

# (Mis)Quoting Epicurus--An Analysis of Language in Epictetus

Post by “Joshua” of January 27, 2023 at 5:16 AM

I should note for the record that it was [this](#) blog post that got me thinking about it.

## Quote

That's important to note because due to the notorious ambiguity of Epicurean teachings, people sometimes want to question whether Epictetus really understood Epicureanism. It's likely, however, that he had access to more Epicurean teachings than we do today. Scholars believe Epictetus possessed rare copies of early Greek Stoic texts, which he read to students and was discussing with them in the surviving Discourses. These may have been the books of Zeno, and more likely some of those by Chrysippus. These quite probably contained references to early Epicurean teachings. However, Epictetus would also have known many late Roman Epicureans personally. As this Discourse proves, Epicureans visited him and apparently discussed philosophy in his school, in the presence of students like Arrian, who recorded this conversation. So it's unfairly dismissive to merely place in question his familiarity with the philosophy. Epictetus probably knew a great deal more about the teachings and way of life endorsed by Epicureans than we ever will.

Somehow I don't think that modern Stoics would accept this argument if it were put the other way--if it were claimed, for example, that Torquatus, Lucretius, or Philodemus understood Stoicism better than any modern Stoic ever could.