

"A Socio-Psychological and Semiotic Analysis of Epicurus' Portrait" by Bernard Frischer

Post by "Charles" of January 23, 2023 at 9:21 AM

[Quote from Cassius](#)

Your reaction to "hero worship" is very common, but ultimately I think that the concern is unjustified. Epicurean philosophy teaches you to question authority and demand answers based on evidence, and it doesn't lead in the direction of general cultism for anyone who thinks about it.

I think it's worth heeding some amount of caution over this. There's always been the trend of venerating past philosophers, and that is still true today. However, were it not for the insistence of the Epicurean school and of Epicurus himself on carrying his image, we would have a dearth of objects and depictions. It lends a much-needed certainty and confidence to an otherwise fragmented system.

The issue instead, lies in our usage of his image. Carrying around copies of jewelry that once existed among the schools (different schools often had signifiers ala the cloak and staff of the cynics) is acceptable, and so are keeping busts of notable Epicureans, in my view. There are others too, such as the commissioned art of Epicurus breaking his chains on the front page of the site. It's when we get into objects such as clothing and votive candles when it starts to become cult-like.

Pair this with our stringent need/belief to retain the classical elements of the philosophy and to not hoist eclectic principles on the same pedestal of Epicurus, and the issue becomes more apparent.