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Post by "Don" of September 29, 2022 at 6:42 AM

[Quote from waterholic](#)

I like the idea, but to do so I feel I miss a simple and modern body of knowledge/message

By "modern" do you mean contemporary, modern science communicators or modern figures that present "Epicurean" ideas whether or not they identify specifically as Epicurean?

[Quote from waterholic](#)

Vatican collection is the closest, but even then it's archaic and requires a predisposition to reading old texts. There is little point in attempting to convey valid, strong and sensible ideas driven by facts in a language that is not accessible for most people.

I think it all depends on the translation. I could certainly advocate for "updated" translations and certainly wouldn't advocate for anything with thee's, thou's, or behold's that give off a "Biblical" vibe.

That said, I also think there's something very valuable in reading "old texts" if for no other reason than to clearly see that human nature hasn't changed all that much in say several millennia. Even Ancient Babylonians were worried about dying, losing friends, and the exercise of power. We still do that and, no doubt, will continue to do that as a species. That thread is worth investigating, from Gilgamesh, Euripides, Shakespeare, even through even Ecclesiastes and religious and literary texts we don't necessarily agree with. Recognizing and struggling with texts makes us better able to decide what we ourselves believe and why and why not. Seeing what we believe - or sharpening what we believe - by using the classical Epicurean texts to me is a way to make a human connection to a well-worn path instead of cutting a way down the jungle path again and again.

I think there's also something to be said for being part of - dare I say - that tradition, lineage, or a worldview informed by a cohesive "body of knowledge." For me, I take pleasure in attempting to apply a school of thought that has stood the test of time. Being able to see reflections of Epicurus's Garden in contemporary thought and science amazes me and was something that attracted me enough to say " What is up with this 2,500 year old philosophy that sounds so modern??"

I don't think we can abandon the "old texts," but I also don't think we should intentionally imbue them with archaic language or fetishize them. Updating time-tested ideas is how the

modern "Stoics" have managed to corner the market on "look at this ancient wisdom we're selling." But they've thrown out or repackaged a LOT of inconvenient ancient Stoic principles to speak (i.e., to make sense) to a modern audience to the extent that I feel Marcus Aurelius or Seneca would say "Well, those are interesting ideas but... Stoicism? I don't quite recognize that as my school." I think Epicurus can survive MUCH more intact and still appeal to a modern audience. That's my argument for keeping the original texts and encouraging people to study them.

[Quote from waterholic](#)

Epicurean philosophy does not need any of that since the message is very simple and applicable

I agree Epicurus's message is very simple and applicable, but it can be deceptively simple. That's a LOT behind it, serving as a foundation, that, if one doesn't grasp that, it can be a thin veneer. That's one reason why I now agree with [Cassius](#) and others on this forum about getting a grasp of how and why Epicurus's physics is so important and how it underpins the philosophy and why one shouldn't jump right to the ethics. I disregarded a lot of the physics for awhile, but without building from the ground up, the understanding of the whole system isn't as steady. Listening to them go through the letters to Herodotus and Pythocles specifically were very instructive.

In the end, I think the old texts ground us, show us we're not alone in our ages-old struggle to come to grips with our mortal lives, and allow us to avoid reinventing the wheel over and over again.

All that said, if I've addresses something you didn't intend or completely misinterpreted what you were saying, mea culpa! 😊