

# Revisiting Issues of The Use of AI in Epicurean Philosophy

Post by “Eikadistes” of April 2, 2026 at 6:19 PM

This discussion brings a few quotes to mind that provide some nuance.

We're certainly cautioned against explicit proselytization as a matter of practicality:

- **"Never did I reach to please the masses, for truly what pleases them, I did not understand, but what I understood was far away from their perception."** (Usener fragment 187)

And any actions fueled by the motivation of personal advancement are risky:

- **"They will not make flowery speeches [...] They will make plans to gain public approval only so far as to avoid being treated with contempt [...] They will establish a school, but not in order to lead a mob; and they will gain notoriety in public, but not enthusiastically."** (Laértios 10.120)

Loukianós provides some nuance in terms of an Epicurean's first intention in discourse:

- **"My object, dear friend, in" writing the book *Alexander the False Prophet* "has been twofold. [1] First, I was willing to oblige a friend and comrade who is for me the pattern of wisdom, sincerity, good humour, justice, tranquillity, and geniality."**

Epíkouros says the same thing in his *Epistle to Herodótos*, in terms of a personalized outline:

- **"[For] you, oh, Hēródotos, these summaries have been epitomized on account of the whole of the nature [that] exists."** (10.82).

It seems that, first and foremost, we're trying to help our immediate friends. Yet that's now all those two authors say. Loukianós adds this in *Alexander the False Prophet*:

- **"[2] But secondly I was still more concerned [...] to strike a blow for Epicurus [...] I think casual readers too may find my essay not unserviceable, since it is not only destructive but, for men of sense, constructive also."** (61)

Epíkouros also explains to Herodótos that the "memory of doctrines" are also intended **"so that for each of the [critical] times [students] are able to help themselves in the most important [matters]"** (10.35), so there is a dual purpose. The voice is intended for *one* reader (Epíkouros changes his tone in each letter for comprehension), but the concepts are meant for us *all*.

So "striking a blow for Epicurus" is contrasted against helping a single friend. Here, we have a much more cosmopolitan attitude that, as far as I understand, is championed by Diogénēs:

- The man of Oinóanda writes that in **"I wanted at this moment to help men of sense [...] I would do all in my power [...] to give them the best advice. But since, as I have asserted, the great majority are all in common [...] and their numbers are growing even bigger [...] and since it is right that I should help also those who will come after me [...] as well as being a kindly act to give assistance to the strangers living amongst us; since then the assistance from my work concerns a greater number I wished by making use of this colonnade to set forth in public the remedies which bring salvation"** (*The Stone Inscription*, frag. 2; trans. Chilton)

Here, his words express to me a kind of social altruism or civic philanthropy, especially with regard to providing **"assistance to the strangers living amongst us."** This proposition of empathy toward strangers sounds ... downright Judeo-Christians? (Lev. 19:33-34 Ex. 23:9, Detu. 10:18-19, 27:19, Matt. 25) ... well, at least *those* verses. I can't defend the entire chronicle.

Along these lines, Lucretius also writes, first and foremost, to his friend Memmius, with a secondary intention of writing a masterpiece for the ages, foreigners and strangers, alike:

- **"... this doctrine seems generally somewhat bitter to those by whom it has not been handled [... so I] have resolved to set forth to you our doctrine in sweet-toned Pierian verse and overlay it as it were with the pleasant honey of the muses"** (Book 1.943-947).

Considering all of this, I'm not sure exactly where I fit in terms of my personal motivations to spread the word. On one hand, I bring up our tradition in casual conversations with friends to help explain concepts. In terms of inviting them to Eikas (etc.) ... I sort of leave an open invitation, but I also don't remind everyone, and I want to make sure I'm not pressuring anyone. I hate it when anyone does that to me, so I want to avoid making anyone feel like I'm trying to make a sale or convert them.

In the meantime, I'm going to leave cryptic message in public places and pique curiosity. 😊

