

An Epicurean Study of Aristotle's Nichomachean Ethics

Post by "Cassius" of October 14, 2022 at 10:05 AM

[Quote from Don](#)

The thought that comes to mind is: is it our responsibility to convert or to simply evangelize. I don't think those are the same thing. Epicurus seemed to hold a dim view in some regards of the hoi polloi. He made his philosophy available but he wasn't handing out leaflets and screaming on the street corner.

Absolutely right. I am not sure that the Epicureans thought we have a "responsibility" to do either one. My reading of Lucretius and Diogenes both is that they had a benevolent general interest in "getting the word out" for those who were inclined to listen, so that might be akin to "evangelizing." But I definitely don't think they saw a responsibility to "convert" and they specifically seemed to acknowledged that not everyone was "well constituted" (seems I remember that in both Oinoanda and in Diogenes Laertius) so I bet they were clear-eyed about not converting everyone.

However it enhances our happiness to have more friends, and helps make us more secure if we at least don't have enemies (unnecessarily have enemies I guess I should say), so I see that as the primary way to describe the motivation to talk about the philosophy with others.

So definitely I would not scream on a street corner. Would I hand out leaflets (which appears to be exactly what the Roman Epicureans were doing)? Probably so, but I would be sure i did it unobtrusively and just mainly made them available.