

# The Twelve Fundamentals - Discussion on Lucretius Today Podcast

Post by “Don” of January 1, 2023 at 11:27 PM

The reference to this mystery list/book/work is only mentioned in a scholia (scribal note added to a manuscript) at Diogenes Laertius 10.44:

*He (Epicurus) says below that atoms have no quality at all except shape, size, and weight. But that colour varies with the arrangement of the atoms he states in his "Twelve Rudiments" ; further, that they are not of any and every size ; at any rate no atom has ever been seen by our sense.*

So, according to that, the only thing we know for sure that the "Twelve Rudiments" contains is that "1. colour varies with the arrangement of the atoms." I'm not sure of that line that comes after, but, theoretically, the "Twelve rudiments" could include "2. atoms are not of any and every size" and "3. no atom has ever been seen by our sense." But that doesn't mean there's a simple list of 12 things. So, the work could be talking about the senses, not the physics. It seems it could have been translated as "The 12 Basics" or "The 12 Fundamentals."

LSJ:

στοιχεί-ωσις , εως, ή,

A. teaching, “ἀρετῆς” Hierocl. in CA11p.445M.; elementary exposition, “τῶν ὅλων δοξῶν” Epicur.Ep.1p.4U.; αἱ δώδεκα ς., a work by Epicurus, Id.Fr.56; ή ήθικη ς., work by Eudromus, Stoic.3.268; “ς. καθολικαί” Phld.Rh.1.104 S.; τὰ ἀπλᾶ πρὸς στοιχείωσίν ἐστιν ἐπιτήδεια elementary teaching, Simp. in Cat.13.29.

2. doctrine of the elements, Gal.7.678, 15.175, 19.356.

Also:

[Henry George Liddell, Robert Scott, A Greek-English Lexicon, στοιχείον](#)