

# Updated Alternative Timeline of Epicurean History

Post by “Don” of January 18, 2022 at 4:24 PM

I did another version of this timeline a year ago, and thought it needed a revision. With a "snow day" off work, this felt like a good time.

This chronology is meant to put historical people into a more relatable context. For me at least, it's hard to remember who would have been contemporaries of whom, especially when there are BCE and CE dates involved. It's also helpful to sometimes have a more firm grasp on how far apart people were from each other. How long was it between the time Epicurus lived and when Cicero and Plutarch were writing treatises against his school?

Let's imagine Diogenes Laertius is putting together his chapter on Epicurus right about now (i.e., 2022):

- Epicurus would have lived around the same time as Columbus was making his voyages across the Atlantic Ocean to North America.
- Philodemus would have been active around 200 years after Epicurus; or, in our alternative scenario, around the time of Isaac Newton. Cicero was a contemporary of Philodemus.
- 400 years after Epicurus, Plutarch could still be vehemently anti-Epicurean. Plutarch lived around the early-mid 1800s in our alternative timeline, making him active during the time of the American Civil War.
- Diogenes of Oenoanda would have been commissioning his wall around the 1950s or mid-20th century generally. He lived 500 years after Epicurus.
- Roman emperor Marcus Aurelius died in 1984 in our alternative timeline, the same year as the pro-Epicurean satirist Lucian of Samosata.
- Our contemporary Diogenes Laertius, beginning to compile his notes for his *Lives of the Eminent Philosophers*, is working 600 years after Epicurus. Epicurus's philosophy was still vibrant after six centuries! In the next few decades, the spread of the philosophy will come to a screeching halt with the "triumph" of Christianity all but snuffing out the flame of the Epicurean school.

Notes: Any circa dates have used the specific year for calculation of the "modern" years.

Dates are from the person's Wikipedia article for consistency within this timeline. For more information, refer to Wikipedia.

Within the entries, I've included the alternative dates; the actual dates of their lives; and their age. Surprisingly, it's not uncommon for these people to have lived into their 60s and 70s and beyond.

If you see a mistake in my math, please don't hesitate to comment, and I'll be happy to edit this!

Enjoy!

- Heraclitus of Ephesus (1235-1295; c. 535 – c. 475 BCE (60))
- Anaxagoras (1270-1342; c. 500 – c. 428 BCE (72))
- Empedocles (1276-1336; c. 494 – c. 434 BCE (60))
- Socrates (1300-1371; c. 470-399 BCE (~71))
- Democritus (1310-1400; c. 460 – c. 370 BCE (~90))
- Plato (1342-1422; 428/427 or 424/423 – 348/347 BCE (~80))
- Aristotle (1386-1448; 384-322 BCE (62))
- Pyrrho (1410-1500; c. 360 – c. 270 BCE (90))
- Epicurus (1429-1500; 341-270 BCE (71))
- Polyaeus of Lampsacus (1430-1485; c. 340 – c. 285 BCE (~55))
- Zeno of Citium (1436-1508; c. 334 – c. 262 BCE (72))
- Metrodorus of Lampsacus (1439-1492; 331/0-278/7 BCE (53))
- Hermarchus (scholarch of the Garden) (1443-1518; c. 325-c. 250 BCE (~75))
- Colotes of Lampsacus (1448-1500; c. 320 – after 268 BCE (~52))
- Polystratus (scholarch of the Garden) (c.1470-1550; d. 218/9 BCE)
- Dionysius of Lamptraï (scholarch of the Garden) (c. 1493-1563; d. 205 BCE)
- Basilides (scholarch of the Garden) (1518-1593; c. 250 – c. 175 BCE (75))
- Chrysippus (1489-1562; c. 279 – c. 206 BCE (~73))
- Apollodorus (scholarch of the Garden) (fl. early 1600s; fl. 2nd century BCE)
- Zeno of Sidon (scholarch of the Garden) (1618-1693; c. 150 – c. 75 BCE (~75))
- Phaedrus (scholarch of the Garden) (1630-1699; 138 – 70/69 BCE (69))
- Patro (scholarch of the Garden) (fl. early 1700s; contemporary of Cicero's)
- Philodemus (1658-1728; c. 110 – prob. c. 40 or 35 BCE (~70))
- Marcus Tullius Cicero (1662-1725; 106 – 43 BCE (63))
- Julius Caesar (1668-1724; 100 – 15 March 44 BCE (56))
- Titus Lucretius Carus (1669-1713; c. 99 – c. 55 BCE (~44))
- Quintus Horatius Flaccus ("Horace") (1703-1760; 65 – 8 BCE (57))
- Plutarch (1814-1887; 46 – after AD 119 CE (~73))
- Epictetus (1854-1939; 50 – c. 135 CE (~85))
- Diogenes of Oenoanda (wall dated around 1950s (mid-1900s); lived 2nd century CE)
- Marcus Aurelius (1925-1984; 121 – 180 CE (59))
- Lucian of Samosata (1929-1984; c. 125 – after 180 CE (~55))
- Diogenes Laërtius (fl. early-mid 2000s; fl. 1st half of 3rd century CE)
- Athenaeus (fl. late 20th/early 21st century; fl. late 2nd/early 3rd century CE)
- Eusebius (will be born in 2064; AD 260/265 – 339/340)