

"You will not taste death: Jesus and Epicureanism" (Gospel of Thomas Thread)

Post by "Eikadistes" of February 5, 2026 at 11:54 AM

This is an awesome contribution of material. thank you for sharing your work!

[Quote from mlinssen](#)

Never take anyone's word for anything, and solely judge for yourself

I've come to the same conclusion with regards to translations. I've found that many of our translation of classical texts come from stuffy British lords in the late 19th-century, whose contributions are excellent, reliable, and educational, yet still inject their own linguistic limitations.

... if I read ONE more translation with "in this wise", **BY ZEUS** ... 🤪

Not that they are *wrong*, just incomplete, or in need of an update for modern ears, or in need of a review by people (100+ years later) who benefit from a vast repository of educational resources.

In that regard, I really appreciate your angle. (Also, great style. You have a strong literary voice).

[Quote from mlinssen](#)

Pros:

1. Rejection of religion
2. Rejection of the proverbial pot of gold
3. Indifference to gods
4. A stress on (autonomous!) movement and action
5. Rejection of everything outside, and sole focus on the inside
6. Rejection of reincarnation (e.g. 27, 89, 112)
7. Rejection of leaders, status

Cons:

- A. Not a single mention of pleasure, and only one mention of 'my soul gave **pain**' in (28)
- B. Thomas doesn't bother at all with any cosmogony of any kind, which fits with

rejecting anything on the outside. I find the Epictetus idea of only caring for that which is in your control particularly strong in Thomas. Let's be honest, all ideas about any cosmogony are mere opinions.

C. Desire is a twin pair: desire [ἔπιθυμι] Noun masculine 99, Desire [ἐπιθυμῶ] Verb 38, 47. I can't evaluate it in an Epicurean sense.

D. Nowt about friendship. Thomas' Quest is a lonely, utterly solitary one where it is even strongly recommended to avoid everyone (64, 65).

E. Knowledge comes from empiricism by oneself about oneself inside oneself. It's the only knowledge of use, and when devoid of it you are doomed, and dead

Display More

I think this is a fair summation, with perhaps one tweak on point (3)., which corresponds with an earlier observation on prayer: while the forms of the gods are indifferent to the human drama, we are encouraged to practice piety, and engage in prayer (so long as it isn't about wish fulfillment).

I do see similarities, perhaps more so than with logocentric *John*, or the synoptic gospels.

Out of curiosity, have you found any relationship between the propositions in *Thomas* and the Apikorsim tradition in Judaism? I've loosely understood *Thomas* to be a mystical document that emerged from post-Second Temple Messianic Judaism, so in the regard of setting a contrast against other sects, I wonder if they were sympathetic to Apikorsim (less so ideologically, but perhaps more so in an "enemy of my enemy" kind of way).

Tonally, I observe a contrast against Epicurean texts. *Thomas* relies heavily on (what I think Epíkouros would agree to refer to as) "the mythic drama of tragic poets", in this case, the narratives provided from ancient Hebrew texts, like *Genesis* and *Jacob*. Epíkouros suggests that only a wise person can interface with art and metaphor in a helpful manner, so using fables and metaphors as teaching tools for students is seen as obfuscating (compared with *parresia*, "frank speech").

That doesn't necessarily mean that the content of those metaphors is anti-thetical. I think, maybe, speaking for myself, as an Epicurean, I want to skip metaphors and ask for a frank description, because I feel like I can never truly be sure what someone wielding metaphor *really* means. At the same time, it isn't pure grey—like you indicate, all translations benefit from review, and I am sure that there are *more* authentic, versus *less* authentic translations, each being the consequence of the educational resources available to the translator. Inter-disciplinary study is very helpful.

I'm also curious on your thoughts on the influence the author of *Thomas* might have had against mystical currents that would later develop into christian "heretics" and Persian mystical sects that are sometimes loosely referred to as "Gnostic" (or, at that, if "Gnostic" is even a useful identifier).

Overall, great job. I'm going to continue reviewing because I am unfamiliar with much of this.