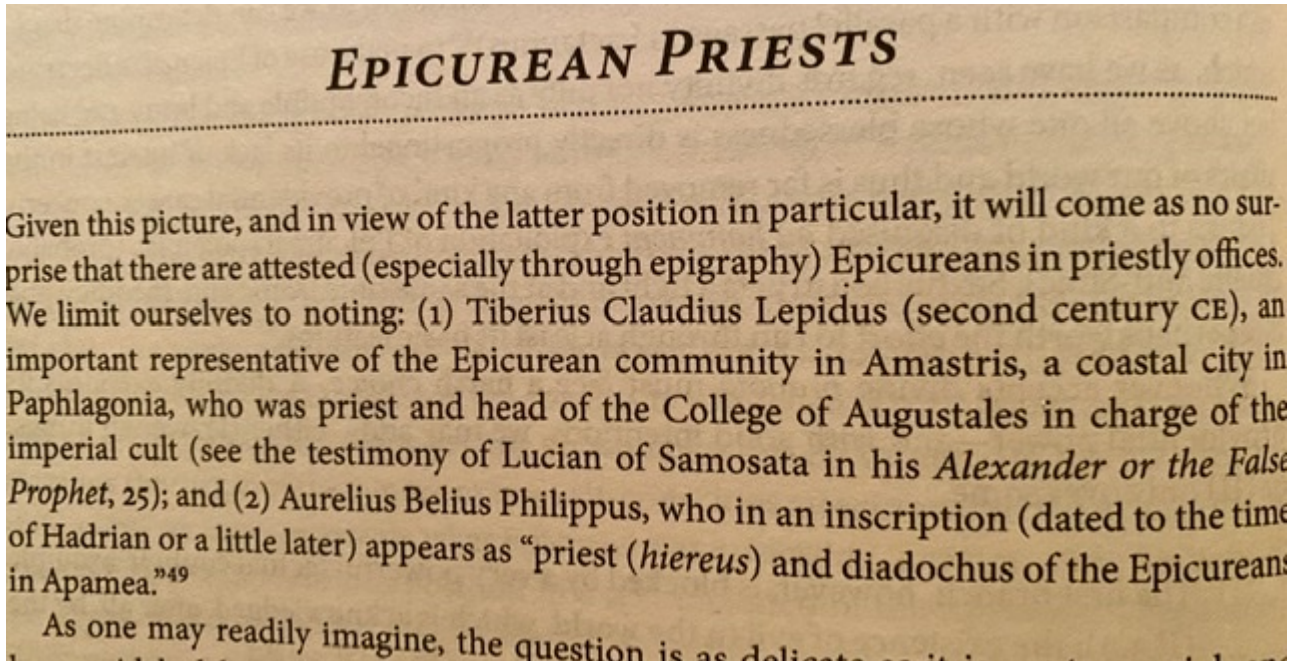


Applied Theology

Post by "Susan Hill" of November 3, 2020 at 7:33 AM



This is also from The Oxford Handbook of E&E. Martin Furguson Smith even has an article about it!

<https://www.jstor.org/stable/20189781?seq=1>

Post by "Don" of November 3, 2020 at 8:05 AM

Well, that's interesting! I want to look at that article but here's one from the Center for Hellenic Studies <https://chs.harvard.edu/CHS/article/di...-matthias-haake> The word Epicurean comes up many times.

It does look like the priests were more government functionary than spiritual mentors. I see mention of the imperial cult.

Thanks for the info!!

Post by “Susan Hill” of November 3, 2020 at 9:05 AM

Don, thank you for the link! Here are a couple of relevant excerpts:

The functions of the *prophētēs* were, on the one hand, the ritual performance of the sacrifices to Apollo and, on the other hand, representative duties as well as announcing and interpreting the answers of the oracle. The *prophētēs* Philidas, who left behind only an inscription of four lines as testimony of his office, did not see any inconsistency in being both an Epicurean philosopher and a prophet, or in publicly commemorating this aspect after the end of his term as prophet. Those who selected him as their candidate evidently had no reservations about this situation, either, for there can be no doubt that they knew about his Epicurean background.

.....

To return to Epicurean *hiereis*, modern scholars have been particularly impressed by Aurelius Belius Philippus, *hiereus theou megistou hagiou Belou* and *diadokhos* of the Epicureans at Apamea ad Orontem (Rey-Coquais 1973:66–68 no. 3; cf. now Smith 1996:120). The relevant inscription is preserved only in a very fragmentary state and is dated to the second or third century AD. In spite of its poor condition, it is possible to gather from the text that Aurelius Belius Philippus had done something at the god Belus’ behest. Therefore, the Epicurean publicly recognized the god as the inspirer of his own acts. Since Aurelius Belius Philippus was *diadokhos* of the Epicureans at Apamea, there must have been an institutionalized Epicurean school, which is not otherwise attested. The sanctuary of Zeus Belus at Apamea was an important oracle sanctuary,[53] which was consulted, for example, by Septimius Severus (Cassius Dio *Roman History* 70.8.5–6). Little is known about this sanctuary, and nothing about the Epicurean *diadokhos*, except what the inscription tells us; yet Aurelius Belius Philippus, whose name contains Latin, Semitic-theophoric, and Greek elements,[54] has captured scholars’ interest for two reasons: first because, although being an Epicurean philosopher and therefore an exponent of Hellenic culture, he had strong relations to the cult of Belus,[55] and second, because of the supposed inconsistency between his Epicureanism and his priesthood.[56] However, rather than perceiving Aurelius Belius Philippus as a person enmeshed in inner paradoxes, we should perhaps question whether the supposed inconsistency might not prove to be an error of perspective on our part. For the issue whether an *orthodox* Epicurean should be a

priest of Belus is relevant if, and only if, the postulate is valid that Epicurus' *doxai* were determinant for his followers in their public life.

Very mysterious. I wonder what was going on here!

Post by "Cassius" of November 3, 2020 at 9:45 AM

I am pretty sure both of these articles are totally new to me so it is going to take me some time to comment. But in the same department, it was sort of my understanding that the Epicurean who was an "advisor" (my word because I can't remember more detail to Antiochus Epiphanes and his dealings with Jerusalem was an Epicurean.

Hmm I am thinking sort of about this article, but it was my recollection that the references were to an Epicurean in his government, not to Antiochus himself:
<https://web.archive.org/web/2018032911.../history.html#C>

Post by "Don" of November 3, 2020 at 9:49 AM

This could be evidence of [Cassius](#) 's conviction that Epicureans weren't wallflowers and that some took part civic and political life.

Post by "Cassius" of November 3, 2020 at 9:53 AM

[Quote from Don](#)

This could be evidence of Cassius 's conviction that Epicureans weren't wallflowers and that some took part civic and political life.

Oh yes, that's a conviction of mine that's at least as strong as that Epicurus was serious about what he was saying about divinity. Give me liberty, or give me death, but at the end of my life above all don't make me have to admit to myself that I spent my life entirely in a cave on bread and water and running from the world! 😊