

PD14 - Alternate Translations

Post by “Cassius” of November 19, 2017 at 11:40 AM

14. The most unalloyed source of protection from men, which is secured to some extent by a certain force of expulsion, is in fact the immunity which results from a quiet life, and retirement from the world. (Bailey)

ΤΗΣ ΑΣΦΑΛΕΙΑΣ **ΤΗΣ ΕΞ ΑΝΘΡΩΠΩΝ ΓΕΝΟΜΕΝΗΣ ****ΜΕΧΡΙ**

ΤΙΝΟΣ ΔΥΝΑΜΕΙ **ΤΙΝΙ ΕΞΕΡΕΙΣΤΙΚΗ ****ΚΑΙ ΕΥΠΟΡΙΑ**

ΕΙΛΙΚΡΙΝΕΣΤΑΤΗ ΓΙΝΕΤΑΙ **Η ΕΚ ΤΗΣ ΗΣΥΧΙΑΣ ****ΚΑΙ**

ΕΚΧΩΡΗΣΕΩΣ ΤΩΝ ΠΟΛΛΩΝ ΑΣΦΑΛΕΙΑ.

“Irresistible power and great wealth may, up to a certain point, give us security as far as men are concerned; but the security of men in general depends upon the tranquility of their souls, and their freedom from ambition.” Yonge (1853)

“When tolerable security against our fellow-men is attained, then on a basis of power arises most genuine bliss, to wit, the security of a private life withdrawn from the multitude.” Hicks (1910)

“When tolerable security against our fellow-men is attained, then on a basis of power sufficient to afford support and of material prosperity arises in most genuine form the security of a quiet private life withdrawn from the multitude.” Hicks (1925)

“The most unalloyed source of protection from men, which is secured to some extent by a certain force of expulsion, is in fact the immunity which results from a quiet life and the retirement from the world.” Bailey (1926)

“Although safety from the attacks of men has been secured to a certain degree by dynastic protection and abundance of means, that which comes of the retired life and withdrawal from the multitude is the most unalloyed.” DeWitt, Epicurus and His Philosophy 189 (1954)

“Even though security from the injuries of men may have been established to a certain degree by dynastic protection, the most unalloyed feeling of security is to be found in the retired life and withdrawal from the multitude.” DeWitt, St. Paul and Epicurus 188 (1954)

“When reasonable security from men has been attained, then the security that comes from peace of mind and withdrawal from the crowd is present, sufficient in strength and most unmixed in well-being.” Geer (1964)

"The most perfect means of securing safety from men, which arises, to some extent, from a certain power to expel, is the assurance that comes from quietude and withdrawal from the world." O'Connor (1993)

"The purest security is that which comes from a quiet life and withdrawal from the many, although a certain degree of security from other men does come by means of the power to repel [attacks] and by means of prosperity." Inwood & Gerson (1994)

"Supreme power and great wealth may, to some degree, protect us from other men; but security in general depends upon peace of mind and social detachment." Anderson (2004)

"Although safety from human beings may be secured, up to a point, by means of bountiful resources and power that can exempt one from [some risks;] yet, the most genuine safety comes from leading a tranquil private life and keeping aloof from the masses." Makridis (2005)

"Although some measure of safety from other people is based in the power to fight them off and in abundant wealth, the purest security comes from solitude and breaking away from the herd." Saint-Andre (2008)

"The simplest means of procuring protection from other men (which is gained to a certain extent by deterrent force) is the security of quiet solitude and withdrawal from the mass of people." Strodach (2012)

"While some degree of security from other men can be attained on the basis of stable power and material prosperity, the purest security comes from tranquillity and from a life withdrawn from the many." Mensch (2018)

"Although security on a human level is achieved up to a point by a power to resist and by prosperity, the security afforded by inner peace and withdrawing from the crowd is the purest." White (2021)

Post by "Cassius" of August 31, 2021 at 8:47 AM

It looks like we have a significant difference among sources as to how [PD14](#) should end, so we need to have a discussion as to why that is the case, and this thread is the best place for that. This is prompted by Nate's graphic here [Principal Doctrine 14](#) which cites Inwood and Gerson:

XIV "The purest security is that which comes from a quiet life and withdrawal from the many, although a certain degree of security from other men does come by means of the power to repel [attacks] and by means of prosperity." (Epicurus, Principal Doctrine 14) [PD14](#) Translated by Inwood and Gerson (1994)

The other cites we've listed initially are:

Bailey Version: 14. The most unalloyed source of protection from men, which is secured to some extent by a certain force of expulsion, is in fact the immunity which results from a quiet life, and retirement from the world.

Greek: 14Τῆς ἀσφαλείας τῆς ἐξ ἀνθρώπων γενομένης μέχρι τινὸς δυνάμει τινὶ ἐξερειστικῇ καὶ εὐπορίᾳ εὐκρινεστάτη γίνεται ἢ ἐκ τῆς ἡσυχίας καὶ ἐκχωρήσεως τῶν πολλῶν ἀσφάλεια.

Hicks translation: 14 When tolerable security against our fellow-men is attained, then on a basis of power arises most genuine bliss, to wit, the security of a private life withdrawn from the multitude.

Saint-Andre translation: 14 Although some measure of safety from others comes from the power to fight them off and from abundant wealth, the purest security comes from solitude and breaking away from the herd.

Emidio Spinnelli paper: The purest security is that which comes from a quiet life and withdrawal from the many, after having obtained a certain degree of security with respect to other men by means of comfort and prosperity.

Post by “Godfrey” of August 31, 2021 at 1:51 PM

"Supreme power and great wealth may, to some degree, protect us from other men; but security in general depends upon peace of mind and social detachment." [PD14](#), Epicurus Wiki

Post by “Don” of August 31, 2021 at 3:44 PM

I was just about to post that too 😁

Here's the link:

http://wiki.epicurism.info/Principal_Doctrine_14/

I think the commentary there is very good as well per their translation.*

The Greek above in #2 agrees with Bailey/Usener so I'm good with that.

*PS: I'll have something to say about some of their interpretation however.

Post by “Don” of September 1, 2021 at 8:40 AM

My translation and interpretation are my own, informed by all the scholarly materials referenced above as well as Bailey's commentary on this Principal Doctrine in his Extant Remains.

I want to first look at several individual words.

ἀσφαλείας

"assurance from danger, personal safety"

ἀσφαλείας is about personal, individual safety from danger, one's own personal safety from harm. It's not an abstract concept of "Safety" or "Security" writ large. It asks, "How do I keep myself free from harm?"

[Henry George Liddell, Robert Scott, A Greek-English Lexicon, ἀσφάλ-εια](#)

ἐξερειστικῆ & δυνάμει

Epicurus Wikis "the ability to repel" through one's own power/strength δυνάμει (dynamēi, compare English dynamo, dynamite) is good.

[Henry George Liddell, Robert Scott, A Greek-English Lexicon, δύνα^μις](#)

ἐκχωρήσεως τῶν πολλῶν

Epicurus Wiki has just "of withdrawal from the many." τῶν πολλῶν is simply the genitive plural of hoi polloi, the many, the rabble, colloquially the mass of average people out on the street. This is the exact phrase Epicurus uses to describe those who hold erroneous views about the gods in the Letter to Menoikeus.

ἐκχωρήσεως I found interesting after digging in. LSJ gives "retirement, withdrawal from" and even cites PD 14. But I tried to break it down further. ἐκ is the prefix for "out of, away from, etc." So if we take that off, we get χωρήσεως, which has to be a form of χωρέω "go, make way, make room, withdraw, etc." This verb is related to χώρα and χώρος (χώρος (khôros, "place") + -έω (-éō)) that mean, as one of their senses, "land, country as opposed to the city; field, farm, estate."

<http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus:text:1999.04.0057:entry=xw%3dros1>

[Henry George Liddell, Robert Scott, A Greek-English Lexicon, Χ χ, , χωλός , χώρα](#)

This would relate right back to the characteristic of the sage in that they are fond of the country as opposed to the city. That uses a different word for "country" but the connotation is exactly the same. In deference to [Cassius](#), it's not a cave! It doesn't convey the mountains or wastelands. I'm seeing this more as connoting a country villa or retreat, maybe think Villa of the Papyri outside Herculaneum or The Garden. I would also note that the original Garden was not some remote location. It was just outside the city walls directly along the road to the Academy.

ἡσυχίας From Strong's: "descriptive of the life of one who stays at home doing his own work, and does not officiously meddle with the affairs of others," 2 Thessalonians 3:12 Thessalonians wasn't written until the mid-late 1st century CE, but the connotation would be there earlier, just maybe less emphatic. The LSJ has stillness, ease, leisure, rest, quiet.

[Henry George Liddell, Robert Scott, A Greek-English Lexicon, ἡσυχία](#)

I could see this as also referring to our being a synonym for ataraxia.

[NOTE: Aristophanes personifies Hesykhias Ἠσυχίας in line 1321 of The Birds, glossed here as "gentle peace." <http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?do...1&lang=original>]

εἰλικρινεστάτη superlative, "most unmixed, purest"

[Henry George Liddell, Robert Scott, A Greek-English Lexicon, εἰλικρινής](#)

This aligns with the characteristics I included in my translation of the characteristics of the sage under the heading Living Unknown <https://sites.google.com/view/epicurean...nown?authuser=0>

In my opinion then, Bailey and Saint-Andre get closest to a literal translation adhering to the original Greek. I will say it can't be solitude [PD14](#) is talking about since Epicurus stressed the importance of friendship. There's going to be people around you. But this PD seems to stress the quiet life, not being troubled by the hustle and bustle of the hoi polloi.

Post by "Cassius" of September 1, 2021 at 8:53 AM

Don't what about the "prosperity" part - that seems to me the most controversial aspect of the quote. I am surprised that Inwood and Gerson would deviate so far from what appears to be otherwise the consensus. That is from page 33 of the Epicurus Reader and unfortunately there appear to be no footnotes. I don't know how we can track that down but such a departure calls into question the reliability of the Epicurus Reader if there is no good reason for it.

Post by “Don” of September 1, 2021 at 10:06 AM

I'm seeing "prosperity" simply as a paraphrase for εὐπορία

<http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/morph?l=eu%29pori%2Fa%7C&la=greek&can=eu%29pori%2Fa%7C0&>

It's the opposite of πενία

[Greek Word Study Tool](#)

PS: "Up to a certain point, personal safety can be achieved by the power to repel and wealth, but the purest safety..."

Post by “Don” of September 1, 2021 at 8:43 PM

Here's my highly idiosyncratic paraphrase of [PD14](#), incorporating the notes above:

"Up to a certain point, personal safety can be obtained by being powerful and wealthy, but the surest way to personal safety is from withdrawing from the hustle and bustle of the hoi polloi and from the peace gained from not meddling in the affairs of others."

Post by “Martin” of September 3, 2021 at 1:49 AM

I noticed with other PD's, too, that Saint-Andre's translation appears to be the most consistent with Epicurus' philosophy as a whole as we usually interpret it here with quite some consensus.

Post by “Cassius” of September 3, 2021 at 7:18 AM

[Quote from Cassius](#)

Saint-Andre translation: 14 Although some measure of safety from others comes from the power to fight them off and from abundant wealth, the purest security comes from solitude and breaking away from the herd.

Agreed Martin -- I much prefer "breaking away from the herd" to "retirement from the world."

Post by “Cassius” of September 3, 2021 at 9:13 AM

[Quote from Cassius](#)

I much prefer "breaking away from the herd" to "retirement from the world."

And yet if the Greek really very clearly were "retirement from the world" it would probably be best to keep that. Probably the key word that bothers me is the "retirement" or "withdraw" that can be read to imply exhaustion and "giving up" - which is very different from "breaking away from the herd."

Don did you opine on your ultimate view on that word? I see you were considering "go, make way, make room, withdraw, etc."

Post by “Don” of September 3, 2021 at 1:19 PM

I don't get "retirement **from the world**" at all from ἐκχωρήσεως τῶν πολλῶν at all. It's literally "'withdrawal' from the hoi polloi." It doesn't say society, culture, world, etc. It's specifically referring to withdrawal from the masses, which is why I think "herd" is such a good choice. Those who want to assign ascetic or antisocial tendencies to Epicurus and his school are reading more into that hoi polloi than I think prudent.

Post by “Cassius” of September 3, 2021 at 1:45 PM

OK I will say it:. The intersection of the viewpoint of many academics with their preferred translation may well be that the academics consider everyone but themselves to be hoi polloi, and thus they see no difference between "hoi polloi" and "the world."

...which I strongly believe was *not* Epicurus' viewpoint. I believe if forced to choose, Epicurus would take the "hoipolloi" over the "golden" academics most any day of the week, as would I!



Post by “Don” of September 3, 2021 at 2:42 PM

[Quote from Cassius](#)

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Doesn't he say as much in the Letter to Menoikeus about accepting myths?

Post by “Cassius” of September 3, 2021 at 2:58 PM

[Quote from Don](#)

Doesn't he say as much in the Letter to Menoikeus about accepting myths?

Yes exactly and I started to add that as my own reference but I didn't want to sound too argumentative this afternoon 😊

I seem to recall that DeWitt thought that Epicurus considered Plato to be a skeptic, and I think the "accepting myths" probably applied to Plato too even though that's in a section where Epicurus was referencing determinism. And I'd probably double down and say that if you accepted Plato's view of the universe you really wouldn't have much choice except to follow his rules, so even an accusation of hard determinism might be in play too.

Post by “Don” of September 3, 2021 at 3:04 PM

We're talking about this, right?

Quote from Epicurus

'It is better to endorse the myths about the gods than to be enslaved to the “fate” of the natural philosophers.'

Yeah, I take this to mean, "Give me the myths believed by the hoi polloi any day over the determinism of the academics!" Not that he endorsed those myths! But, given those two options...

Post by “Joshua” of September 4, 2021 at 7:16 PM

Quote

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Quote

OK I will say it:. The intersection of the viewpoint of many academics with their preferred translation may well be that the academics consider everyone but themselves to be hoi polloi, and thus they see no difference between "hoi polloi" and "the world."

A slightly more charitable interpretation (since their Greek is better than mine);

Some of the translators may be latching on to a punning connection between πολὺς (many) and πόλις (city-state, or more poetically "the affairs of the world").

But Epicurus is known to have favored plainer speech. Further, he *chose* Athens, the beating heart of Greek culture. Samos off the coast of Asia was at a far greater remove from the Greek world.

Post by “Don” of September 4, 2021 at 7:25 PM

[Quote from JJElbert](#)

But Epicurus is known to have favored plainer speech. Further, he chose Athens, the beating heart of Greek culture. Samos off the coast of Asia was at a far greater remove from the Greek world.

Yes, I would concur, although Epicurus was an Athenian citizen by birth, too. I keep coming back to the fact that even Epicurus didn't "withdraw from the world." He's placed his Garden only a few stadia outside Athen's walls directly on the busy road that went past the Academy out to the rest of Attica. It makes more sense to me that he withdrew from there masses, the rat race, the hustle and bustle of City life. The Garden was a refuge of sorts but it wasn't isolated or inaccessible. The whole idea, as I understand, was to make it accessible to those who sought it out.

Post by "Joshua" of September 4, 2021 at 7:38 PM

Yes--by a modern (and U.S. centered) analogy, he set up shop in Central Park, not in Montana.

But I suspect that like Aristotle he would have found his way to Athens in any case. A century or two earlier, Miletus: a century or two later, perhaps Alexandria.

Post by "Cassius" of September 4, 2021 at 7:56 PM

I suspect he's doing just like what a lot of us are probably doing -- making sure that we have a private retreat, but also that we're located to take advantage of most if not all of the modern conveniences.

Post by "Cassius" of September 4, 2021 at 8:14 PM

Here is at least part of what I am remembering about Munro's commentary. The first line about not caring if it is true is not good but may be part of the old issue of self-protection. However

other hand the truth or falsehood of his system is of exceedingly little concern except in so far as it is thereby rendered a better or worse vehicle for conveying the beauties of his language and the graces of his poetical conceptions.

Is then the epicurean system well or ill adapted to these purposes? As a poet in that age could scarcely be the inventor of a new system of philosophy, Lucretius could hardly help adopting some one of those which were then in vogue; if not the epicurean, then the academical or peripatetical or stoical. To construct a poem out of either of the first two with its barren logomachies, wire-drawn distinctions without a

we have good

difference, would have truly been to twist a rope out of sand: of course I am speaking of these two systems as they were in the days of Cicero and Lucretius; though much the same might be said of them in the age of their first propounders. Well then the stoical? I unhesitatingly assert that for all purposes of poetry both its physical and ethical doctrines are incomparably inferior to those of Epicurus. Read the *de natura deorum*; compare their one wretched world, their monotonous fire, their rotund and rotatory god, their method of destroying and creating anew their world, with the system of nature unfolded by Lucretius, grand and majestic in its general outline, with some strangely suggestive anticipations of the latest marvels of physical science. Then look at their sterile wisdom and still more barren virtue with their repudiation of all that constitutes the soul of poetry. Lucretius on the other hand can preach up virtue and temperance and wisdom and sober reason with as loud a voice as any of your stoics; and then what inexhaustible resources does he leave himself in his *alma Venus* and *dux vitæ diu voluptas*! Are examples wanted? then contrast the varied graces and exuberant beauty of Virgil, when he is pleased to assume the garb of an epicurean, with the leaden dulness and tedious obscurity of the stoic Manilius; or compare the rich humour and winning ways and ease of a Horace with the hardness and thinness and forced wit of a Persius. All this it may be said is in the men, not their systems. Yes, but the proper choice of a subject is half the battle. And yet the picturesque English historian speaks of the epi-

Post by “Eikadistes” of September 7, 2021 at 1:43 PM

XIV (14)

τῆς ἀσφαλείας τῆς ἐξ ἀνθρώπων γενομένης μέχρι τινὸς δυνάμει τε ἐξερειστικῇ καὶ εὐπορία, εἰλικρινεστάτη γίνεται ἢ ἐκ τῆς ἡσυχίας καὶ ἐκχωρήσεως τῶν πολλῶν ἀσφάλεια.

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“Although safety from the attacks of men has been secured to a certain degree by dynastic protection and abundance of means, that which comes of the retired life and withdrawal from the multitude is the most unalloyed.” (De Witt, *Epicurus and His Philosophy* 189; 1954)

“Even though security from the injuries of men may have been established to a certain degree by dynastic protection, the most unalloyed feeling of security is to be found in the retired life and withdrawal from the multitude.” (De Witt, *St. Paul and Epicurus* 188; 1954)

“When reasonable security from men has been attained, then the security that comes from peace of mind and withdrawal from the crowd is present, sufficient in strength and most unmixed in well-being.” Geer (1964)

“When tolerable security against our fellow humans is attained, then on a basis of power sufficient to afford supports and of material prosperity arises in most genuine form the security of a quiet private life withdrawn from the multitude.” O'Connor

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“The purest security is that which comes from a quiet life and withdrawal from the many, although a certain degree of security from other men does come by means of the power to repel [attacks] and by means of prosperity.” Inwood & Gerson (1994)

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Post by “Cassius” of September 7, 2021 at 4:02 PM

[Quote from Nate](#)

the power to fight them off

Ha! "The power to fight them off" --- as usual St Andre comes through with something memorable - and I like it!

Again, THANK YOU NATE for the work in these recent postings.

Post by “Cassius” of September 7, 2021 at 4:04 PM

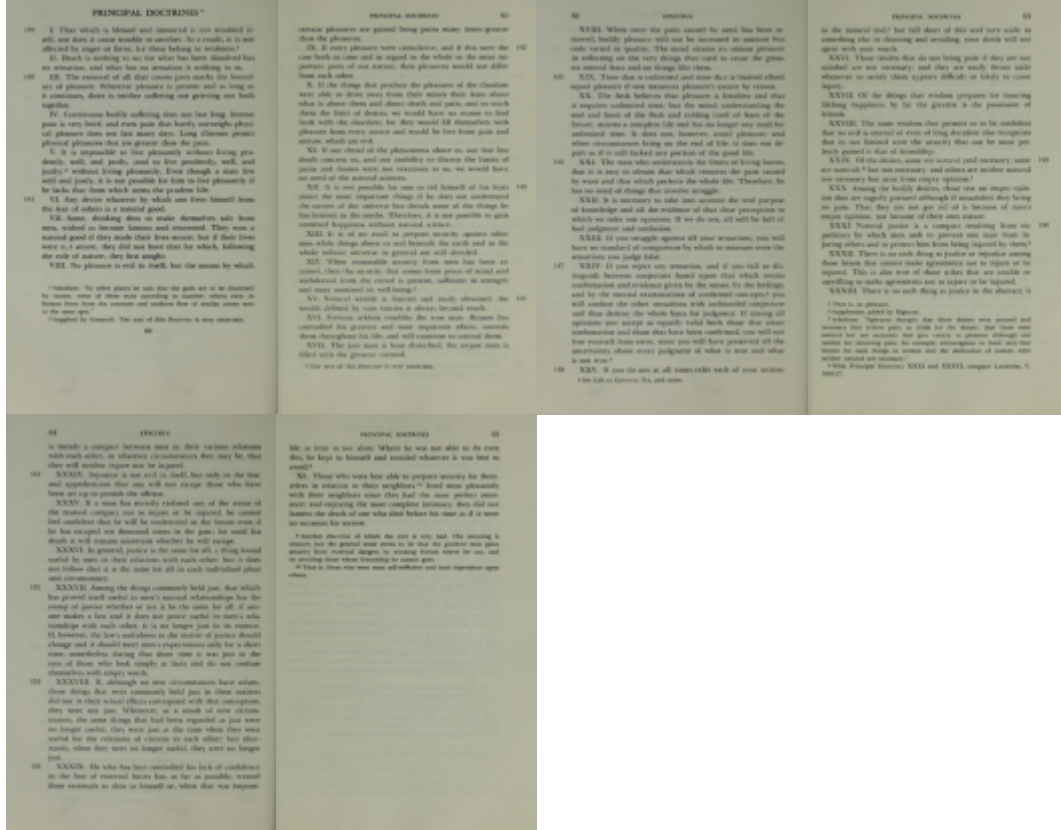
[Quote from Nate](#)

“When reasonable security from men has been attained, then the security that comes from peace of mind and withdrawal from the crowd is present, sufficient in strength and most unmixed in well-being.” Geer (1964)

Now THIS is unusual. Nate what source is that? Given the departure from the norm in that one we may see something similar in the other ones by Geer.

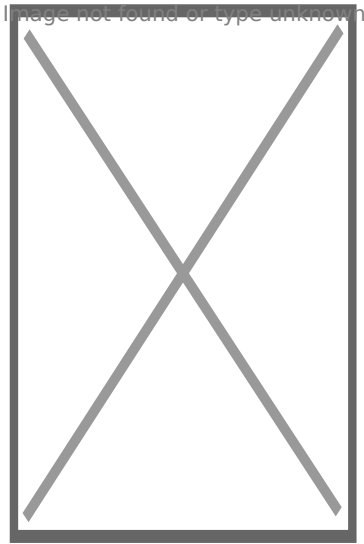
Post by “Eikadistes” of September 7, 2021 at 4:39 PM

That translation comes from Russel Geer's book *Letters, Principal Doctrines, and Vatican*



Post by “Cassius” of September 7, 2021 at 5:14 PM

I see that is on Archive.org. I wonder who Geer was and what were his credentials?



[Letters, Principal Doctrines and Vatican sayings : Epicurus : Geer, Russel M : Free Download, Borrow, and Streaming : Internet Archive](#)
archive.org

Oops - only partly

Post by “Don” of September 7, 2021 at 5:17 PM

[Quote from Cassius](#)

Oops - only partly

If you "borrow" it, is the whole book there?

It's just a free account to borrow.

Post by “Cassius” of September 7, 2021 at 5:23 PM

[Quote from Don](#)

If you "borrow" it, is the whole book there?

It's just a free account to borrow.

Looks like borrowing would give access to the full book. I'll just have to find the time. Bobbs-merrill is a reputable publisher, but I'd like to know his credentials, especially since the one we're talking about seems pretty far off.

Post by "Cassius" of September 7, 2021 at 5:27 PM

Ah I see from Nate's pages that Geer annotates 14 as very uncertain.

Post by "Godfrey" of September 7, 2021 at 5:55 PM

Does anybody have any information on Strodach? I like some of his translations but find his commentary disturbing. All I can find with a Google search is that he was born in 1905.

Post by "Cassius" of September 7, 2021 at 6:01 PM

[Quote from Godfrey](#)

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Do you have a copy of his book? I do but it doesn't seem to contain much bio information other than that he seems to have been a professor perhaps at Northwestern which published his book?

Post by “Godfrey” of September 7, 2021 at 6:25 PM

I have the Kindle version, it doesn't say much, if anything, about him.