

EpicureaPoetica—Epicurean Themes in Poetry [Video Project]

Post by “Joshua” of July 21, 2020 at 1:29 PM

In our recent meeting I mentioned an idea I've been kicking around lately. This is a thread to flesh out the project, and to invite comment and feedback.

Recent major projects have been the group reading of DeWitt, and the ongoing and very dedicated podcast on the close reading of Lucretius. We have additionally been enriched by the rebirth of a classical tradition; the 'feast' (or celebration) and meeting of the Twentieth. These have been excellent and informative, as well as richly inspiring!

But there is as well a large and mostly formless mass of secondary literature pertaining to our school, and I feel that there is an opportunity here to shed new light on some of it.

Working on the model of [LatinPerDiem](#), I envision brief, simple and crisp presentations exploring the shorter poetic works of Epicureans and their detractors: Horace and Virgil; Philodemus, Anacreon, and Catullus; Frederick the Great, Edmund Spenser, and Alfred Tennyson. Lucretius was particularly influential, and the borrowings innumerable, so there will be a lot to work with.

The planned first 'Episode' will explore themes of madness, death and suicide in Tennyson's masterful Victorian poem "*Lucretius*". I am still looking for a proper and corrected sample of the text, but in the mean time I have been studying the poem [Here](#).

One key to my analysis will be a short section of another of Tennyson's poems, which you can find [Here](#). Careful readers will notice the certain allusion to Lucretius that doubtfully concludes the passage. (I'll post this passage later when I find it.)

If you happen to read the poem and there are points you would like to see touched upon, I encourage you to post them here! I look forward to putting this together.

-Joshua

Post by “Cassius” of July 21, 2020 at 2:26 PM

What can we name the thread to make it more descriptive? Have you thought of a podcast name? Something that labels it as focusing on the secondary literature or on specific points, rather than on the larger major works?

Post by “Joshua” of July 21, 2020 at 6:56 PM

I've secured the necessary domain and gmail address, so I can *tentatively* announce EpicureaPoetica as the name of the 'show'. The Latin is slightly clunky, but I suppose "Of the Poetry of the Epicurean Tradition" would be a loose translation. Mainly I derive it from *Epicurea*, which was a collection of fragments compiled by Usener, and *Poetica*, which of course is the Latin for poetry as well as the title of a work by Horace (*Ars Poetica*).

Post by “Cassius” of July 21, 2020 at 8:27 PM

Sounds great Joshua - keep us posted!

Post by “Joshua” of July 22, 2020 at 12:02 AM

The software I've downloaded for the task;

OBS Studio--Screen Recording software

EpicPen--Screen marking tool, for basic visual annotations of the text

Audacity--Audio recording, although OBS Studio has a native audio client that I'll try first.

And an idea I had for flavor art;

[RA6CBGX.png](#) or type unknown

Which is a software cartoonification of this image;

[JBLqBmI.jpg](#) or type unknown

(The yellow ribbon is a watermark of sorts; I would have to actually pay for the photo editor or find an alternative to do it properly. BeFunky is the name that popped up in case anyone wants to play around with it)

Post by “Cassius” of July 22, 2020 at 12:40 AM

1 - Wow that cartoon software works pretty well!

2 - I use Audacity for all the editing of the Lucretius Today Podcast and it works well

3 - I know people swear by OBS Studio and have played with it but not found reason to use it - we record the podcast in Skype and I just edit that file in Audacity.

4 - The visual annotation feature looks like it is perfect for the type of video you're talking about.

Post by “Joshua” of July 28, 2020 at 8:01 PM

Further work on the logo/art;

[3PurL6X.png](#) or type unknown

With space for project title;

[Xcbp44k.png?1](#) or type unknown

And a longer version as a banner;

[06peFDi.jpg](#) or type unknown

What I really need now is a good text editor with a block font that works well with this art style!
Hoping to record something tomorrow evening.

-josh

Post by “Joshua” of July 28, 2020 at 8:14 PM

And a timeless quandary; to what extent are photographs of these old sculptures protected by copyright?

Post by “Don” of July 28, 2020 at 8:31 PM

[Quote from JJElbert](#)

And a timeless quandary; to what extent are photographs of these old sculptures protected by copyright?

Call it fair use (unless you're making money) and derivative works.

Post by “Joshua” of July 28, 2020 at 8:32 PM

Quote

Call it fair use (unless you're making money) and derivative works.

Perfect!

Post by “Don” of July 28, 2020 at 9:28 PM

Oops, I guess it's the copyright holder that owns the [rights to make derivative works](#). Mea culpa.

But you might be able to argue fair use on educational grounds. But honestly, I'm seeing that same image on book jackets and other things. I think you're in the clear 😊 Disclaimer: i am not a lawyer not do I give legal advice. Sorry, standard librarian disclaimer.

Post by “Cassius” of July 28, 2020 at 10:06 PM

i know nothing about copyright law either, but I too see these same images everywhere and I would imagine the worst that would happen is you eventually get asked to take it down, which is probably a one in a thousand chance, or less. I never studied the Digital Millennium Copyright Act either but maybe if someone were concerned they would even have to issue a take-down notice first? I wouldn't imagine that anything major bad could happen except in situations where maybe someone takes a Getty or other commercial image and then crops off the copyright watermark, and even then I have to wonder what's the worst that could happen for a project like this.

Looking forward to hearing the first episode!

Post by “Joshua” of July 28, 2020 at 10:38 PM

I've been reading further as well.

I have identified the copyright holder of the photograph. The image is available on several stock image sites, all sourced back to one individual; apparently this is common for photographers to license their images through several different outlets simultaneously. I would be willing to pay a nominal fee--less than \$100, say--for such a license, except that the terms of the licenses on offer are so convoluted and opaque. I would probably be fine regardless; but in order to be **free of any and all trouble forever** (a fine goal!), I think I will choose a different photo to work off of.

I have also found, looking through [Wikimedia Commons](#), that several photographs of busts of Epicurus are already offered either in the public domain, or under a Creative Commons license. That's likely the route I'll go, but I'll also keep looking.

Post by “Don” of July 28, 2020 at 10:52 PM

There's also the Flickr Commons. I did a quick Epicurus search:

<https://www.flickr.com/search/?w=commons&q=Epicurus>

I'm not sure why some came up, but there are a couple public domain Epicurus statue drawings.

Post by “Joshua” of July 28, 2020 at 10:54 PM

<https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/248475?searchField=All&sortBy=Relevance&ft=>

This image is listed as public domain by the museum that holds it. At some point we should think about a central location for all images of Epicurus known to be in the public domain.

Post by “Don” of July 28, 2020 at 11:10 PM

[Quote from JJElbert](#)

<https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/248475?searchField=All&sortBy=Relevance&ft=>

This image is listed as public domain by the museum that holds it. At some point we should think about a central location for all images of Epicurus known to be in the public domain.

That's a great find!! Looking forward to your project!

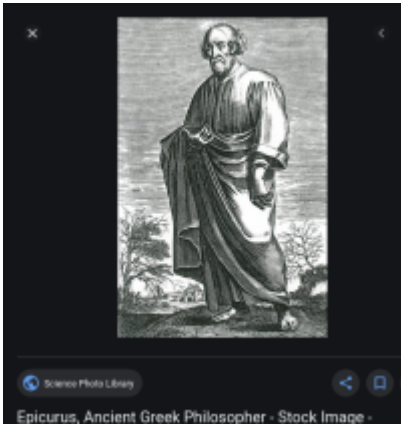
Post by “Cassius” of July 28, 2020 at 11:32 PM

As to that particular image - <https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection...=0&rpp=20&pos=1>
We see that one used all the time and it being public domain may explain it.

Which is a shame.

I have to say that my personal opinion is that is the LEAST flattering portrayal of Epicurus in existence. With the broken eyebrow, he looks confused or resigned or 'stoned,' which is why I never use that one in any of my work. Of course I generally bite my tongue when others use it

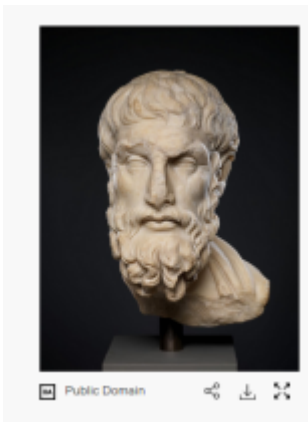
though 😊 At least it's not one of those older portrayals of a bald or other wise totally "wrong" portraits - not Epicurus at all - that we sometimes see used, such as:.



That "bald" Epicurus is the worst, but a close runner up is the broken eyebrow version:

[pasted-from-clipboard.png](#)

I suppose it's possible that this bust was mutilated by the Christians, so maybe it's a badge of honor, but in this view and lighting I think he actually looks sad:



But of course, to each his own 😊

Post by “Don” of July 28, 2020 at 11:42 PM

LOL. I had the exact opposite reaction. I saw the piercing eyes, serious brow, and clarity of the photo picking up the luster of the marble. Every curve of his hair and beard stood out. The fact

that you could see it 360° in different lighting attracted me as well.

Post by “Joshua” of July 29, 2020 at 12:06 AM

Cassius, do you happen to know anything about the current curator of Erik Anderson's old site? He has an image of the same bust I used above; an artful photo which he took himself at the Capitoline Museum in Rome. It would be the perfect photo to use--a fine portrait of Epicurus, as well as an homage to one of the early Epicureans of the internet age. I'm asking as a prelude to writing the webmaster--I just don't know where that e-mail will land!

[22.jpg](#) image not found or type unknown

Post by “Martin” of July 29, 2020 at 4:01 AM

Quote

At some point we should think about a central location for all images of Epicurus known to be in the public domain.

The gallery on this webpage could be that location. We would just need to add a subfolder (or a tag to each PD image of Epicurus?).

Post by “Joshua” of July 29, 2020 at 8:23 PM

[jY6kP82.jpg](#) image not found or type unknown

Another stab at the artwork. This uses Erik Anderson's photo above. It lacks the gravitas of the earlier effort, but that may not be a bad thing. More bookish, and less reminiscent of a U.S. banknote. The text has problems, but it's a start.

Post by “Cassius” of July 29, 2020 at 8:31 PM

Joshua that looks good. Unfortunately i do not know any leads on who resurrected Eric's site.

Post by “Don” of July 29, 2020 at 9:39 PM

Are you all talking about Epicurus.info?

I checked <https://whois-web.rrpproxy.net/> for the domain and most of the contact info was redacted for privacy. It looks like it's registered in the Netherlands and the server names are three women's names but that doesn't mean anything. It looked like it was due for renewal in November 2020.

Post by “Joshua” of July 29, 2020 at 9:55 PM

Yes, that's the one. In any case the copyright would go to his heirs in (presumably) Oregon, unless he made other arrangements. I did send an email to the webmaster, but have not had a reply.

Since his photos are not archived on any stock image site, and we cannot reasonably trace his bequests or know his wishes (except that in his life he *did* readily grant permission to republish his writings on Epicurus), and further that the photos are reproductions of artworks millennia out of copyright, I don't feel that there's much of an ethical or legal risk here. I don't mind using it to create derivative informational work. I can only hope that his family understands!

Post by “Cassius” of July 29, 2020 at 10:50 PM

Don just for the record I see you searched <http://epicurism.info/> and that's the info I get too. I would really be curious to know because they sure did a good job of lifting the old contents.

Post by “Joshua” of July 30, 2020 at 1:09 AM

I have a recording that I'm fairly happy with for a first attempt. I'll do a little light editing tomorrow before I post it. OBS Studio seems to do a fair job at audio, I didn't have to tamper with it at all! I need to put a little more work into scripting, but in other respects things are looking alright.

Post by “Joshua” of July 30, 2020 at 12:24 PM

I have had a reply to my email, and will post it here when I have the sender's permission. The writer is indeed from the Netherlands, and has previously attempted to contact Mr. Anderson's family, but with no reply.

The letter itself is full of charm, which is why I am hoping for permission to publish it here.

Post by “Joshua” of July 30, 2020 at 5:51 PM

Here is the email exchange with Koen;

Quote

Good afternoon,

I am Joshua Elbert [user jjelbert] writing in connection with the epicureanfriends.com forum, where I am active daily. I am a friend of that site, but not in any way a representative.

I am inquiring about the photography of Erik Anderson as it relates to the key figures of Epicureanism; Erik captured several photographs of ancient sculptures, including a portrait bust from Roman antiquity of Epicurus himself at the Capitoline Museum in Rome.

I am hoping to learn of the copyright status of these photographs; who holds the claim, and whether permission can be granted for use in our videos, websites, and educational and informative material--with attribution to Mr. Anderson, of course.

I would appreciate any assistance or direction.

Thank you,

Joshua Elbert

Display More

Quote

Dear Joshua,

After his death I continued his website, by copying it integrally. I think his family inherited all rights? I tried to contact them to ask for permission to continue the website. But it did not receive a response.

Kind and epicurean regards from the Netherlands,

Vriendelijke groet, [n.b. "Kind Regards"]

- Koen de Heer

Quote

Dear Koen,

Thank you very much! And thank you also for maintaing his old site. Can I post your last email to the forum? We have others who are curious, and I am certain they would like to know that you gave your time and energy to revive it. Or I can leave out your name, if you prefer it that way.

I am pleased to know that Epicurus is remembered fondly by one at least, in the land of Huygens and Spinoza.

Gratefully,

Joshua

Quote

Dear Joshua,

Sure! No need to publish anonymously. (But please do correct my linguistic error. 😊)
Perhaps I should add a note to Erik's website. Up until now I have been reluctant to change the content, even the smallest detail.

Very pleased to know that it helped someone. As the website was very insightful for me, in getting acquainted with epicureanism, which was a philosophical revelation to me, I thought it was terrible that the website went offline, not benefiting others anymore. Erik did a superb job creating his website.

I am not familiar with epicureanfriends.com and I will surf there soon. Indeed, it is not very often you meet someone familiar with

Hellenistic philosophy.

Yours sincerely,

-Koen de Heer

Display More

I have not replied to that last, but certainly will—with gratitude, and an invitation to the forum! As to Koen's English, it is excellent and I have not edited any of it.

The email address I used was contact@epicurism.info

Post by “Cassius” of July 30, 2020 at 9:09 PM

Wonderful Joshua! Thank you very much for doing this and telling us about it! I think Koen was probably very wise to republish the site exactly as it was before - who (who might have a right to) could complain about that? I know that circumstances will control, and that indeed the ancient Epicureans discussed that it is justified to charge for philosophical guidance, but I strongly suspect that most truly Epicurean-minded people are very liberal on their "intellectual property" claims (liberal meaning that they grant free use liberally 😊)

Post by “Joshua” of August 2, 2020 at 7:35 PM

I've uploaded the first episode. I had more trouble than anticipated with editing due to technical problems that I don't even begin to understand, but I used other software than I was planning and it worked out alright. I've used the free version for everything;

Captured/recorded in OBS Studio,
File converted in VLC media player
Audio and Video edited in Lightworks,
Saved as .mp4 for publication on Youtube

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tt7DDIY5T38>

Enjoy! I don't know how interesting or useful these will be, but they'll be very good experience for me in building toward other projects down the road.

Post by “Cassius” of August 2, 2020 at 10:25 PM

Listening now! Thanks! - Finished and I think it is excellent! i will publicize as best I can. Great work and looking for more Joshua!

Post by “Godfrey” of August 3, 2020 at 12:04 AM

Enjoyed it Joshua! I'm actually not familiar with the poem, so this is a great introduction. Looking forward to the next one. 📖📖

Post by “Don” of August 3, 2020 at 8:04 AM

Excellent work, [Joshua](#) ! 👍👍

I was completely ignorant of the poem and you appear to have begun to provide a solid explication.

I listened to the "episode" on my walk this morning to see if I could follow along without the visuals. No problem! Your tone and cadence made it both enjoyable as well easy to follow.

My only suggestions would be:

You do jump right in. A little more context on who Lucretius was at the beginning might help those who are new to the poem and Epicurean philosophy. You do give excellent information as the episode goes on! If you post on a website, did you plan to give an intro to the episode in textual form? I think that might be enough to provide that context I'm talking about.

I am sincerely looking forward to episode 2!! 😊

Post by “Cassius” of August 3, 2020 at 9:56 AM

Yes I think it definitely lends itself to being listened to rather than just read, but I did note that you referred to the picture of Jerome that someone listening would not be able to see. There are lots of directions you can go with this so for now I'll just wait to see your preferences. Plus, as I expect to do later with the Lucretius today podcast, you can always take the finished podcasts and repackage them in different formats for later use. I personally have not found a good *free* way to host the mp3 files and get them listed in the major directories, and that's why I went with Spreaker.com as the cheapest option I could find. But the technology behind all this is very interesting in itself (at least to me) so I am glad that you are posting info about how you are going about creating and posting.

I'm particularly interested in how you are using OBS. I see that lots of people use that for streaming and adding in multiple sources into a single final product, but for the moment I haven't seen the need to do that myself -I just edit the audio in audacity, and if I were using video I would just use my video editor. But maybe there are advantages to using OBS that I need to explore.

Post by “Joshua” of August 3, 2020 at 12:27 PM

Thank you for the feedback!

I need to look at writing a script before the next recording, to tighten things up a bit. I see that Eoghan arrived at the same conclusion on his videos. I think Don makes a good point about clearer introductions; I certainly *should* be aiming to interest a wider range of people!

The presentation itself was made in LibreOffice 'Presentation' (a PowerPoint analogue) and I'm simply using OBS Studio as a screen capture (with mic audio) of the presentation on a second display. So I'm actually recording the audio and video at the same time. OBS Studio doesn't have a native editing client, which is why I went to Lightworks.

Whether it makes more sense as a video project or a podcast (or both) is something I'll certainly think about as it develops. Does it help to have text/images on the screen?

Post by “Godfrey” of August 3, 2020 at 1:49 PM

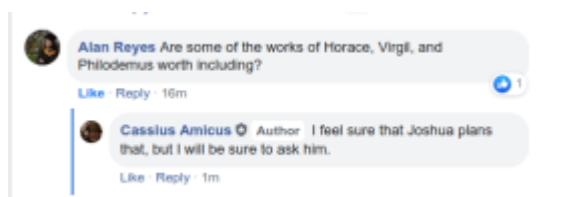
For this particular presentation I think it's helpful to have text and images. Often I'm not a fan of that, but for what you're doing I liked being able to read the text as you read or referred to it. Same with viewing the painting.

There is a podcast that I follow (typically one hour + in length) which streams on Google Podcasts as well as YouTube; in that case I listen to the audio stream and only rarely watch the video if there's something specific that I want to see. In your case I think the visuals are pretty integral. Having a purely audio stream might make it easier to access (in the car, for example) but as long as the length is around ten minutes I for one would watch the video.

Post by “Joshua” of August 3, 2020 at 2:02 PM

Yes, I think 10 minutes or even shorter is a good target. And once I have a set of them done I can strip the audio and edit it down to a podcast length for a separate release.

Post by “Cassius” of August 3, 2020 at 3:22 PM



Post by “Cassius” of August 8, 2020 at 6:32 PM

Joshua i see this comment added to the thread at Facebook. I don't recognize these two names:

[Alan Reyes](#) and or type unknown

[Cassius](#) I know that Swinburne and Pessoa also have poems of an Epicurean bent. May be worth looking into for inclusion!

Post by “Joshua” of August 9, 2020 at 2:17 AM

I've read Swinburne, but not Pessoa. I'll look into it!

Post by “Cassius” of August 17, 2020 at 9:09 PM

Joshua I paste this here not really for the point, which we have covered pretty well, but for the citation to the point, what looks like a lengthy article by someone named Cronert. Just thought at some point it might be something you or someone else would want to track down.

Post by “Joshua” of August 17, 2020 at 9:27 PM

Thank you Cassius, I'll certainly look into it! I still have that next episode on my hard drive waiting to be edited, if I can only find the time.

Post by “Cassius” of August 17, 2020 at 9:38 PM

I know what you mean about lack of time!

Here's one more section I will point out to you from Delacy;

<https://archive.org/stream/philode...ge/148/mode/2up>

starts with this section:

