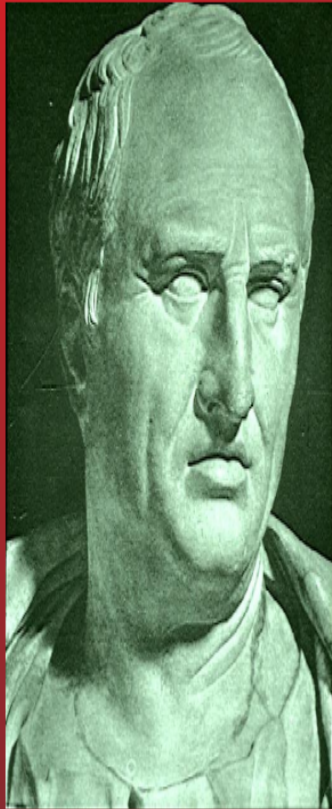


Not Virtue, But Vigor

Post by "Cassius" of December 4, 2019 at 8:54 AM

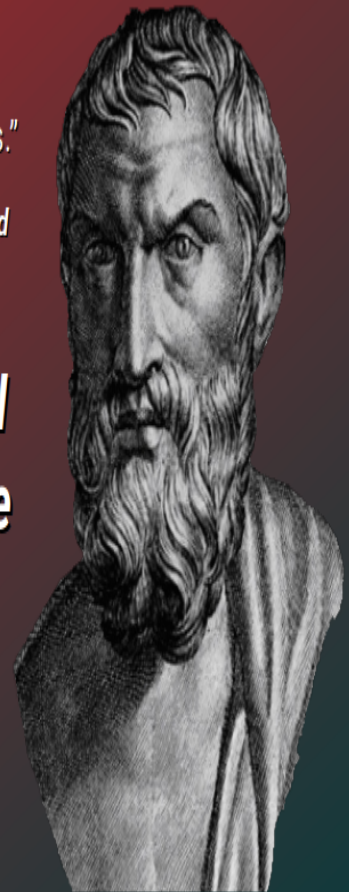
Not Virtue, But Vigor



"In ista ipsa αἰπέσει metuo ne plus nervorum sit quam ego putarim, si modo eam tu probas."

- Cicero, 45 BC, to Gaius Cassius Longinus, in regard to Epicurean philosophy - Ad Fam. 15.16

"In that very sect of yours I have a misgiving that there must be more vigor than I thought, if only because you accept it."



Nervorum: *noun pl masc gen - Nerve, vigor, force, power, strength.*



Ad Familia 15.16

Scr. Romae ante mcd. m. Ian. a. 709 (45).

M. CICERO S. D. C. CASSIO

puto te iam suppuere, quem haec tertia iam epistula ante oppressit quam tu scidam aut litteram. sed non urgeo ; longiores enim exspectabo vel potius exigam. ego si semper haberem cui darem, vel ternas in hora darem ; is fit enim nescio qui ut quasi coram adesse videare cum scribo aliquid ad te, neque id κατ' εἰδῶλων φαντασίας, ut dicunt tui amici novi, qui putant etiam διανοητικὰς φαντασίας spectris Catianis excitari ; nam ne te fugiat, Catus Insuber, Ἐπικούρειος, qui nuper est mortuus, quae ille Gargettius et iam ante Democritus εἶδωλα, hic 'spectra' nominat. [2] his autem spectris etiam si oculi possent feriri, quod quae velis ipsa incurrunt, animus qui possit ego non video. doceas tu me oportebit, cum salvus veneris, in meane potestate sit spectrum tuum, ut, simul ac mihi conlibitum sit de te cogitare, illud occurrat ; neque solum de te, qui mihi haeres in medullis, sed si insulam Britanniam coepero cogitare, eius εἶδωλον mihi advolabit ad pectus? [3] sed haec posterius ; tempto enim te quo animo accipias. si enim stomachabere et moleste feres, plura dicemus postulabimusque, ex qua αἰρέσει 'VI HOMINIBVS ARMATIS' deiectus sis, in eam restituare. in hoc interdicto non solet addi 'IN HOC ANNO.' qua re si iam biennium aut triennium est cum virtuti nuntium remisisti delentus inlecebris voluptatis, in integro res nobis erit. quamquam quicum loquor? Cum uno fortissimo viro qui, postea quam forum attigisti, nihil fecisti nisi plenissimum amplissimae dignitatis. in ista ipsa αἰρέσει metuo ne plus nervorum sit quam ego putarim, si modo eam tu probas. 'qui id tibi in mentem venit?' inquires. quia nihil habebam aliud quod scriberem ; de re p. enim nihil scribere possum ; nec enim quod sentio is libet scribere.

DXXX (F XV, 16)

TO C. CASSIUS LONGINUS (AT BRUNDISIUM)

ROME (JANUARY)

I think you must be a little ashamed at this being the third letter inflicted on you before I have a page or a syllable from you. But I will not press you: I shall expect, or rather exact, a longer letter. For my part, if I had a messenger always at hand, I should write even three an hour. For somehow it makes you seem almost present when I write anything to you, and that not "by way of phantoms of images," as your new friends express it, I who hold that "mental pictures" are caused by what Catus called "spectres"—for I must remind you that Catus Insuber the Epicurean, lately dead, calls "spectres" what the famous Gargettius, and before him Democritus, used to call "images." Well, even if my eyes were capable of being struck by these "spectres," because they spontaneously run in upon them at your will, I do not see how the mind can be struck. You will be obliged to explain it to me, when you return safe and sound,

whether the "spectre" of you is at my command, so as to occur to me as soon as I have taken the fancy to think about you; and not only about you, who are in my heart's core, but supposing I begin thinking about the island of Britain—will its image fly at once into my mind? But of this later on. I am just sounding you now to see how you take it. For if you are angry and annoyed, I shall say more and demand that you be restored to the sect from which you have been ejected by "violence and armed force." 2 In an injunction of this sort the words "within this year" are not usually added. Therefore, even if it is now two or three years since you divorced Virtue, 3 seduced by the charms of Pleasure, 4 it will still be open for me to do so. And yet to whom am I speaking? It is to you, the most gallant of men, who ever since you entered public life have done nothing that was not imbued to the utmost with the highest principle. In that very sect of yours I have a misgiving that there must be more stuff than I thought, if only because you accept it. "How did that come into your head?" you will say. Because I had nothing else to say. About politics I can write nothing: for I don't choose to write down my real opinions.

ἄρσεις αἰρέω

I.a taking especially, esp. of a town, Hdt., etc.; ἡ βασιλῆος ἄρ. the taking by the king, Hdt.

2.means for taking a place, Thuc.

II. (αἰρέομαι) a taking for oneself, a choosing, choice, νέμειν, προτιθέναι, προβάλλειν to give or offer choice, Hdt., attic; ἄρ. γίγνεται τιμι a choice is allowed one, Thuc.; ἄρσειν λαμβάνειν to have choice given, Dem.

2.choice or election of magistrates, Thuc., etc.

3.a choice, deliberate plan, purpose, Plat., etc.

4.a sect, school, etc.: esp. a religious sect, such as the Sadducees and Pharisees, NTest.

5.a heresy, Eccl.

<http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/morph?l...or=ipsa#lexicon>

nervus , i, m. root snar-; Old Germ. snara, a snare; Gr. νεῦρον; cf. parvus and παῦρος,

I.a sinew, tendon, nerve.

II. Trop.

A. Nerve, vigor, force, power, strength: "digna res est ubi tu nervos intendas tuos," Ter. Eun. 2, 3, 20: "onus ... dignum, in quo omnes nervos aetatis industriaeque meae contenderem," Cic. Verr. 1, 12, 35: "omnibus nervis mihi contendendum est, ut, etc.," id. ib. 2, 3, 56, § "130: opibus ac nervis ad perniciem suam uti," Caes. B. G. 1, 20; Cic. Phil. 5, 12, 32: "nervi belli pecunia," id.

ib. 5, 2, 5: "vectigalia nervos esse rei publicae," id. Imp. Pomp. 7, 17: "legionum nervos incidere," id. Phil. 12, 3, 8: "poëtae molliunt animos, nervos omnes virtutis elidunt," id. Tusc. 2, 11, 27: "video, fore nervis opus sapientiâque tuâ," id. Fam. 3, 10, 1: "loci inhaerentes in nervis caesarum," intimately connected with them, id. de Or. 3, 27, 106: "nervi conjurationis," the leaders, Liv. 7, 39, 6.—

B. In partic., of expression, force, energy: "horum oratio neque nervos, neque aculeos oratorios ac forenses habet," Cic. Or. 19, 62; cf. id. de Or. 3, 21, 80: "nervi in dicendo," id. ib. 2, 22, 91: "sectantem levia nervi Deficiunt," Hor. A. P. 26.

Post by "Cassius" of December 4, 2019 at 11:03 AM

Quote

JJ WROTE:

The use of that lone Greek word αἵρεσις is notable. Implying choice among schools, it's the very word that Christians would later use to make a crime of choice—"heresy".

Yes I thought the definition of that word was interesting too. Can you expand on your comment for the Christian heresy?

Post by "Cassius" of December 4, 2019 at 1:28 PM

Comment by Elli:

"Δύναμη" [dynamis] is the Greek word for the English words as force, vigor, power, and strength. Nature is dynamic and not static.

And as the ES 37 says : Nature is weak toward evil, not toward good: because it is saved by pleasures, but destroyed by pains.

Our natural condition is strengthened and enhanced by the enjoyment of pleasures past, present and expectation of the future ones.

Post by “Joshua” of December 4, 2019 at 2:08 PM

I hadn't seen this post when I wrote that, Cassius, so I didn't realize you had already delved into the etymology.

I wouldn't have recognized the Greek term in the first place if Greenblatt had not discussed it in the Getty lecture, at the 15:00 mark in [this video](#). So that's a good place to start.

I notice from your post that it was used in that sense in the book of Ecclesiastes. That's earlier than I would have supposed.