

Porphyry - Letter to Marcella -"Vain Is the Word of the Philosopher..."

Post by "Cassius" of June 13, 2023 at 9:02 AM

[Quote from Don](#)

There seem to be quite a few.

This is reminding me of something else. I can't believe even the staunchest ancient Epicurean really thought that **everything** Epicurus said was blindingly unique. We all know much of what Epicurus taught he learned from starts others had made, such as Democritus. So it's only natural that smart people do regularly hit on similar thoughts. The uniqueness of Epicurus comes through in certain particular ways, and it's probably most helpful for us to think about those particular ways and the reasons for them. That's the obvious way to sniff out when someone who's talking - for example - about "virtue" is speaking as an Epicurean or Stoic or whatever. Surely Usener had a lot of experience and ought to have been good at it, but we (or at least I) don't know Usener's own views. This is where we regularly think that DeWitt goes too far in identifying parallels to Christianity, but starting out looking for parallels to Stoicism or Plato is going to create the same issue.