

Did Ancient Epicureans Live In Communes? Should We Try To Do That Today?

Post by "Cassius" of March 11, 2017 at 6:12 PM

[Michael Carteron](#) [March 1 at 10:27pm](#) I've read references to Epicureans living in communes, indeed one source claims Christian monasteries were based on them, taking over the existing communities. This is said to be an early example of communism. So what truth is there to all this?

[Ilkka Vuoristo](#) or type unknown [Ilkka Vuoristo](#) Very little truth. There's no evidence of this. Even the original Garden group wasn't a commune, but a school and a house owned by Epicurus. The other people were either faculty, guests, or both.
Laertius 10 -- 11

"Friends indeed came to him from all parts and lived with him in his garden. [...] He further says that Epicurus did not think it right that their property should be held in common, as required by the maxim of Pythagoras about the goods of friends; such a practice in his opinion implied mistrust, and without confidence there is no friendship."

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[Michael Carteron](#) or type unknown

[Michael Carteron](#) I wonder where they get this idea then.

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[Ilkka Vuoristo](#)

[Ilkka Vuoristo](#) Who knows... They probably think that because we have communes today, the Garden must have been one (because people were living together).

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[Michael Carteron](#)

[Michael Carteron](#) Well based on the Laertius reference and what I've read elsewhere, it seems there were ancient communes. Perhaps the Epicureans have been wrongly lumped in with them.

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[Panos Alexiou](#) or type unknown

[Panos Alexiou](#) Pythagoreans had a cult like commune structure afaik.

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Cassius Amicus type unknown

Write a reply...

Elli Pensa type unknown

Elli Pensa Friends indeed came to him from all parts and lived with him in his garden. This is stated by Apollodorus, [11] who also says that he purchased the garden for eighty minae ; and to the same effect Diocles in the third book of his Epitome speaks of them as living a very simple and frugal life ; at all events they were content with half a pint of thin wine and were, for the rest, thoroughgoing water-drinkers. He further says that Epicurus did not think it right that their property should be held in common, as required by the maxim of Pythagoras about the goods of friends ; such a practice in his opinion implied mistrust, and without confidence there is no friendship.

IMO there is a confusion between the epicurean hospitality and the commune living by some others.

The above from Laertius makes to us clear that the garden was not a commune of people who were sharing any property in common. Epicurus purchased the garden and there was a hospitality by him when his friends were visited him in Athens, and stayed there as long as they could or liked.

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~~nathan harry bartman~~ type unknown

~~nathan harry bartman~~ Coincidentally, I was having a dialogue (that felt more like a monologue **lf61b.png** **:P**) with someone the other day who made this assertion to justify a separate point. To my knowledge, there is no reasonable link between the 'commune' and 'Epicureanism' any more than there is between any two other cooperative human behaviors.

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