

Let's Make a List of 1) Major Causes of the Decline of Epicurean Philosophy after Lucretius and 2) The Obstacles to its Revival Through Today

Post by "Cassius" of August 20, 2023 at 4:45 PM

Burning lights you are of course also raising the background question of what it is we are talking about in terms of decline and revival - whether the focus is on ethics primarily or the full picture.

It's definitely legitimate to talk about eclecticism especially as an entry point. However for purposes of the discussion let's presume that what we are talking about both in the past and in the intervening years would be the status of claiming "I am an Epicurean" and meaning by that that the person is making the point that he or she endorses the full philosophy of Epicurus - -- not necessarily every precise point of "science" at the atomic level, but including every major point of canonic, ethics, and the nature of the universe professed by Epicurus. Which is what you would expect an organized "school" would likely do.

Now of course that kind of standard applies more clearly to the intervening centuries than to 2023, but I think the basic point remains valid, and revolves around seeing Epicurus as the core organizing figure of a philosophy that he would clearly recognize as his own if he were alive at any point in the last 2000 years or even today.

For purposes of this exercise we aren't saying necessarily that we ourselves would take that path tomorrow. The main point here is analyzing the big picture in the abstract, sort of along the lines of Gibbon diagnosing the fall of Rome, for us to discuss in the podcast.

Any further ambitions beyond that should be reserved for another day. 😊 . Putting a period to this series of episodes of the podcast is the immediate objective. All comments so far have been great so we will hope for many more over the next week.