

# "Epicurean Mission and Membership" - Very Interesting Article by MacGilivray On Ancient Epicurean Missionary Spirit

Post by "Kalosyni" of May 8, 2022 at 10:36 AM

This article covers a lot of background, here an interesting excerpt:

Quote

Yet it is not just the Epicurean aspiration for privacy that has led some to posit their exclusivist nature, but also **the school's communal nature**. When the idea of the Epicurean desire for a quiet garden retreat is attached to their communal living it seems, to some, that the Garden must have been a self\*sustaining, reclusive society. Although again **we must caution ourselves by noting that we are left with surprisingly few primary sources from which to examine whether such an interplay or dynamic existed**. Nor can we tell how such a format would define their understanding of those found outside of the Garden. **Most comments referencing their communal life are allusions; such as Epicurus' statement that: 'the agreeable life [is] in each other's society,'6 or when he references the insiders of the group as belonging to 'the household.'**<sup>7</sup>

Ancient commentators and historians of the Epicurean movement are equally laconic in their recording of the school's communal nature. **Diogenes Laertius, for example, remarked that: 'friends indeed came to [Epicurus] from all parts and lived with him in his garden,'**<sup>8</sup>

and in a subsequent statement he relayed for his readers the information that the **members of the Garden enjoyed 'the common life.'**<sup>9</sup> One of the only notable insights that we have received is that **their goods were held individually**, and were not communally shared\*<sup>10</sup> something that would have separated them from other communal philosophical groups such as the Pythagoreans, or, at least the portrayal of, Philo's Therapeutae.<sup>11</sup>