

# Luck

## Post by "Cassius" of September 17, 2024 at 1:20 PM

Here's a prior thread on the letter to Marcella: We've discussed this before as the source of the "vain is the word of a philosopher which does not heal..." and that the letter is not represented to be a direct quote from Epicurus. I've come around to a somewhat more favorable opinion of it lately, but there's no doubt in my mind that it is mashup of Stoic and Epicurean and may simply Porphyry's own views, so in my view it has to be taken with caution. I agree with your reservations on this part Kalosyni. I think that a close reading of \*exactly\* what it is saying largely rescues it from sounding Stoic, and for that reason it's useful for discussion. But a too-superficial reading of it can definitely be made to sound like a recommendation to being indifferent to pleasure and pain, which I don't think is accurate Epicureanism.

Thread

### [Porphyry - Letter to Marcella - "Vain Is the Word of the Philosopher..."](#)

I was talking to @EricR this morning and trying to remember the source of this quote. In tracking it down it seems to come from Porphyry's letter to Marcella -- but do we really know this is attributable to Epicurus? Usener seems to think so, but why? Anyone recall?

U221

**Porphyry, *Letter to Marcella*, 31, [p. 209, 23 Nauck]:** Vain is the word of a philosopher which does not heal any suffering of man. For just as there is no profit in medicine if it does not expel the diseases of the body,...



Cassius

June 12, 2023 at 11:34 AM

Second thread, same general reservations:

Thread

### [Article on the "Letter to Marcella" by Porphyry](#)

Thanks to Takis Panagiatopolis of the Athens Garden for this link:

[http://www.epicuros.gr/pages/en/Tempe...us\\_Porphyry.pdf](http://www.epicuros.gr/pages/en/Tempe...us_Porphyry.pdf)

! It seems clear that this writer was referencing Epicurean ideas while also combining them with elements that are absolutely irreconcilable. It is interesting to reflect on which are which.

"27. So then, first you must grasp the law of Nature and from it ascend to the divine law which also established the law of Nature."

[epicureanfriends.com/wcf/attachment/345/](http://epicureanfriends.com/wcf/attachment/345/)

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Cassius

April 17, 2019 at 6:40 AM

See also in particular this part for discussion that Porphyry seems to be recommending abstinence from food and sex:

Post

**[RE: Article on the "Letter to Marcella" by Porphyry](#)**

Weren't we talking recently somewhere about someone recently interested in this letter to Marcella? I still to this day have not spent much time with it, but it seems to me very dangerous to consider this an Epicurean work as it seems to have lots of unEpicurean thought mixed into it.

It would take almost a line-by-line analysis to go through it but I see this as an example which appears to me directly UNEpicurean, because if the gods have decided to give up food and sex for themselves, then...



Cassius

January 31, 2020 at 2:45 PM