

Happy New Year 2021 / 2022 !

Post by “Joshua” of January 1, 2022 at 12:02 AM

Happy New Year!

On an evening that asks us to gaze into an uncertain future, the words that come to my mind rise up from an impenetrably deep and distant past. They are the words of Diogenes of Oenoanda, which he inscribed in stone.

Quote

But if we assume it to be possible, then truly the life of the gods will pass to men. For everything will be full of justice and mutual love, and there will come to be no need of fortifications or laws and all the things which we contrive on account of one another. As for the necessities derived from agriculture, since we shall have no slaves at that time (for indeed [we ourselves shall plough] and dig and tend [the plants] and [divert] rivers and watch over [the crops], we shall] ... such things as ... not ... time ..., and such activities, [in accordance with what is] needful, will interrupt the continuity of the [shared] study of philosophy; for [the] farming operations [will provide what our] nature wants.

They are words, in part, that make me shake my head and smile; is there a charming naiveté about them? Yes, perhaps. But there is cold, steely prescience as well---the kind of sound cultural critique, a foresight born of wisdom, that would make the quack oracles of Delphi bristle with envy.

There is also, etched in that ancient stone, a strain of hope; a yearning for a better and wiser age---and that not selfishly, but altruistically wished for. His hope was not that *he* should live to see it, but that you and I, and those who follow, should live to see such an age; and I like to think we've seen a measure of it.

"That things are not so ill with you and me as they might have been, is half owing to the number who lived faithfully a hidden life, and rest in unvisited tombs."

-George Eliot