

Where Is Epicurus In The "School of Athens"?

Post by "Cassius" of March 11, 2017 at 6:27 PM

Admin Edit 080620 - It appears that some of the linked photos in the post below have disappeared over time. I will try to relink them, but in the meantime, ultimately Epicurus in "the chubby" the chubby



[Elli Pensa](#) (as of 080620 the original post is still available on Facebook at this link:

[February 23 at 9:20am](#)

The famous fresco in the Vatican.

Issue: "How we find in Raphael's fresco entitled, "The School of Athens", the familiar figure of our teacher and philosopher Epicurus".

In Epicurus's epistle to Herodotus we read the following passage : "And besides we must keep all our investigations in accord with our sensations, and in particular with the immediate

apprehensions whether of the mind or of any one of the instruments of judgment, and likewise in accord with the feelings existing in us, in order that we may have indications whereby we may judge both the problem of sense perception and the unseen". i.e. according to this passage, for finding the figure of Epicurus in the famous fresco by Raphael, first of all we have to use our sensation that is called VISION.

Bearing in mind our known bust of Epicurus, which existed in Raphael's era and maybe he would see it somewhere, we SEE that Raphael has painted the face of Epicurus identical (like some other philosophers). And yet this (obvious or even the non obvious) is confirmed by the criterion, in accord with our feeling existing in us, this friendly group next to Epicurus, we see that has been painted "embraced". Raphael could not paint this friendly company otherwise, as the main feature and immortal good in the Garden was, is and will be the friendship.

E.S 78. The noble man is chiefly concerned with wisdom and friendship; of these, the former is a mortal good, the latter an immortal one.

From various speculations is known that Raphael, Botticelli and many other painters of the Renaissance, had studied the Epicurean Lucretius and his famous book "On the Nature of Things". Speculations "about who is who" in the fresco "School of Athens" came from the Vatican and the popes, and not by the painter himself. And these speculations as opinions are reproduced for centuries by various writers and art critics. But let everyone making his speculations, and holding their views and opinions ... Because we, the Epicureans, we have the criteria to find the truth: We use the tool and the method that is called "Epicurean Canon".

As mentioned above the title "The School of Athens" was not given by Raphael himself, and the theme of the mural is actually "Philosophy," or "the ancient Greek philosophy" since over the mural, the painter Raphael scored two words «Causarum Cognitio» this means « knowing the causes», a philosophical conclusion from the study of Aristotle's works, "Metaphysics Book I" and "Physics Book II".

Indeed, Plato and Aristotle appear to be the central figures in the scene. However, all the philosophers sought knowledge of first causes. Many of them had lived before Plato and Aristotle, and hardly a third were Athenians. It is assumed that every philosopher is on the picture, however the recognition of all is impossible, for two reasons : firstly because Raphael has not left any description of the persons that he designed, and second because Raphael has designed some of the philosophers based on his imagination. The painter Raphael has combined his imagination with his knowledge and created his own iconography system for painting them. Although Raphael had read something for them, but he had not seen any picture for some of them. For example, Socrates is immediately recognizable in the mural center because we know today, like Raphael then, a pattern of his type, how he looked from busts or statues, while the person that is presumed to be Epicurus is far removed from the standard type as encountered in his busts. The conjecture for Epicurus states that is a child "with a

smirk", which is crowned with vine leaves. The same conjecture states that Raphael was inspired by the librarian and Catholic Cardinal of the Vatican Tommaso Inghirami who was known by the nickname "Faedra".

According to the famous bust of Epicurus (which is very likely known to Raphael) seems Epicurus clearly to be the person with the yellow chiton, who is standing among an embraced friendly company consisting of five (5) persons (women and men) from left and are distinguished next to the raised right hand of Plato.

And even though the speculations be, in this fresco that Plato is holding "Timaeus" and showing his hand up to the heavens (and his fantastic world of ideas) and Aristotle holding his "Ethics" showing his hand down to the earth (and the real world) ...

...meanwhile a young friend of Epicurus, maybe Colotes, looking at his teacher, gestures his hand showing to these two, and asked:

- What do they say Teacher ?

And another hand, from the friendly company of Epicurus responded:

- They disagree in many issues, but it's better to not give so much attention to their disagreement. Because the more we are here and we discuss our epicurean issues, so much more they will make their known logical fallacies.

http://www.epicuros.net/.../5_H-diashmh-toixografia-sto-Batik...

Cassius Amicus Elli I agree totally with the characterization of the painting, but on one point I am not sure. Would Raphael have had access to the bust of Epicurus? I think I have read that these were all uncovered in Herculaneum so that prior to the 1700's the face would have been "lost" for many centuries. And that would explain why we have the false etching of Epicurus floating around in the Thomas Stanley Encyclopaedia in the 1600's showing him largely bald (below). I wonder if anyone can confirm that all these busts came from Herculaneum:

<https://l.facebook.com/l.php?u=https%...4BX2-oi-Ggee7NE>

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Elli Pensa <<Bust of Epicurus in Napoli

The portrait of Epicurus can be traced back to a prototype from the first half of the third century BC. He displays the features of a man with a mature face, with short hair worked into flaming locks that are combed forward from the top of his head with a large forehead furrowed by three parallel horizontal wrinkles, moustache, thick beard and an aquiline nose. He has a penetrating gaze which emerges from his slightly sunken eyes. The bust has drapery which falls over his left shoulder. The inscription on the base bears the name of the philosopher Epikouros: among the various known copies, only one kept in the Capitoline Museums at Rome has the same features and allows the portrait to be identified. The small bust was found in a room with shelving, together with three others depicting Hemarchus, Zeno and Demosthenes: it has been argued, with some justification given the presence of rolls of papyrus, that the portraits were originally used to indicate different sectors of the library according to the works contained within them. The presence of another portrait of Epicurus in Villa dei Papiri at Herculaneum, found in the tablinum, is not particularly surprising: indeed, he was the founder of the current of thought which inspired the writings of Philodemus of Gadara. The latter writer's works were discovered in the library and were undoubtedly adhered to by the owner of the house Lucius Calpurnius Piso; Philodemus' name is engraved on the silver cup with skeletons found in Pompeii, demonstrating the widespread presence of the image of the philosopher in Roman times.>>

<<Capitoline Museums, Italian Musei Capitolini, complex of art galleries on the Capitoline Hill in Rome. The collection was initially founded in 1471 by Pope Sixtus IV, who donated statuary recovered from ancient ruins. It was augmented by gifts from later popes and, after 1870, by acquisitions from archaeological sites on city property. The museum, opened to the public in 1734, occupies portions of the palaces that frame the Piazza del Campidoglio, a historic square designed by Michelangelo in the 16th century. (The plans were not fully realized until after his death.) The collection is housed mainly in the Palazzo Nuovo and the Palazzo dei Conservatori, which face one another across the square. It features such well-known Roman works as the bronze she-wolf suckling Romulus and Remus, the legendary founders of Rome; the Capitoline Venus; and the Dying Gaul>>

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Elli Pensa

Elli Pensa Epicurus bust was not only in Herculaneum, but was in the Capitoline that Pope Sixtus IV has a collection from 1471. <<The inscription on the base bears the name of the philosopher Epikouros: among the various known copies, only one kept in the Capitoline Museums at Rome has the same features and allows the portrait (of Herculaneum) to be identified.====> <<Capitoline Museums, Italian Musei Capitolini, complex of art galleries on the Capitoline Hill in Rome. The collection was initially founded in 1471 by Pope Sixtus IV, who donated statuary recovered from ancient ruins. It was augmented by gifts from later popes and, after 1870, by acquisitions from archaeological sites on city property. The museum, opened to the public in 1734, occupies portions of the palaces that frame the Piazza del Campidoglio, a historic square designed by Michelangelo in the 16th century>>.

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Elli Pensa

Elli Pensa Because, as described in the Naples museum, where there are all the famous findings from Ercolano, they have identified the bust of Epicurus with another from Capitoline Museum. And as I mentioned above the Capitoline Museum opened its doors to the mob after 1734. What a coincidence and a "divine miracle", this time we found the bust of Epicurus next to Metrodorus ???!

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Jason Baker type unknown

Jason Baker It's a shame those Popes didn't document their acquisitions according to modern museum practice! It would have been nice to know where the bust came from, whether there were any other finds associated with it and who discovered it on what date.

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Elli Pensa

Elli Pensa I have the impression that the painter Raphael was "flying" inside the Vatican like "a free butterfly" than that philosopher Gassendi. Please give me your speculation : who would had the full access inside the Vatican with the popes ?? The painter who painted the walls in Vatican or the philosopher Gassendi ?

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Cassius Amicus type unknown

Cassius Amicus Does this text clearly mean that a bust of Epicurus inscribed with his name stayed within the Vatican all those years, or was it the "collection" that was there, leaving the possibility that the Epicurus bust was added only later, after the

excavations (?) I seem to remember something about that somewhere but I don't have access to my book on "The Sculpted Word" where I think I read that.... (not sure!!)

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Cassius Amicus

[Cassius Amicus](#) Here is an interesting discussion of the history of the bust at the **British Museum** - https://l.facebook.com/l.php?u=http%3...9ybwu9tNDKvN-2c&safe_image.php?d=AQBswC96wpsajYM8&w=90&h=90&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.britishmuseum.org

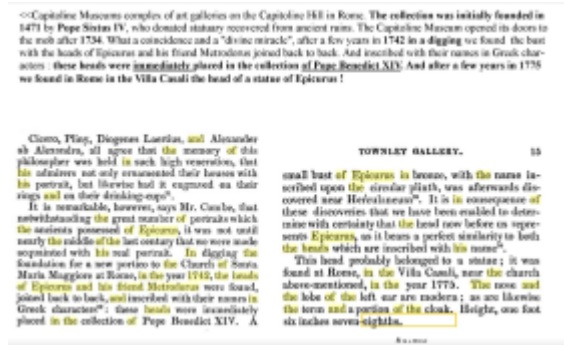
[bust](#)

BRITISHMUSEUM.ORG

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Elli Pensa

Elli Pensa Note : They had in Rome all the statues of Socrates, Plato, Aristotle et al. to be painted by Raphael in his fresco. But "unfortunately" they had not in Rome all those busts of Epicurus who - what a coincidence - they have been found ALL in the same period. Question : The vatican sayings by Epicurus and the epicureans are known and preserved in a 14th century manuscript from the Vatican Library. But they had not the busts of Epicurus ?? Give me a break , I don't buy it. Raphael has seen the bust and the face of Epicurus and made him exactly the same in his fresco "the school of Athens.



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[Jason Baker](#) Profile picture for Jason Baker or type unknown

[Jason Baker](#) The first paragraph in the above pasted image does smack of a bit of prevarication, but it wouldn't surprise me at all if there wasn't a publicly known bust of Epicurus until the 18th-19thC. Rafael likely would have drawn upon his own expertise and made his own, obvious conclusions *given his access to non-public areas. It's a pretty fantasy in any case.

***edited for clarity**

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[Cassius Amicus](#) Profile picture for Cassius Amicus or type unknown

[Cassius Amicus](#) Very interesting clip thanks Elli!

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Cassius Amicus

Write a reply...

[Elli Pensa](#)

[Elli Pensa](#) Epicuru's position in the fresco by Raphael is next to Plato and Aristotle and not as a silly boy with a smirk! Our senses are not false and the Canon is the Epicurus gift as an infallible tool !! [LIKE.png](#) Profile picture for Elli Pensa or type unknown

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[Elli Pensa](#)

[Elli Pensa](#) [Jason](#) my friend, with the usage of the Canon our senses are first and then all the other speculations of a digging in a church in Rome OR of a villa in Rome which was closed and suddenly it was opened and they found an Epicurus bust.

In the fresco has the figure with the yellow chiton the same face with the bust of Epicurus ? Look the details of the face how identical are with all the busts of Epicurus that were discovered - what a coincidence - all in the same period when the

museum in Capitolium was opened to the mob !!!

In the fresco let's have a look at that silly boy with a smirk....here is not the imagination of Raphael, here is the speculation of Popes. They had had hide an Epicurus bust or a real portrait of him in the Vatican with the epicurean sayings. Raphael found all the issues of the Epicurean Philosophy and he had read Lucretius. And even Raphael did not see the figure of Epicurus inside the Vatican... he was a free person to have and a relationship with someone that had a bust of Epicurus.

<<It is remarkable, however, says Mr. Combe, that notwithstanding the great number of portraits which the ancients possessed of Epicurus, it was not until nearly the middle of the last century that we were made acquainted with his real portrait>>.

Raphael had seen the face of Epicurus somewhere and he painted exactly the same with all the details. Our senses are not false ! And if their speculations are correct, why my speculation of this company that is painted is the only company in the fresco that is embraced and has friendly feelings ? Is the friendship inside the Garden something very important or not ? Why my speculation could not be correct and all the other speculations are ?

Because they say, we have not read anywhere that in the age of Raphael we found an Epicurus bust.

Well I do not buy it. Epicurus busts were exist everywhere, but they were hidden and when the people realized that it was the proper age they suddenly all they appeared in a digging or in a villa.

I take for granted that the discoveries that were by chance is only in Ercolano. In Rome the last philosophical schools were the Epicurean and the Stoic. And then came the popes....The stoic popes of course !

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Jason Baker

[Jason Baker](#) I am happy with your thesis, Elli Pensa, it pleases me greatly. I wish to be prepared against any and all criticism when I share it. That said, I just discovered that Raphael was made Prefect of Antiquities giving him authority over all archaeological...[See More](#)

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Cassius Amicus

Write a reply...

[Γεώργιος Καπλάνης](#) unknown

[Γεώργιος Καπλάνης](#) Έλλη, από την Αθήνα (Χρήστος και Τάκης) είπαν ότι οι αποθήκες του Βατικανού άνοιξαν μετά που πέθανε ο Ραφαήλ και συνεπώς δεν ήξερε πως ήταν ο Επίκουρος. Τα γνωρίζεις. Αυτό το είπα στην κόρη μου και αυτή ξέσπασε σε γέλια !! Για το κοινό , μου 'λέει, άνοιξε. Ο Ραφαήλ και άλλοι σημαντικοί θα μπαινόβγαιναν όποτε ήθελα.!! Θεώρησε εξαιρετικά αφελή μιά τέτοια σκέψη.!![See Translation](#)
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[Elli Pensa](#) unknown

[Elli Pensa](#) [Γεώργιος Καπλάνης](#) φίλε μου και εγώ ξεσπάω σε γέλια με όσα ακούω κάποιες φορές![See Translation](#)
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Cassius Amicus

Write a reply...

[Takis Panagiotopoulos](#) unknown

[Takis Panagiotopoulos](#) The inscribed busts of Epicurus

We can do as many cases we want, but we've two known and confirmed facts.

1. The discovery occurred only in 1742 in Rome. During work on the construction of the portico to the church St Maria Maggiore, accidentally discovered the first double bust of Epicurus to Metrodorus, which were inscribed their names.

Dual bust immediately placed in the collection of Pope Benedict 14. The discovery was great because it finally became known as Epicurus and his Mitrodorou. It entails the identification of remaining anonymous busts with their form (thirty busts of Epicurus have been found, all copies of Hellenistic Roman period as Bernard Frischer says).

2. In 1753 the discovery happened also inscribed small bronze bust of Epicurus, the Villa of Papyri at Herculaneum Italy into the ashes Vezouviou². In this way, finally confirmed the form of Epicurus. After dozens of centuries so we met again the gentle

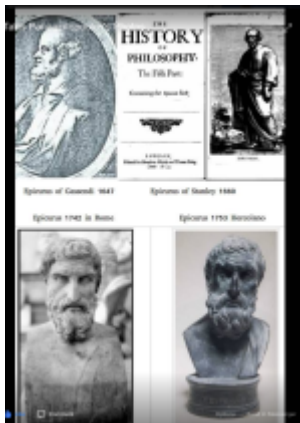
character of this great philosopher.

Οι ενεπίγραφες προτομές του Επίκουρου.

Μπορούμε να κάνουμε όσες υποθέσεις θέλουμε, όμως έχουμε δυο γνωστά και επιβεβαιωμένα γεγονότα.

1ο. Η ανακάλυψη συνέβη μόλις το 1742 στην Ρώμη. Κατά την διάρκεια εργασιών για την κατασκευή στοάς στην εκκλησία St Maria Maggiore, ανακαλύφθηκε τυχαία η πρώτη διπλή προτομή του Επίκουρου με το Μητρόδωρο, όπου υπήρχαν χαραγμένα τα ονόματά τους. Η διπλή προτομή τοποθετήθηκαν αμέσως στην συλλογή του Πάπα Βενέδικτου του 14ου¹. Η ανακάλυψη ήταν μεγάλη, διότι επιτέλους έγινε γνωστή η μορφή του Επίκουρου αλλά και του Μητρόδωρου. Είχε ως επακόλουθο την ταυτοποίηση των υπολοίπων ανώνυμων προτομών με την μορφή τους.

2. Το 1753 συνέβη η ανακάλυψη επίσης ενεπίγραφης μικρής χάλκινης προτομής του του Επίκουρου, στην Βίλα των Παπύρων στο Ερκόλανο της Ιταλίας μέσα στις στάχτες του Βεζούβιου². Με τον τρόπο αυτό, επιβεβαιώθηκε οριστικά η μορφή του Επίκουρου. Συνολικά μέχρι σήμερα έχουν βρεθεί τριάντα προτομές του Επίκουρου, όλες ελληνιστικά αντίγραφα της ρωμαϊκής περιόδου όπως αναφέρει ο Bernard Frischer (σελ. 175). Μετά από δεκάδες αιώνες λοιπόν, γνωρίσαμε και πάλι την ευγενική φυσιογνωμία αυτού του μεγάλου φιλοσόφου. Ολόκληρο το άρθρο εδώ



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Elli Pensa

[Elli Pensa](#) That is to say Takis that our own eyes are false. THE SENSES ARE FALSE of what we SEE in the fresco. Because the discoveries of the two busts of Epicurus were in the same period. And you say among other things that you know what was behind of every secret door in the Vatican. And you say Takis that the popes speculation with that silly boy with a smirk is Epicurus, and it is correct. But mine, the epicurean is not correct, because the popes are frank persons and they did not have anything from Epicurus as a portrait somewhere to be seen by Raphael. And you want to believe of what they say, that all the busts were discovered - what a coincidence - all in the same period when the museum of Capitolium was opened to the mob in 1734 !!! All the things happened in 1734 and after. Epicurus did not exist before, his bust did not exist, his portrait did not exist and the Vatican sayings were exist ? Why the vatican sayings exist from 14 century ? By the way have you seen them somewhere inside the Vatican by your own eyes ?



Thanks Takis for the info, as I said, I do not buy it !

First thing first my own eyes, my anticipations and my feeling of pleasure against the pain that has been spread so many centuries. My speculation against theirs with the USAGE OF THE CANON.

"And besides we must keep all our investigations in accord with our sensations, and in particular with the immediate apprehensions whether of the mind or of any one of the instruments of judgment, and likewise in accord with the feelings existing in us, in order that we may have indications whereby we may judge both the problem of sense perception and the unseen".

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Elli Pensa

[Elli Pensa](#) I take for granted and seriously that the discoveries by chance were only in Ercolano. In Rome the last philosophical schools were the Epicurean and the Stoic. And then came the popes....The stoic popes of course !  

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Elli Pensa The eminence heads of Italy discussed around the welcoming table of Medici for the purpose to reconcile Plato and Jesus, they were dreaming a religion that unites Christian morality and Greek Philokalia. For all this world after Alexandrian era Epicurus was a scandal, such a scandal was to be someone reasonable and to believe in those that catches with his hand and his conclusions after his judgment . His contemporaries were buried him already under calumny, slander and filthy perversions. His extensive work was neglected, lost and we owe in luck the few precious pieces that survived. Hidden for centuries like a spark in ashes were helpful as tinder when the crew of time arrived. The research and understanding have renovate his luminous figure, his genuine Greek figure, and inspired by his luminous physiognomy we restore the antiquity as it was in reality. (Excerpt from the book by the Professor of Philosophy Charalambos Theodoridis entitled "Epicurus - The True Face of the Ancient World")

Οι εξοχότερες κεφαλές της Ιταλίας συζητούσαν γύρω από το φιλόξενο τραπέζι των Μεδίκων για να συμβιβάσουν Πλάτωνα και Ιησού, ονειρεύονταν μια θρησκεία που να ενώνει χριστιανική ηθική και ελληνική φιλοκαλία. Για όλον αυτόν τον μεταλεξανδρινό κόσμο ο Επίκουρος ήταν σκάνδαλο, όπως ήταν σκάνδαλο να είναι κανείς λογικός να πιστεύει σ ' εκείνα που πιάνει με το χέρι του και στα συμπεράσματα που βγάζει με την κρίση του. Οι σύγχρονοί του ήδη τον είχαν θάψει κάτω από διαβολές, αισχρές συκοφαντίες και διαστροφές. Το πλούσιο έργο του παραμελήθηκε, χάθηκε και στην τύχη χρωστάμε τα λίγα πολύτιμα κομμάτια που σώθηκαν. Κρυμένα αιώνες σα σπίθα στη στάχτη χρησίμευσαν προσάναμμα, όταν έφτασε το πλήρωμα άλλων καιρών. Η έρευνα και η κατανόηση αναστήλωσαν τη φωτεινή φυσιογνωμία του, την γνήσια ελληνική και οδηγημένοι από τη φεγγοβολία της αναστηλώνουμε κι εμείς την Αρχαιότητα όπως ήταν στην πραγματικότητα.

(Απόσπασμα από το βιβλίο του καθηγητή Χαράλαμπου Θεοδωρίδη, Επίκουρος - Η Αληθινή Όψη του Αρχαίου Κόσμου).

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Takis Panagiotopoulos

Takis Panagiotopoulos by the evidence we have:

Case 1

1. Raphael was the only one who saw inscribed bust Epicurus , after the bust was

lost until 1742

or

2. Raphael saw several busts and used randomly, even though he did not know to whom they belonged, as a non-inscribed bust Epicurus

Case 2

The form of the school of Athens like Epicurus is simply an overview of a typical philosopher

personally I do not think

it is right the first

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Elli Pensa

[Elli Pensa](#) What is the first by evidence Takis, ?

1. Raphael was the only one who saw inscribed bust Epicurus , after the bust was lost until 1742 ??

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Takis Panagiotopoulos

[Takis Panagiotopoulos](#) the evidence are the archaeological excavations

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Elli Pensa

[Elli Pensa](#) And why to not use the method of analogy for the unseen and making some conclusions with the manifold way of thinking ?

The known : Raphael had painted many philosophers in his fresco as their physiognomy was exactly, since he saw somewhere, specially in the Vatican, their busts and portraits. Raphael had painted Plato, Aristotle holding their works and many others with the symbols of their works.

Analogy : Raphael had painted Epicurus in his fresco as he was exactly and as we see now with our senses how he is from his busts/portraits. Also Raphael had painted symbolically Epicurus not alone but in a company of friends, because maybe he had read from the Vatican's Sayings or Lucretius (known things) that Epicurus based his philosophy mostly on the friendship of same minded persons (the only company that had been painted embraced) and the pleasure that this immortal good has living like a god among men.

Conclusion with the manifold way of thinking : Raphael has seen inside the vatican a portrait/bust Epicurus OR Raphael has seen outside the vatican a portrait/bust of Epicurus OR Epicurus busts/portraits were not lost before 1742 OR Epicurus busts and portraits were hidden until 1742 OR Epicurus busts and portraits discovered by chance in 1742 OR Epicurus philosophy and his busts/portraits became known to the public in 1742 when the things had matured.

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Cassius Amicus

[Cassius Amicus](#) Elli I am SO SORRY. I did not read your original post closely enough, I missed seeing the arrow in your graphic, and I ignored the "yellow chiton" reference because I did not understand the word "chiton." And so I missed entirely the main point of your post! I should have figured it out at least from Jason's comment the found your theory attractive. Duh - I was very distracted yesterday is my only excuse....

So now that I understand the point this is a REALLY interesting thread. Your point is EXCELLENT! Have you developed any more argument to support it and/or seen it made anywhere else?

I contributed to getting it off track by focusing on the issue of when the busts Naples area busts were discovered, and so I missed asking this question: What is the authority for people concluding that the guy with the laurel on his head is Epicurus? Who first reached that conclusion and why? It doesn't seem traditional to portray philosophers with laurel leaves (I guess that is what that is called) so why would Raphael have portrayed Epicurus that way?

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Cassius Amicus

Cassius Amicus Now as to the part of the argument that Epicurus is portrayed in a group because that is an Epicurean characteristic, I think in order to embrace that part I would want to compare that group on the left with the group on the right. Are they not too a group of friends? Who are they, and is there any message / parallelism in comparing the placement of Epicurus you are suggesting to the placement of this group? IE are they Stoics to counterbalance Epicurus?

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Cassius Amicus

Cassius Amicus For comparison -
https://l.facebook.com/l.php?u=https%...3S_z2JjPm8kkqMU
[safe_image.php?d=AQAvt6roL-CpZHoL&w=424&h=328&url=https%3A%2F%2Fupload.wikimedia.](https://www.facebook.com/photo/?fbid=10158444444444444&set=pb.10158444444444444)
[UPLOAD.WIKIMEDIA.ORG](https://www.facebook.com/photo/?fbid=10158444444444444&set=pb.10158444444444444)

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Cassius Amicus

Cassius Amicus What? This identification list suggests NO major Stoics in the painting, nor identifies at all the group on the right that counterbalances the one Elli is suggesting is Epicurus? VERY FISHY! Very hard to believe! That group on the right should be scrutinized to see if they are Stoics

<https://l.facebook.com/l.php?u=https%...z-5iwlwz00DDv-Q>

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Elli Pensa

Elli Pensa Cassius you offer me very good points for thinkig and thanks  Image background or type unknown



[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [1](#) · [February 24 at 5:50am](#)

Cassius Amicus

Cassius Amicus It is almost inconceivable to me that the guy who leads the group on the right (of Aristotle) with the pointy white beard, bald head, and very large stomach is not someone VERY important, and likely someone who is the opposite of an Epicurean.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [2](#) · [February 24 at 5:53am](#) · [Edited](#)

Cassius Amicus

[Cassius Amicus](#) There is no doubt but that Cicero's "ON ENDS" was a major influence from the time it was written and certainly was never lost in this period. And given the influence of stoicism and its friendliness and malleability into Christianity there is no way that Raphael did not highlight it with a very important place in this painting.

[Like](#) · **[Reply](#)** · **[2](#)** · **[February 24 at 5:55am](#)**

Cassius Amicus

[Cassius Amicus](#) The point made here in the Wikipedia page as the ALTERNATIVE (that this is Heraclitus and Democritus) seems MUCH more reasonable than to suggest Epicurus.

"2: Epicurus Possibly, the image of two philosophers, who were typically shown in pairs during the Renaissance: Heraclitus, the "weeping" philosopher, and Democritus, the "laughing" philosopher."

[Like](#) · **[Reply](#)** · **[2](#)** · **[February 24 at 5:58am](#)**

Cassius Amicus

[Cassius Amicus](#) The portrayal / attitude of the woman in the front of the group Elli is suggesting is Epicurus indicates to me that she is very likely dismissive/disapproving of the core Aristotle/Plato duo and that would strongly suggest Leontium. If the group on the right are stoics it would be logical to portray them as relatively more approving of Aristotle/Plato while still with an air of smugness/superiority that they had advanced further. Anyone detect that in the guy with the big stomach?

[Like](#) · **[Reply](#)** · **[2](#)** · **[February 24 at 6:08am](#)**

Cassius Amicus

[Cassius Amicus](#) There might well be similar parallelism in the two groups closer to the front of the painting. Does anyone see any Ionian / Italian school division (From diogenes Laertius) going on? Not sure....

I see that the wikipedia article says that the group on the front left is Pythagorus. What that "U" figure on the black slate in that group? Whatever it is must be a dead giveaway as to the identity of that grouping.

[Like](#) · **[Reply](#)** · **[2](#)** · **[February 24 at 6:16am](#)**

Cassius Amicus

Cassius Amicus Two of these characters in the "Epicurus group" are wearing something blue on their heads. What is that?
Image may contain: one or more people and people standing

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [1](#) · February 24 at 6:20am

Cassius Amicus

Cassius Amicus This article has more speculation that I find unsatisfying and evidences my concern that the identification of Epicurus with the guy with the leaves on his head is intended by some as an insult to Epicurus

Leaning on the marble block at the lower left, wearing a crown of fig leaves and with a satisfied smirk on his pudgy face, is the arch-epicurean Epicurus. The face here is the portrait of the Pope's librarian Tommaso Inghirami, of whom Raphael also painted a fine oil portrait around 1510 ([1, Figure 38]; [9, color plate III]). Joost-Gaugier assembles an impressive argument that Inghirami was the brilliant Renaissance humanist whose learning underlay

the design of the entire Stanza della Segnatura, including the School of Athens[9, pages 17-42].

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Cassius Amicus

Cassius Amicus That last referenced article says "One other point that might trouble a twenty-first century viewer is that the School of Athens contains no women. What a pity that Raphael did not include Hypatia, or Aspasia, or the wise woman Diotima of Mantinea who was Socrates' teacher/" As far as I am concerned the face and hair of that figure in front of the "Epicurus group" looks like it could well be a woman to me..... And of course this writer makes no reference to Leontium as a candidate worthy of inclusion.....

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [2](#) · February 24 at 6:37am · [Edited](#)

Takis Panagiotopoulos

Takis Panagiotopoulos Raphael did not leave a map with names of philosophers. The assumption that the Epicurus is this funny man belongs to a later period and expresses the image that the most people had to our philosophy at the Middle Ages..

[Unlike](#) · [Reply](#) · [3](#) · [February 24 at 6:42am](#)

Cassius Amicus

[Cassius Amicus](#) Depending on what supporting evidence and theories can be developed here there needs to be a major article written on "The Case For Epicurus Being Near the Center of Raphael's 'School of Athens'" and that ought to be as circulated as widely as possible. That would be a major accomplishment for reigniting interest in studying Epicurus, and it would be a major "blow for Epicurus" as Lucian referenced in "Alexander the Oracle Monger."

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [2](#) · [February 24 at 6:59am](#) · [Edited](#)

Takis Panagiotopoulos

[Takis Panagiotopoulos](#) I agree, but it is good to quote all the data we have from archeology etc. for the error in the form of Epicurus to the school of athens... and then develop the new very interesting case highlighted by Elli

[Unlike](#) · [Reply](#) · [3](#) · [February 24 at 7:31am](#) · [Edited](#)

Cassius Amicus

[Cassius Amicus](#) I agree Takis. It should be a very well researched and logical article, but if it thoroughly recounts the facts that have been passed over in the standard analysis it could have a major impact.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [3](#) · [February 24 at 7:45am](#)

Cassius Amicus

[Cassius Amicus](#) "Restoring Epicurus To His Rightful Place in the School of Athens"

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [3](#) · [February 24 at 7:47am](#)

Cassius Amicus

[Cassius Amicus](#) If the grouping to the left of Plato is Epicurean, it is logical to scrutinize the grouping to the right of Aristotle as Stoic. That could be Zeno in the back in the place parallel to Epicurus, but there would need to be a tradition of some greek stoic being big and fat to mesh with the large bald man in front. I seem to recall that Cleanthes was reputed to be a wrestler, but we need to study Diogenes Laertius and other sources to see whether someone in the Stoic line would fit that caricature. If Chryssippus were both the second founder of Stoicism and the first main opponent of Epicurus, then he would be someone to look at closely.

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Cassius Amicus

Cassius Amicus Probably not Chrysippus: "Chrysippus, the son of Apollonius of Tarsus, was born at Soli, Cilicia.[3] He was slight in stature,[4] and is reputed to have trained as a long-distance runner.[5]"

However Chrysippus was largely bald and bearded --

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safe_image.php?id=AQABkT621uiUxEN9&w=90&h=90&url=https%3A%2F%2Fupload.wikimedia.o

[Chrysippus - Wikipedia](#)

in the Stoic school. When Cleanthes died, around 230 BC, Chrysippus became the third head of...

EN.WIKIPEDIA.ORG

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Cassius Amicus

Cassius Amicus Cleanthes - boxer; strong back: "Cleanthes was born in Assos in the Troad about 330 BC.[a] According to Diogenes Laërtius,[2] he was the son of Phantias, and early in life he was a boxer. With but four drachmae in his possession he came to Athens, where he took up philosophy, listening first to the lectures of Crates the Cynic,[3] and then to those of Zeno, the Stoic. In order to support himself, he worked all night as water-carrier to a gardener (hence his nickname the Well-Water-Collector, Greek: Φρεάντλης). As he spent the whole day in studying philosophy with no visible means of support, he was summoned before the Areopagus to account for his way of living. The judges were so delighted by the evidence of work which he produced, that they voted him ten minae, though Zeno would not permit him to accept them. His power of patient endurance, or perhaps his slowness, earned him the title of "the Ass" from his fellow students, a name which he was said to have rejoiced in, as it implied that his back was strong enough to bear whatever Zeno put upon it."

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [February 24 at 9:06am](#)

Cassius Amicus

Cassius Amicus Picture of Cleanthes:

https://l.facebook.com/l.php?u=http%3...SCOW_WowcF4xxuU

safe_image.php?id=AQCdNNyb-T7oZl6-&w=90&h=90&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.iep.utm.edu%2F

[Cleanthes | Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy](#)

IEP.UTM.EDU

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Elli Pensa

[Elli Pensa](#) Here is our man with the bald head !

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [February 24 at 9:13am](#)

Elli Pensa

[Elli Pensa](#) Is this the man with his famous prayer-hymn to god Zeus ?

Most glorious of immortals, Zeus

The many named, almighty evermore,

Nature's great Sovereign, ruling all by law

Hail to thee! On thee 'tis meet and right

That mortals everywhere should call.

From thee was our begetting; ours alone

Of all that live and move upon the earth

The lot to bear God's likeness.

Thee will I ever chant, thy power praise!

For thee this whole vast cosmos, wheeling round

The earth, obeys, and where thou leadest

It follows, ruled willingly by thee.

**In thy unconquerable hands thou holdest fast,
Ready prepared, that two-timed flaming blast,
The ever-living thunderbolt:**

Nature's own stroke brings all things to their end.

By it thou guidest aright the sense instinct

Which spreads through all things, mingled even

With stars in heaven, the great and small-

Thou who art King supreme for evermore!

Naught upon earth is wrought in thy despite, oh God.

Nor in the ethereal sphere aloft which ever winds

About its pole, nor in the sea-save only what

The wicked work, in their strange madness,

Yet even so, thou knowest to make the crooked straight.

Prune all excess, give order to the orderless,

For unto thee the unloved still is lovely-

And thus in one all things are harmonized,

The evil with the good, that so one Word

Should be in all things everlastingly.

One Word-which evermore the wicked flee!

Ill-fated, hungering to possess the good

**They have no vision of God's universal law,
Nor will they hear, though if obedient in mind
They might obtain a noble life, true wealth.
Instead they rush unthinking after ill:
Some with a shameless zeal for fame,
Others pursuing gain, disorderly;
Still others folly, or pleasures of the flesh.
[But evils are their lot] and other times
Bring other harvests, all unsought-
For all their great desire, its opposite!**

**But, Zeus, thou giver of every gift,
Who dwellest within the dark clouds, wielding still
The flashing stroke of lightning, save, we pray,
Thy children from this boundless misery.
Scatter, Oh Father, the darkness from their souls,
Grant them to find true understanding
On which relying thou justly rulest all-
While we, thus honoured, in turn will honour thee,
Hymning thy works forever, as is meet
For mortals while no greater right**

Belongs even to the gods than evermore

Justly to praise the universal law!

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [February 24 at 9:18am](#)

Elli Pensa

[Elli Pensa](#) Oh this is theology indeed. This leads to the religion indeed. This leads to the confusion indeed. This is against the whole Nature indeed. 1f61b.png 🙄

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [February 24 at 9:19am](#)

Cassius Amicus

Write a reply...

Elli Pensa

[Elli Pensa](#) From the article that posted by [Cassius](#) we read :

1. In those pre-Copernican days, astrology was a respectable, complex, and sophisticated enterprise, and Paulus issued many annual prognostications with some notable successes (for instance, in 1524 predicting that the world would not be ending in a flood that year). His prognostications for 1480-1482 include mathematical challenge questions so advanced they went unanswered, on topics like properties of the sphere and cylinder, the value of π , and the quadrature of the parabola, showing a good knowledge of the work of Archimedes. A 1518 publication by Paulus concerning compound interest and the number of atoms in the universe introduced an early form of decimals to notate the results.

2. I offer, finally, as a theory of my own, a “null hypothesis” (in both literal and statistical senses): that Euclid’s figure may have no real mathematical meaning. The scene is a beautiful image of scholarship: the mathematicians of Athens would have been engrossed in some such geometric diagram. But, just as a Raphael “Madonna and Child” is an image of maternal tenderness, not an instructional diagram on how to hold one’s baby, it might simply be misplaced ingenuity to seek an actual theorem on Euclid’s slate.

3. Raphael’s School of Athens well deserves its fame as an image of an ideal world of

intellectual life. Though the verall plan is clear, many details and identifications still remain undetermined. Might Euclid's slate hold a new theorem? The present article has described some candidates; possibly a better one is still waiting to be found. In any case, the scene itself remains a magnificent image of an ideal life in mathematics.

From just the above three paragraphs of the article we see clearly that :

All the analyses, the interpretations, the speculations, the views, the opinions and so on of what we see in the picture "school of Athens" are based on Plato, Aristotle and the Stoics. i.e Mathematics, dialectics, geometry, poetry, theology, Logos, virtues and all that stuff that made the people to be confused and be against the real goal and the real world !

Where is the real study of Nature ?

Here is the challenge of a new article entitled "The Case For Epicurus Being Near the Center of Raphael's 'School of Athens' - with the collaboration of many of us - making clear to all of them and VS to their endless verbalism WHAT IS THE Epicurean Canon. The method of the Analogy. The clarification on words. The manifold way of thinking by Epicurus against all the dilemmas. What are the first principles of Nature, and whats the goal of human's life as set by Nature when he studies philosophy that is in accordance with Nature ?

I would be very glad if this post would be continued with the collaboration of many of us and be circulated at the internet. 1f642.png 😊

[Unlike](#) · [Reply](#) · [2](#) · [February 24 at 9:06am](#) · [Edited](#)

Cassius Amicus

[Cassius Amicus](#) Exactly Elli. There is strong, wide, and enduring interest in this work of art. A persuasive reinterpretation which shows how Raphael considered Epicurus to be near the center of the action would be a tremendous help in encouraging interest in him.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [2](#) · [February 24 at 9:08am](#)

Elli Pensa

Book Description

Raphael's Stanza della Segnatura in the Vatican Palace has often been considered the artist's most aesthetically perfect work. Executed between 1508 and 1511, it features a painted ceiling, a pavement of inlaid marble, and four frescoed walls, all orchestrated with a cast of famous historical figures who exemplify the various disciplines of learning. Joost-Gaugier's study is the first to examine the elements of the Stanza della Segnatura as an ensemble, exploring the meaning of the frescoes and accompanying decoration in light of recent studies into the intellectual world of High Renaissance Rome.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [February 24 at 9:50am](#)

Cassius Amicus

[Cassius Amicus](#) I think the identity of the figure marked (1) here is key - he is clearly someone to reckon with and not a filler. Determining who he is would tell us a lot. If the theory that this is a stoic grouping were correct, I suppose (6) would most likely be...[See More](#)
Image may contain 3 people

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [2](#) · [February 24 at 10:35am](#)

Cassius Amicus

[Cassius Amicus](#) 1. We know the ancients made many copies of the image of Epicurus.

2. We know that 30! Have now been located.

3. We know that Epicurus was hated by church and Stoics alike.

4. We know that the church and academia have done what they could to discourage and suppress Epicurean philosophy.

5. We know that the establishment reports that the image identification was lost until the mid 1700a


6. We know the church and philosophical establishment are congenital liars.

My conclusion: the official records are entitled to little deference and the likelihood is that the image of Epicurus was never fully lost to those who wanted to find it.

Now how that applies to this work of art is a different question, but I think all church and establishment / academia records and positions regarding Epicurus should be viewed with great skepticism.


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Elli Pensa

[Elli Pensa](#) [Cassius](#) here they are, and with their written words [1f609.png](#)  type unknown
Image may contain: 3 people, text

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [2](#) · [February 24 at 1:00pm](#) · [Edited](#)

Elli Pensa

[Elli Pensa](#) [Cassius](#) hi ! Please look at those two hands right down in the corner of the picture, next to the Fate of Zeno the Cytium, is like they are emptied and saving desperately : "we can not do anything at all everything is fated" ! [1f609.png](#) 

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [1](#) · [February 26 at 3:02am](#) · [Edited](#)

[Julius von Maneanec](#) type unknown

[Julius von Maneanec](#) there seems to be quite a lot of concept misunderstanding going on: e.g. we do not know what Aristotle MEANS by the phrase "contemplation of God"...

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [February 26 at 5:58am](#)

Cassius Amicus

[Cassius Amicus](#) Yes I agree that the two hands do indicate that Elli. As we move away from the center of the picture is there any overall organization that can be assigned to how people are placed? I think one of the article said that it was divided into halves by "realist" vs "idealist" but that is not clear to me. I didn't yet have time to look to see if there was an "Italic vs Ionian" division from DL either....

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [2](#) · [February 26 at 7:23am](#)

Elli Pensa

[Elli Pensa](#) [Julius von Maneanec](#) The "Ethical Eudaimonia" is the first of three moral treatises of Aristotle (the other two are the "Ethics" and "Nicomachean Ethics"). The

name "Evdimeia" was received by an Aristotle's disciple with the name Eudemus of Rhodes, because the philosopher Aristotle respected Eudemus and devoted this treatise to him.

The thesis consists of seven books and are strictly moral; i.e. is not connected with politics, that is in the case in the "Nicomachean Ethics". The "Ethical Evdimeia" have at most a religious connotation. In these the true virtue is based on the religion and is a manifestation of the command and inspiration of a reasonable superman. This peculiarity echoes the Platonic heritage of Aristotle or, according to some others, the stoic effect.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [1](#) · [February 26 at 9:44am](#) · [Edited](#)

Cassius Amicus

Write a reply...

Cassius Amicus

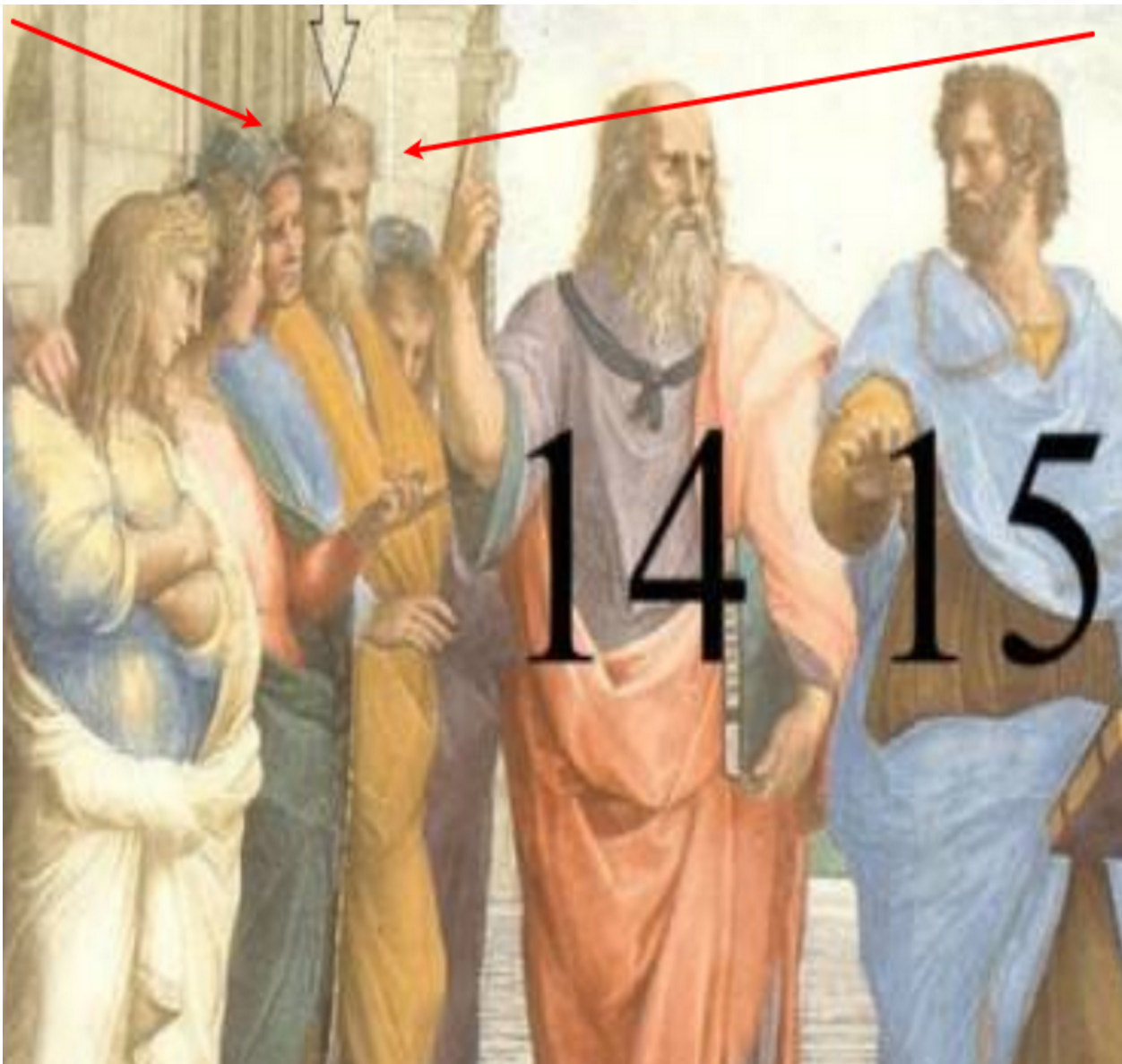
[Cassius Amicus](#) A good start!

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [1](#) · [February 24 at 4:41pm](#)

[Cassius Amicus](#)

[Cassius Amicus](#) *I wonder what we could do to stir up general interest in this. A Facebook group devoted solely to identifying the people and/or symbology shown in the fresco? That might get much wider interest (?)*

Post by "Cassius" of March 30, 2019 at 6:10 PM



s is

something of considerable significance. Please let us know your thoughts:]

Raphael's fresco "The School of Athens" in the Vatican is famous throughout the world, but less well known are the identities of the philosophies shown within it. Aristotle, Socrates, and Plato seem confidently identified, but where are the other leading lights of Greek philosophy, especially Epicurus and Zeno, founders of two of the most popular schools in ancient Greece?

The purpose of this is to discuss theories for identifying the other philosophers shown in the fresco.

From various reports it is believed that Raphael, Botticelli and many other painters of the Renaissance, had studied the Epicurean Lucretius and his famous poem "On the Nature of

Things." Theories of "who is who" in the fresco "School of Athens" came from the Vatican and the popes, and not from the painter himself. And these speculations as opinions are reproduced for centuries by various writers and art critics. But let everyone making his speculations, and holding their views and opinions ...

The figure most commonly identified as Epicurus is this one, with the garland on his head:



As mentioned above the title "The School of Athens" was not given by Raphael himself, and the theme of the mural is actually "Philosophy," or "the ancient Greek philosophy" since over the mural, the painter Raphael scored two words «Causarum Cognitio» this means « knowing the causes», a philosophical conclusion from the study of Aristotle's works, "Metaphysics Book I" and "Physics Book II".

Indeed, Plato and Aristotle appear to be the central figures in the scene. However, all the philosophers sought knowledge of first causes. Many of them had lived before Plato and Aristotle, and hardly a third were Athenians. It is assumed that every philosopher is on the picture, however the recognition of all is impossible, for two reasons : firstly because Raphael has not left any description of the persons that he designed, and second because Raphael has designed some of the philosophers based on his imagination. The painter Raphael has combined his imagination with his knowledge and created his own iconography system for painting them. Although Raphael had read something for them, but he had not seen any picture for some of them. For example, Socrates is immediately recognizable in the mural center because we know today, like Raphael then, a pattern of his type, how he looked from busts or statues, while the person that is presumed to be Epicurus is far removed from the standard type as encountered in his busts. The conjecture for Epicurus states that is a child "with a smirk", which is crowned with vine leaves. The same conjecture states that Raphael was inspired by the librarian and Catholic Cardinal of the Vatican Tommaso Inghirami who was known by the nickname "Faedra".

Although we don't have information from Raphael to allow us to be certain, in Epicurus's letter to Herodotus we read his advice on solving mysteries: "And besides we must keep all our investigations in accord with our sensations, and in particular with the immediate apprehensions whether of the mind or of any one of the instruments of judgment, and likewise in accord with the feelings existing in us, in order that we may have indications whereby we may judge both the problem of sense perception and the unseen. " So if we follow this advice to locate the figure of Epicurus and identify the others, we first must start by using our own eyes.

There is considerable controversy as to the identification of busts from the ancient world, but we know that numbers of busts of Epicurus survived. In comparing the bust that we know today is that of Epicurus, we see that the figure to the immediate left of Plato bears a distinct resemblance to Epicurus. This identification is supported by the observation that the grouping with Epicurus seems to be "friendly" one of the trademark features of the Epicurean garden.

VS 78. The noble man is chiefly concerned with wisdom and friendship; of these, the former is a mortal good, the latter an immortal one.

Further the expressions of a number of this group, especially the figure in the foreground with arms folded, seem to be viewing Plato and Aristotle with scepticism. Opposition to Plato and Aristotle was a hallmark of Epicurean philosophy.

Please help us by contributing your thoughts on the identification of Epicurus and other central philosophers from the School of Athens.

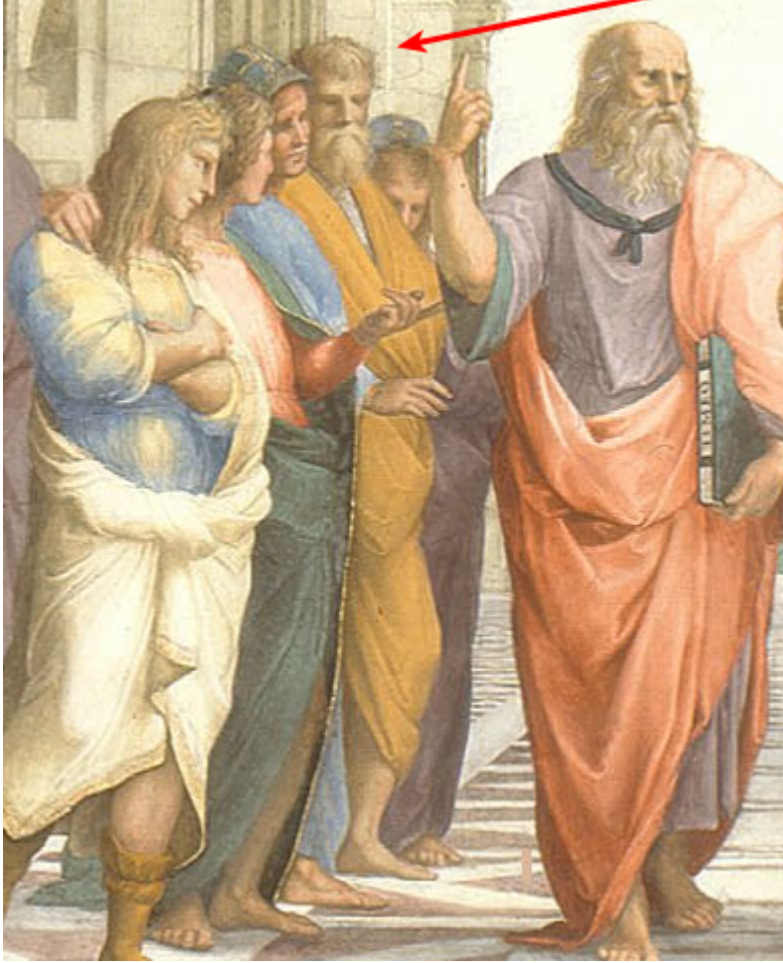
The Facebook page devoted to this is here:
https://www.facebook.com/search/top/?q=...&epa=SEARCH_BOX

Post by "Cassius" of March 30, 2019 at 6:18 PM

The proposition is that Epicurus is NOT this figure, which looks nothing whatsoever like the true Epicurus:

[17308994_10154628061179615_6888431907121750294_n.jpg?_nc_cat=107&_nc_ht=scontent.fslc2-1.fna&](https://www.facebook.com/epicureanfriends/photos/17308994_10154628061179615_6888431907121750294_n.jpg?_nc_cat=107&_nc_ht=scontent.fslc2-1.fna&_nc_ohc=...)

But is instead THIS figure, which looks very much more like the correct image of Epicurus:



Post by "Cassius" of March 30, 2019 at 6:32 PM

A version with numbers for identification:



Post by "Joshua" of August 5, 2020 at 2:25 PM

I don't have much really, but I can summarize my thinking.

I disagree with Elli on the probable placement of Epicurus in the fresco. I wouldn't at all expect to find him in a central position on the dais—he always taught in a private setting, far secluded from the gymnasium.

I wouldn't be surprised if we found out that even Raphael didn't identify the clustered figures that frame Plato and Aristotle. A place is often given in Greek art and drama to the *hoi polloi*—in drama, the polis is represented by the chorus. In philosophical dialogues, the 'room' is filled up with named characters who have no speaking parts at all. They exist simply to frame the discussion in a community setting.

I *would* expect to find him pictured with a book. It is easy to forget how prolific a writer Epicurus was—over 300 scrolls is an impressive and unmatched corpus for that time and place. Diogenes Laertius said as much, and he must have been Raphael's primary source.

I would not expect his portrait to resemble the ancient busts. For one thing, it's not clear whether Raphael knew of them. For another, iconography was more important than actual likeness to these Renaissance painters, and mostly they used contemporary people as models.

The humanist on which this portrait was based was Tommaso Inghirami; and that is suggestive. Inghirami was a learned humanist, a prefect of the Vatican Library, and poet laureate. Erasmus complained of an oration in which Inghirami "treated Christ as a self-sacrificing hero rather than the Redeemer." In Raphael's version, the wreathed figure is supporting the weight of a friend or follower who leans on him from behind with bowed head. A hint of the soteriology that clung to Epicurus, perhaps?

There are other hints that are more incidental, but I'll leave it there for now.

Post by “Cassius” of August 5, 2020 at 5:35 PM

OK I see! These are "interpretational" arguments that I can certainly understand. I was thinking that you were referring to some specific clues that you saw referenced in the British museum article beyond just the mural itself. That's what I wanted to be sure to file away in my mind - whether you saw some new data that I'd missed. Thanks for elaborating!

[Quote from JJElbert](#)

Thank you for following up on that, Don; I was up far too late last night.

I also found that British Museum article, and I found the illustrations very interesting. Elli wrote an article a few years back on what she believes was the misidentification of Epicurus in Raphael's School of Athens. I think at some point I'll write an article or make a video arguing the other side in that debate, looking at Diogenes Laertius, the Nuremburg Chronicle, and De Claris Mulieribus for clues.

Post by “Joshua” of August 5, 2020 at 6:12 PM

Right. The main question with that article is whether the man "hugging" Leontion is meant by the illustrator to signify Epicurus. Groping the 'courtesan', and all that. If it is, that gives us (along with the Nuremburg Chronicle) two drawings of Epicurus in popular Latin texts from the 15th Century that portray him beardless, and in the one case paunchy. Rather how one would portray a Eunuch—or the head of a school of philosophy stereotyped as weak and effeminate, and "fit only for swine".

Raphael was working on the painting less than 20 years after the Nuremburg Chronicle was published, and the Nuremburg Chronicle gives a positive ID to Epicurus' portrait.

I would say that I am...oh, 75 percent convinced that the wreathed figure is Epicurus. There's certainly plenty of room for interpretation!

Post by “Cassius” of August 5, 2020 at 8:31 PM

Well just to be up front and on the record I am going to have to side with Elli on this one, but it's a multi-layered issue and that's why I asked about the history - it's certainly possible that there is some record that would substantiate the possibility that Raphael intended what you mean.

Back when Elli posted the article there was some additional discussion with one of the other Greek activists on the issue of "Was knowledge of the true face of Epicurus ever really TOTALLY lost, or are we just talking some people in some areas thought it was lost while other areas / other people had access to one or more of the relatively large numbers of busts of Epicurus that apparently survived the ancient world. I tend to think that given the hurdles of communication back in those years it's entirely possible that some people were well aware of what Epicurus looked like and others were not, but I have nothing to back that up other than I don't think it is likely logical that digging up a single bust in Herculaneum was the first time that

any living human had an inkling of Epicurus' true face in 500 or 1000 or 1500 years.

Then there are the issues of the people involved in the mural in Italy and who knew what.

I think the details of all that historical debate are as interesting, perhaps more so, than the debate on where we think Epicurus "should" have been placed.

Like I said I side with Elli's interpretation, but I think there's a lot more to be learned from discussing the issue.

Come to think of it I believe this debate all took place before we came into contact with Michelle Pinto. I will see if I can post something somewhere to see if he has an opinion on this.

Note to self: I need to go back to the article and check this - I do not recall Elli suggesting that the figure of Epicurus was hugging the female figure:

[Quote from JJElbert](#)

The main question with that article is whether the man "hugging" Leontion is meant by the illustrator to signify Epicurus. Groping the 'courtesan', and all that.

Post by “Cassius” of August 5, 2020 at 8:42 PM

[michelepinto](#) -

In a more recent thread [Joshua and I took a sidetrack](#) and Joshua expressed his opinion that he felt differently than Elli on this question, and that he thought the figure identified as "2" in Elli's graphic above, as is often stated (perhaps on the wikipedia page too).

I don't think you were communicating with us regularly when this debate started, and in fact I see the original post is so old that some of the graphics have now disappeared. I am not sure I can reconstruct those but I will see what I can do.

But my reason for posting this is: I think this is a very interesting debate, and I wonder if you have an opinion not only on the main question but on:

(1) Do you think knowledge of Epicurus' true appearance was ever COMPLETELY lost to the world?

(2) Do you know anything about the history of what he was thought to have looked like, and when that became solidified?

I think I have read that there was a discovery at Herculaneum of a bust that had his name etched on it, so at that point any debate would have ceased. However it is also my impression that there are MANY surviving busts of Epicurus, along with rings, and I find it very difficult to believe personally that NO ONE in the world retained an accurate tradition.

And of course that gets us back to the question - Even if we presume that some people some places knew that Epicurus was not bald and pudgy, what do we know (if anything) about Raphael's connection to that knowledge, or his own description of who these characters are supposed to represent.

If you have any insight, or know anyone we could ask, that would be greatly appreciated!

Post by “Joshua” of August 5, 2020 at 10:30 PM

Quote

I tend to think that given the hurdles of communication back in those years it's entirely possible that some people were well aware of what Epicurus looked like and others were not.

It is difficult to assess, to be sure. And Raphael was certainly ideally placed; if anyone knew what Epicurus really looked like, it probably was the Vatican Library!

Quote

Note to self: I need to go back to the article and check this - I do not recall Elli suggesting that the figure of Epicurus was hugging the female figure:

I didn't mean Elli's article; I don't think she looked at *De Claris Mulieribus* in her consideration. As far as I know, my speculation that the hugging figure was Epicurus is original. It makes sense though; if you're trying to calumniate Leontion, and they certainly were, then the slander is more complete if it implicates Epicurus as well.

Post by “michelepinto” of August 6, 2020 at 3:33 AM

I don't think the bust of Epicurus preserved in the Capitoline Museums in Rome and other busts scattered throughout south Europe have ever disappeared.

Obviously when Raphael painted the School of Athens there were no cameras, and very few people knew Greek to be able to read the name of Epicurus on his bust.

But above all for Raphael it was not important that the appearance of Epicurus was real, the figure he painted had to embody the (wrong) idea that at the time there was of Epicurus.

Post by “Cassius” of August 6, 2020 at 11:16 AM

Argh I am wasting your time on this discussion I am afraid. I think my issue is that I don't see which figure is hugging a female - I will go back and look closer.

Post by “Cassius” of August 6, 2020 at 11:19 AM

Well that is interesting and probably a new take in the conversation. You are suggesting that regardless of whether Raphael knew what Epicurus looked like, he might have wanted to embody the current thought as to his character.

I am afraid that I don't even really know the data as to whether Raphael himself ever gave a list of who was who, or where the list we are discussing came from. When I have time I need to start at the beginning and confirm the trail of who is or was asserting the identity of these peripheral figures. Presumably Aristotle and Plato in the center were never in doubt, but I don't know the trail of history of these designations.

Thank you Michele!

And hey that is a great new AVATAR you are using!

Post by “Cassius” of August 6, 2020 at 11:23 AM

In terms of hugging are we talking about THIS figure with the blue top? I see the hand on "her" shoulder, but I would not think anyone is asserting that hand belongs to Epicurus (in orange, two figures away)? Or are they? I am referencing [this comment here](#).



Post by “Joshua” of August 6, 2020 at 11:54 AM

Some pictures would help!

[6a00d8341c464853ef01b7c86e2f4c970b-500wi](#)

Above is a mid-15th century French manuscript of Boccaccio's *De Claris Mulieribus*, from the article Don cited from the British Museum. The figure in green is certainly Leontion. I am merely speculating that the figure in red is meant to depict a portly, sybaritic and lecherous Epicurus.

[Epicurus_Nuremberg_Chronicle.jpg](#)

This image comes from a late-15th century *incunabulum* of The Nuremberg Chronicle.

In light of these two, as well as all of the other things I mentioned, I am persuaded that the following is likewise an image of Epicurus.

[Raffael_063.jpg](#)

Post by “Cassius” of August 6, 2020 at 11:59 AM

OKAY now I understand based on those first two photos



I presumed you were talking about something from Don's link but I wasn't diligent enough to try to figure it out. Now we have a basis to explore at some future point when we both have more time. I think I am going to move these posts to the thread on the painting where they will be easier to find. Thank you!

Post by “Joshua” of August 6, 2020 at 12:02 PM

I should have checked here before I posted my reply; it's in the other thread! I more or less agree with Michele.

Post by “Cassius” of August 6, 2020 at 12:10 PM

It's interesting that after more than three years we finally get a discussion going on this topic! This is what "forum" software is good for - asynchronous discussion! I particularly hope that now that we have called this to [michelepinto](#)'s attention he will keep the question in mind, as being from Italy he probably is uniquely positioned to raise this question every so often with people who are in a position to have some really keen insight into the question.

Post by “Don” of August 6, 2020 at 4:03 PM

I must admit I'm intrigued by [Elli](#)'s conjecture. That robed figure off to the side fits the bill for Epicurus, down to the cleft beard. I'm also skeptical whether Epicurus would have had so prominent a spot right down front if we take the traditional attribution.

As for the Boccaccio illustration, it doesn't appear Epicurus is even mentioned in Leontium's entry. I've attached my scan. I would think it more "scandalous" if it was just a random "John" sexually assaulting Leontium.

Post by “Cassius” of August 6, 2020 at 5:29 PM

OK I have to apologize to everyone because I have only now had the time to follow Don's original links to see what Joshua was commenting on..... Now I see where Joshua was coming from.

At least to organize my own thoughts, if not the thread as a whole, it seems we are talking about a series of things:

1. Did Raphael have access to good information as to what Epicurus really looked like?
 1. The context of that question is that clearly at some point in history various book publishers featured renderings of Epicurus which were apparently "reconstructed" as if they did not have access to good information about Epicurus' likeness.
 2. On the other hand, it appears to be the case that there were busts of Epicurus at the Vatican which survived from antiquity. If the memory was also preserved that these busts were of Epicurus (which needs to be determined) then at least some Europeans retained a correct knowledge of his likeness even while books were being published elsewhere with incorrect portrayals.
 3. Is it possible that Epicurus' true face was not known anywhere with confidence until the small bust inscribed with his name was found at Herculaneum?
2. Did Raphael convey to others who each of the figures in his fresco were intended to represent?
3. If Raphael did not convey his own views to others, is there a record of a historical tradition as to who each figure was?
4. We're presumably talking about the Wikipedia attribution. What authority does the Wikipedia page cite?
5. Is it possible that Raphael knew what Epicurus really looked like, but nevertheless portrayed him as the pudgy wreathed stenographer?
6. If the pudgy wreathed stenographer was not intended to be Epicurus, is there another likely candidate for that figure?
7. What case can be made that the figure which most resembles the actual Epicurus, the bearded figure in Orange to the left of Plato, was intended by Raphael to represent Epicurus?
8. What implications can be drawn from the placement of the figures and the context in which they are placed?

Post by "Cassius" of August 6, 2020 at 5:31 PM

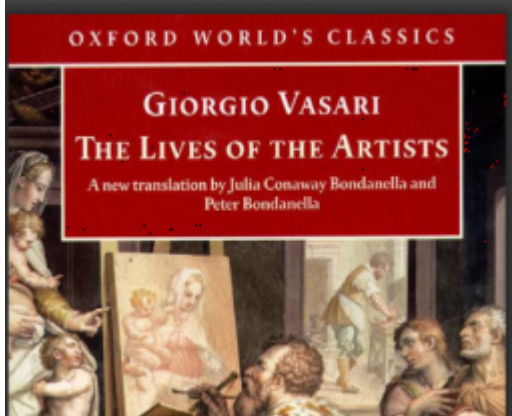
[Quote from Don](#)

I'm also skeptical whether Epicurus would have had so prominent a spot right down front if we take the traditional attribution.

That's another angle on this to consider. Which position is more "prominent"? The one down front with the pudgy wreathed figure, or the position located very close to the central figures of the fresco (even if somewhat obscured)?

Post by "Cassius" of August 6, 2020 at 5:50 PM

This (I think) is the Vasari material on Raphael mentioned on the Wikipedia page. I do not see it



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depended on it. One lady ran to meet him, and the heads of all the other figures are more graceful in their swaying, particularly that of Saint John, who, with his hands clasped, leans his head to a man that would never be looked upon as priest. And to all the truth, anyone who considers the calm, firm, still, and grave in this painting, his goal seems to be answered, for it would scarcely appear looking at it because of the expression of its figures, the beauty of its garments, and, in short, the sweet excellence of all its choices.

When he completed his work and returned to Florence, the King Louis, Franciscan friar, commissioned him to do a panel to go in the chapel of their altar in Santa Spirito; he began this and brought the outline to an excellent state of completion, and at the same time he painted a picture that he saw in Siena, which he carried to Rinaldo del Ghirlandino upon his departure to finish a blue drapery that was incomplete. And the drapery occurred because Francesco from Urbino, who was in the service of Julius II, both because of the almost knowledge he had with Raphael and because he was from the same area, had written to Raphael, writing him that he had continued the project, who had some more built, so that Raphael to demonstrate his work to decorating them. This proposal pleased Raphael, so he obtained the works in Florence and the unfinished panel for the Dec that complete artwork in that. Later, Michelozzo della Porta placed it in the parish church of his city after Raphael's death and named it "Rome," where, upon his arrival, he discovered that a large number of the scenes in the palace had already been painted and were still being painted by various masters, and so it happened, so we have seen, that there was one room with a scene completed by Piero della Francesca in another, Luca di Cione had brought one wall to a good state of completion, and Don Piero della Porta, abbot of San Clemente in Rome, had begun a number of works there. Evidently, Bramante from Milan had painted numerous figures, which for the most part were living portraits and considered exceptionally beautiful.

Having been granted very affectionately by Pope Julius upon his arrival, Raphael began a scene in the Rooms of the

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Sigismondo depicting the theologians exercising philosophy and theology with theology in which he portrayed all the wise men of the world possessing different arguments. There are some analogies to some side who have diverse grammatical and ontological figures and characters in various forms and some tables, and they would have by means of certain beautiful signs to the Evangelists, who explain them. Among them is a figure of Epicurus with his cap lying upon the table, a most pronounced and beautiful figure, which for its beauty and the distribution of its garments deserves praise. Likewise, there are Aristotle and Plato, the latter with the Timone in his hand, the former with the Ethics, while around them a large school of philosophers forms a circle. The beauty of these philosophers and grammarians drawing numerous figures and characters in affairs with their companions cannot be described. Among them, in the figure of a young man with a beautiful face who is drawing upon his arm to an easel and holding his book in the portrait of Federico II, Duke of Marino, who was in Rome at that time. Likewise, there is a figure who is bending towards the ground with a pair of compasses in hand and holding a line on a table, which is said to be the architect Bramante, whose portrait is so well done that he seems no less himself than if he were alive. Next to a figure who sees his book and holds a globe of the heavens in his hand is the portrait of Zoroaster, and next to him is the portrait of Raphael, the master of the work, who painted himself by looking at a mirror. He has a youthful head and a very modest appearance coupled with a pleasant and gentle grace, and he is wearing a black tunic. But could one describe the beauty and goodness that can be seen in the heads and figures of the Evangelists, in whose faces Raphael has created a certain content and sweetness which is very natural, especially in those who are writing. And behind Saint Matthew, who is copying characters out of the original tablet held by an angel and writing down from a book, an old man who has placed a sheet of paper on his knee copies all the words Saint Matthew is writing down. And while he remains seated in that uncomfortable position, it seems as if he is moving his mouth and his hand, following the movement of his pen.

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Besides the small death of the artist's plan, which an acute musician, the composition of the entire scene is arranged with such order and measure that it truly proved his ability and made it known that, among those who employ the brush, he wanted to hold his ground without opposition.

Raphael also adorned this painting with perspective and many figures completed with such a delicate and soft style that it caused Pope Julius to desire all the scenes painted by other masters from the past and present, so that Raphael alone would be honored above all those who had followed on the paintings which had been done up to that time. Although the work of Giovanni Antonio Soliman da Veroffi, which was above Raphael's scene, was to have been seen down by the pope's order, Raphael nevertheless wanted to see it arranged and gossamer, and in each of the four corners which were those he created a figure expressing the meaning of the same history, namely which it treats. For the first, where he had depicted Philosophy and Astrology, Geometry and Poetry being surrounded with knowledge, he painted a female figure representing Knowledge who is seated upon a chair supported on each side by a figure of the goddess Cybele, with the numerous breasts by which the ancient represented Themis Polybreasts, her garment is composed of four columns representing the elements—from her head flows the colour of fire, below her waist the colour of air, from her thighs to her knees the colour of earth, and from those to her feet the colour of water. And she is accompanied by some extremely beautiful girls.

In a temple named towards the window looking out on the Belvedere, Raphael depicted Theory, in the person of Polytechnia crowned with laurel, who, with her legs crossed, is holding an ancient musical instrument in one hand and a book in the other. With the expression and beauty of a heavenly face, due to raising her eyes towards heaven, accompanied by two lively and animated poets who, with her and the other figures, form various compositions, and on this side over the same window he first painted Mount Parnassus. In another temple which is painted above the scene in which the Doctors of the Church are capturing the liberty of the Muse,

Post by "Don" of August 6, 2020 at 8:34 PM

[Quote from Cassius](#)

That's another angle on this to consider. Which position is more "prominent"? The one down front with the pudgy wreathed figure, or the position located very close to the central figures of the fresco (even if somewhat obscured)?

Oh! Good point!

Post by “michelepinto” of August 7, 2020 at 10:27 AM

[Quote from Cassius](#)

And hey that is a great new AVATAR you are using!

Thank you! 😊

Post by “Cassius” of March 24, 2021 at 9:30 AM

[Permalink:](#)



Elli Pensa ▸ Επικούρειος Κύκλος

4h · 🌐



<https://epicuros21.gr/%ce%b7-%ce%b4%ce%b9%ce%ac%cf%83%ce.../>

The famous tapestry " School of Athens " arrived in Greece by the French National Assembly to the Greek government in order to be placed outside the central entrance of the Greek Parliament plenary, on the occasion of the 200 years since the Greek Revolution. It is noted that the tapestry came to Greece after communication from the president of the Greek Parliament with his French counterpart R. Ferrant who was happy to announce her loan in Athens. The tapestry is a 17th century masterpiece, and adorned the French National Assembly since 1879 After 141 years, this project by Manufacture de Gobelins came down from the main hall and was restored to find its lost shine. To complete the job it took 1700 working days. It's inspired by a work of the 1508 Raphael mural currently in the Vatican. The project depicts a group of philosophers discussing, from Archimedes to Pythagoras and Plato and Aristotle are downtown.

I take the opportunity to mention here, and something about a paper of mine, which I had done about how we find in this mural the form of Epicurus using our EYES and FEELINGS!

This paper of mine, I still remember with a complaint, how easily the Athens Garden rejected it, and I was not given the opportunity to present it at a Symposium. Because it was not, he says, in-depth archaeological and historical. As if they know, the Athens Garden what the Vatican popes were hiding inside their warehouses, and what Raphael saw and painted next. That is, the Gardens preferred not to use their senses and feelings. And they chose not to give the place that Epikouros deserves and in this mural. Thus, they gladly accepted to spread this rumor from Vatican's popes, that this form of a foolish child is Epicurus. What else can we say?! Nothing else, of course, we have to say.

⚙️ · [See original](#) · [Rate this translation](#)



Elli did you find that your argument was rejected because of disagreement with your conclusion? What was the position of those who rejected your paper as to which figure represents Epicurus?

Even if I thought you were wrong (and I think you are right) I would still think that the discussion would have been very interesting to present to an Epicurean assembly. Maybe I am missing something (?)

Post by “Elli” of March 24, 2021 at 1:09 PM

Their arguments were not based on senses and feelings. They were not based on what we see that is similar of what we have nowadays for Epicurus bust. The usage of the epicurean CANON has not been used.

They insisted to preserve those redicule speculations that were spreaded by Popes with some writers about Art and that is : **Epicurus in this fresco is that boy with the smirk and has a wreath with vine leafs on his head! This boy, as they say, has the face of a cardinal named Inghirami that was a secretary to the popes, and had a feminine nickname as Pheadra.** 😏

Here you can read something about him.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tommaso_I..._note-rowland-2

In 1510, Inghirami was appointed Prefect of the Palatine Library. As secretary to the College of Cardinals he served as secretary for the papal conclave of 1513 which elected Pope Leo X.[1] About this time he commissioned Raphael to paint his portrait. He appears in the robes of a canon of St. Peter's Basilica. Raphael had already, in 1509, used Inghirami as the model for the Greek philosopher Epicurus in his fresco The School of Athens for the papal apartments.[2][c]

He served as secretary of the Fifth Lateran Council under Pope Julius II and, after his death, under Pope Leo X.[2]

Inghirami was overweight at least in his final decades, as shown in Raphael's works. He suffered from strabismus, the failure of the eyes to align, a condition that Raphael disguised in his portrait by focusing his gaze away from the viewer at some unseen superior or inspiration.[10] Contemporary letters hint he was homosexual[1] or state it as plain fact,[8] an interpretation supported by Raphael's "School of Athens" where Inghirami is embraced from behind by a half-hidden male figure, and his unusual feminine nickname of Phaedra.[2]

Post by “Cassius” of March 24, 2021 at 2:14 PM

Yes that face is a close match!

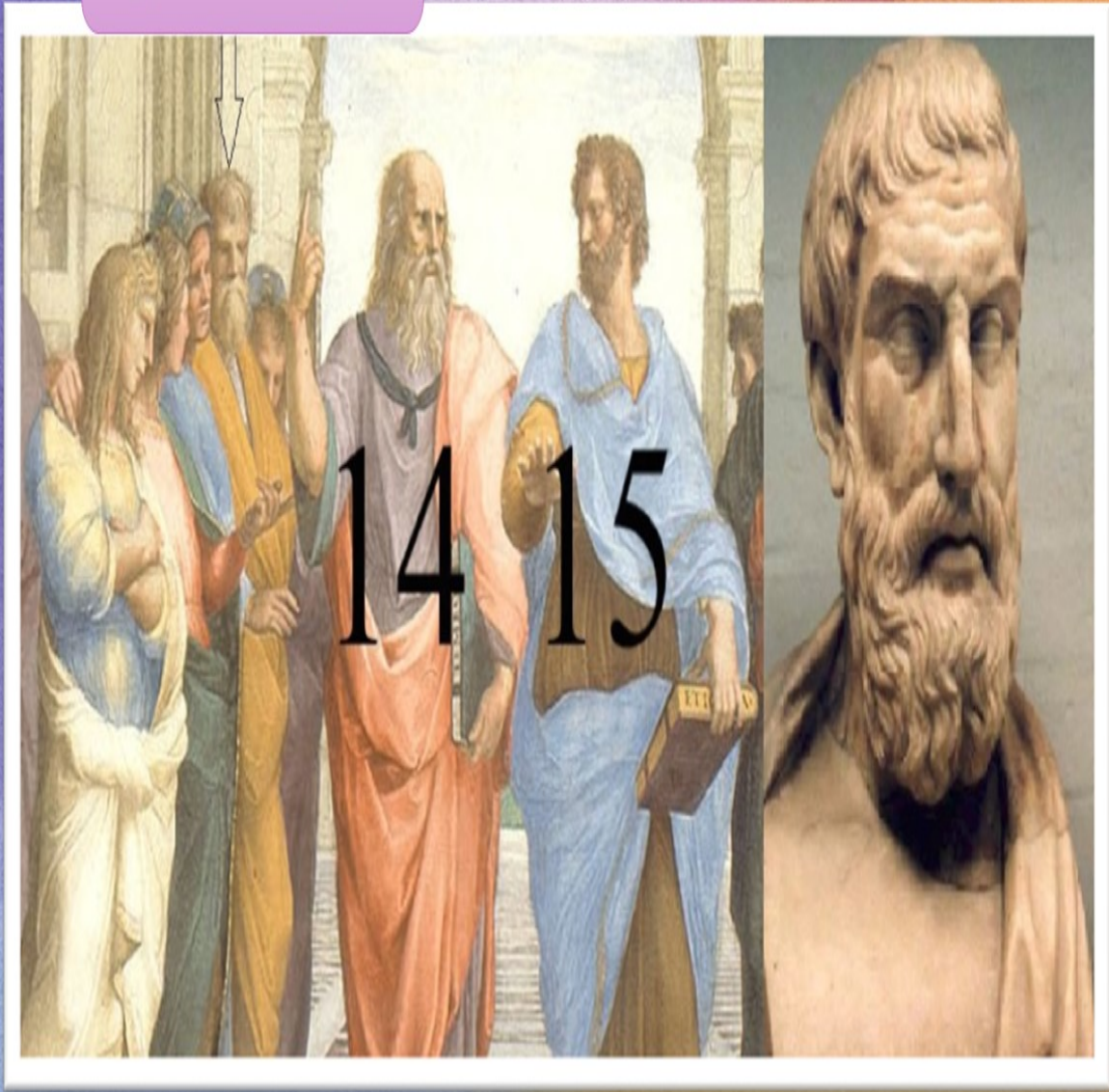
Post by “Elli” of March 24, 2021 at 6:22 PM

Yes, indeed, now that I wear my supernatural glasses, I see clearly. This face in Raphaels fresco is a close match with the Epicurus bust! 😊😊



Post by “Elli” of March 24, 2021 at 6:56 PM

-Who is this?
- A god that lived among men!



Post by "Joshua" of May 7, 2021 at 10:01 PM



A detail of the wreathed figure from The School of Athens. Probably engraved c. 1800-1820 in Italy.

Post by “Cassius” of May 7, 2021 at 10:06 PM

Great find, Joshua - so this would establish that as far back as 1810's someone was pegging that person as Epicurus --- so once again we ought to consider how the dates of the Herculaneum busts and busts at the Vatican play against this date. I will tag [Elli](#) to be sure she sees this.

Post by “Elli” of May 9, 2021 at 2:50 AM

Hello to all epicurean friends. 😊

The first found, as they claim, was of the double bust of the Epicurus with Metrodorus, and it was in 1742 in Rome. And was happened "accidentaly" during the construction of a portico in the church of St Maria Maggiore.

The marble bust from St Maria Maggiore in Rome in which the name of Epicurus can be seen is today at the Capitolino Museo in Rome.

The double bust was immediately placed in the collection of Pope Benedict XIV.

In 1753, a small bronze bust of Epicurus was also discovered in the Villa of the Papyri in Herculaneum, Italy, among the ashes of Vesuvius. .

This drawing, as Joshua says, is during the years 1800-1820. Thus the drawing is after the years 1742 and 1753 that the busts of Epicurus were found.

I want to make a hypothesis and I would like to ask something: There is a famous villa in Italy and in the area of Tivoli that is called "Villa Adriana" that was built by the emperor Hadrian.

In that villa, as they say, there were many busts of greek philosophers, gods etc., and as the archeologists say, Hadrian wanted to show things that would overwhelm the visitor, something that had not been seen anywhere else in the world and that exists only in his Villa.

The question is : **would there be a case Hadrian had inside that villa a bust of Epicurus?** 😊

Post by “Cassius” of May 9, 2021 at 6:01 AM

Perhaps we can find an answer to that question in Bernard Frischer's book "Sculpted Word"? Or maybe we can actually find Mr. Frischer online and email him a question about this. That actually strikes me as doable.

So where are we on this by timeline?

The fresco was painted in the early 1500's:

The **School of Athens** (Italian: Scuola di Atene) is a fresco by the Italian Renaissance artist Raphael. It was painted between 1509 and 1511 as a part of Raphael's commission to decorate the rooms now known as the Stanze di Raffaello, in the Apostolic Palace in the Vatican.

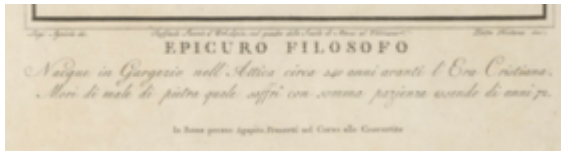
The busts from Herculaneum and Vatican were not discovered until the 1750's.

I guess we are really talking about two things:

(1) Do we have any evidence that Raphael himself asserted that the wreathed chubby figure was Epicurus?

(2) When did other people start asserting that wreathed chubby figure was Epicurus? Who was that person and when and why?

As to question (2) we now know from Joshua's post that the assertion that wreathed chubby figure is Epicurus dates at least to early 1800's. I can't read this inscription from the etching but it may or may not help with that question:



Given the dates of the bust discoveries, if Raphael knew the correct likeness of Epicurus, it would have to be based on something else, perhaps the Hadrian villa items, or perhaps well something totally unknown to us currently - and i would indeed presume that there are or were many historical artifacts in Italy and Greece that we're not aware of in this conversation.

Post by “Cassius” of May 9, 2021 at 6:03 AM

Elli, it looks like Bernard Frischer can be contacted with the material on this page: <http://frischer.org/contact/>

I wonder if you would be interested in writing him? My bet is that you personally have the best chance of getting a reply from him for many reasons, not the least of which is your location and connections in Greece.

I would wager that Mr. Frischer may well have more expertise of the likeness of Epicurus as any living person in the world at this time. Further, if he doesn't have an opinion on this himself, he is probably best positioned to ask for help from others, given that this issue is so close to his past research and interests.

Maybe he would be interested in the Facebook page on this topic, and/or a copy of Pan's page (I think I remember he wrote a paper on this?)

Post by “Elli” of May 9, 2021 at 6:10 AM

Please let me to write some facts with persons that were involved... and as that famous phrase says "Follow the money" that is a catchphrase popularized by the 1976 docudrama film entitled as: "All the President's Men", which suggests political corruption can be brought to light by examining money transfers between parties.

Villa Adriana

After Hadrian, the villa was occasionally used by his various successors (Antoninus Pius (138–161), Marcus Aurelius (161–180), Lucius Verus (161–169), Septimius Severus and Caracalla have been found on the premises). Zenobia, the deposed queen of Palmyra, possibly lived there in the 270s.

During the decline of the Roman Empire in the 4th century, the villa gradually fell into disuse and was partially ruined as valuable statues and marble were taken away.

From whom the statues and the marble were taken away?

From persons like this one:

Bindo Altoviti who lived in the years 1491-1557 of the House of Altoviti was an Italian banker and one of the most influential papal bankers of his generation. A patron of the arts, **he cultivated close friendships with artists such as Cellini, Raphael, Michelangelo and Vasari.**

His father was Antonio Altoviti, the papal Master of the Mint, and his mother was La Papessa Dianora Altoviti, niece of Pope Innocent VIII. One of his direct descendants was Pope Clement XII.

Like other Florentines who provided loans to the popes in exchange for the rights to papal revenues, Bindo prospered. He enjoyed the financial resources to undertake extensive renovations to the properties he inherited from his father and his suburban villa on the Tiber, and to indulge a growing passion for art. **Known for, and endowed with, a strong taste for art, he became a patron of the arts and friend to Cellini, Raphael, Michelangelo and Vasari.**

Immortalized in the portrait by Raphael (see the picture), he gave sanctuary to Michelangelo when he fled from Florence to Rome. Michelangelo had such a high esteem for Bindo, while he despised his rival Agostino Chigi, that he gave him as a gift the cartoon of Noah's Blessing (lost), used for the fresco in the vault of the Sistine Chapel as well as a drawing of a Venus (lost) colored by Vasari. It was also Michelangelo who convinced Bindo not to rebuild, but to preserve, the Santi Apostoli church.

Vasari painted the Allegory of the Immaculate Conception for the family chapel. When in Rome, Vasari also used to stay at the Palazzo Altoviti where he frescoed the Triumph of Ceres. When the palazzo was demolished in order to create the Tiber's embankments, the frescos were

removed and are now shown in the National Museum of Palazzo Venezia.

For Bindo's suburban villa Vasari frescoed a vast loggia called the Vineyard, decorated with statues and burial marbles from Emperor Hadrian's Villa Adriana.

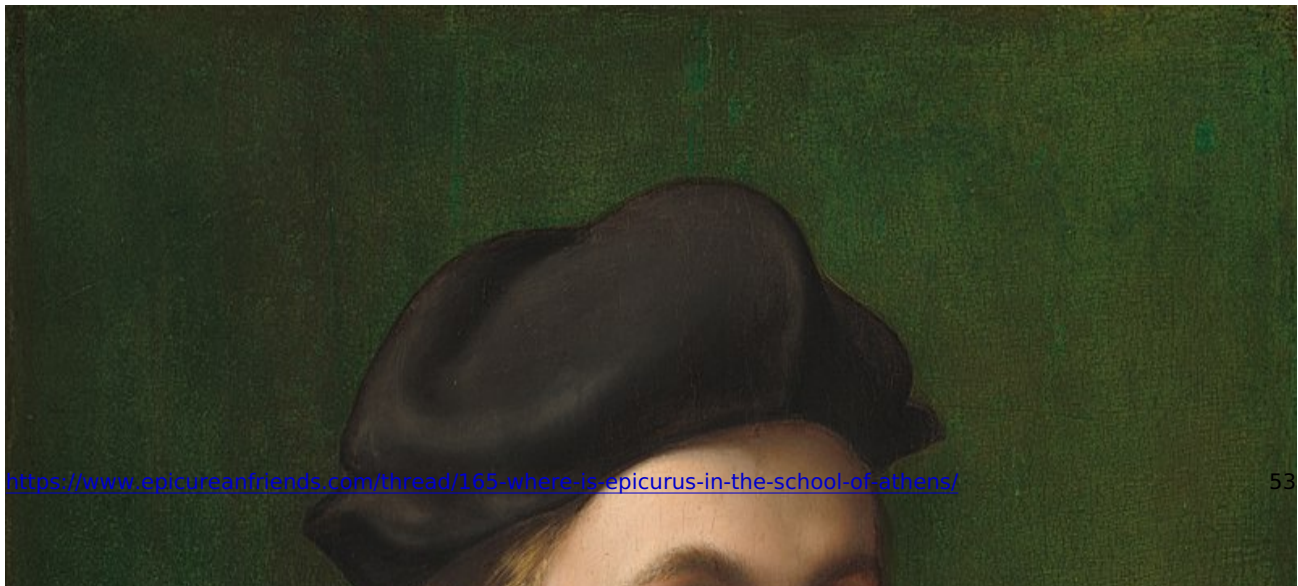
My hypothesis is : that Bindo Altoviti must had a bust of Epicurus and it had pointed out to his friend the painter Raphael. For this reason Raphael has painted Epicurus figure on his fresco “the school of Athens” so identical and so similar to our known busts.

For the history Bindo Altoviti's descendants were:

Bindo's son Giovanni Battista Altoviti married Clarice Ridolfi, daughter of Lorenzo Ridolfi, grandson of [Lorenzo il Magnifico di Medici](#) and [Clarice Orsini](#), bringing about a reconciliation between the houses of Altoviti, Medici and Strozzi. This made it possible for Bindo's other son, Archbishop of Florence Antonio Altoviti, finally to live in his bishopric. Giovanni Battista himself remained a banker in Rome, was twice consul of the Nazione Fiorentina, and exercised, under [Pius V](#), the offices of an apostolic general and the Depositario dell'Abbondanza.

Marietta Altoviti married Giambattista Strozzi, which also strengthened the link between the houses of Strozzi and Medici. Their descendants became the Strozzi dukes of Bagnolo and princes of Forano, the Corsini princes of Sismano, dukes of Casigliano and Civitella, and most prominent [Pope Clement XII](#).

Their granddaughter Lucrezia Maria Strozzi married [Prince Aleksander Ludwik Radziwiłł](#), [Voivode of Polock](#), [Grand Marshal of Lithuania](#) and member of the [Radziwiłł](#) family, [magnates of Poland and Lithuania](#). [Prince Anton Radziwiłł](#) was the husband of [Louise of Prussia](#). The couple were important patrons of the arts in Berlin during the 19th century. Their later heir [Prince Stanisław Albrecht Radziwiłł](#) was married to Caroline Lee Radziwill, sister of the late First Lady, [Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis](#), and sister-in-law of [President John F. Kennedy](#).



Post by “Cassius” of May 9, 2021 at 6:19 AM

I suppose too as part of our discussion we ought to consider the possibility too that Raphael knew of the true likeness of Epicurus, but still chose to portray him as a wreathed cherubic figure as a means of insulting him.

That may be unlikely, but it is one possibility that if we're being complete we need to include in the analysis. Presumably the most likely scenario is that Raphael intended to portray Epicurus accurately, and the question is whether he had means of knowing the true likeness. Short of finding some document by Raphael himself stating his intentions, however, we can't presume to a certainty that just because a correct image was available in the early 1500's that Raphael used it. The full list of possibilities would include (1) A correct image might have existed and he chose not to use it, or (2) a correct image existed but he was unaware of it, or (3) no correct image existed in the 1500's except underground.

Post by “Elli” of May 9, 2021 at 7:46 AM

This is the work by Takis Panagiotopoulos that is a founding member in the garden of Athens.

<https://www.epicuros.gr/pages/en/Panag...rusPortrait.pdf>

Please trust me, my friend Cassius, in the greek gardens there are persons that claim for themselves that are epicureans and at the sametime ACCEPT, without using their senses and feelings, whatever is served by the vatican popes. What do you do not understand?

μου αρέσει! · Απάντηση · Κοινοποίηση · 4 χρ.



Dimitri Lostromos



By the way, I like Francis as popes go, he shows his concerns honestly and supports worthwhile causes, now if he would just "decriminalize" contraception and a few other sensible things he would leave a worthwhile legacy.

This is the person that translated from greek into english the work by Takis Panagiotopoulos on the busts of Epicurus. Panagiotopoulos is founding member in the Garden of Athens.

μου αρέσει! · Απάντηση · Κοινοποίηση · 4 χρ.



Elli Pensa Συντάκτης Διαχειριστής +1

Yes Pope Francis is a "good" person. He shows us paintings-frescos and says : here is the reality in the picture and you eat and drink in the sky. Give me a break !!!

Μου αρέσει! · Απάντηση · Κοινοποίηση · 4 χρ. · Τροποποιήθηκε

The work by Takis Panagiotopoulos is entitled "How the portrait of the Athenian philosopher Epicurus became known to us".

¹ First published in "Anthology of Epicurean Philosophy" in the Greek language. Many thanks to Dimitri Lostromo and to Rachel Forides for helping with the translation.

Post by "Elli" of May 9, 2021 at 7:57 AM

Raphael did not leave any written notes who is who in this fresco! All are speculations.

However, Aristotle, Plato Socrates were painted by him similar with their busts. Raphael had info for these philosophers busts, but he had no info for Epicurus bust, but at the same time in his fresco Raphael has painted a person that is similar with the bust of Epicurus. Raphael had info for Socrates bust, but he had no info for the latest philosophical mainstreams that were prevailed in Athens and in Rome, and these were Epicurean philosophy and stoicism. Interesting eh? 🤔

Post by “Cassius” of May 17, 2021 at 6:26 AM

[Elli](#) I see this section from the Wikipedia article but I have never seen pictures of any of these preliminary sketches. Have you found them and checked to see whether there are any details in the figures that would bear on your thesis?

Drawings and cartoon [\[edit\]](#)

A number of drawings made by Raphael as studies for the *School of Athens* are extant.^[13] A study for the Diogenes is in the [Städel](#) in [Frankfurt](#)^[14] while a study for the group around Pythagoras, in the lower left of the painting, is preserved in the [Albertina Museum](#) in [Vienna](#).^[15] Several drawings, showing the two men talking while walking up the steps on the right and the [Medusa](#) on Athena's shield,^{[16][a]} the statue of Athena (Minerva) and three other statues,^[18] a study for the combat scene in the relief below Apollo^[19] and "Euclid" teaching his pupils^[20] are in the [Ashmolean Museum of Art and Archaeology](#) at the [University of Oxford](#).

The [cartoon](#) for the painting is in the [Pinacoteca Ambrosiana](#) in [Milan](#).^[21] Missing from it is the architectural background, the figures of Heraclitus, Raphael, and Protagenes. The group of the philosophers in the left foreground strongly recall figures from Leonardo's *Adoration of the Magi*.^[22] Additionally, there are some engravings of the scene's sculptures by [Marcantonio Raimondi](#); they may have been based on lost drawings by Raphael, as they do not match the fresco exactly.^[23]



Post by “Cassius” of May 17, 2021 at 7:30 AM

I see one view of the cartoon is here: <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/03/26/art...-of-athens.html>

and indeed the area you are pointing to is different:



As is the chubby wreathed figure:



My first impression is that these differences help your thesis, but that's only a first thought based on thinking that the preliminary sketch appears to be a generic set of onlookers with a man whose head is twisted as if he is paying particular attention or is otherwise an inferior student. On the other hand the finished product appears to be a dead ringer for Epicurus with much different head position and facial expression. I don't think you would insert someone strong like that (complete with philosopher beard) unless you wanted to feature a particularly important person.

If we could get a more clear view of that twisted head figure we might be able to learn more.

Also, the forerunner of the wreathed figure looks nothing like a Greek philosopher at all (nor does the current wreathed figure.)

Post by “Cassius” of May 17, 2021 at 7:42 AM

More background details: http://projects.mcah.columbia.edu/raphael/htm/ra...athens_draw.htm

Post by “Cassius” of May 17, 2021 at 7:49 AM

Closeup of the first draft of the section Elli is pointing to:

http://projects.mcah.columbia.edu/raphael/htm/ra...athens_draw.htm

also: <https://www.ambrosiana.it/en/partecipa/p...chool-of-athen/>



Does it not appear that the twisted-head figure has some kind of headpiece on? I would think that undercuts the idea that he was originally a major figure, and I would see his being replaced as some evidence of special attention being paid to this character. He may have a beard, but the overall look doesn't impress me as being a philosopher, unlike the figure that replaced him.

I'm not sure why but in the past (and some of my comments probably reflect this) I was thinking that this fresco was in some part of Italy other than the Vatican. Since I now stand corrected and find that this is in the Vatican, **in my own mind** that adds near-certainty to Elli's conclusion. I personally have no doubt that the arch-enemies of Epicurus in the Vatican **never** lost track of what their primary enemy looked like, and one of them could and would have pointed out his bust to Raphael.

Post by “Elli” of May 17, 2021 at 9:29 AM

I agree totally with your thoughts Cassius. I sum up with this picture and my comments below.





These drawings are by Raphael from an area of his fresco "school of Athens". This is Raphael's first attempt to draw a company with philosophers next to Plato and Aristotle.

And this is the final work of the same area of the fresco by Raphael that we see this till today, realizing that Raphael had changed totally the first figure and corrected the painting with a figure that is so identical with the bust of Epicurus!!

Post by "Cassius" of May 17, 2021 at 9:49 AM

[Elli](#) I wonder if Takis included this cartoon draft in his analysis?

Post by “Elli” of May 17, 2021 at 11:56 AM

No, he did not. However, I did not know the existence of these drawings too. You did a good catch Cassius! 👍

Post by “Cassius” of May 17, 2021 at 12:54 PM

Glad I could help Elli! I will never believe for a second that the Vatican ever lost track of the correct image of Epicurus. I will never believe for a second that the Vatican didn't keep in its records a complete copy of Lucretius' poem. I will never believe for a second that there aren't many more texts of Epicurus and the Epicureans secreted away in the Vatican Library even today.

The Vatican has always known, and some of us over the years have always known, that Epicurus was the Number One mortal enemy that the Church has had since its inception. Nietzsche saw it. Norman DeWitt was probably correct that the early Christians considered Epicurus either one of, or the main, "Anti-Christ." Talmudic scholars have always known it, using Epicurus' name as a term of denunciation. I don't know about the past Islamists, but I would certainly expect them to have seen the same thing.

This is something that is totally lost in discussing Epicurus as primarily interested in "pleasure," especially in the form of "absence of pain." Epicurus was a philosophical and moral revolutionary, and the various religious groups had to work to stamp him out because his comprehensive view of the universe and the place of humanity in it would blow their fantasies sky high if they became well known and accepted by significant numbers of people. It does a great disservice to Epicurus to focus on food and drink and bodily pleasures - there's no doubt in my mind but that Epicurus was aiming at a virtual overthrow of the established culture and education - the groups that adopted Christianity and Islam and (today) Humanism so completely. People who are focused on those issues won't ever see what a revolutionary Epicurus was.

I think a lot of people over history have seen and understood that, and the Vatican saw and understood it too. I would therefore expect that they studied their primary opponent in close

detail and kept good records of how they planned to defeat his ideas and prevent their flaring up ever again.

And the primary way they did that was to multiply Cicero's characterization of Epicurus as effeminate (focused on sensual pleasure rather than seeing "feeling" as the philosophical opponent of Virtue and Religion. And that's the way they succeeded in branding his ideas as disreputable and unfit for discussion in the camp or in the Senate (the way I understand Cicero described it).

In fact that's the thought I woke up with this morning, and started to post about. I know in the past I've received some criticism for focusing on the importance of "pleasure" as the goal of life, and at this point I'll begin to agree with that criticism, at least to this extent: I don't think Epicurus saw his work on the practical side of pleasure (what to eat, drink, clothing, dance, etc) as particularly unique or what he wanted to be remembered for. I think Epicurus saw his achievement as his insight that pleasure is really feeling, and that it's feeling rather than virtue and religion and rationalism that life is all about. I think Epicurus saw his comprehensive view of the universe as natural, as eternal, as infinite, and that there are no such things as supernatural gods or life after death, as the key benefit of his philosophy. Yes pleasure is important, but it's third in line in the [principal doctrines](#) after the dogmatic assertions that there are no supernatural gods and there is no life after death. The place that pleasure holds derives from those insights, and that there are no ideal forms or anything magic about "logic" and rationalism, and it's on all of that where Epicurus departs from the prior consensus, not just in appreciating good food and drink.

The Vatican knows that. The Vatican knows that defining "epicurean" as pursuing fine wine and dining and the like is never going to be a threat to their empire. They don't really care even for that, and thus they promote Cicero's "absence of pain" viewpoint, but in reality it's the rest of the philosophy that's the iceberg waiting to take out the Vatican's Titanic.

Post by “Joshua” of May 17, 2021 at 9:15 PM

I agree with most of what you've written here Cassius, but when it comes to what the Vatican knew or didn't know...well, I still can't quite get there.

Consider first that neither the Vatican nor anyone else even knows what *Jesus or ANY of his disciples* looked like. We have an apocryphal description of St. Paul that emerged in the second century (nearly a hundred years after his death), and it may or may not be accurate—no one will ever know. And...that's it. There's no biblical figure for whom a contemporary image survives.

It would be another hundred years after the apocryphal story of St. Paul until we finally got the first portrait of a Roman Pontiff. The likenesses of the **ten** predecessors of [Pope Anicetus](#) (and those of many of his successors) will forever remain obscure to history.

But look much more recently than that! Almost everyone who reads English Literature with any kind of depth will be familiar with the Shakespeare authorship dispute. While I personally believe that centuries of scholarship has settled that question, there is another debate that's almost as astonishing--no one can say for certain whether the [Chandos Portrait](#), the bard's most well-known likeness, is actually him or someone else. We can't say for certain that any of the surviving and alleged portraits were made in his own lifetime.

We don't know for certain what Chaucer looked like; we don't know what the crowned heads of medieval Europe looked like.

As for my opinion on surviving writings...that will have to wait until after dinner!

Post by "Don" of May 17, 2021 at 10:51 PM

I have to agree with [Joshua](#) while also saying clearly I appreciate the passion and the general sentiment of [Cassius](#) 's post.

Once Epicurus's school and legacy were pretty much wiped out by the Justinian closures of the schools in the 500s or Arabs in the 700s if the Epicureans had a presence in Alexandria, they weren't considered a threat. They were once! No question! But the Triumph of Christianity in the literal sense of a Roman triumph where you celebrate the crushing of your enemies was total.

his site has some interesting excerpts:

<http://www.bede.org.uk/justinian.htm>

I agree that there may have been stray pockets of Epicureans and Epicureanism scattered about, but I have doubts there was a bust of Epicurus secreted away in the Vatican for them to throw eggs at, so to speak. The "Secret Archive" has been open to researchers for a number of years. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vatican_Archive?wprov=sfla1 I don't think they have the mummified body of Jesus hidden somewhere either https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Another_Romanion?wprov=sfla1 Once Epicurus and his school and its students were stamped out, viciously and with maximum efficiency, I don't think the Church would have worried you much. They wielded the literal power of life and death over swaths of the world by the 400s and consolidated power soon after. They may have kept around a bust of

Socrates or Aristotle because they could incorporate Socratic, Platonic, Aristotelian, and Stoic ideas into Christianity. Anything of value from Epicurus they take, mold to their own, and completely erase its provenance. They had nothing to fear (they thought) from a few stray letters or a copy or two of some obscure Latin poet. His Latin is elegant. What have we to fear.

I can't recall if you or Elli shared the link to Takis's paper but I accidentally ran across it: <https://www.epicuros.gr/pages/en/Panag...rusPortrait.pdf> He seems to say it laid hidden until 1742.

Post by "Joshua" of May 17, 2021 at 11:04 PM

As for surviving writings in the Vatican Library, I'm skeptical about that as well.

The Roman Pontiffs have been a strikingly varied lot. Some were pious, and many others have been corrupt. Some popes have been scholars of the highest learning (as in the case of Sylvester II), while at least four of the "Vicars of Christ" on earth have been illiterate! (Innocent VI is notable for his mistrust of the high literary ambitions of Petrarch, or so I have read.)

Nor was the Church uniformly hostile to all criticism. Our own Lorenzo Valla (later in life a contemporary and rival of Poggio Bracciolini at the Roman *Curia*) had made a name for himself early on when he proved using philology that the so-called "Donation of Constantine" was a forgery. The Church had for centuries buttressed its own authority partially with this document. His scholarship put his life in danger—and yet when the mitre changed heads with the inauguration of Nicholas V, Valla was invited to a high position in the papal court.

It would strike me as odd if during all these centuries a major work from antiquity had been hidden away in the Vatican Library, with generations of humanists and scholars never revealing it. But it's even more unusual when I consider that in 1888 a small collection of maxims *did* emerge. I hardly see the point in letting those sayings out, and hiding the rest away; I don't suppose there can really be anything shocking or subversive in Epicurus beyond what we have record of elsewhere. Oddly enough, Lucretius was spared inclusion onto the infamous Index of Prohibited Books, supposedly by the intervention of one Cardinal Marcello Cervini.

So there's that. I certainly appreciate the work that Elli has done in developing her thesis. It would be great to see something new come to light in all of this.

Post by "Cassius" of May 18, 2021 at 7:02 AM

[Quote from JJElbert](#)

Consider first that neither the Vatican nor anyone else even knows what Jesus or ANY of his disciples looked like.

As for a likeness of Jesus and/or the disciples, I think the most likely answer to that is that he never really existed except as a composite figure of one of more various local rebellion-leaders.

As for Shakespeare I am tempted to [think much the same thing as well.](#)

And there certainly have been "good" figures mixed in to the history of the catholic church (and the rest of organized religion), but I don't see that really changing its overall picture as machinery for manipulation and oppression of the "masses."

Post by “Joshua” of May 18, 2021 at 7:44 AM

Quote

And there certainly have been "good" figures mixed in to the history of the catholic church (and the rest of organized religion), but I don't see that really changing its overall picture as machinery for manipulation and oppression of the "masses."

True, but what we would have to believe in this case is that for well over a thousand years—during many centuries of which humanist scholars (including men in holy orders) were rifling the libraries of Europe for pagan texts—a significant work by an important figure was hidden away in perfect secrecy. It's just that personally I find it more likely that the Church employed a more direct means of containment; by the classic expedient of feeding books to the fire.

Post by “Don” of May 18, 2021 at 8:02 AM

[Quote from Cassius](#)

As for a likeness of Jesus and/or the disciples, I think the most likely answer to that is that he never really existed except as a composite figure of one of more various local rebellion-leaders.

I think a more likely scenario for likeness of Jesus of Nazareth and his followers is that for decades if not a century he was a minor figure. No one paid any attention to him until his followers (none of whom would have ever seen him) began to consolidate power. I have no problem accepting there was a person, an apocalyptic prophet, living in Judea in the early "common era", probably named Yeshua. There's also no doubt that later writers glommed into his stories from various Hebrew and pagan sources.

Epicurus on the other hand was a powerhouse, well known before and after his death whose memory and teachings needed to be stamped out hard, eradicated, and burned by the followers of Jesus Christos, Logos, Lord of the Universe.

Post by "Cassius" of May 18, 2021 at 8:55 AM

[Quote from JJElbert](#)

a significant work by an important figure was hidden away in perfect secrecy.

I grant you that it is a poor idea to impute efficiency to the core church leadership. However I don't hesitate for a moment to impute power-lust and corruption to them, so there's that aspect as well. And I am not sure that our alternatives are mutually incompatible - they apparently wrote over lots of early manuscripts and there could be some combination of issues - obviously Lucretius did escape their worst efforts, and apparently the works of Cicero and Diogenes Laertius were too widespread to be eliminated entirely.

The main part of this aspect that concerns me is that in my view I see over and over examples of where individual "rebels" get stamped out by the central orthodoxy, and the lesson I take from that is that no countervailing force can hope to succeed for long unless it too "organizes" so as to perpetuate itself. As brilliant as Epicurus was, his works barely survived, and then likely only because they penetrated the culture so far initially that the views were picked up by others elsewhere and perpetuated.

I'm no Nietzsche expert but my understanding is that a similar observation (that nature does not provide that the "strong" always survive over the "weak" who have superior numbers) was behind much of Nietzsche's critique of some of Darwin's views. Regardless of that, I don't think we should underestimate what Epicureans in history have always been up against, and I don't

at all think that those forces of opposition are gone. In fact, I see them again, at present, gathering strength for another offensive.

Post by “Don” of May 18, 2021 at 9:00 AM

Wasn't the whole secret hidden manuscript the plot of Umberto Eco's *The Name of the Rose*?

Post by “Cassius” of May 18, 2021 at 9:00 AM

Getting back to Elli's post for just a moment, I think that it would be interesting to consider the possibilities of what was going on with Raphael drastically revising that particular figure, even if we assume Elli's contention is correct:

- the first that comes to mind is that it appears that the drawing was first conceived with someone else in that position. If so, then that observation would tend to diminish any linkage between the other figures arrayed nearby with Elli's Epicurus. I think we had previously speculated that one of more of them might be female and perhaps a reference to Epicurus' associates, but that possibility might be less likely if the original drawing was not intended to be Epicurus, because those other figures remain the same.
 - Can we tell anything of significance about the figure that was removed? His eyes seem strange to me. I wanted to describe it as a "deer in the headlights" look but that might not be best. Might be best to speculate about him based on his headpiece, which I don't recognize but which might be identifying.
 - Then there's the dramatic change in the wreathed figure. That may say something too,
-

Post by “Cassius” of May 18, 2021 at 9:03 AM

[Quote from Don](#)

Wasn't the whole secret hidden manuscript the plot of Umberto Eco's The Name of the Rose?

You know a topic on the "Secrets of the Vatican" might make for an interesting thread itself. I've heard of that, but the only related them I am familiar with is that Tom Hanks movie -- what was that? 😊

Does anyone have enough interest or material for a "Secrets of the Vatican" thread?

Post by "Cassius" of May 18, 2021 at 9:04 AM

Oh, too, there was an early church figure associated as being Epicurean too -- i forget the name - {Pelagius?} Might need a thread on him too.

Post by "Don" of May 18, 2021 at 10:53 AM

[Quote from Cassius](#)

[Quote from Don](#)

Wasn't the whole secret hidden manuscript the plot of Umberto Eco's The Name of the Rose?

You know a topic on the "Secrets of the Vatican" might make for an interesting thread itself. I've heard of that, but the only related them I am familiar with is that Tom Hanks movie -- what was that? 😊

Does anyone have enough interest or material for a "Secrets of the Vatican" thread?

That was the Da Vinci Code and all the other Dan Browne books. The Name of the Rose was made into a movie starring Sean Connery.

Post by "Cassius" of May 18, 2021 at 4:43 PM

I am pretty sure I did not see "Name of the Rose." Worth watching, or gag-inducing deference to the Vatican and "holiness" of the church (attributing anything bad to bad people as opposed to the rotten foundation)?

Post by "Don" of May 18, 2021 at 5:16 PM

it wasn't bad as I remember. Evil monk hiding manuscripts (Aristotle's Comedy was one I think I remember). Sean is the good guy monk trying bring them to light. Set in the Middle Ages.

Post by "Don" of May 18, 2021 at 5:21 PM

<https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0091605/>

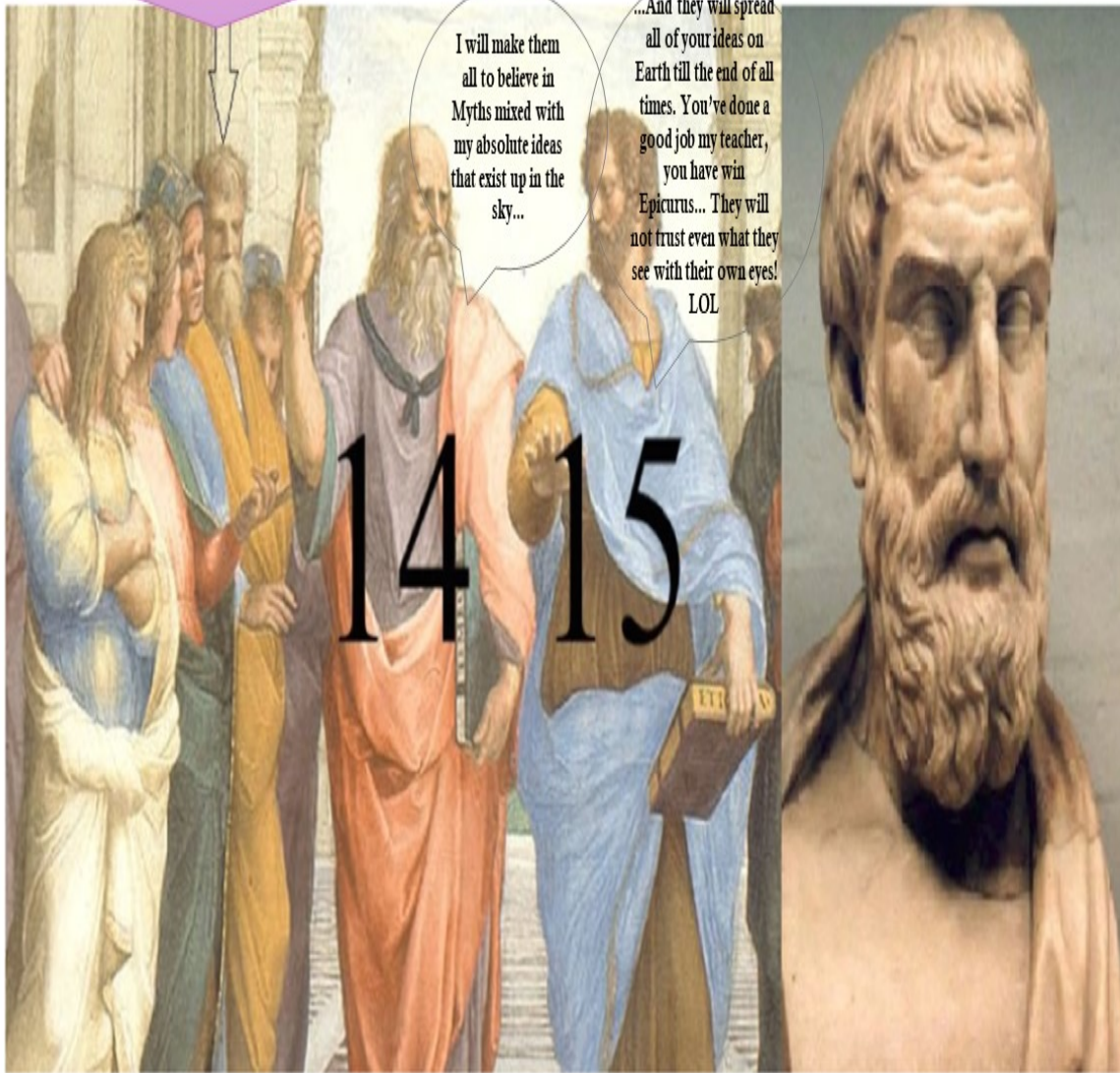
Post by "Elli" of May 19, 2021 at 5:32 AM

Myths and fairytales (Jesus and Saul/Paul) mixed with books and movies (Umberto Eco and Dan Brown) and a totally rejection of the two creteria of truth of the Canon which are our own eyes and our feelings for the examination on the issue: where and who is Epicurus on the fresco by Raphael?

The right answer is: well, the bust of Epicurus had not been discovered in the era of Raphael, so that we conclude that Epicurus on that fresco is that stupid little boy with the smirk and wreath on his head.

GUYS, I'M HERE WHY DON'T YOU SEE ME??

“But, those who have not thoroughly taken these things to heart could not rightly study them in themselves, nor have they made their own the reason for observing them”. (Epicurus LTP)



Post by "Don" of May 19, 2021 at 7:03 AM

Have we seen this paper: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/3046140>

New Identifications in Raphael's School of Athens

Can't tell if it addresses Epicurus directly, but the abstract seems to contend that Raphael didn't use portrait sculpture for any of the portraits. Even Socrates was supposedly derived from textual descriptions. Also, if the Pope wanted to denigrate Epicurus's teachings, how fitting would it be to tell Raphael, "Yeah, use that pudgy guy to represent that atheist pleasure seeker if you have to include him." I agree it looks like Epicurus, but the trope of the bearded, robed philosopher was a common motif, wasn't it? I've also gotten the impression in the past that the figures to the immediate left and right of Plato and Aristotle were supposed to be their unnamed followers. I could be misremembering. Don't get me wrong. I'd like it to be Epicurus, but I need to see at least one documented reference to be convinced. Too many variables.

Post by "Cassius" of May 19, 2021 at 7:16 AM

[Quote from Don](#)

Can't tell if it addresses Epicurus directly, but the abstract seems to contend that Raphael didn't use portrait sculpture for any of the portraits. Even Socrates was supposedly derived from textual descriptions.

Not questioning you, Don, but the statement on its face. Can such a theory even be seriously entertained? We need that full article because this assertion I want to read in detail.

And yes I think you're correct to observe that even in the course of someone who is extremely anti-Vatican, and anti-Church, and slow to impute "good" motives to any of them, it would be part of the thesis of someone arguing Elli's point that Raphael (at least Raphael, if not his Church supervisors) wanted to be accurate in placing Epicurus in a position more consistent with his central role in Greek philosophy, rather than banish him to the edges or some other unflattering position.

Post by "Cassius" of May 19, 2021 at 7:39 AM

Elli: Given the new development about the changes in the two characters you are looking at between draft and final execution, maybe it's time for you (or someone) to update your article?

When you say:

[Quote from elli](#)

Myths and fairytales (Jesus and Saul/Paul) mixed with books and movies (Umberto Eco and Dan Brown) and a totally rejection of the two criteria of truth of the Canon which are our own eyes and our feelings for the examination on the issue: where and who is Epicurus on the fresco by Raphael?

I would say that it would be extremely interesting to see a discussion of that argument. I think it's easy to understand how your would assert that your senses (eyes) bear on the issue, but not so easy to explain how "feelings" play into the assertion. After the evidence of the eyes (which I think is strong), I would think that we are left with little more than a long chain of deductive reasoning based largely on hearsay as to the proper identification of the two figures. I think it would be useful to discuss through this example how an Epicurean DOES use deductive reasoning (tied closely to the senses) just as Epicurus used deductive reasoning throughout his physics.

And the article could also discuss how it becomes very difficult to get out from under a consensus after it is long formed and has assumed the air of an authority, but that an Epicurean will trust his senses and his own reasoning (if he is confident enough of it) against a consensus of other people no matter how large that consensus might be, depending on the evidence.

I tagged you in a note about the article that Don linked to - here is a statement in one of its footnotes that makes the point that I simply cannot /do not accept as true.

ami ramavati, 07-07-16
3. According to the standard works of references, there were virtually no Greek portraits in statues, busts, carved gems, or coins which can be identified as sources in European art before or during 1509-12; see A. Pigler, *Barockthemen*, 3 vols., Budapest, 1974; Raimond Van Marle, *The Development of the Italian Schools of Painting*, 19 vols., The Hague, 1925-38, vi, 147; the *Index Iconologicus*, microfiche, 1980, to Bartsch; Richter, 25-30; and Guy de Tervarent, *Attributs et symboles dans l'art profane, 1450-1600*, Geneva, 1958. The very few examples of fanciful Greek "portraits" which existed in earlier Renaissance art would have been of no use to Raphael, and there is little evidence of such sources anywhere in the *School of Athens*; see "Plato" and "Aristotle," workshop of Andrea Orcagna, Van Marle (as in n. 3), v, 203-7. For minor sources of iconographic influence, see Perugino's frescoes of the Virtues in the Cambio, Perugia (1500-1507), where the name of Socrates is inscribed under an "Oriental" figure holding a book. See also Gombrich, 87-88, pl. 80a, for Pinturicchio's *Liberal Arts* cycle in the Borgia apartments, the Vatican (1492-95). Rather surprisingly, Konrad Oberhuber, "Raphael and Pinturicchio," *Studies in the History of Art*, xvii, 1985, 167, sees no influence of Pinturicchio in Raphael's work in the Stanza.

It looks like the article contains a lot of good historical information even for someone (like me) who rejects certain of its fundamental premises from the start. The idea that Raphael had no models to work by and guessed at the central figures from descriptions, but that his "guesses" proved so accurate to the busts in so many cases, strikes me as absurd. Hopefully as I read further into the article the writer won't take an extreme position on that.

OK I have read it. He does take the pretty extreme position, but the article is focused on disputing the identity of the figure sitting on the steps in front of Plato and Aristotle, which the write says is Socrates rather than Diogenes the Cynic, as is apparently the consensus today. Some reasonably good arguments in it, but the contention flies in the face of the other Socrates figure being a dead ringer for the bust that is today identified with Socrates. Maybe the identification of the bust of Socrates and his location in the picture is wrong, but since the article is really based on the contention that Raphael had little or no knowledge of the ancient busts, i am very skeptical.

Post by “Don” of May 19, 2021 at 7:57 AM

To be clear: I certainly think Elli's assertion deserves respect and scrutiny. My position currently is that an Epicurean approach is to have an open mind and to not defend one position at this time until more evidence is available, much like the texts do with meteorological and astronomical phenomena: it could be x, y, or z with our current information.

It could be Epicurus depicted in the smaller background figure.

It could be an anonymous figure to fill out the composition.

It could be a pre-Socratic bearded philosopher.

It could be an unnamed student of Plato situated near his master.

Those are just some of the options available at this time.

Post by “Cassius” of May 19, 2021 at 8:09 AM

Yes I am wanting to be very specific that I am not criticizing you (Don) or Joshua or anyone else personally, including Takis, for their positions on this issue.

I think the whole question presents a very interesting and clear way to discuss many issues of epistemology in a low-impact setting devoid of political or other aspects that would introduce bias or emotion too much into the picture.

You've listed a good set of various possibilities as to the result, and it would be equally interesting to discuss some of the issues that Elli is raising about - "Given the evidence, what

are the possibilities for how to process that evidence? How much do we defer to consensus, or authority, or speculation, and when does speculation based on "some" evidence rise to the level of something to be entertained, or believed, and when does it not?"

I see the question of "when do we defer to the consensus of authorities" and "when do we pursue our own judgment that conflicts with those of authorities" as maybe one of the most important and regularly-occurring ones that we could address.

Certainly it seems to me that Epicurus was in almost complete rebellion against the philosophic opinions of his day, so we know that willingness to take an independent stand was important to him, but I think we have a long way to go to describe how he himself dealt with prior consensus and authority, or how we can apply his example ourselves.

Post by "Don" of May 19, 2021 at 8:19 AM

[Quote from Cassius](#)

Yes I am wanting to be very specific that I am not criticizing you (Don)

Oh, none taken! 😊

Post by "Don" of May 19, 2021 at 8:40 AM

[Quote from Cassius](#)

The idea that Raphael had no models to work by and guessed at the central figures from descriptions, but that his "guesses" proved so accurate to the busts in so many cases

If I remember correctly, Socrates is described pretty thoroughly in the texts. Are there extant ancient statues of Plato and Aristotle?

Post by "Cassius" of May 19, 2021 at 9:06 AM

I'm going by:

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aristotle>

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Plato> (now that one might not bear much resemblance due to the age issue)

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Socrates>

Of course it is hard to know whether or how these were identified as being of the people asserted.

Post by “Don” of May 19, 2021 at 12:09 PM

Oh, have y'all heard the theory that Epicurus is the figure coming down the steps beside Diogenes and pointing back at Plato and Aristotle? If not, getting notes together to upload tonight. I like the idea of Epicurus' representation having a more prominent place.

Post by “Eikadistes” of May 19, 2021 at 12:16 PM

If there's one thing I've learned from this discussion, it's that the medieval world and its inhabitants were utterly revolted, intimidated, and threatened by Epicurean philosophy, and they did everything that was humanly possible to erase his legacy from history.

And yet, here we are. 👍

Post by “Cassius” of May 19, 2021 at 12:41 PM

Nate you are the artist among us. What are your current thoughts on this question?

Post by “Don” of May 19, 2021 at 2:58 PM

<https://www.epicureanfriends.com/thread/165-where-is-epicurus-in-the-school-of-athens/>

I noticed today (& I'll upload later) that the Epicurus figure proposed by Elli is designated as Speusippus by some <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Speusippus?wprov=sfla1He> was Plato's successor and so it could make sense for him to flank Plato.

Post by “Don” of May 19, 2021 at 10:06 PM

Okay, as promised, here are the interesting items I found today. If I'm re-hashing anyone else's research, mea culpa! I'm not able to share the entire JSTOR doc due to copyright, but I'll share the citations and relevant parts. This definitely shows that the pudgy wreathed individual was NOT accepted as representing Epicurus by everyone (especially by these 2 authors from the 1800s and a more recent author). The ambiguity of the composition as well as the lack of notes by Raphael himself leads to conjecture, but, as I state again below, I like that Epicurus is possibly given a central placement by these authors with some sound reasoning. Still not entirely convinced, but this shows it's not a cut and dried Pudgy Guy = Epicurus equation.

1)

RAPHAEL'S "SCHOOL OF ATHENS"

Author(s): Gertrude Garrigues

Source: The Journal of Speculative Philosophy , October, 1879, Vol. 13, No. 4 (October 1879), pp. 406-420 (Excerpt, p. 417)

Published by: Penn State University Press

Stable URL: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/25667781>

"Over his "Garden" in Athens might have been written the noble aphorism of Goethe, " Think of Living." Democritus had a glimpse of this high thought, Aristippus saw it "darkly," too, but to Epicurus is due its embodiment ? to his followers, alas, its prostitution.

*Perhaps the finest episode of the picture, certainly the strongest antithesis, is the contrast of Cynicism and Epicureanism, as represented by their chief exponents. **Lying negligently upon the middle step (Raphael was no ascetic) is Diogenes of Sinope.** His eyes fixed upon a tablet which he holds in his hand, he is absorbed in thought. His drapery is scanty and poor, but he has not yet reached the lowest point of his voluntary destitution; his bowl stands on the step beside him. **Mounting the steps we see a young man, handsomely dressed. He has heard of the congress of philosophers, it seems, and has come hither to seek a master. Meeting a stranger (Epicurus, also richly dressed) descending, he inquires of***

him, "Who is the greatest teacher here? Surely this man, who exhibits so much contempt for all the luxuries and gauds of life; who, solitary, has no need of companionship." **Epicurus points to the triumvirate above, telling him not to stop on the way, but seek always the highest good; and bids him not to trust too much to an appearance whose only characteristic may be its singularity.** We seem almost to hear the echo of words like unto these of Emerson: "It is easy in the world to live after the world's opinion; it is easy in solitude to live after our own; but the great man is he who, in the midst of the crowd, keeps, with perfect sweetness, the independence of solitude."

So, Garrigues sees Epicurus as the figure descending the staircase and speaking to the person coming up the steps beside Diogenes. I do think having that reclining figure be Diogenes of Sinope makes the most sense. That cup beside him isn't hemlock (like the other recent author we found who says that's Socrates and his cup of hemlock). That's Diogenes last remaining possession before he was embarrassed by the child using his hands to scoop up water, then Diogenes throwing away his cup. ****IF**** there was no portrait bust for Raphael to go by, he could make Epicurus appear any way he wanted. I personally like the idea of the striding figure descending the steps rather than the pudgy wreathed librarian... even if he is a librarian.

2)

<https://archive.org/details/raphae...ge/128/mode/2up>

Raphael d'Urbino et son père, Giovanni Santi by Passavant, Johann David, 1787-1861

See p. 128

(I'm using Google Translate to get this translation)

*In the middle of the steps, **Diogenes of Sinope**, named the Cynic, lying negligently, holds a tablet in his hand, and seems to be meditating deeply, without taking care of the illustrious assembly which surrounds him.*

This singular man (born 414 years BC), disciple of Antisthenes, founded the severe school of Virtue, which he interpreted as an absolute renunciation of the material things of life. He thus expressed the basis of his doctrine: "To need nothing is proper to the gods. To need only a little is to be like the gods. So we see near him his bowl, the only utensil he wanted to have - until he recognized its superfluity, seeing a child draw water from his hand to drink.

Contemporary with Cynicism and Stoicism, Epicureanism differed on several points. The founder of the Epicurean sect, Epicurus (born 34 ^ years BC, in Gargettus, near Athens) also tended towards personal contentment, but he sought happiness in the harmony of moral pleasures and sensual pleasures. The Epicurean practiced virtue and wisdom only in view of their consequences and as a means of pleasure; he lived soberly and fraternally, and mastered both joy and suffering.

The fresco shows Epicurus descending the steps of the estrade, he converses with Aristippus', named Metrodidactus, a young man with curly hair, in a rich costume, and he indicates to him with a gesture the proud Stoic, disdainful of sensual pleasures.

The Greek genius, in search of a solution to the universal enigma, had exhausted itself in these multiple attempts. When the great men disappeared, there remained only sects which crossed and clashed.

This confused transition is indicated by the young man leaning against the base of one of the columns of the vestibule. Equilibrium on one leg, the other leg crossed in the air, he writes on his knee, not what his own research has taught him, but what he has heard from here and there. 11 represents Eclecticism which begins.

But while Eclecticism grasps all that seems to it to be true in the different systems, Skepticism, emerging at the same time, goes so far as to maintain that one can prove the falsehood of all established truth - a tendency which would have as a result the annihilation of all science, of all philosophy.

Pyrrho d'Elis (born 3M years BC) is the representative of this skeptical philosophy, which has even been given its name (Pyrrhonism). [^] E will not be accused of levity, if we designate , as **Pyrrho, the standing and inactive philosopher, who leans against the base of a column and looks sarcastically into the book written by the young eclectic.**

Standing next to him, the philosopher who, by a movement of hesitation, turns his head to one side and the body to the other side, must be Archilaus of Pitane (born 318 years BC), the founder of the new Academy, whose theory leaned towards Skepticism, the practice towards Stoicism. In general he only concluded with problematic knowledge, and, as all reason is subject to contradiction, he believed he should refrain from any decided adhesion.

I like the idea of Epicurus taking center stage, so to speak. And it would make sense that Pyrrho is nearby Epicurus since Epicurus had some degree of respect for him. They could be placed together.

3)

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/30...ol_of_Athens%27

Codes and Messages in Raphael's 'School of Athens'

August 2016

State: In Progress

Authors: John Douglas Holgate, St George Hospital

See the entire article. The author does a lot of work identifying Renaissance scholars and matching up possible representations of Greek philosophers. His identification of Plato's successor Speusippus is interesting. The figure does look like the 1655 woodcut in the Wikiedia article <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Speusippus>

Plato's Group



1. Archelaus 2. Socrates 3. Crates 4. Polos 5. Xenocrates 6. Speusippus 7. Aristotle of Pillos 8. Plato

As for the pudgy, wreathed figure most often identified as Epicurus by modern "scholars", this author identifies him with Democritus:

"Democritus of Abdera (ca 460-370 B.C.) was a student of Leucippus and was the founder of atomism. His major work was The Great Diacosmos (World Order). Raphael has cheekily placed Pope Julius the Second's emblematic wreath of oak leaves on the head of the atheist Democritus while doubling his likeness with that of his close friend the poet and actor Tommaso 'Fedra' Inghrami, the Vatican Librarian and Papal Secretary who was probably the main source for the philosophical content of the painting itself."

This author identifies the person with the long flowing hair ascending the stairs with Epicurus (p. 30):

*"**Epicurus**, whose philosophical message was ataraxia (freedom from fear) aponia (absence of pain) and the importance of friends, **here gestures towards Diogenes the Cynic asking Crates how this life of askesis (shamelessness) and social alienation can be justified.** Crates, a student of Diogenes, points in the direction of the Stoics Chrysippus and Crates' former pupil Zeno of Citium blaming them for the mist of confusion Stoicism had caused. As the sixth scholarch of the First Academy Crates founded the tradition of radical scepticism and the rejection of Platonic idealism continued with the Second and Third Academies under Arcesilaus of Pitane and Carneades respectively."*

"Pico della Mirandola (known for his long curly locks) is here masked behind the figure of Epicurus. The Renaissance scholar Christiane Joost-Gaugier argues in her book 'Raphael's Stanza della Segnatura' (p.95) that Pico can be seen 'as the young man seen from the back

who actively enters the painting and implores with his hands on Aristotle's side.' Mirandola was in fact a strong critic of Aristotle and an apologist for Epicurus, re-evaluating his notion of pleasure. Here Pico is appealing to his nephew Gianfrancesco to explain the tragic situation of

Pico's mentor Savonarola just as Epicurus is asking Crates to vindicate the life of his teacher Diogenes of Sinope."

So, it appears that there is no consensus, or at least wasn't, as to where Epicurus was in the fresco. The authors from the 1800s certainly associated him with the figure descending the stairs. I personally like the look on his face as he points back towards Plato and Aristotle as if to say, "Look at them! All high and mighty. They haven't got a clue!" and he hurries down the steps away from them.

Personally, I found this a LOT to chew on.

PS. The two men ascending and descending the steps were seen as on composition as evidenced by this sketch for the larger work:



Post by “Cassius” of May 19, 2021 at 10:26 PM

Great research and thank you!

But I have to say that the speculation that either the descending figure (blue) or the ascending figure (long hair looking away) seem to me to be absolutely and totally fanciful and I see no way in the world that these guys had anything to go on other than sheer speculation.

Do you gather that they had any reasoning other than wanting to put Epicurus in the scene?

Post by “Don” of May 19, 2021 at 10:38 PM

I get the feeling that it's their dismissive gestures toward Diogenes for one thing, but I'd have to read all three of the papers fully to follow all their arguments. I literally did Ctrl+F or followed up on a citation.

I will say I find the identification of Speusippus compelling though, especially due to his proximity to Plato.

Post by “Cassius” of May 19, 2021 at 10:40 PM

As to the Speucippus that's based ONLY on proximity, correct? Or are there likenesses or descriptions of Speucippus that support that?

Post by “Don” of May 19, 2021 at 10:47 PM

[Quote from Cassius](#)

As to the Speucippus that's based ONLY on proximity, correct? Or are there likenesses or descriptions of Speucippus that support that?

It certainly looks like the 1655 woodcut that illustrates his Wikipedia article, but I'm not sure if that was based on Raphael or independent.

Plus, the idea that all those to the side of Plato were associated with him makes sense to me. Plato and his posse.

As I said, I also like the idea of seeing Epicurus as an active figure rather than passively hanging out in the background.

Post by “Don” of May 19, 2021 at 10:53 PM

I also just saw that the conjecture is that Leonardo da Vinci was the inspiration for Plato and not a classical sculpture. I can see the resemblance.

Post by “Eikadistes” of May 19, 2021 at 11:05 PM

Personally, I'm not convinced that *any* of the figures represent Epicurus.

Bernard Frischer, researcher and archaeologist from Indiana University who specializes in Roman history wrote a book called *The Sculpted Word: Epicureanism and Philosophical Recruitment in Ancient Greece* in which he attests to the “magnetism” of Epicurus’ portrait. He devotes several hundred pages to exploring different cultural depictions of Epicurus throughout history based on available resources. On page 151 he makes an important point: “**Before 1742, when the Epicurus-Metrodorus double herm with ancient identifying inscription [...] was discovered beneath the new porch of S. Maria Maggiore in Rome (the herm is now in the Capitoline Museum), Epicurus’ true image was not known.**”

Raphael’s intended audience would **not** have seen portraits or busts of Epicurus, and, *even if they had*, they would **not** have recognized the face of the bust to match that of Epicurus. Painting a *contemplative, bearded Greek* would not have been as *Epicurus-esque* as would have painting a *chubby, smirking Roman* (for example).

The four Vatican frescoes were certainly painted within an *allegorical* context as opposed to a *historical* one. This is evidenced by the anachronistic presence of philosophers spanning several centuries, several of whom were never active in Athens. The setting of this piece is purely symbolic and not in any way intended to be literal.

It's like "Jurassic Park", filled with dinosaurs from the Triassic and Cretaceous periods.

In an architectural context, the four frescoes in the Stanze di Raffaello in the Apostolic Palace in the Vatican were designed to reinforce the Christian narrative. Therein, the inclusion of “pagan” philosophers is not meant to contrast with the divinity of Christ; rather, it signifies a harmony between ancient philosophy and Christian theology.

Thus, the Church's favorite two philosophers, and their supporters (such as *Socratics* and *Pythagoreans*) are featured front-and-center. The idolization of *Plato* and *Aristotle* is overwhelming. They reinforce the brand. The choice to include Epicurus - at all - would have been antithetical to the function of the painting, taken symbolically. While Raphael *may* have made that choice *anyway*, it is thematically inconsistent.

Painting Epicureans in the Apostolic Palace in the first place is contextually inappropriate (It may even have been dangerous). Raphael's inclusion of Epicurus and/or Epicurean philosophers in the Apostolic Palace may have been akin to Diego Rivera painting Vladimir Lenin in the Rockefeller Building in the 30s.

If it were the case that we had some indication that Raphael was a closet Epicurean who subversively hid hedonist-sympathizing clues in his paintings throughout the years (...the way Dan Brown frames Leonardo in the Da Vinci code), *then*, in my mind, it would seem appropriate to include Epicurus.

However, I think that fiction unlikely. I think the following **two** possibilities are most probable: (1) Epicureanism is not represented in this painting because Epicureanism is thematically inconsistent with the artistic context, (2) "Epicurus" is represented by the anonymous, chubby, smiling Roman stereotype, writing in the front.

Either way, the relevance I see with this painting to Epicurean philosophy is the reflection of the Christian Church's marginalization of materialism over a millennia. Raphael neither provides us with a glimpse at Epicurus, nor of Epicureanism. What he provides us with is either commentary of **ambivalence**, that it was not necessary to depict Epicureans clearly, or **absence**, that omitting Epicurus was necessary.

In conclusion, I don't see any compelling reason for Raphael would have felt compelled to include the Epicurus and his Epicureans. He was not painting a record of Athenian teachers; he was painting a picture of philosophical pre-Christians.

Post by "Don" of May 19, 2021 at 11:10 PM

That most recent paper posits that The Nuremberg Chronicle was one of Raphael's sources. If so, Epicurus's "portrait" in that looks suspiciously/unfortunately like pudgy wreath guy:

https://commons.m.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Epic...g_Chronicle.jpg

Post by "Godfrey" of May 19, 2021 at 11:13 PM

As an aside, it just occurred to me that the architectural setting is Roman, not Greek. As far as I'm aware the Greeks didn't build with arches but with posts and lintels, developed through the classical orders.

If this has any relevance to the discussion at hand, it may indicate that Raphael wasn't taking a literal view as to who was who and had another, overarching (pardon the pun) agenda.

Post by "Cassius" of May 19, 2021 at 11:13 PM

All I can say for sure right now is that it is definitely an interesting debate.

Post by "Don" of May 19, 2021 at 11:25 PM

@Nate raises very good points. My desire for Epicurus to be front and center is just that. A desire. However, if Raphael wanted to portray Epicurus, he most likely would either:

a) Use ridicule: pudgy wreathed portrait of guy he knew (and that resembles the Nuremberg Chronicle picture)

or

b) show him rejecting the accepted Philosophers: storming away down the steps or dismissively gesturing at the cynic Diogenes. Diogenes, with his Anti-social behavior and ridicule of Plato (plucked chicken = Behold, a man!) wouldn't have endeared him to the Popes but he's there. I see no reason why Epicurus shouldn't be included but he certainly didn't need to be.

Also, Lucretius's poem was also just being rediscovered around this time. "The first printed edition of *De rerum natura* was produced in [Brescia, Lombardy](#), in 1473." Wikipedia. School of Athens was done 1509/11. Epicurus may have to have been addressed in the work, again via ridicule or rejecting accepted Philosophers.

Post by "Cassius" of May 20, 2021 at 5:47 AM

Lots of good points bring made. I woke up thinking about this that has probably already been covered, but how firm is the identification of the group to the right of Plato with one or more Stoics? If that group were shown to be clearly stoic, I suspect that Raphael and his contractors would have had a hard time resisting the parallelism of putting one or more Epicureans on Socrates left to mirror them and keep things "even.". Regardless of what anyone knew about what anyone looked like from the bust, I gather that the church always held Cicero in high regard, and never lost his works, and it would be impossible to know about his "On Ends" and not know that Epicureans were one of the major schools that would leave a major gap if omitted.

Post by “Don” of May 20, 2021 at 7:08 AM

<https://www.bbc.com/culture/articl...n-a-masterpiece>

This article contends that the figures may not be fixed identities. Some yes, others not. Food for thought.

Post by “Cassius” of May 20, 2021 at 7:42 AM

Lots of interesting stuff in there, but I have to comment on this:

Quote

As a symbol that oversees the enactment of official papal decrees in the *Stanza Della Segnatura*, Heraclitus’s ink pot (from which notions of the fleetingness of all authority would pour forth), is a courageously subversive symbol. It denies power by declaiming the futility of any attempt to inscribe oneself indelibly into the world. ***It and it alone sanctions the fluidity of identity that Raphael ingeniously constructs (and deconstructs) across the surface of his painting. Remove the ink pot from the epicentre of Raphael’s fresco, and the work dissolves into a fiasco of confused and confusing forms.*** Heraclitus’s profound, if overlooked, ink pot is the very well-spring from which the elastic energy of Raphael’s masterpiece endlessly emanates.

Oh come on, Kelly Grovier! (the author) Do you really expect to be taken seriously when you say something like *It's all about the inkpot?*

Post by “Don” of May 20, 2021 at 1:34 PM

I'm getting the thought that, sans Raphael's personal notes, The School of Athens is almost a Rorschach test. Who do you want to see where? Oh, you think that's him? Interesting idea. Why? How's about this one?

<https://www.epicureanfriends.com/thread/165-where-is-epicurus-in-the-school-of-athens/>

Post by “Elli” of May 20, 2021 at 2:01 PM

Raphael saw somewhere a bust, a ring or an engraving of Epicurus, not necessary inside the Vatican, but in one villa of his wealthy friends/florentines bankers who had statues from Villas of Romans e.g. Villa Hadriana etc, and as I mentioned above in one of my comments. Raphael painted Epicurus and his figure is so identical with the bust of Epicurus we know today. I assume when the pope asked Raphael who is who, he did not say anything for anyone. Only for Plato and Aristotle that in fresco they hold already their books and they were (and still are) well esteemed by the popes.

However, I insist for my speculation since for that person with the yellow chiton that I claim is Epicurus, along with the embraced friendly company next to him, it prevails a total silence!!

Don, as far as I know, it has never been found a bust or a statue of Speusippus. For Speusippus there is only an engraving that was done from imagination. Speusippus was not so famous that has companion and friends. Besides if that figure was Speusippus, as he was socratic-platonist, the figure next to him it would not be appropriated to make a gesture of doubt or question, it is supposed that the platonists knew what Plato had said.

Post by “Cassius” of May 20, 2021 at 2:08 PM

Elli that's a good line of attack -- even if we forget about the busts, what about the rings?

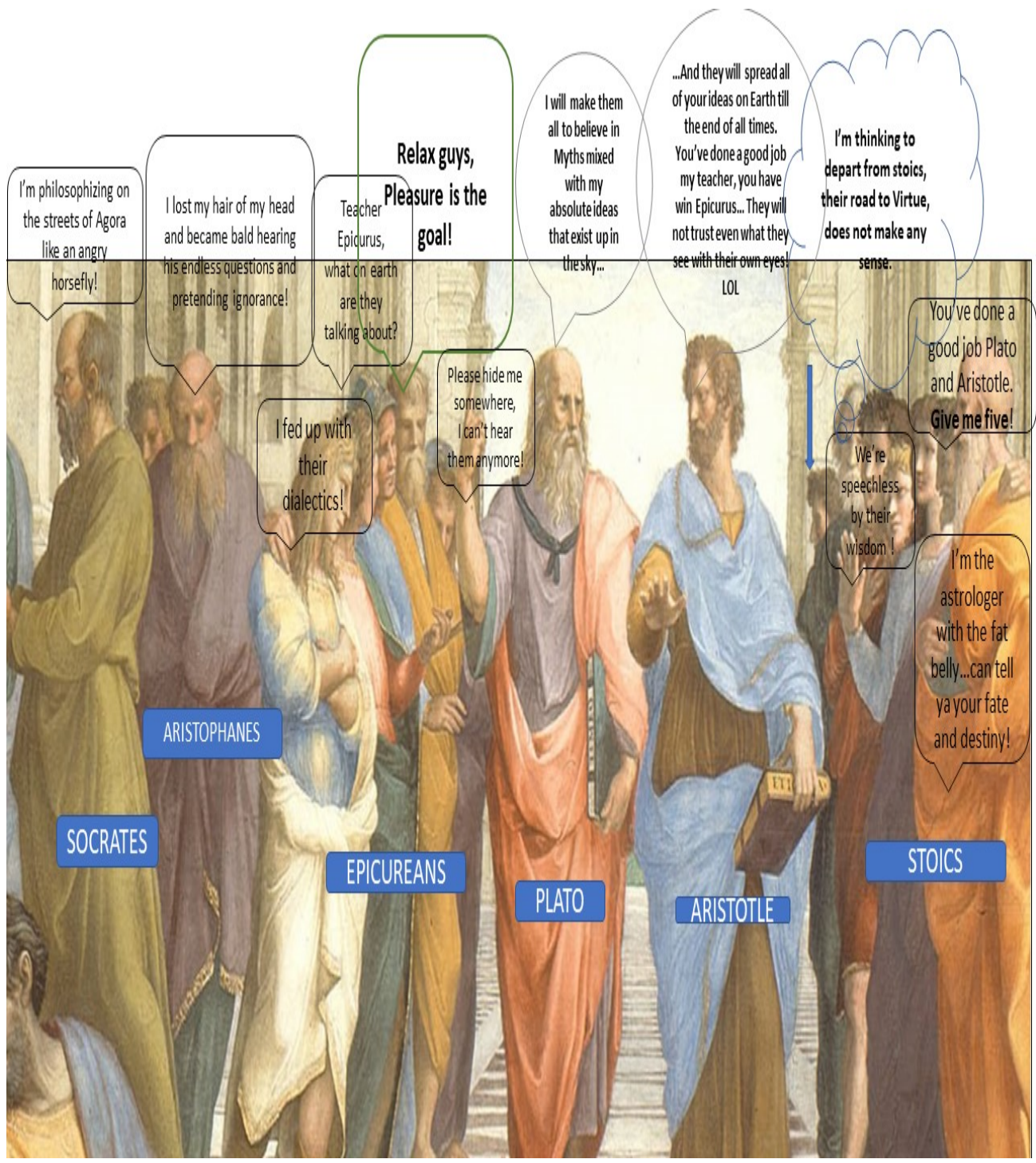
I don't have a good list of how many there are or where they are now, but we don't think that each and every ring was discovered in Herculaneum or Pompeii, do we? Presumably there were many more rings than busts to start with, and they would be passed down from generation to generation. And some (at least) of the rings have Epicurus' name inscribed too, correct?

I would think the first thing that someone commissioned to do a fresco of historical figures would do is to scour his available contacts for all representations preserved in any form.

Certainly you would also include references from Diogenes Laertius as to objects or names (of books) that people were associated with, but you would certainly do everything you could to incorporate ALL available evidence.

Post by “Elli” of May 20, 2021 at 2:10 PM

If you did not see this picture, I post it on FB yesterday, entitled "the school of the world". 😊



Post by "Cassius" of May 20, 2021 at 2:18 PM

I see this one at the British museum doesn't show his name, so maybe none of them do. Not sure.

https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/G_1890-0601-55

Maybe there aren't many rings to consider - I see in the photos I've clipped in the past I only show these two, and the one on the left may not really be him:



Post by “Elli” of May 20, 2021 at 2:35 PM

Cassius there is already a post by you on rings. [Rings Featuring Epicurus or Epicureans](#)

Post by “Cassius” of May 20, 2021 at 2:48 PM

Thank you for linking that for us Elli! I am afraid that I can't keep track of what I post myself, much less what everyone else posts! 😊 I guess that's what a forum with a "search" function is for!

So as for the posts in that thread too there is no indication that we have a ring labeled with Epicurus' name.

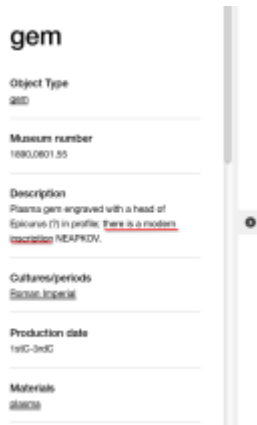
Post by “Elli” of May 20, 2021 at 2:50 PM

<https://www.epicureanfriends.com/thread/165-where-is-epicurus-in-the-school-of-athens/>

There are some greek letters engraved on the right ring. I read the letters that form the word "NEAPKOY". There is no such a greek name that includes the letter "K". But as far as I know there was a greek name as "NEAPXOΣ" with the letter "X" and in genitive is "NEAPXOY", and we meet this name as one the famous explorer, a navarch and officer in the army of Alexander the Great.

Post by “Cassius” of May 20, 2021 at 2:56 PM

Elli I see that that page at the British Museum says that the inscription is "modern." No idea how they conclude that:



Post by “Don” of May 20, 2021 at 3:18 PM

[Quote from elli](#)

There are some greek letters engraved on the right ring. I read the letters that form the word "NEAPKOY". There is no such a greek name that includes the letter "K". But as far as I know there was a greek name as "NEAPXOΣ" with the letter "X" and in genitive is "NEAPXOY", and we meet this name as one the famous explorer, a navarch and officer in the army of Alexander the Great.

<https://archive.org/details/handbo...ge/276/mode/2up>

Nearkos was an ancient artist according to this catalog of names. (For those curious: Nearkou is simply the genitive form of his name.)

Post by “Elli” of May 20, 2021 at 3:43 PM

Don, in the text you linked, there are latin letters in this name. With latin letters the greek name NEAPXOΣ becomes as NEARKOS or NEARCHOS because the greek letter "X" it sounds like "K". In this ring we see greek letters as "NEAPKOY" since there is the letter "Yiota" in the end, but in greek names there is not such a name as NEAPKOΣ in genitive NEAPKOY, but as I said "NEAPXOΣ".

Post by “Eikadistes” of May 20, 2021 at 4:40 PM

From whom, *specifically*, might Raphael have seen the image?

I agree that it is a reasonable generalization to suppose that one of the hundreds of affluent, Italian benefactors of the Renaissance had access to Epicurus ... but it's hard to prove, especially when we consider that Epicurean literature was *just* re-discovered, and then proceeded to suffer several hundred years of misinterpretation by enthusiasts.

I think it's imperative to our conclusion that we identify the name of this individual who owned Epicurean memorabilia, because that person would be more significant to the history of Epicurean philosophy than either Poggio Bracciolini and Pierre Gassendi.

If someone had preserved a ring of Epicurus, and recognized the significance of it, they, themselves, would very likely be Epicurean-sympathizers, or Epicureans, themselves. Even Poggio was unconvinced by the the conclusions he read in *De Rerum Natura*. This would imply that a community was in Italy in the 15th-century that was actively dedicated to preserving Epicurean philosophy. This *could* be the case, but it would change history.

Even so, it's not even enough to prove that there were Epicureans in Italy at the time.

We need to demonstrate that (1) *not only* was Epicurean philosophy understood to a thorough level within one century of the rediscovery of *De Rerum Natura* (2) *not only* was Raphael familiar with this knowledge, but, *most importantly*, (3) that a 25-year-old Renaissance painter was dedicated enough to Epicurean philosophy to have chosen to risk his career by painting the Ultimate Anti-Apostle on a fresco in the Apostolic Palace in the Vatican. It's an incredibly bold move, and Raphael did not do it for our unique benefit.