

Life support literature based on Epicurean philosophy

Post by “Titus” of August 9, 2020 at 3:41 PM

I have been interested in the philosophy of Epicurus for about 10 years and at that time there were almost only collections of texts or scientific literature for sale. This has changed a lot in the meantime. There are more and more books that draw on Epicurean thought. It is the same with Stoic philosophy, only that this development started some time earlier.

If you search for Epicurus on Amazon or enter Epicureanism, there are now even guidebooks published by professional publishers. They are also available in multiple languages. I find this development amazing. However, I'm a bit critical, because it looks very much like commercialization to me.

Has anyone read any of these books? Is it worth buying them? Or can you forget about them? What is your personal opinion?

Here are some examples:

https://www.amazon.com/How-Be-Epicurean-Ancient-Living/dp/1541672631/ref=sr_1_3?_mk_de_DE=ÅMÅŽÕÑ&dchild=1&keywords=Epicureanism&qid=15970013

https://www.amazon.com/Epicurus-Pleasant-Life-Philosophy-Nature/dp/9609384560/ref=sr_1_6?_mk_de_DE=ÅMÅŽÕÑ&dchild=1&keywords=Epicureanism&qid=1597006

https://www.amazon.com/Little-Book-Stoicism-Resilience-Confidence/dp/3952506907/ref=sr_1_10?_mk_de_DE=ÅMÅŽÕÑ&dchild=1&keywords=stoicism&qid=15970010

Post by “Joshua” of August 9, 2020 at 5:49 PM

Good afternoon, Titus!

I cannot comment on these books with any personal experience, but Catherine Wilson and Haris Dimitriadis have been widely discussed around here. You'll be able to find them with a search, I

think.

Dimitriadis' text in particular has been well- received. I need to pick up a copy myself!

Post by “Don” of August 9, 2020 at 6:27 PM

I would echo [Joshua](#) 's recommendations. I know Hiram Crespo published a book but I haven't read it. He also contributed a chapter to a recent book on life philosophies.

Honestly, my recommendation would be to stick to the reading list that [Cassius](#) has posted to this site. Read multiple translations of Epicurus's works and Lucretius.

Post by “Cassius” of August 9, 2020 at 7:27 PM

Yes I echo Don (of course) especially as to Norman DeWitt's book being head and shoulders above the rest.

[Quote from Titus](#)

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I agree and what you observe looks the same way to me.

As Joshua says most of these have been commented on elsewhere, but here is my quick comment:

Catherine Wilson - How to Be An Epicurean. I like Catherine Wilson in general and of the "current" books I think hers are among the best, but I find her treatment of themes to be too political. I would say what she is mainly engaged in is "popularizing," which can be useful, but she's not really attempting to dig into the foundations and explain them as DeWitt does.

Haris Dimitriadis' Epicurus and the Pleasant Life. Haris is an internet acquaintance of mine and I value his opinions. I think his book is worthwhile and I think (if I recall) that I found his views to be very compatible with mine, and so I generally endorse this. I am not sure but Haris may be in the process of revising this, and I think the second version will be an improvement over the first. I recommend this too but as always only after DeWitt.

As to the Stoicism book I have not read it and therefore can't offer a comment. In former years I used to read some of stoicism, and if you want to call Cicero's "On Duties" to be stoic then I

found some valuable things in the reading. But today I find much less value in reading Stoic material unless I am researching some point on which the Epicureans and Stoics diverged. As to reading on Stoicism, if you have not read the full collection of books in Cicero's "On Ends" I recommend that you read the book (i forget which one it is) that is devoted to Cicero's attack on Stoicism. Of course I am partisan against the Stoics but I found Cicero's attack on them very persuasive and enlightening as to how the stoics were seen by the non-stoics in the ancient world.