

The "Leaping Pig" from Herculaneum (& modern iterations)

Post by "Belf" of April 16, 2025 at 6:57 PM



It does not appear that we currently have a thread devoted to the Leaping Pig, at least not here in this forum where it needs to be. This is to start that thread so we can eventually explore details such as :

1. Where it was discovered.
2. Where it is now.
3. References to it in articles and journals.
4. Creating a replica via 3d printing.
5. How it ties in with Epicurean iconography.

I would also like a graphic version that can be added to the right-hand panel of graphics, probably right underneath the explanation of the EpicureanFriends logo.

Something that looks like a flag, perhaps incorporating a circle or other reference to the sun, so that we have two "in your face" references at once.

"Oh, you don't like Epicurus' view of how to consider the size of the sun, we'll just say til the end of time: 'The Size of The Sun Is As It Appears!'"

"Oh, you don't like Epicurus' view of Pleasure as the goal of life and you think certain animals are 'unclean,' well then we'll adopt a PIG as our mascot!"

As to "in your face" references:

In closing I argue that the size of the sun is an Epicurean shibboleth. In Epicurus, in Lucretius and in Demetrius, we see the same nostrum repeated, with progressive elaborations that do not fully clarify the basic precept. The persistence of Epicureans in this formulation is not so much the result of reflexive dogma or pseudo-intellectual obscurantism as it is a passphrase, a litmus test. Think like an Epicurean, and you will figure out that the sun's appearance and the sun itself are two related but distinct things with two different sizes; that you must keep the infallible data of the senses, tactile as well as visual, in proper perspective when making judgments about your perception; and that the available data is insufficient to estimate the sun's magnitude to an acceptable degree of confidence (compare Barnes: 1989, 36). Think that Epicureans believe the sun's diameter is a foot, that they are absurd, and you have exposed yourself as un-Epicurean. The first/second-century AD Stoic doxographer Cleomedes, who as Algra points out "nowhere takes account of the Epicurean principle of multiple explanations," likewise fails this test when he mocks Epicurus' position on the size of the sun.

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I'm a bit of a flag nerd and decided to take a crack at this!

Edit: Realised that the "sun" was not aligned so went back to fix it. Also created versions using the classic piggy.

