

Script of "A Few Days In Athens" Suitable For Performance

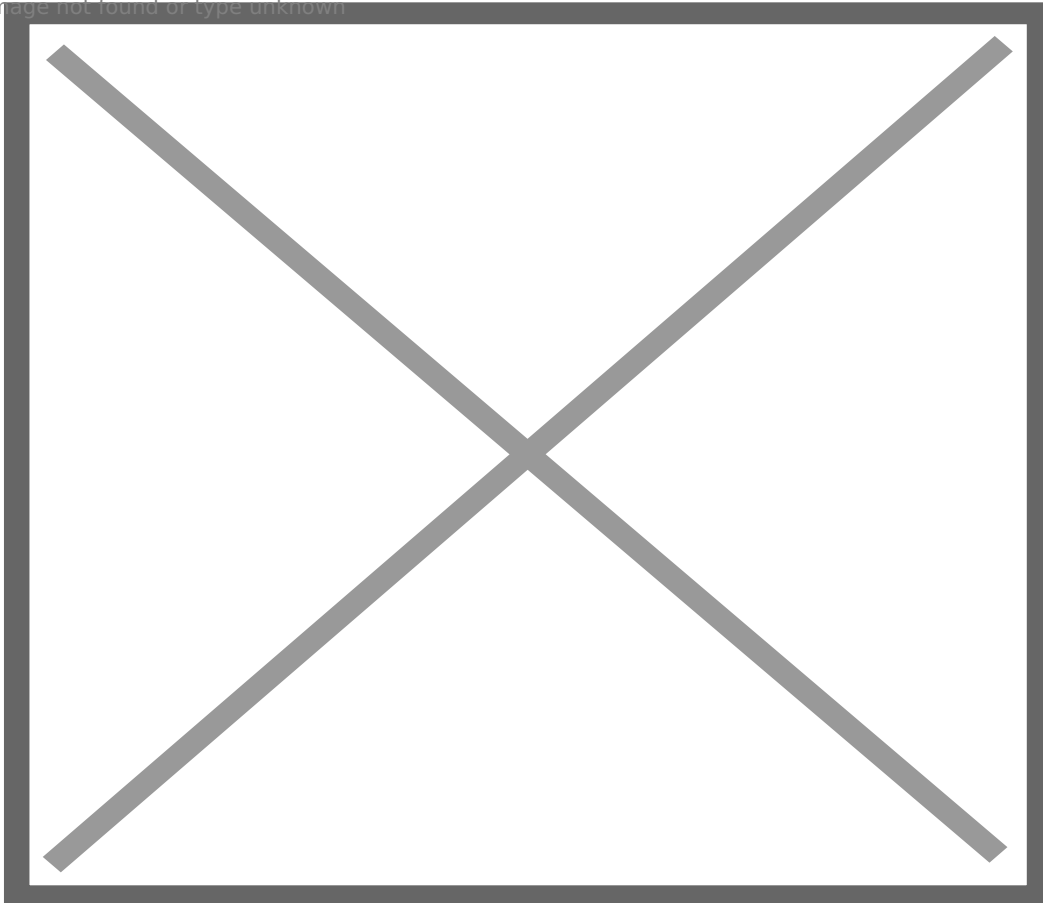
Post by "Cassius" of December 25, 2021 at 9:51 AM

As a long term goal that now seems possible using Zoom, Skype, or similar system, I would like to see us coordinate a collaborative audio recording of "A Few Days In Athens" using participants here at EpicureanFriends as the reader for each character.

The text of "A Few Days In Athens" is almost usable as it, but it probably requires the addition of more verbal cues to alert the listener to who is speaking at a particular time. If we have enough readers to have a voice for each character that problem will be easier to address, but even then it may not be apparent in audio format who is speaking to whom at a particular time.

For that reason there is now a collaborate document in the Lexicon where we can work on modifying the text to produce a performance-ready version of the script:

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[Script of "A Few Days In Athens" Suitable For Performance - Epicureanfriends.com](http://www.epicureanfriends.com/thread/2290-script-of-a-few-days-in-athens-suitable-for-performance/)

Post by “Don” of December 25, 2021 at 12:21 PM

To really make it suitable for performance, I would suggest we'd really need something like this. That's NOT to say you couldn't stick directly to them text! Then narrator would just have to stick close to the text and jump in when there's "her said..." etc. :

THEON: Oh monstrous! Ye Gods! and will ye suffer your names to be thus blasphemed? How do ye not strike with thunder the actor and teacher of such enormities? What! will ye suffer our youth, and the youth of after ages, to be seduced by this shameless Gargettian? Shall the Stoic portico be forsaken for the garden of Epicurus? Minerva, shield thy city! Shut the ears of thy sons against the voice of this deceiver!

NARRATOR: Thus did Theon, having left the portico of the Stoics, give vent to the indignation which the words of Timocrates had worked up within him. Timocrates had been a disciple of the new school; but, quarreling with his master, had fled to the followers of Zeno; and to make the greater merit of his apostacy, and better to gain the hearts of his new friends, poured forth daily execrations on his former teacher, painting him and his disciples in the blackest colours of deformity; revealing, with a countenance distorted as with horror, and a voice hurried and suppressed as from the agonies of dreadful recollections, the secrets of those midnight orgies, where, in the midst of his pupils, the philosopher of Gargettium officiated as master of the cursed ceremonies of riot and impiety.

Full of these nocturnal horrors, the young Theon traversed with hasty steps the streets of Athens, and issuing from the city, without perceiving that he did so, took the road to the Piraeus. The noise of the harbor roused him to recollection, and, feeling it out of tune with his thoughts, he turned up the more peaceful banks of the Cephissus, and, seating himself on the stump of a withered olive, his feet almost washed by the water, he fell back again into his reverie. How long he had sat he knew not, when the sound of gently approaching footsteps once more recalled him. He turned his head, and, after a start and gaze of astonishment, bent with veneration to the figure before him. It was of the middle size, and robed in white, pure as the vestments of the Pythia. The shape, the attitude, the foldings of the garment, were such as the chisel of Phidias would have given to the God of Elocution. The head accorded with the rest of the figure; it sat upon the shoulders with a grace that a painter would have paused to contemplate — elevated, yet somewhat inclining forward, as if habituated gently to seek and benevolently to yield attention. The face a poet would have gazed upon, and thought he beheld in it one of the images of his fancy embodied. The features were not cast for the statuary; they were noble, but not regular. Wisdom beamed mildly from the eye, and candor was on the broad

forehead, the mouth reposed in a soft, almost imperceptible smile, that did not curl the lips or disturb the cheeks, and was seen only in the serene and holy benignity that shone over the whole physiognomy: it was a gleam of sunshine sleeping on a lucid lake. The first lines of age were traced on the brow and round the chin, but so gently as to mellow rather than deepen expression: the hair indeed seemed prematurely touched by time, for it was of a pure silver, thrown back from the forehead, and fringing the throat behind with short curls. He received benignly the salutation of the youth, and gently with his hand returning it —

EPICURUS: Let me not break your meditations; I would rather share than disturb them.

NARRATOR: If the stranger's appearance had enchanted Theon, his voice did now more so; never had a sound so sweet, so musical, struck upon his ear.

THEON (to himself): Surely I behold and hear a divinity.

NARRATOR: Theon stepped backwards, and half-stooped his knee with veneration.

EPICURUS: From the groves of the Academy, I see.

THEON: No; from the portico.

EPICURUS: Ah! I had not thought Zeno could send forth such a dreamer. You are in a good school, a school of real virtue; and, if I read faces well, as I think I do, I see a pupil that will not disgrace its doctrines.

Post by “Cassius” of December 25, 2021 at 1:44 PM

Yes exactly Don! That's why I went ahead and set up the collaborative document for revision, as it will take some effort to rework it into that format.

There's a lot of back and forth conversation that sometimes isn't exactly clear even when we are reading the text, but most of that works itself out when we get different voices to read the different parts. But even in those sections we probably need additional labeling so it really does look more like a script.

Post by “Kalosyni” of December 25, 2021 at 2:52 PM

As I read over this, I have a mixed feelings about this. I think that many here love the beauty of words...as in Lucretius writings, and so also with "A Few Days in Athens" (which I haven't read yet) ...this display of the beauty of word choice is laudable, but with its words comes a complexity and lengthiness that some others may not necessarily enjoy as much, since the language is not like the simplicity of current times. This is a lot like how some people might enjoy a Shakespeare play, which I have at times done so myself, though my brain "hurts" afterward from the struggle of trying to fully understand everything.

So Cassius...Do you feel that you want to maintain the integrity of the word choice and keep a kind of respect for the original work...or do you feel the message behind the words is more important? (in which something entirely new and much shorter in length could be written...a play, and credit would be given as based upon "A Few Days in Athens".

To put it out there where I stand...is that I prefer a straightforwardness in the presentation of thoughts and ideas, and generally enjoy a simplicity of language. And I do understand everyone has their individual preferences.

Post by "Cassius" of December 25, 2021 at 3:25 PM

I think virtually all your concerns will be resolved when you get a chance to read it. As it stands now, it is written virtually in play form, and it tells a story which is very simple and not overly complex or divided into tangents.

I always warn people that the first chapter or two are kind of "Flowery" - written in an eighteenth century style that turns off some people (especially men). But once you get past the initial descriptions of the characters (where I think the floweriness is most in display) the story settles down to a very direct style.

So if I understand your concern there is likely to be no need for deep rewrite at all -- it is already in a form which could be used almost without modification.

Once you read it or at least glance through it let us know if your view on this changes.

Post by "Cassius" of December 25, 2021 at 3:36 PM

I will say this however, has already gone through my mind: It would be wrong to make major changes in the way the work is written, but there are a couple of places (perhaps two come to mind) where a slight change in wording would make the meaning much more clear and

consistent with what I think most all of us would agree is what Epicurus actually wrote.

I am not sure those come to mind right now except in regard to two related passages (1) a sentence on the existence of gods (in which she has Epicurus take a position here that is clearly not what he said and is far outside any of the positions we regularly debate here, and (2) an extended discussion of observation vs theory that seems also to have been her own variation on Epicurus.

As we get much further into the project than we are now we can review some of the earlier posts here on criticism of the work, and we can at the very least gather those into an "appendix" which we keep with the final production.

Check here for earlier discussions and criticisms. There are certainly some significant issues in the book that would be much too extensive and totally improper to try to deal with by any "rewriting," but in general it is a very well done story and does do a good job of conveying many core Epicurean viewpoints:

Thread

[Warnings For New Readers of A Few Days In Athens](#)

Please be sure to see Elayne's thread here: [Problems in Frances Wright's "A Few Days in Athens"](#)



Cassius

October 22, 2020 at 3:59 PM