

# High Water Mark of The Epicurean Movement In The Ancient World : October 3, 42 BC

Post by "Cassius" of September 4, 2019 at 8:38 AM



Just for fun I thought it would be interesting to the Epicurean movement in the ancient world. I have a nomination, even down to the day: October 3, 42 BC.

The reason I suggest that day is that this is the day that Gaius Cassius Longinus, a self-proclaimed Epicurean, was defeated at the Battle of Philippi.

Up until the moment of defeat, according to my understanding of the history, the world had

advanced to the place where:

1. There was continuing existence of the original school of Epicurus in Athens, and presumably all of Greece and much of the Greek-influenced East had significant Epicurean presence.
2. According to Cicero, Epicurean philosophy had "taken Italy by storm."
3. Epicurean Philosophy was so widely regarded that Cicero felt obliged to devote a large section of his work "On Ends" to describing and opposing it.
4. Cicero's best friend (Titus Atticus Pomponius) and leading citizen of Rome was an Epicurean.
5. Julius Caesar, leading citizen of Rome and temporary dictator, had Epicurean viewpoints on certain subjects, if not an Epicurean himself (or at least he was accused of this during the Cataline conspiracy).
6. Julius Caesar's father in law was the prominent Epicurean Piso, owner of what is now known as the Villa of the Papyri in Herculaneum.
7. Popular works by Catus, Amafinius, Rabirius, and others were circulating in the Roman world.
8. People later to become Epicurean-inspired poets like Horace and Virgil were on their way up in life.
9. Lucretius had written and published "De Rerum Natura."
10. Cassius Longinus had publicly converted to Epicurean philosophy, and we know other Roman generals, including Panza, had also done so.
11. Philodemus of Gadara, and others, were at working continuing to spread Epicurean philosophy.

Had the battle of Philippi been won by Cassius Longinus (as a result of a better performance by Brutus, who was not the same level of military leader as was Cassius), then the Roman world would have been:

1. Led by a Consul who was a self-proclaimed Epicurean.
2. The school of Epicurus and the spread of Epicurean philosophy would have likely gained official sanction and therefore wider adoption.

Instead, with the Senatorial forces suppressed after the result of the Roman Civil War was complete:

1. Octavian / Augustus clamped down on private associations in Rome (which is significant if we presume that any organized Epicurean movements were private associations).
2. The Empire consolidated power and the social climate became significantly more concerned with duty and obedience and sacrifice for the state than ever before.

Let me know your thoughts on this suggestion, as well as alternatives.