

On Use Of The Term Apikoros / Apiqoros / Bikouros Against Epicureans

Post by "Joshua" of January 16, 2024 at 1:17 AM

I do find the staying power of this usage to be remarkable. The Scottish adventurer Cunninghame Graham wrote this in a book on his travels;

Quote

Almost all Europeans in Morocco must of necessity be merchants, if not they must be consuls, for there is hardly any other industry open to them to choose. The [christian] missionaries bought and sold nothing, they were not consuls; still they ate and drank, lived in good houses, and though not rich yet passed their lives in what the Jews called luxury. So they [the Jews] agreed to call them followers of Epicurus, for, as they said, "this Epicurus was a devil who did naught but eat and drink." The nickname stuck, and changed into Bikouros by the Moors, who thought it was a title of respect, became the name throughout Morocco for a missionary. One asks as naturally for the house of Epicurus on coming to a town as one asks for the "Checquers" or the "Bells" in rural England. Are you "Bikouros"? says a Moor, and thinks he does you honour by the inquiry; but the recipients of the name are fit to burst when they reflect on their laborious days spent in the surgery, their sowing seed upon the marble quarries of the people's hearts, and that the Jews in their malignity should charge upon them by this cursed name, that they live in Morocco to escape hard work, and pass their time in eating and In in quaffing healths a thousand fathoms deep.

Which is how Bikouros came to be mentioned as a very minor character in one of Frank Herbert's *Dune* novels.