

⊘ as the symbol of the philosophy of Epicurus

Post by "Julia" of May 20, 2025 at 8:36 AM

[Quote from kochiekoch](#)

Yeah, but they'd mostly know an image of Jesus.

Well, yes. Like mostly everyone anywhere in the world knows Coca-Cola *now*, nobody knew Coca-Cola on day one. Today's organised Christianists operate something similar to an international corporation, which, in the past, was an integral part of the military-industrial complex and even operated a private military for aggressive conquest... I mean. I don't know. I think we should define our target audience.

What I am looking for is something that clicks with Epicureans, and which can be used in the manner of the Star of David, a cross, and so on -- as a symbol around the house, as a piece of jewelry, and so forth. *To this end*, it shouldn't be overly lewd, offensive or anything else that would make it hard to fly the banners due to backlash from the general public. I can see myself wearing or publicly displaying a 20er moon with four dots on it, for example.

But other than that, I really don't care if non-Epicureans know what it means. They will know with time, just like we all know what someone means when he says "In the Meditations, it says..." -- the Stoics have sort-of captured an ordinary English word. What if that diary was commonly known as "Aureliatum"? Well, then you'd know that word. What if that somehow clicked with them, and they'd all start using that word starting today? You'd learn it with time.

[Quote from Don](#)

the majority of humans - or at least *many* humans - don't like ambiguity. It's easier to live a world with cut and dried rules. Rules also make it easier to enforce a structure, a hierarchy, and in-group and an out-group.

I agree. (This also applies to modern wild Gorillas and Chimpanzees, as well as pre-historic humans, from what I know.)

[Quote from Don](#)

Who gets to name the "true Epicureans"?

I'd like to counter by example: Two anarchists meet by chance, they recognise each other by use of the anarchist's symbol of an A in a circle ⊘. They might exchange numbers, meet, and discuss anarchism, often in a heated debate, often disagreeing on what the right way is -- but

they'll still be connected. Two christianists meet by chance, recognise each other by use of a cross. Two judaists meet by chance, recognise each other by use of a star of david. Same thing. Just because we look for and propose a symbol that we hope will click with most Epicureans of the general persuasion we have on this forum, as you outlined does *not* mean we register a trademark and start policing who calls themselves Epicurean... (Even though I'd love to make all those overpriced "Epicurean" wineries pay trademark royalties into a fund towards preserving the Herculaneum papyri 😊)

Quote from Kalosyni

an Epicurean symbol must have an interface between feeling and usefulness.

[Quote from Cassius](#)

There are all sorts of combinations that apply in different contexts.

[Quote from Cassius](#)

As to the bracelets and symbolism I see that as useful but differing widely by context.

[Quote from Don](#)

From what I understand, Epicurus calls us:

to see [...] to understand [...] to judge [...] And so on...

In my opinion, these aspects are all symbolised in the waning gibbous (20er moon) with four atom dots. Let me recap, in no particular order, the symbolism as far as it was outlined:

- The four dots represent the atoms, and the space between/around them, is the void
- Historically, the moon and the stars (which the four dots can also be) have provided literal guidance to traveling humans, just as they provide figurative guidance to us
- The celestial bodies have inspired art, poetry, and scientific research
- The four invisible lines between the dots represent the quadrefugaco, the lines of the tetrapharmakos
- The four lines are invisible, because abstract concepts stem from the biochemical reality material atoms form in our brains, but they don't have a literal, direct existence in the sense of a Platonic realm of ideal forms
- The space between and around also points to where the Gods live.
- The different size of the atoms alludes to both the Epicurean ideas about not every atom being equal, as well as the shibboleth about the size of the sun
- It could also be seen as an eye, as in Sic Fac Omnia Tamquam Spectet Epicurus.
- The moon ties back to an ancient tradition as well as The Man himself, and...
- also to the Epicurean emphasis of friendship and community, and with that, it ties into

- to Epicurean ideas of justice (because without it, we couldn't be friends for long...)
- The dots can be a birds-eye view of four people in the garden (represented by the moon)
- Because they're "on the moon" an emphasize of lathe biosas can be seen, too
- The points at the top (a triangle pointing up) and bottom (a triangle pointing down) of the diamond shape represent Pain and Pleasure.
- The points to the left and right (triangle pointing left and right) represent Choice and Avoidance
- They can also be Right and Wrong, as in ethics and justice
- The four atoms can be: Physics, Atomics, Canonics, and Ethics
- The lower three atoms can be Sensations, Anticipations and Feelings, leading to the upper one: our Judgement about what is true in the world
- The four atoms are arranged in a diamond, the most durable natural physical substance (we currently know of), representing for the unshakable enduring trust in the Canon and the physical nature of the Cosmos with no supernatural intervention.
- The 20th moon is perpetually "born", "grows up" and "dies" again, which can be seen as a circle of life
- However, in moving through it's cycle, moon might fade from view, but it never truly disappears: nothing comes from nothing.
- It can also represent the linear, steady, forward-only passage of time (we cannot turn back time, not can we pause it)
- The space around the moon is as infinite as the universe itself
- Three atoms can be the canon, with the fourth being
- Even on nights we cannot see the 20th moon, anywhere on the night sky we can usually find four stars roughly arranged in a diamond on both hemispheres; this symbolises the eternal wisdom in what the four atoms represent, how they're there every day of the week, at any time of the day, and can offer us guidance through life even when it's not a time to celebrate
- This is also represented by the earth's moon looking that same way on earth practically forever (100 million years from now, human descendents will look back at me with an amused chuckle)
- because any constellation will do, it also says that there is no special meaning to the stars, symbolising the *stance against superstitions* (as can be found in like today's zodiac signs, ancient Babylonian / Hellenistic astrology, religionism, etc)
- ...

That's a total of 27 interpretations already (I'm sure more could be found), and I argue that is not a weakness, but a strength: The symbol offers something for everyone, making it viable for broad adoption, and leading to the 28th interpretation: There is no universally agreed-upon authority issuing decrees about what "a true Epicurean" is. The symbol itself is a space for exploration, it is what your senses and judgement tell you it is, and that meta-level is itself Epicurean 😊

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(Copy & Paste from [Don](#) in [this post](#).)