

# **Epicurus' Appearance - Research Into What He Looked Like**

**Post by "Cassius" of May 26, 2021 at 8:16 AM**

OK, I am not sure we have a picture of an engraved gem inscribed EPICURUS do we? If so, what is the known history of that?

rate from and more difficult than identifying his head, especially since none of the statues now displays an “Epicurus” inscription, whereas two of the busts do (Richter nrs. 1 and 8). Moreover, the statue-type is not illustrated in another medium, as is the bust, which appears in profile with an inscription saying “Epicurus” on an engraved gem.<sup>2</sup> But if the bust is easier to identify than the statue-type, the balance is perhaps made up by the fact that the statue-type is easier to restore than the head because there are so few witnesses of the statue-type and so much less disagreement among them than one finds among the copies of the head. Artists obviously saw more creative opportunities in facial expression than in sandals, chairs, book-rolls, or even drapery. The major difficulty we face in reconstructing the statue-type arises less from the evidence per se than from the scholarly issue about what should count as good evidence.

To begin with identification, the statue-type is only identifiable as Epicurus on the basis of circumstantial evidence. Lippold argued that the identification of S1–5 and Dontas Γ and Δ as Epicurus can be made for the following reasons: (1) S1, formerly in the Ludovisi collection, seems to have once had an “Epicurus” inscription, which has since disappeared due to weathering; (2) many of the busts show the himation draped over the left shoulder, as do the statues (cf. B2, 5, 8, 9, 13, 17, 20, 24, 28, 29); (3) on the site of an ancient Roman villa in Tuscany were found S2 and a similar statuette of Hermarchus (securely identifiable because its head is intact), and it is logical to expect that Hermarchus, the second head of the school, would have been paired with his predecessor Epicurus.<sup>3</sup> This last argument may be bolstered now by the important find of yet two more statues of the Epicurus-type (Dontas Γ and Δ). They were discovered in Ath-

2. G. M. A. Richter, *The Engraved Gems of the Romans* (London 1971) 88, nr. 438bis. We cannot be too grateful for so much inscriptional confirmation of Epicurus’ iconography, since any single Roman inscription always has to be suspected of being a *metagraphe*. See H. Blanck, *Wiederverwendung alter Statuen als Ehrendenkmäler bei Griechen und Römern* (Cologne 1963) 3–24 (=pp. 11–25 of the second edition [Rome 1969]).

3. G. Lippold, *Griechische Porträtstatuen* (Munich 1912) 79.