

Can You Suggest A Reading List For New Students of Epicurus?

Post by "Cassius" of September 3, 2019 at 8:10 PM

What are the best three resources for a beginning student to read?

1 - Norman DeWitt 'Epicurus and His Philosophy' which will give you the necessary overall context of what you are about to read in the next two sources.

2 - [Diogenes Laertius' Biography of Epicurus](#) which will give you the primary source material from which everyone works.

3 - Lucretius "On The Nature of Things" in a *narrative* translation which will give you a trustworthy example of the thought process of an ancient Epicurean and how it starts with physics about the nature of the universe, the nature of the human soul, and the primary role of sensation over "logic." The current authoritative version is by Martin Ferguson Smith by Hackett publishing, but there are free public domain ones at this link - [https://epicureanfriends.com/wiki/doku.php?...ature of things](https://epicureanfriends.com/wiki/doku.php?...ature_of_things)

Only after you've got a good grounding in the overall philosophy will you be in a position to understand why the modern summary "Epicurus was a strange hedonist because he defined pleasure as the absence of pain" is so ridiculously inaccurate and demeaning to the man and his legacy to humanity.

If you asked me for a fourth, I would say Cicero's "On Ends" which gives from the pen of someone who knew them intimately more of the big picture of the logical arguments from opposing schools with which the ancient Epicureans were dealing.