, and that the one is favorable and the other hostile to that being, and by their means choice and avoidance are determined; and that there are two kinds of inquiry, the one concerned with things, the other with nothing but words. So much, then, for his division and criterion in their main outline."
 3. Letter to Menoeceus: "Wherefore we call pleasure the alpha and omega of a blessed life. Pleasure is our first and kindred good. It is the starting-point of every choice and of every aversion, and to it we come back, inasmuch as we make feeling the rule by which to judge of every good thing."
 4. [PD03](#). The magnitude of pleasure reaches its limit in the removal of all pain. When such pleasure is present, so long as it is uninterrupted, there is no pain either of body or of mind or of both together.
 5. [PD22](#). We must consider both the ultimate end and all clear sensory evidence, to which we refer our opinions; for otherwise everything will be full of uncertainty and confusion.
 6. Torquatus in On Ends: "Let us imagine a man living in the continuous enjoyment of numerous and vivid pleasures alike of body and of mind, undisturbed either by the presence or by the prospect of pain: what possible state of existence could we describe as being more excellent or more desirable? One so situated must possess in the first place a strength of mind that is proof against all fear of death or of pain; he will know that death means complete unconsciousness, and that pain is generally light if long and short if strong, so that its intensity is compensated by brief duration and its continuance by diminishing severity. Let such a man moreover have no dread of any supernatural power; let him never suffer the pleasures of the past to fade away, but constantly renew their enjoyment in recollection, and his lot will be one which will not admit of further improvement."
 7. [VS63](#). There is also a limit in simple living, and he who fails to understand this falls into an error as great as that of the man who gives way to extravagance.
3. Not virtue for the sake of virtue, but virtue as instrumental for the attainment of pleasure.
1. Diogenes of Oinoanda: If, gentlemen, the point at issue between these people and us involved inquiry into "what is the means of happiness?" and they wanted to say "the virtues" (which would actually be true), it would be unnecessary to take any other step than to agree with them about this, without more ado. But since, as I say, the issue is not "what is the means of happiness?" but "what is happiness and what is the ultimate goal of our nature?," I say both now and always, shouting out loudly to all Greeks and non-Greeks, that pleasure is the end of the best mode of life, while the virtues, which are inopportunately messed about by these people (being transferred from the place of the means to that of the end), are in no way an end, but the means to the end.
 2. Torquatus in Cicero's On Ends: "Those who place the Chief Good in virtue alone are beguiled by the glamour of a name, and do not understand the true demands of nature. If they will consent to listen to Epicurus, they will be delivered from the grossest error. Your

school dilates on the transcendent beauty of the virtues; but were they not productive of pleasure, who would deem them either praiseworthy or desirable? We esteem the art of medicine not for its interest as a science, but for its conduciveness to health; the art of navigation is commended for its practical and not its scientific value, because it conveys the rules for sailing a ship with success. So also Wisdom, which must be considered as the art of living, if it effected no result would not be desired; but as it is, it is desired, because it is the artificer that procures and produces pleasure."

4. Not "the greatest good for the greatest number," but "Every desire must be confronted with this question: What will happen to me if the object of my desire is accomplished and what if it is not?"

1. [VS71](#). Question each of your desires: "What will happen to me if that which this desire seeks is achieved, and what if it is not?"
2. [VS50](#). (PD 8) No pleasure is a bad thing in itself, but the things which produce certain pleasures entail disturbances many times greater than the pleasures themselves.
3. This is of possible application here (we should discuss) Diogenes of Oinoanda, fragment 32: "Suppose, then, someone were to ask someone, though it is a naive question, «who is it whom these virtues benefit?», obviously the answer will be «man.» The virtues certainly do not make provision for these birds flying past, enabling them to fly well, or for each of the other animals: they do not desert the nature with which they live and by which they have been engendered; rather it is for the sake of this nature that the virtues do everything and exist.
4. [PD06](#). "In order to obtain protection from other men, any means for attaining this end is a natural good."
5. [PD39](#). "The man who best knows how to meet external threats makes into one family all the creatures he can; and those he can not, he at any rate does not treat as aliens; and where he finds even this impossible, he avoids all dealings, and, so far as is advantageous, excludes them from his life."
6. [PD40](#). "Those who possess the power to defend themselves against threats by their neighbors, being thus in possession of the surest guarantee of security, live the most pleasant life with one another...."
7. Torquatus in *On Ends*: "Yet nevertheless some men indulge without limit their avarice, ambition and love of power, lust, gluttony and those other desires, which ill-gotten gains can never diminish but rather must inflame the more; inasmuch that they appear proper subjects for restraint rather than for reformation."

5. Not "humanism," "individualism", "collectivism", "egoism" or "altruism" or "social progress," but friendship which "is formed and maintained by means of community of life among those who have reached the fullness of pleasure."

1. Diogenes Laertius (Bailey) "That friendship too has practical needs as its motive: one must indeed lay its foundations (for we sow the ground too for the sake of crops), but it is

formed and maintained by means of community of life among those who have reached the fullness of pleasure”

2. [PD17](#). The just man is most free from disturbance, while the unjust is full of the utmost disturbance.
3. [PD14](#). Protection from other men, secured to some extent by the power to expel and by material prosperity, in its purest form comes from a quiet life withdrawn from the multitude.
4. [PD27](#). Of all the means which wisdom acquires to ensure happiness throughout the whole of life, by far the most important is friendship.
[PD31](#). Natural justice is a pledge of reciprocal benefit, to prevent one man from harming or being harmed by another.
5. [PD32](#). Those animals which are incapable of making binding agreements with one another not to inflict nor suffer harm are without either justice or injustice; and likewise for those peoples who either could not or would not form binding agreements not to inflict nor suffer harm.
6. [PD33](#). There never was such a thing as absolute justice, but only agreements made in mutual dealings among men in whatever places at various times providing against the infliction or suffering of harm.
7. [PD34](#). Injustice is not an evil in itself, but only in consequence of the fear which is associated with the apprehension of being discovered by those appointed to punish such actions.
8. [PD35](#). It is impossible for a man who secretly violates the terms of the agreement not to harm or be harmed to feel confident that he will remain undiscovered, even if he has already escaped ten thousand times; for until his death he is never sure that he will not be detected.
9. [PD36](#). In general, justice is the same for all, for it is something found mutually beneficial in men's dealings, but in its application to particular places or other circumstances the same thing is not necessarily just for everyone.
10. [PD37](#). Among the things held to be just by law, whatever is proved to be of advantage in men's dealings has the stamp of justice, whether or not it be the same for all; but if a man makes a law and it does not prove to be mutually advantageous, then this is no longer just. And if what is mutually advantageous varies and only for a time corresponds to our concept of justice, nevertheless for that time it is just for those who do not trouble themselves about empty words, but look simply at the facts.
11. [PD38](#). Where without any change in circumstances the things held to be just by law are seen not to correspond with the concept of justice in actual practice, such laws are not really just; but wherever the laws have ceased to be advantageous because of a change in circumstances, in that case the laws were for that time just when they were advantageous for the mutual dealings of the citizens, and subsequently ceased to be just when they were no longer advantageous.

12. [PD39](#). The man who best knows how to meet external threats makes into one family all the creatures he can; and those he can not, he at any rate does not treat as aliens; and where he finds even this impossible, he avoids all dealings, and, so far as is advantageous, excludes them from his life.
 13. [PD40](#). Those who possess the power to defend themselves against threats by their neighbors, being thus in possession of the surest guarantee of security, live the most pleasant life with one another; and their enjoyment of the fullest intimacy is such that if one of them dies prematurely, the others do not lament his death as though it called for pity.
6. Not "hard determinism" but "some things happen from necessity, some from chance, and others through our own choice."

1. Letter to Menoeceus: "Fate, which some introduce as sovereign over all things, he scorns, affirming rather that some things happen of necessity, others by chance, others through our own agency. For he sees that necessity destroys responsibility and that chance is inconstant; whereas our own actions are autonomous, and it is to them that praise and blame naturally attach. It were better, indeed, to accept the legends of the gods than to bow beneath that yoke of destiny which the natural philosophers have imposed. The one holds out some faint hope that we may escape if we honor the gods, while the necessity of the naturalists is deaf to all entreaties. Nor does he hold chance to be a god, as the world in general does, for in the acts of a god there is no disorder; nor to be a cause, though an uncertain one, for he believes that no good or evil is dispensed by chance to men so as to make life blessed, though it supplies the starting-point of great good and great evil. He believes that the misfortune of the wise is better than the prosperity of the fool. It is better, in short, that what is well judged in action should not owe its successful issue to the aid of chance."
2. Lucretius Book Two: "Once again, if every motion is always linked on, and the new always arises from the old in order determined, nor by swerving do the first-beginnings make a certain start of movement to break through the decrees of fate, so that cause may not follow cause from infinite time; whence comes this free will for living things all over the earth, whence, I ask, is it wrested from fate, this will whereby we move forward, where pleasure leads each one of us, and swerve likewise in our motions neither at determined times nor in a determined direction of place, but just where our mind has carried us? For without doubt it is his own will which gives to each one a start for this movement, and from the will the motions pass flooding through the limbs. Do you not see too how, when the barriers are flung open, yet for an instant of time the eager might of the horses cannot burst out so suddenly as their mind itself desires? For the whole store of matter throughout the whole body must be roused to movement, that then aroused through every limb it may strain and follow the eager longing of the mind; so that you see a start of movement is brought to pass from the heart, and comes forth first of all from the will of the mind, and then afterwards is spread through all the body and limbs. Nor is it the same

as when we move forward impelled by a blow from the strong might and strong constraint of another. For then it is clear to see that all the matter of the body moves and is hurried on against our will, until the will has reined it back throughout the limbs. Do you not then now see that, albeit a force outside pushes many men and constrains them often to go forward against their will and to be hurried away headlong, yet there is something in our breast, which can fight against it and withstand it? And at its bidding too the store of matter is constrained now and then to turn throughout the limbs and members, and, when pushed forward, is reined back and comes to rest again. Wherefore in the seeds too you must needs allow likewise that there is another cause of motion besides blows and weights, whence comes this power born in us, since we see that nothing can come to pass from nothing. For weight prevents all things coming to pass by blows, as by some force without. But that the very mind feels not some necessity within in doing all things, and is not constrained like a conquered thing to bear and suffer, this is brought about by the tiny swerve of the first-beginnings in no determined direction of place and at no determined time.

7. Not supernaturalism but materialism.

1. Letter to Herodotus: "First of all, that nothing is created out of that which does not exist: for if it were, everything would be created out of everything with no need of seeds. And again, if that which disappears were destroyed into that which did not exist, all things would have perished, since that into which they were dissolved would not exist. Furthermore, the universe always was such as it is now, and always will be the same. For there is nothing into which it changes: for outside the universe there is nothing which could come into it and bring about the change. Moreover, the universe is bodies and space: for that bodies exist, sense itself witnesses in the experience of all men, and in accordance with the evidence of sense we must of necessity judge of the imperceptible by reasoning, as I have already said. And if there were not that which we term void and place and intangible existence, bodies would have nowhere to exist and nothing through which to move, as they are seen to move. And besides these two, nothing can even be thought of either by conception or on the analogy of things conceivable such as could be grasped as whole existences and not spoken of as the accidents or properties of such existences."
2. Lucretius, Book 1: But now, to weave again at the web, which is the task of my discourse, all nature then, as it is of itself, is built of these two things: for there are bodies and the void, in which they are placed and where they move hither and thither. For that body exists is declared by the feeling which all share alike; and unless faith in this feeling be firmly grounded at once and prevail, there will be naught to which we can make appeal about things hidden, so as to prove aught by the reasoning of the mind. And next, were there not room and empty space, which we call void, nowhere could bodies be placed, nor could they wander at all hither and thither in any direction; and this I have above shown to you but a little while before. Besides these there is nothing which you could say

is parted from all body and sundered from void, which could be discovered, as it were a third nature in the list. For whatever shall exist, must needs be something in itself; and if it suffer touch, however small and light, it will increase the count of body by a bulk great or maybe small, if it exists at all, and be added to its sum. But if it is not to be touched, inasmuch as it cannot on any side check anything from wandering through it and passing on its way, in truth it will be that which we call empty void.

3. Lucretius Book Two: [1090] And if you learn this surely, and cling to it, nature is seen, free at once, and quit of her proud rulers, doing all things of her own accord alone, without control of gods. For by the holy hearts of the gods, which in their tranquil peace pass placid years, and a life of calm, who can avail to rule the whole sum of the boundless, who to hold in his guiding hand the mighty reins of the deep, who to turn round all firmaments at once, and warm all fruitful lands with heavenly fires, or to be at all times present in all places, so as to make darkness with clouds, and shake the calm tracts of heaven with thunder, and then shoot thunderbolts, and often make havoc of his own temples, or moving away into deserts rage furiously there, plying the bolt, which often passes by the guilty and does to death the innocent and undeserving?

8. Not "Supernatural Gods," or "Life After Death," but confidence in a fully material universe, and for those for whom wisdom is possible, "then truly the life of the gods will pass to men."

1. Epicurus' Letter to Menoeceus: Meditate therefore on these things and things akin to them night and day by yourself; and with a companion like to yourself, and never shall you be disturbed waking or asleep, but you shall live like a god among men. For a man who lives among immortal blessings is not like unto a mortal being.
2. Diogenes of Oinoanda Fr. 56: [So we shall not achieve wisdom universally], since not all are capable of it. But if we assume it to be possible, then truly the life of the gods will pass to men. For everything will be full of justice and mutual love, and there will come to be no need of fortifications or laws and all the things which we contrive on account of one another. As for the necessities derived from agriculture, since we shall have no slaves at that time (for indeed [we ourselves shall plough] and dig and tend [the plants] and [divert] rivers and watch over [the crops), we shall] ... such things as ... not ... time ..., and such activities, [in accordance with what is] needful, will interrupt the continuity of the [shared] study of philosophy; for [the] farming operations [will provide what our] nature wants.

9 Not only "short term hedonism" but "it is to continuous pleasures that I invite you."

1. Letter to Anaxarchus, Bailey Extant Remains p. 127. "But I summon you to continuous pleasures and not to vain and empty virtues which have but disturbing hopes of results."
2. Letter to Menoeceus: "And even as men choose of food not merely and simply the larger portion, but the more pleasant, so the wise seek to enjoy the time which is most pleasant and not merely that which is longest."

3. Torquatus in On Ends: "The truth of the position that pleasure is the ultimate good will most readily appear from the following illustration. Let us imagine a man living in the continuous enjoyment of numerous and vivid pleasures alike of body and of mind, undisturbed either by the presence or by the prospect of pain: what possible state of existence could we describe as being more excellent or more desirable? One so situated must possess in the first place a strength of mind that is proof against all fear of death or of pain; he will know that death means complete unconsciousness, and that pain is generally light if long and short if strong, so that its intensity is compensated by brief duration and its continuance by diminishing severity. Let such a man moreover have no dread of any supernatural power; let him never suffer the pleasures of the past to fade away, but constantly renew their enjoyment in recollection, and his lot will be one which will not admit of further improvement.

10. Not "rationalism," but "all reason is dependent upon sensations."

1. Diogenes Laertius: "Nor is there anything which can refute sensations or convict them of error: one sensation cannot convict another and kindred sensation, for they are equally valid; nor can one sensation refute another which is not kindred but heterogeneous, for the objects which the two senses judge are not the same; nor again can reason refute them, for reason is wholly dependent on sensation; nor can one sense refute another, since we pay equal heed to all. And the reality of separate perceptions guarantees the truth of our senses. But seeing and hearing are just as real as feeling pain."
2. Lucretius Book Four: "Again, if any one thinks that nothing is known, he knows not whether that can be known either, since he admits that he knows nothing. Against him then I will refrain from joining issue, who plants himself with his head in the place of his feet. And yet were I to grant that he knows this too, yet I would ask this one question; since he has never before seen any truth in things, whence does he know what is knowing, and not knowing each in turn, what thing has begotten the concept of the true and the false, what thing has proved that the doubtful differs from the certain? You will find that the concept of the true is begotten first from the senses, and that the senses cannot be gainsaid. For something must be found with a greater surety, which can of its own authority refute the false by the true. Next then, what must be held to be of greater surety than sense? Will reason, sprung from false sensation, avail to speak against the senses, when it is wholly sprung from the senses? For unless they are true, all reason too becomes false"

11. Not fearful of death nor careless of losing life, but valuing life for the opportunity of pleasure it brings.

1. Letter to Menoeceus: "The wise man does not deprecate life nor does he fear the cessation of life. The thought of life is no offense to him, nor is the cessation of life regarded as an evil. And even as men choose of food not merely and simply the larger portion, but the more pleasant, so the wise seek to enjoy the time which is most pleasant

and not merely that which is longest. And he who admonishes the young to live well and the old to make a good end speaks foolishly, not merely because of the desirability of life, but because the same exercise at once teaches to live well and to die well. Much worse is he who says that it were good not to be born, but when once one is born to pass quickly through the gates of Hades. For if he truly believes this, why does he not depart from life? It would be easy for him to do so once he were firmly convinced. If he speaks only in jest, his words are foolishness as those who hear him do not believe.”

This document was first published with the following introduction, referring to its original implementation at Facebook. The version above has been updated to refer to EpicureanFriends.com:

I do not encourage anyone to use Facebook, and I fully expect there will come a day when I no longer use it at all myself. In my view there are huge issues with its privacy, its intrusiveness, its censorship, and even its ability to manipulate and cause mental and emotional disorders in people.

However for the moment the reality is that Facebook commands huge numbers of users, and it is an important opportunity to locate new people who are also interested in Epicurus. For that reason you will see here on this forum regular references to postings over at Facebook. I try to make sure that any significant developments over there are reported here too.

So the latest update is this: A series of changes are being made by the admins over there which I think will eventually prove useful here as well. One of the most important is a document entitled "Not Neo-Epicurean, But Epicurean" which contains a list summarizing some important points in interpreting Epicurean philosophy. It is not a list that intends to cover every important aspect of Epicurean philosophy, but rather the major areas of dispute in interpretation of Epicurean philosophy, and the preferred position on those disputes.

This document was first posted at Facebook today - July 26, 2019. I expect there to be much discussion of it, and that discussion needs to happen here too, where it will be easier to find in the future and develop over time. So here is the document. It states that it applies to the Facebook Group, but as it was prepared by the leaders of this EpicureanFriends forum it should be expected that this is the direction this forum will go as well: epicureanfriends.com/wcf/gallery/image/362/

Post by “Cassius” of July 26, 2019 at 5:53 PM

In the time since this website was founded several years ago, we have had many people come through it, stay a while to agree with a couple of points, and then leave. We'll continue to have that happen, but one of our goals has been to find **friends**. And a major part of what makes someone a potential long-term friend is that we not only agree with a couple of Epicurean ideas, but we agree with the idea that Epicurean philosophy is something special that we don't want to just stuff in a closet to pull out on special occasions. For us Epicurus isn't just one book on our shelf, but the key book that helps us organize all the rest. We don't just consider ourselves to be students of philosophy, we consider ourselves to be "Epicureans."

While we haven't grown to huge numbers, in recent years we **have** finally succeed in building our regular participants to the point where we can in good faith say that we have the beginnings of a new Epicurean community. It may be "on-line" but it is real nevertheless.

The changes announced today are intended to help us accelerate in that direction. We want to encourage those who come here and agree with Epicurus to post more and produce more content themselves. And that means that they should not have to sidetrack themselves day after day dealing with the same misrepresentations and uninformed criticisms that have been used to suppress Epicurus' ideas for 2000 years. That's why we're making more clear what characteristics we think make a good member of this Epicurean community, and what characteristics indicate that someone would be a better fit in a generalist philosophy group of some other type.

All who are sincerely interested in communicating in good faith with people who consider themselves to be Epicurean will always be welcome. That definitely includes people who are only beginning to study Epicurus and confused ideas about him. But we are going to keep a tighter leash on posts that are obviously intended to be negative or disruptive and are made by people who clearly have no long-term interest in becoming Epicureans.

We also want to improve the quality of posting by making sure that new topics are moderated. By doing that we can be sure that most discussions are worth the general attention of the community. That's why we recently implemented the "approval" requirement for new posts, and why we set up the "Open Thread" feature to accommodate questions that are more narrowly targeted.

The changes we are making are not designed to suppress debate or questioning of the teachings of Epicurus. The opposite is in fact the goal: By making sure that discussions are productive and positive, we can all do a better job of exploring the details of Epicurean philosophy. And in those circumstances where we may find something we don't accept, we can at least pay Epicurus the courtesy of learning how and why he reached his conclusions, so we can understand where we really differ.

What I have personally found is that even in those areas where Epicurus is held to have reached incorrect conclusions, such as the size of the sun, the story is much less damaging to Epicurus' reputation than critics would have you believe. Epicurean philosophy is less about a

list of **conclusions** than it is about methods on **how to reach conclusions**. The focus is first and foremost on how to determine evidence to consider, and how to evaluate that evidence. When you track back on how Epicurus reached his conclusions given the information available to him, you invariably find an ****approach to life**** that is even more important than any individual doctrinal conclusion.

Post by “Cassius” of December 2, 2019 at 8:22 PM

12/2/19 Edit to make item five more encompassing and clear:

From:

5. Not "humanism," "individualism", "collectivism", "egoism," "altruism," or "social progress," but friendship which "is formed and maintained by means of community of life among those who have reached the fullness of pleasure."

To:

5. Not "humanism," "transhumanism," "individualism," "collectivism," "egoism," "altruism," "social progress," "Marxism," "democracy," "tyranny," or any "one size fits all" political ideal of any kind, but social structure based on friendship which "is formed and maintained by means of a community of life among those who have reached the fullness of pleasure."

Post by “Eikadistes” of June 15, 2023 at 11:06 AM

I just found a vocabulary word of interest in Column 45 of *On Anger*: Philodemus contrasts dissident, heterodox Epicureans against orthodox, "**textbook [βιβλιακοίς] Epicureans**" (coming from the word βιβλιακοί or *bibliakoí* meaning "Epicureans by the book" according to translators David Armstrong and Michael McOsker 2020).

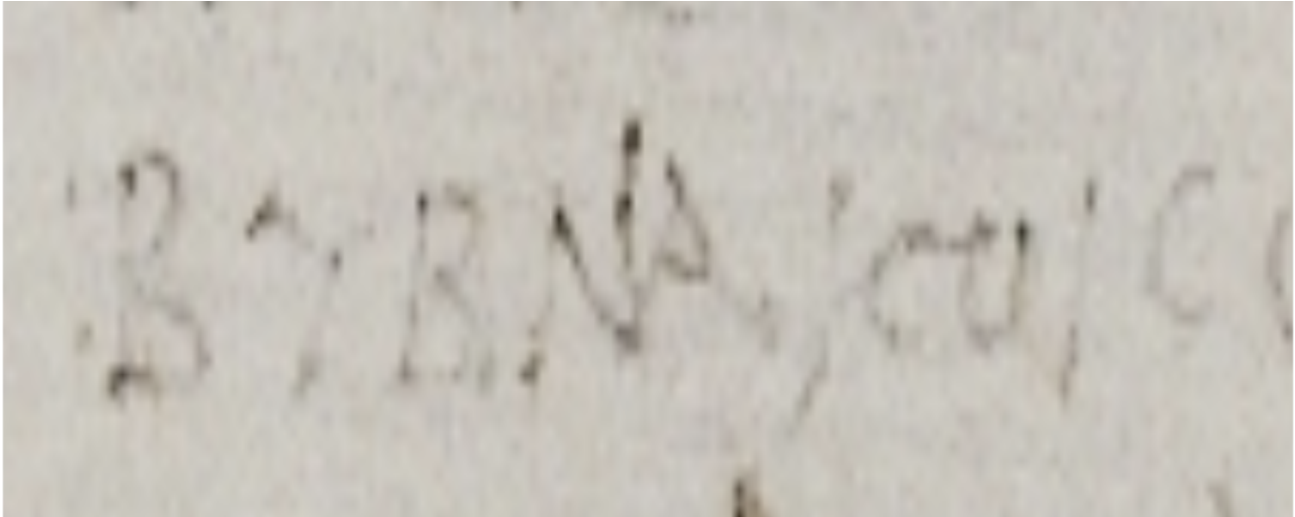
I think it is appropriate to refer to those of us who are "not *neo*-Epicurean, but **Epicurean**" as "Bibliakoi".

Post by “Don” of June 15, 2023 at 11:28 AM

ΤΟΥΤΕ ΚΑΘΗΓΕΜΟΣΙΝ ΟΥΤΟ
ΤΗΝ ΘΥΜΩΘΗΣΕΘΑΙ ΤΟΝ ΣΟ
ΟΝ ΑΛΛΑ ΤΟ ΚΑΤΑ ΤΗΝ
ΙΕΙ ΑΝ ΚΑΙ ΓΑΡ Ο ΕΠΙΚΟΥ
ΑΙΣ ΑΝΑΦΩΝΗΣΕΣΙΝ
ΙΣΑΝ ΤΕ ΘΥΜΩΘΗ
ΣΕΘΑΙ ΚΑΤΑ ΜΕΤΡΙΩΣ ΚΑ
ΟΜΗΤΡΟ ΔΕ ΤΟ ΣΕΙΚΥΜΩΣ
ΛΕΓΕΙΤΟ ΤΟ ΦΟΥΘΥΛΟΣ
ΣΥΝΕΜΦΑΝΙΤΟ ΛΙΑΝ ΠΡΑ
ΧΕΩΣ Τ ΔΕ ΤΟΥ ΘΥΜΩΘΗ
ΤΑΙ ΚΑΤΑ ΤΑΡΧΑΙ

ΩΣ ΤΕ ΘΑΥΜΑΖΕΙΝ ΕΓ
ΒΥΒΛΑΚΟΙΣ ΕΙΝΑΙ ΘΕΛΟΥΣΙΝ
ΟΤΙ ΤΑΥΤΑ ΚΑΙ ΤΑ ΠΡΟΤΕΡΟΝ
ΕΠΙΣΗΜΑΝΘΕΝΤΑ ΠΑΡΑ
ΛΙΠΟΝ ΤΕ ΣΕΣ ΑΚΟΛΟΥΘΙΑΣ
ΤΟΥ ΘΥΜΩΘΗΣΕΘΑΙ ΚΑΤΑ
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ΠΕ ΔΕΙΚΝΥΟΝ ΑΙΤΕ ΠΙΣΤΕΙΣ
ΑΥΤΩΝ ΑΙ ΠΕΡΙ ΤΟΥ ΘΥΜΩΘΗ
ΣΕΘΑΙ ΤΟΣΟΥΤΟΝ ΑΠΟ ΔΕΟΥΣΙ
ΤΟΥ ΚΑΤΑ ΠΑΣΑΝ ΕΝΝΟΙΑΝ ΘΥΜΟΥ
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ΟΥ ΚΑΙ ΤΗΝ ΟΡΓΗΝ ΚΑΙ ΤΟΝ
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ΤΑΥΤΟ ΦΕΡΕ ΤΟΡΓΗ ΚΑΙ ΘΥ
ΜΟΣ ΕΙΣ ΕΜΕΣ ΜΕΝ ΟΙΚΑ
Ο ΔΙΑ ΠΙΛΤΟ ΣΙΚΑΝΤΩ ΠΕ

Post by “Don” of June 15, 2023 at 11:35 AM



BYBΛIAKOIC

Post by “Cassius” of June 15, 2023 at 11:54 AM

That might be even better than "classical" Epicureans 😊 textbook or by-the-book!

Is any of the rest decipherable?

Post by “Don” of June 15, 2023 at 1:37 PM

[Quote from Cassius](#)

Is any of the rest decipherable?

Most of it, I believe. On Anger is one of the most intact Herculaneum papyri.

Post by “Eikadistes” of June 16, 2023 at 1:21 PM

A footnote on page 299 of the translation reads as follows: "215. The *βιβλιακοί* are 'Epicureans by the book,' or at least so they claimed. The school encouraged verbal disputations over the texts of the founders like those of Demetrius Laco's *Textual Problems*. See Sedley 1998, 62-93; and Del Mastro's (2014, 184-87) reconstruction of the title *Πρὸς τοὺς φασκοβιβλιακοὺς Α*, in P.Herc. 1005/862 (partially published in Angeli 1988a" (Armstrong and McOsker).

It corresponds with the following text from *On Anger* (Columns 45.16 – 46.12):

"... [45.16] so that I am amazed at those who want to be textbook Epicureans [*βυβλι'ακοίς*], that they ignored these and the things I mentioned before, and as a result tried to demonstrate that, according to our Founders, 'the sage will become wrathful.' [45.23] And their proofs that he will become enraged are very far from establishing that he will become enraged according to every notion of rage, as they ought to have, since nowhere do they establish both anger and rage as separate categories, nor that 'he (the wise man) will become angry' in the sense common (to both words), as we will show. [45.33] It is clear that both in magnitude and quality rage differs from anger and is not natural. [45.37] But they have reasoned wrongly about when anger and rage are referred to the same thing and when they are not just as they fail in their opinion about whether the sage does or does not fall into a 'rage'--I think this clear to those who have followed what we have indicated in our discussion of the subject. [46.6] So, then, having laid down these things on our own behalf and concerning us, with arguments that prove it, in support of there being a natural kind of anger, we have [indeed] replied that the sage will become angry." (Philodemus, translated by Armstrong and McOsker 2020)

Post by “Cassius” of June 16, 2023 at 3:06 PM

[Quote from Nate](#)

in support of there being a natural kind of anger, we have [indeed] replied that the sage will become angry."

May seem counter-intuitive to celebrate this statement, but I think this is very useful in reinforcing the statement in Diogenes Laertius just before 118 to the effect that "He [the wise man] will be more deeply moved by feelings, but this will not prove an obstacle to wisdom." Texts like this help separate the Epicurean school from those who overdose on calmness, tranquility, and imperturbability. I would expect Epicurus would be happy to leave those extremes to the Stoics or Buddhists and the like, and that Epicurus would endorse "appropriate"

responsive feeling to most any situation. And I doubt I really need to hedge with the "most" in that sentence.

Post by “Eikadistes” of June 18, 2023 at 12:17 PM

Just a loose thought: there seems to be a general accusation of (ignorant or insensitive) inerrant Epicurean fundamentalism expressed by Philodemus taught by his teacher Zeno of Sidon. By this time, all the original Epicureans had died and the remnants of the tradition were being preserved in memory, so the question of literary canon became (inevitably) a point of question and contention, and it seems that there were those, like Zeno and Philodemus, who accepted a "nuanced" and "between-the-lines" sort of interpretation of Epicurus, versus those "fundamentalists" who (according to Philodemus) over-relied on an unnecessarily-literal interpretation of Epicurus' vocabulary ... so in accordance with Philodemus, perhaps "*Bibliakoi*" is inappropriate since Philodemus seems to be using it as a derogation or slur.

All of this (again) brings me back to *phantastiken epibolen tes dianoias* and the question of canonic.

Post by “Don” of June 18, 2023 at 1:18 PM

However, didn't Philodemus also encourage his readers to get back to the books? I need to delve back into that work of his.

Post by “Pacatus” of June 18, 2023 at 1:25 PM

[Quote from Nate](#)

those "fundamentalists" who (according to Philodemus) over-relied on an unnecessarily-literal interpretation of Epicurus' vocabulary

Unfortunately, this reminded me of another “book fundamentalism” – and prompted this satirical doggerel:

+++++

By the Book

By the Book, by God, by the big black Book

I do vow – by the holy Word, I vow –

no tittle or jot will a free thought blot.

I bow, my God, with bended head I bow ...



Post by “Don” of June 18, 2023 at 2:58 PM

This may be relevant:

Thread

[**P.Herc. 1005 from Les Epicuriens \(A First Draft Translation\)**](#)

Les Epicuriens has been a wonderful resource!! If anyone can get a copy through interlibrary loan (ILL), I highly recommend it. I have my copy through May 16, 2022, via ILL. There are a some sections that are readily available such as Cicero, Plutarch, Seneca, et al. But I'm going to do my best to get the hard-to-find sections (e.g., Epicurus's *On Nature*, much of Philodemus, excerpts from Metrodorus et al.) at least copied and "Google translated" before it has to be returned.

The current...



Don

March 12, 2022 at 12:09 AM

Post by “Don” of June 18, 2023 at 5:47 PM

[Quote from Don](#)

However, didn't Philodemus also encourage his readers to get back to the books? I need to delve back into that work of his.

This is what I was looking for...

Quote from Philodemus, PHerc. 1005 Col. 4.2-18 & Col. 14.13-18

ὁ μὲν γὰρ ἐγνωσμένος ἢ καὶ διστορημένος ὑπ' ἡμῶν, ὃς καὶ φησι εἶν[α]ι ὁ γνήσιος ἀναγνώ[σ]της ἐπὶ γραφὰς [ἐγλεκ]τάς καὶ πλήθη συγγρα[μμ]άτων, κὰν βάλῃ [γ]ε [κα]λῶς, ἀνείληφε πολ[λὰ]ς ἐγλογὰς καὶ τῶν μ[ε]ν ἐπὶ μέρους διανο[η]μάτων ἀπειρότατός ἐστιν. ἃ δὲ προστάττεται ποιεῖν, ἐπὶ κεφάλαι[α] βλέπει, καθάπερ ὄν λ[έ]γουσιν ἐκ βιβλίου κυβ[ερνή]την καὶ διὰ παντ[ός] - -]

...

ἀλλὰ τὸ σχετιώτατον ἐκεῖν ἐστὶν [ἐ]πὶ τοῖς πλείοσιν τῶν Ἐπικουρείων ὃ τὴν ἐν τοῖς βιβλί[ο]ις ἀ[νε]νεργησίαν ἀπαραίτητον ποιεῖ...

He who claims to know us and to be instructed by us, who claims to be a genuine reader of various writings and of complete books, even if he says something correctly, he has only memorized various quotations and does not know the multitude of our thoughts. What he has to do, he looks up in summaries, like people who believe that they [can learn to be] steersman from books and [can cross every ocean].

...

but the most shocking thing of most Epicureans is the unforgivable inactivity in regards to the books...

[Display More](#)

Here's some commentary from Hiram on PHerc 1005 (primarily using the translation and commentary in Les Epicuriens):

[On Philodemus' Scroll 1005 | Society of Friends of Epicurus](#)