

Best Recent Version of Diogenes Laertius?

Post by "Cassius" of September 4, 2021 at 5:11 PM

[Quote from camotero](#)

So I'm hopeful that the translation will be pro Epicurus.

Well the trick there is "What is the meaning of 'pro-Epicurus?'" It's pretty safe to say that most or all of the writers who have devoted the time to write a book about him in the last 100 years would call themselves "pro-Epicurus" -- but the issue is what do they think Epicurus taught, especially in terms of engagement with the world, asceticism, relationship to Stoicism, relationship to standard Platonic doctrine, etc.

Every one of the writers on my "unfriendly" list, starting perhaps with Cyril Bailey himself, I rate as unfriendly not because they don't think they are personally well disposed toward Epicurus, but that their version of Epicurean philosophy is, in my humble opinion, antithetical to what Epicurus himself was teaching and wanted the world to understand.

That's why here on the page we've tried to summarize some of those important points, especially in the "Not Neo-Epicurean, but Epicurean" list, as well as even in the shorter golden graphic of four key elements of what Epicurus taught. Most people don't argue about the "no supernatural gods," "no life after death" part, although even there I find many writers want to gloss over that as if that's not as important as the "pleasure" issue.

But by the time you get to "all good and evil consists in sensation" (a bright line that there is no absolute virtue) and "pleasure is the beginning and end of the blessed life" (which ought to be clear enough) it takes significant explanation to lay out where the battle lines are, and unless people get directed to a source that wants to dive into those issues (like this website, or to some extent DeWitt) then they don't even see that the issues exist.

[Quote from camotero](#)

From what I glimpsed, and as the cover says, the biography of DL is not complete but rather just selections of the text.

Yes, that is what I recall. It's a "selection" from Book ten, if I recall. So that makes it a good supplement but not a full replacement to DL himself. I would still advocate you find one of the used (or new I guess) Loeb Editions (green sleeve). There are significant references to Epicurus in other sections as well as Book Ten, so ultimately you'll want to read the full thing.