

◻ as the symbol of the philosophy of Epicurus

Post by “michelepinto” of March 18, 2021 at 11:59 AM

I received an email from a reader of epicuro.org who prefers to remain anonymous with an original proposal that immediately thrilled me. Here is his email:

Epicurean philosophy is among the greatest movements of thought in history, on a par with the most common religions.

Unlike religions (e.g. Christianity) and other more recent movements (e.g. Communism), it does not have a symbol with which it can be identified around the world.

I therefore thought of a symbol that could condense the main points of Epicurus' thought, in a graphic that is as minimalist as possible.

The result is this: ◻

A rhombus with a dot inside.

The four sides of the rhombus represent the quadrifugaco, the way to happiness according to Epicurus.

The point, on the other hand, represents the Democritean atom at the basis of Epicurean physics and the key concept of clinamen, the random movement of atoms.

This symbol corresponds to the UNICODE U + 27D0 standard so it is copyright free.

What do you think?

[Simbolo Epicureismo.png](#)

Post by “Titus” of March 18, 2021 at 12:20 PM

It could also be interpreted as an eye (as one of the senses) and therefore be related to the formulation *Sic Fac Omnia Tamquam Spectet Epicurus*.

Post by “Don” of March 18, 2021 at 12:37 PM

I like this better than the Tetracharmakos "symbol" I've seen online that mashes the tau T and phi Φ of that word.

Post by “Cassius” of March 18, 2021 at 1:43 PM

That is an interesting suggestion Michele!

I think it does have some potential, at least for certain uses.

However as to this:

[Quote from michelepinto](#)

it does not have a symbol with which it can be identified around the world.

.... I am not sure that the ancient Epicureans would agree --- it seems as if they did have something they used: the bust of Epicurus himself, which you are holding in your excellent avatar! 😊

This is an interesting questions from many perspectives. It probably also relates to the use of the term "Epicurean" as the name of the philosophy rather than "hedonism" or even "atomism" or the like. Both words have uses, but neither word captures the whole philosophy like identifying it with the founder himself does.

And I think that relates too to the issue that Don refers to, such as the use of the Greek letter (such as Society of Epicurus does) representing "friendship". Anything that conveys only one aspect of the philosophy fails to capture the fullness of it, and may tend to falsely imply that one aspect of it is "the most important."

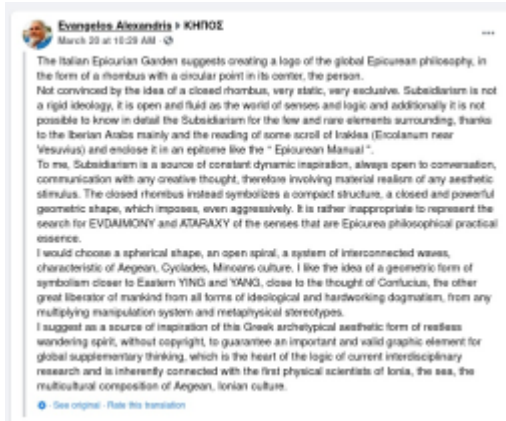
I know personally that was my immediate reaction to the letter indicating friendship, and I think that's also why I rarely refer to the philosophy as atomism or hedonism. Both words have their uses, just as this suggested symbol might.

I suspect even the christians ought to be concerned about the cross for the very same reasons. (Which is one reason I gather than the Mormons do not use the cross very often, even though they consider themselves to be christians.)

If the question were: What unicode symbol on a keyboard would work best, I doubt anyone could come up with any better.... though it would be interesting to consider the options and think about that.

Post by “Cassius” of March 25, 2021 at 5:08 PM

Michelle --- Along the same lines as your post I see this post on Facebook today:



Post by “Bryan” of March 26, 2021 at 1:08 AM

Those are nice images. I put one behind a lampshade for a fun effect. It does solve the issue of not using Forms, but the use of the Greek Key design may be critiqued as not fully using our little boat.

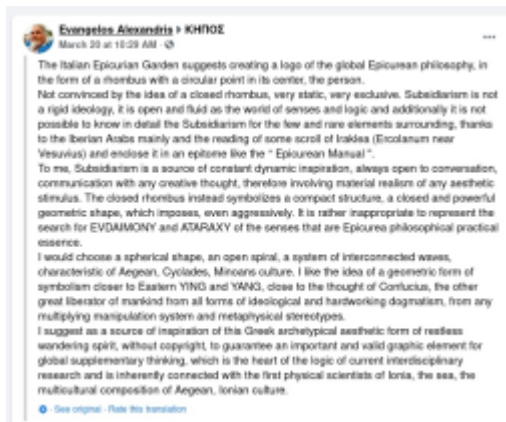
Post by “Titus” of March 26, 2021 at 2:00 AM

It seems we need a thread on interior decoration. Can you tell me something about the papyrus reproductions on the wall?

Post by "Don" of March 26, 2021 at 7:40 AM

[Quote from Cassius](#)

Michelle --- Along the same lines as your post I see this post on Facebook today:



That's a beautiful piece of artwork and maybe "represents" the philosophy but it is completely impractical as a symbol or logo. We need something more in line with the Nike swoosh, Christian cross, Islamic crescent, Atheist A, Apple apple, ... You get the idea. Something bold, graphic, and that you could hang from a necklace.

Post by “Don” of March 26, 2021 at 8:33 AM

1727-simbolo-epicureismo.png

To repeat and expand on [michelepinto](#) 's and others' proposals:

- The four sides = The four lines of the Tetrpharmakos
- The dot = the atom (or whatever basic building block of matter you want in modern terms)
 - The space around the dot represents the void.
- The points at the top (a triangle pointing up) and bottom (a triangle pointing down) of the diamond shape represent pain and pleasure.
 - Additionally, the points represent the choices we make based on pain and pleasure. Which way will we decide to go? It's up to us!
- The symbol is an abstract eye to represent the motto Sic fac omnia tamquam spectet Epicurus. You could even include the letters SFOTSE in some arrangements around or inside the diamond.
- The diamond shape with dot is an abstract representation of a walled Garden with a group of people inside.
 - For those Epicureans who want to emphasize lathe biosas it can represent that but doesn't need to.
- The two sides of the diamond represent two people facing each other with outstretched arms < > joining hands in friendship.
- The diamond itself represents the most durable natural physical substance which stands for the unshakable enduring trust in the Canon and the physical nature of the Cosmos with no supernatural intervention.

I'm blue-skying here but just wanted to provide in how many directions you can go with a simple figure. I agree with [Cassius](#) that the most traditional "symbol" was the bust of Epicurus but that's hard to capture graphically (unless someone is up for a challenge).

Post by “Bryan” of March 26, 2021 at 9:14 AM

[Quote from Titus](#)

Can you tell me something about the papyrus reproductions on the wall?

It is a fun little craft project to print out PHerCs, cut them into the surviving pieces and put them under a frame!

Post by “Julia” of May 8, 2025 at 2:26 AM

[Quote from Don](#)

1727-simbolo-epicureismo-png

To repeat and expand on [michelepinto](#) 's and others' proposals:

- The four sides = The four lines of the Tetrpharmakos
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I'm blue-skying here but just wanted to provide in how many directions you can go with a simple figure. I agree with [Cassius](#) that the most traditional "symbol" was the bust of Epicurus but that's hard to capture graphically (unless someone is up for a challenge).

I very much miss having a universally agreed upon symbol for Epicurean philosophy, and I quite like the many ways in which this can be interpreted.

One practical problem is, of course, having actual space between the four sides and the dot in a real-world pendant like a necklace, but I think an diamond-shaped piece of gold/silver (ideally with raised edges) with a stone set in the middle should do fine?

What would we call this symbol?

Post by “Don” of May 8, 2025 at 8:22 AM

This is a good example of nothing ever goes away on the Internet 😊 I had completely forgotten about this thread from 4 years ago!

Honestly, I still think the idea has some merit. One issue is that, having the Epicurean community being so fragmented and decentralized, it would be difficult for any one image to catch on and be accepted. I remain skeptical of the TΦ mashup used elsewhere. It's an interesting graphic image, but tetrapharmakos is technically one word.

The symbol above? The Epicurean Atom?

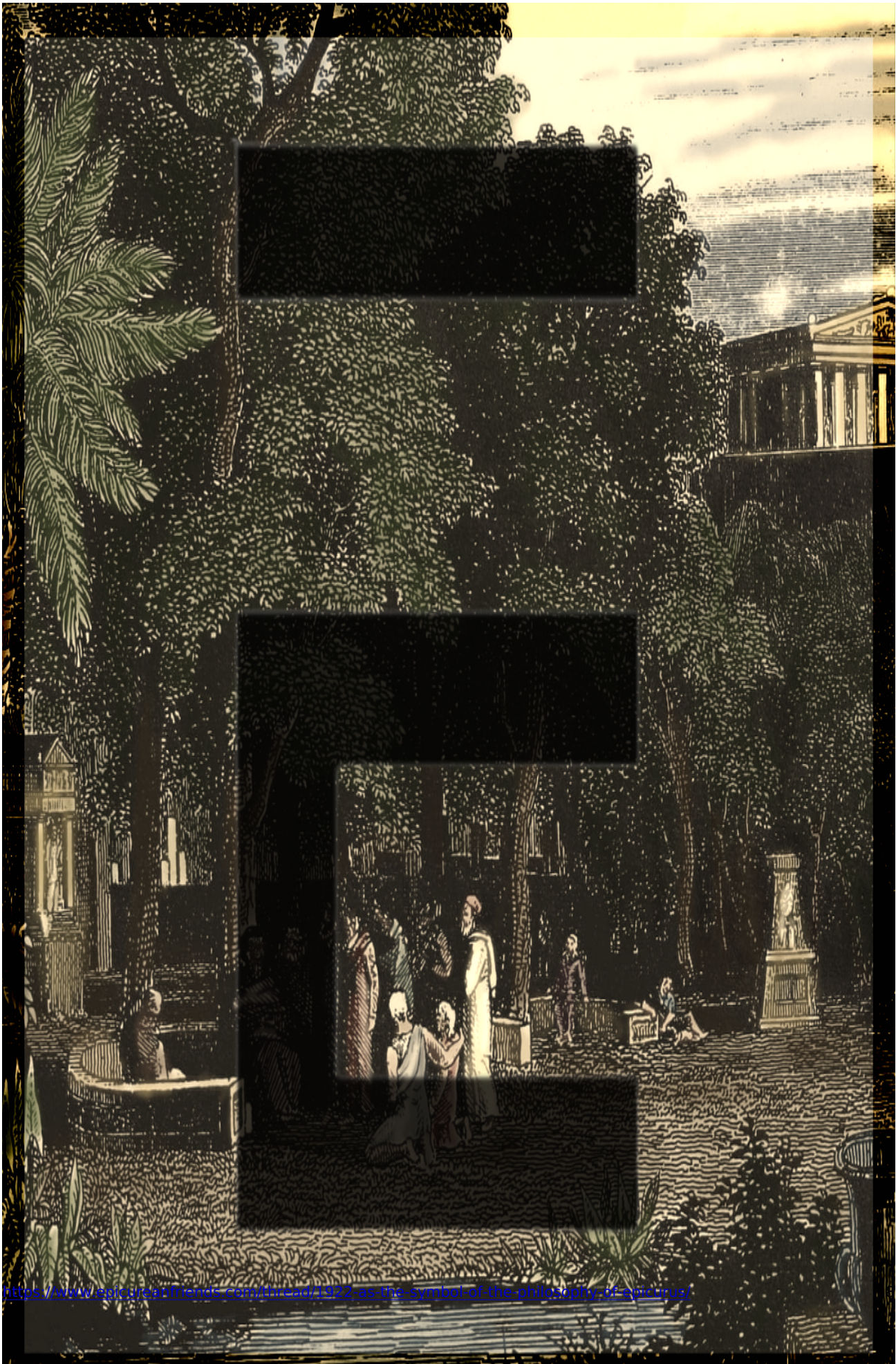
And, yes, [Cassius](#) remains correct, the widespread symbol in the ancient world that we know of was the image of Epicurus in stone, on cups, on rings, etc.

Post by “Eikadistes” of May 8, 2025 at 9:00 AM

[Quote from Don](#)

the widespread symbol in the ancient world that we know of was the image of Epicurus in stone, on cups, on rings, etc.

I do like the idea of a symbol reflecting the Hegemon, *himself*, in the spirit of consistency with the ancient tradition. This is what I came up with a while ago to place focus back on The Man:



Post by “Kalosyni” of May 8, 2025 at 11:10 AM

An idea, the animal who most enjoys life holding a pearl of wisdom:



Post by “Godfrey” of May 8, 2025 at 11:55 AM

I particularly like this pig graphic. But of course I'm the guy with a toy monkey for an avatar.

Post by “Don” of May 8, 2025 at 1:20 PM

I love the pig woodcut design as artwork. Epicurus' bust is great as artwork.

But you have to hand it to the major religions for having easy to spot, easy to draw symbols:



That's what we're looking for.

Getting people to agree and use it, that's a whole other kettle of fish.

There are things like the leaping piglet silhouette, [Eikadistes](#) ' 20er moon, graphic representations of the Epicurus bust, etc. But for sheer basic graphic symbols, ya gotta hand it to the cross, crescent, Star of David, et al.

Post by “Julia” of May 9, 2025 at 8:25 AM

[Quote from Don](#)

I love the pig woodcut design as artwork. Epicurus' bust is great as artwork.

But you have to hand it to the major religions for having easy to spot, easy to draw symbols:

† ☪ ☉ ☼ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☆ † ☐ ☐

That's what we're looking for.

I agree.

[Quote from Don](#)

Getting people to agree and use it, that's a whole other kettle of fish.

This seems to imply getting agreement before actual usage, and I don't think that's how it works. Symbols like these are adopted and used *without* asking for universal agreement, let alone permission, and they either make it or they don't. As such, the process is an evolutionary trial & error cycle through the court of public opinion, until something just happens to be found that clicks with enough of a majority to catch on. So the trick, in my opinion, is not to make the entire world agree. It should be enough if we can come to reasonable level of agreement amongst each other, and then just try and see what happens.

[Quote from Don](#)

There are things like the leaping piglet silhouette, Eikadistes ' 20er moon, graphic representations of the Epicurus bust, etc. But for sheer basic graphic symbols, ya gotta hand it to the cross, crescent, Star of David, et al.

I agree. I think it should ideally be a very simple geometric shape, and if it is to be based on letters, I think it should be stylised (like the tau-phi mashup, like %, @, &, ☐, etc). So, for example, I like the shape of the 20er moon, but I think the four letters "20er" spelled out are

already too much writing to make for a good logo / symbol / ...

[Quote from Eikadistes](#)

I do like the idea of a symbol reflecting the Hegemon, himself, in the spirit of consistency with the ancient tradition. This is what I came up with a while ago to place focus back on The Man:

I agree that having some continuity would be good. But I wonder, pragmatically: How would you turn that stylized E into, for example, a necklace pendant? The lower half would have to be connected somehow.

[Quote from Wikipedia](#)

"Uncial is a majuscule script (written entirely in capital letters) commonly used from the 4th to 8th centuries AD by Latin and Greek scribes. Uncial letters were used to write Greek and Latin, as well as Gothic, and are the current style for Coptic and Nobiin."

"After the establishment of the canonical Ionian (Euclidean) Greek alphabet, new glyph variants for E were introduced through handwriting. In the uncial script (used for literary papyrus manuscripts in late antiquity and then in early medieval vellum codices), the "lunate" shape (ϵ) became predominant."

This variant of the Epsilon is quite symmetrical, and moon-shaped ("lunate"), alluding to the 20th / moon-based calendar. It can be modified with an "atom" dot (like this \dot{E} character) which - to my limited knowledge - would make it quite unique. I didn't mean for it to be off to one side / asymmetrical, I just didn't know off the top of my head how to get it right in the middle using only Unicode.

Lunate Epsilon: ϵ (Unicode U+03F5)

Combining Dot Above: ˙ (Unicode U+0307)

Result: é

I don't actually know that I would prefer that over the □ symbol. The most visually pleasing icons, in my opinion, are symmetrical (left-right, up-down, both, in diagonals, ...), which makes any E variant tricky.

I think, my overall favourite so far would be a rhombus ◊ (instead of an equal-angle diamond ◇), with a dot in the middle. Any thoughts on that?

Post by “Kalosyni” of May 9, 2025 at 8:50 AM

[Quote from Julia](#)

This seems to imply getting agreement before actual usage, and I don't think that's how it works. Symbols like these are adopted and used without asking for universal agreement, let alone permission, and they either make it or they don't.

Regarding the use of the symbol of the cross: "Before the 4th century AD, multiple Christian symbols were used, including the [fish \(Ichthys\)](#), the [anchor](#), the [ship](#), and the [Chi Rho](#). These symbols were often found in catacombs and other early Christian art. The cross itself wasn't a prominent symbol until later, with the main focus on symbols like the fish which represented Jesus Christ, God's Son, Savior. Christians were initially hesitant to openly display the cross due to fear of ridicule and persecution from the Roman authorities. Emperor Constantine's conversion to Christianity in the 4th century was a major turning point. He promoted the cross as a symbol of the faith and even used it in his battle banners. The Edict of Milan in 313 legalized Christianity, paving the way for the open display and celebration of the cross." Source: Google search.

Post by “Don” of May 9, 2025 at 9:00 AM

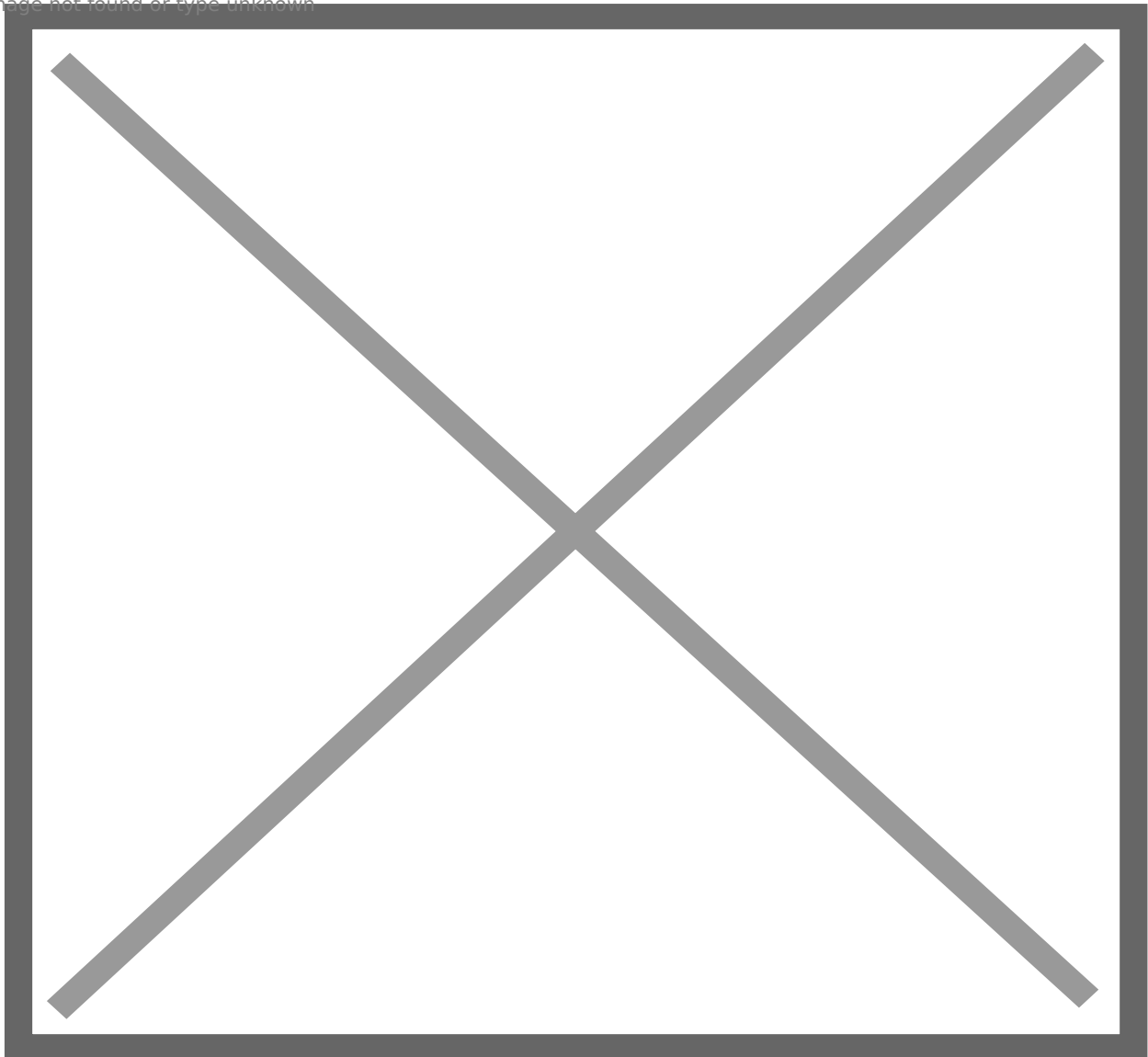
[Quote from Julia](#)

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Well said, [Kalosyni](#) , kudos!

I'm reminded of the Christian fish:

Image not found or type unknown



[Ichthys - Wikipedia](#)

en.wikipedia.org

which appears to have been used even earlier than the cross, fell out of popular use, then roared back onto the backs of cars in the 1970s.

[Quote from Julia](#)

I think the four letters "20er" spelled out are already too much writing to make for a good logo / symbol / ...

Agreed. I really like it as a graphic or as say a team logo when we have a softball team. As an overall symbol, agree with you.

[Quote from Julia](#)

lunate Epsilon: ε (Unicode U+03F5)

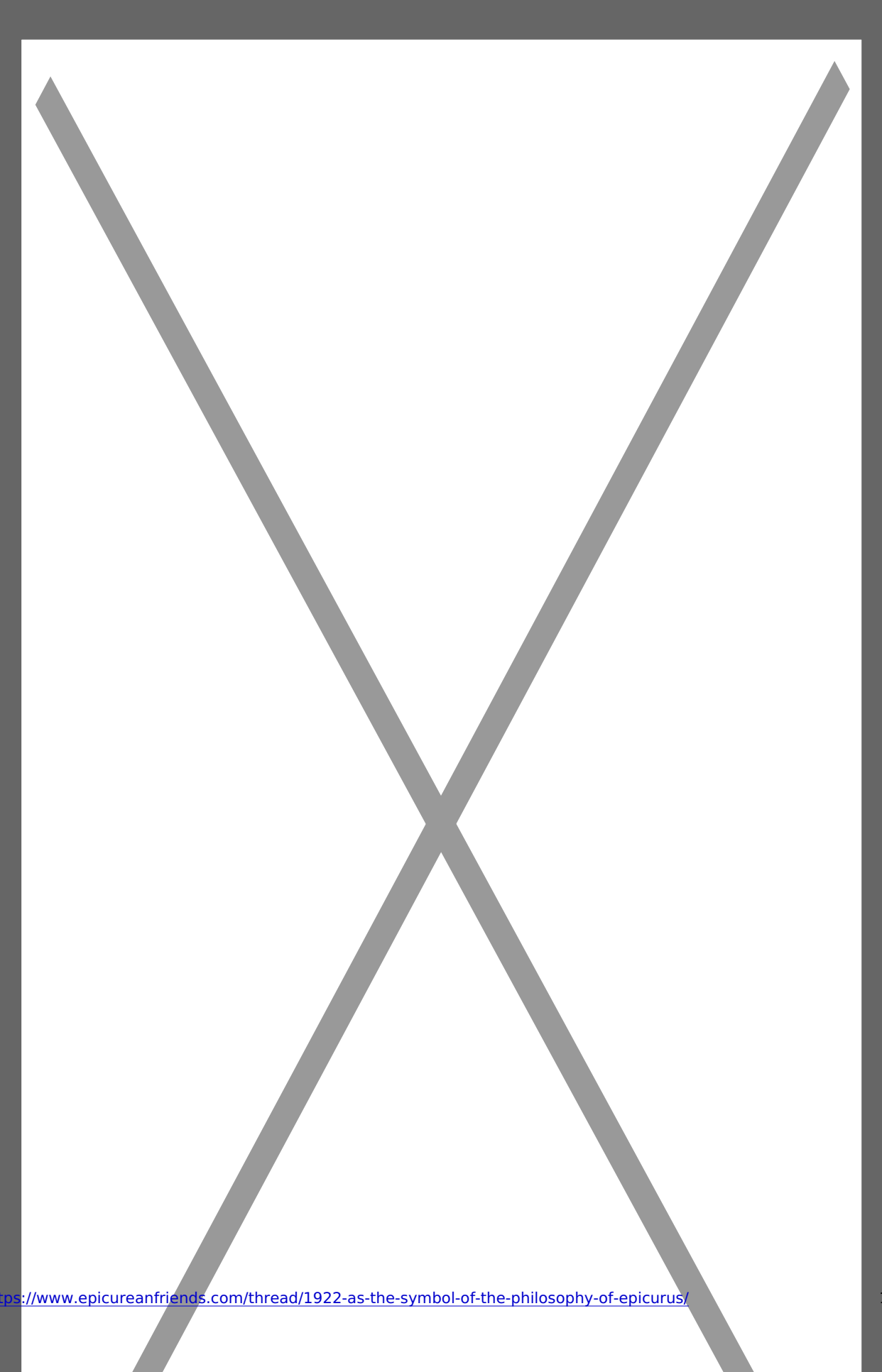
Combining Dot Above: ˙ (Unicode U+0307)

Result:έ

I can't endorse that dotted lunate epsilon. It has the same issue you raised with the symbolized E with the detached top line as to necklace, etc.

Generally, I don't like letters or numbers to be used as symbols. There's too much room for misinterpretation, jokes, etc. I'm not even sure I *fully* endorse the pig as a symbol. Is Horace the only textual evidence for that? I know the statue is from Herculaneum. That said, I do have a small plastic piglet on my desk at work:

Image not found or type unknown



[Pig](#)

OINK OINK! Like any pig, our Pig from schleich® FARM WORLD has a great sense of smell thanks to its powerful nose. The pink hoofed animal likes using it to...
us.schleich-s.com

I don't have a firm proposal, but I'm intrigued by the conversation.

Post by “Don” of May 9, 2025 at 9:25 AM

Thinking out loud (fully realizing I just said no letters 😄)

Φ or Φ - Greek phi

- = Philosophy
- Two stylized Ps back to back = Pleasure and Pain

Some mashup of Greek H eta hedone "pleasure" and A alpha algos "pain"?

Pig? Stylized pig? Think Christian fish?

Like I said, just thinking out loud.

Post by “Cassius” of May 9, 2025 at 9:34 AM

[Quote from Julia](#)

Generally, I don't like letters or numbers to be used as symbols. There's too much room for misinterpretation, jokes, etc. I'm not even sure I fully endorse the pig as a symbol. Is Horace the only textual evidence for that? I know the statue is from Herculaneum. T

There's also the Boscoreale cup with the pig at Epicurus' feet, plus the leaping pig from herculaneum, which is probably one of the most definitive connectons. -



Post by "Don" of May 9, 2025 at 9:57 AM



I find the pose of the Boscoreale pig surprisingly similar to the Herculaneum pig.



"The Boscoreale Treasure is a large collection of exquisite silver and gold Roman objects discovered in the ruins of the ancient Villa della Pisanella at Boscoreale, near Pompeii, southern Italy." So, they're both from the same general area and same time but still, I find that similarity fascinating.

Post by "Cassius" of May 9, 2025 at 11:17 AM

[Quote from Don](#)

I find the pose of the Boscoreale pig surprisingly similar to the Herculaneum pig.

agreed and I hadn't noticed that myself. But I am not sure there is much variation in the appearance of pigs(?)

Post by “Julia” of May 9, 2025 at 11:28 AM

[Quote from Don](#)

then roared back onto the backs of cars in the 1970s

Seems to me like it also started showing up on some Western European storefronts.

[Quote from Don](#)

That said, I do have a small plastic piglet on my desk at work

That's cute ☺☺

[Quote from Don](#)

Two stylized Ps back to back = Pleasure and Pain

That only works in English, so I don't think it would be a very good idea. Greek and Latin are languages too, of course, but they hold a different status, in my opinion. (As do proper Names, like Epicurus, Ἐπίκουρος.)

[Quote from Cassius](#)

agreed and I hadn't noticed that myself. But I am not sure there is much variation in the appearance of pigs(?)

They can be newborn, piglet, or adult. Boar or sow. Boars might show tusks. Sows might be pregnant or have visible teats. Position could be lying, wallowing, standing, or leaping. Could be furry or bare skinned, and fat, lean, or medium. So...there is /some/ variation, but of course they'll still be pigs ☺☺♀

But regarding the leaping piglet, I'm not convinced mammals can be stylised like a fish? There's Picasso's bull sketch (Le Taureau), but I'm quite certain that if didn't have his name attached, it would be considered utterly unremarkable. Plus, for a symbol, there's no symmetry or anything in it -- unlike the Christianist's stylised fish, which is quite geometric as a shape. A pigs face would be an easier, more symmetrical shape overall.

I think it is interesting there never was a symbol other than the bust, which I'm sure not just anyone could afford to own or put on display.

Post by “Don” of May 9, 2025 at 12:01 PM

[Quote from Julia](#)

I think it is interesting there never was a symbol other than the bust, which I'm sure not just anyone could afford to own or put on display.


I don't know if any of the ancient philosophical schools had symbols as we think of them: Stoics, Academics, Peripatetics, Pythagoreans, Cyrenaics, and so on and so on. Maybe they had no need. If you wanted to be a student of a school, you knew where to go in your city. I believe all the schools though had statues and busts of their founders in prominent places. [Cassius](#) Correct me if I'm wrong, but isn't their reference to Epicureans in particular going around with Epicurus face on rings, cups, etc, as if it's an idiosyncrasy of the school?

[Quote from Cassius](#)

I am not sure there is much variation in the appearance of pigs(?)

That leaping posture in both of them seems too similar to be coincidence to me, but granted, that's only two data points.

Post by “Julia” of May 9, 2025 at 12:09 PM

 [image40xN2604015976_9hsf.jpg](#)

 [newbridge-sappho-rhombus-pendant-blue-stone-9705-p.jpg](#)

A sideways rhombus with a dot in the middle would still make use of all the interpretations offered for the □ symbol. It can be found ready-made without being prohibitively expensive, but it isn't a common fashion item in and of itself. This makes it more distinct, ensuring those who use it are much more likely to do so because of this particular meaning. The two products I linked to are more feminine, but I think with different styling, it would work equally for men. It is more reminiscent of an eye than the □ symbol with 90° angles, giving more weight to the interpretation: "*Sic fac omnia tamquam spectet Epicurus.*" In effect, benevolently saying some thing like: "I might not be the Hegemon in the flesh, and I might not be a fully-fledged bust of him, but I am one of his eyes, and I am - figuratively, metaphorically - watching the actions of the wearer, such that they might find it easier to act wisely," invoking (figuratively/metaphorically/psychologically/subjectively) a sense of a benevolent presence, if

you will, without losing any of the other interpretations: the atom, the void, the four lines of the tetrapharmakos, and all the other things which have already been mentioned early on in this thread.

[Quote from Don](#)

Correct me if I'm wrong, but isn't their reference to Epicureans in particular going around with Epicurus face on rings, cups, etc, as if it's an idiosyncrasy of the school?

And because this variant of a sideways rhombus would entail a stylised aspect of the bust / face, it would connect to the historical tradition of showing the bust / face.

I think it really hits that sweet spot between being a simple geometric shape, yet still carrying meaning through symbolism; and between being very recognisable and very inconspicuous at that same time 😊

The same holds true for rings: While it can be found incorporated into a rings in a number of ways, it is *far* less common to find a rhombus with the sides pointing left-right to the neighbouring fingers (see picture below). (In contrast, rings with squares that have a stone set in the middle are quite common, and so is a rhombus pointing to the fingertip / knuckles; so they would be much more likely to just be intended as general fashion items.)

New Design 925 Sterling Silver with CZ Rhombus Ring.webp

Avens+Double+Diamond+Triangle+Rhombus+Ring-8.jpg

kitering2.jpg or type unknown

Post by “Kalosyni” of May 10, 2025 at 9:26 AM

Thinking on this further...symbols come about through intense practice over time, through religious feelings and meditations, and religious application/practices of thoughts and ideas.



You can read about the [development of "Om" on Wikipedia](#) to see that it is a long and complex process born out of the usefulness of the symbol.

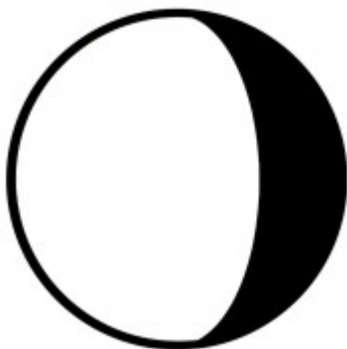
So creation of an Epicurean symbol must have an interface between feeling and usefulness.

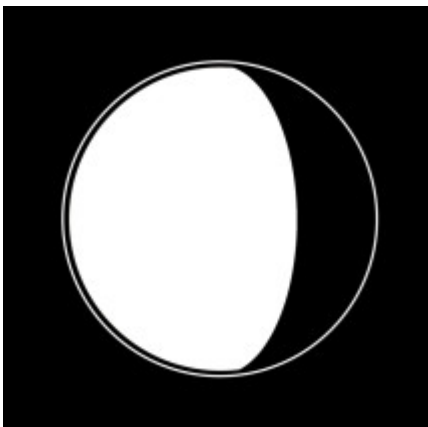
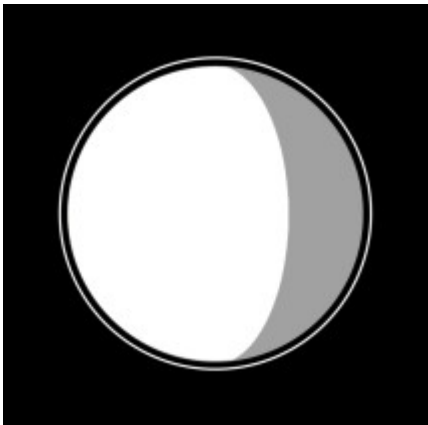
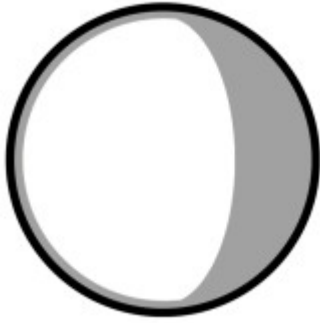
Right now I see a usefulness of the 20th moon symbol that [Eikadistes](#) created, as this is something all Epicureans would partake in.

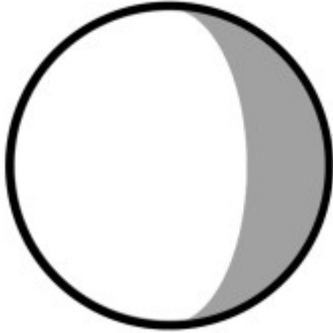
Post by “Kalosyni” of May 10, 2025 at 2:18 PM

Also, it seems that usefulness may come first and then the more it is used the more "feeling" it has. And some may feel it is useful, and some may not feel it is useful (lol)...and so everyone can make their own symbols. 😊

But I like this concept that [Eikadistes](#) made some time ago... I've made it as a plain symbol without words:







Post by “Joshua” of May 10, 2025 at 2:57 PM

I'd like to throw in one more contender; the myrtle blossom, sacred to Aphrodite/Venus.

https://toptropicals.com/pics/garden/m1/Aroma/Myrtus_communis4234_flower_.jpg

Note that this is the True or Common Myrtle, [myrtus communis](#). Frescoes featuring this plant have been discovered at Santorini and Pompeii.

Post by “Godfrey” of May 10, 2025 at 3:20 PM

I keep leaning toward a field of random dots representing particles. Maybe this could be incorporated into the moon symbol, either on the dark or the light side.

Post by “sanantoniogarden” of May 10, 2025 at 3:51 PM

I like the simplicity of the moon symbol, however it's similarity to the crescent and star might be confusing for some and offensive to others.

Post by “Bryan” of May 10, 2025 at 5:37 PM

It is not much of a connection, but Lucius Lucretius Trio was an older contemporary (and presumably relative) of our Lucretius, and the crescent moon shows up on some of his coins.

Post by “Don” of May 10, 2025 at 7:08 PM

[Quote from Godfrey](#)

I keep leaning toward a field of random dots representing particles. Maybe this could be incorporated into the moon symbol, either on the dark or the light side.

Four dots in a square or diamond? Particles/atoms/craters on the moon?

Post by “Kalosyni” of May 10, 2025 at 8:12 PM

[Quote from sanantoniogarden](#)

I like the simplicity of the moon symbol, however it's similarity to the crescent and star might be confusing for some and offensive to others.

Yes, now I begin to think that could be an issue.

Also maybe looks "wiccan".

Thinking to set this idea aside for now.

Post by “Don” of May 10, 2025 at 9:27 PM

[Quote from Kalosyni](#)

[Quote from sanantoniogarden](#)

I like the simplicity of the moon symbol, however it's similarity to the crescent and star might be confusing for some and offensive to others.

Yes, now I begin to think that could be an issue.

Also maybe looks "wiccan".

Thinking to set this idea aside for now.

Honestly, I'd be more inclined to adopt the 20er moon given those others who use moons. Nobody has a monopoly on the phases of the moon.

PS. In light of that, I've taken [Kalosyni](#) 's version of [Eikadistes](#)' 20er moon phase and added 4 atoms of 4 different sizes in a diamond pattern inspired by [Godfrey](#) 's post above. I'm saying they represent atoms (varying in size) as well as the 4 lines of the Tetrpharmakos. I could have gone with three for the Canon. To be clear: I'm NOT endorsing this. Merely playing and "trying it on for size" for a little while.

Post by “Julia” of May 11, 2025 at 5:09 PM

I very much like the variant of the moon [Don](#) currently uses! I also like how the four lines of the Tetrpharmakos are invisible: abstract concepts, ideas -- they stem from the biochemical reality of material atoms, but they don't have any direct existence in the sense of a Platonic realm of ideal forms. The different sized atoms can have an additional layer of meaning, alluding to the shibboleth of [the size of the sun](#).

I think it is visually very pleasing, pragmatically it could be made into pendants, rings and those sorts of things, and it is unique (I don't know of anything else like it).

Post by “Don” of May 11, 2025 at 6:05 PM

[Quote from Julia](#)

alluding to the shibboleth of the size of the sun.

You are clever. That didn't even cross my mind 😊

Post by “Don” of May 11, 2025 at 6:11 PM

[Quote from Julia](#)

I very much like the variant of the moon Don

My major misgiving about the moon I'm using is that it can be interpreted as a moon with a surprised look on its face. (Once you see it, you can't unsee it.)

Post by “Don” of May 11, 2025 at 10:00 PM

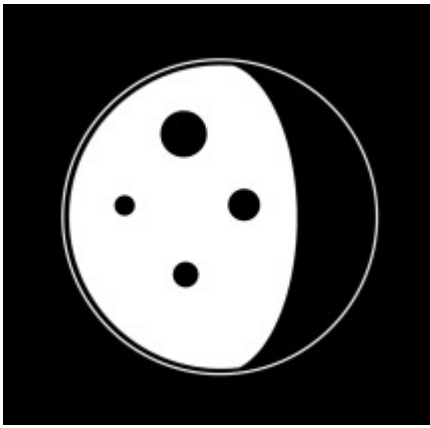
[Quote from Don](#)

[Quote from Julia](#)

I very much like the variant of the moon Don

My major misgiving about the moon I'm using is that it can be interpreted as a moon with a surprised look on its face. (Once you see it, you can't unsee it.)

LOL I got tired of looking at the Moon going "Oh!" That experiment didn't last long. For those who are curious what that moon looked like, I'll post here for future reference:



I've gone back to [Eikadistes](#) ' 20er moon logo. It pairs nicely with my Epicurist tagline. I still like the waning gibbous moon as a symbol.

Post by “Julia” of May 12, 2025 at 4:05 AM

[Quote from Don](#)

I'll post it to my profile wall.

Somehow I can't see it (on your wall)? Can you please also post it to this thread? 😊 Judging from memory, I imagine the "Oh!" could be solved by rearranging the sizes / atoms a bit: by putting a small dot at the bottom and/or by rotating the atom-formation a little, or making it a bit more into a rhombus than a perfect square. And also: That face-in-the-stars didn't occur to me when I first saw it. From memory, I still like your design from yesterday / couple hours ago best!

The atoms could also represent *any of a number of* square/diamond-shaped star constellations which move across the northern/southern hemisphere night sky throughout the year, symbolising that *there is no special meaning* to the stars, symbolising the stance against superstitions, like today's zodiac signs, ancient Babylonian / Hellenistic astrology, all the religionist's stars, et cetera.

And (from memory) the "Oh!" could just as well be an "Ah!", as in an epiphany, when making an important discovery about the nature of things 😊

I like how easy it is to interpret many different meanings into that symbol, allowing it to represent so many key aspects at once.

Post by “Don” of May 12, 2025 at 7:20 AM

[Quote from Julia](#)

Somehow I can't see it (on your wall)? Can you please also post it to this thread?

I couldn't post images to my wall, so I edited the post above.

Post by “Julia” of May 12, 2025 at 11:29 AM

[Quote from Don](#)

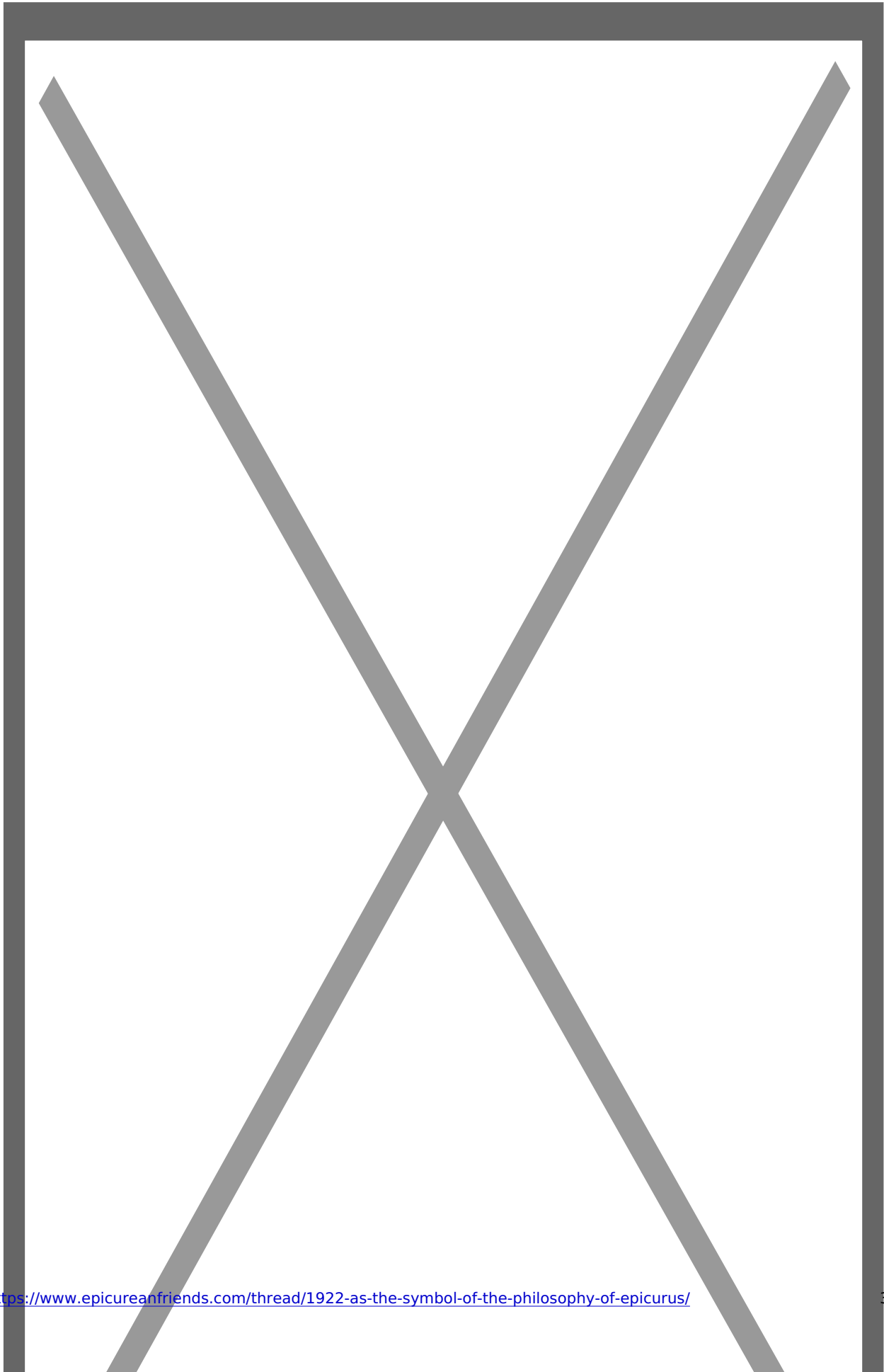
My major misgiving about the moon I'm using is that it can be interpreted as a moon with a surprised look on its face. (Once you see it, you can't unsee it.)

I still don't see it. I mean, I can cognitively suppose that the two atoms left/right could be eyes, and the atom at the bottom could be a mouth, like with this smiley "😮" but then what's the one at the top? The 3rd eye? And how come the right eye is bigger than the mouth? 😞 I really don't see it! Is Don the only one who sees it, or am I the only one who doesn't? 🤔

Post by “Don” of May 12, 2025 at 12:11 PM

I guess my pareidolia is overactive.

Image not found or type unknown



[Pareidolia - Wikipedia](#)

en.wikipedia.org

Post by “Martin” of May 12, 2025 at 1:16 PM

I do not see it, probably because of the larger atom at the top and the different sizes of the "eyes" as mentioned by Julia.

Post by “Don” of May 12, 2025 at 2:08 PM

[Quote from Martin](#)

the larger atom at the top

I couldn't not see that as a hair curl in the middle of his forehead, like Superman.

Post by “Julia” of May 12, 2025 at 2:39 PM



[Don](#): Is there an astonished / surprised superman in here, too? 😊

Of what we have so far, I still like this symbol best.

Post by “Patrikios” of May 12, 2025 at 7:21 PM

[Quote from Don](#)

Thinking out loud (fully realizing I just said no letters 😊)

Φ or Φ - Greek phi

= Philosophy

Two stylized Ps back to back = Pleasure and Pain

If the Epicurean philosophy is about choice of Pleasure or Pain, then

Pleasure/Pain = Φ/Φ



Post by “Eikadistes” of May 12, 2025 at 8:57 PM

[Quote from Kalosyni](#)

But I like this concept that [Eikadistes](#) made some time ago... I've made it as a plain symbol without words:

In the even that anyone else wants to play with the gibbous moon design, I'm happy to share with you high resolution versions of the wordless transparencies I created for the Hedonicon and elsewhere.



Post by “Julia” of May 13, 2025 at 5:35 AM

[Quote from Eikadistes](#)

[Quote from Kalosyni](#)

But I like this concept that [Eikadistes](#) made some time ago... I've made it as a plain symbol without words:

In the even that anyone else wants to play with the gibbous moon design, I'm happy to share with you high resolution versions of the wordless transparencies I created for the Hedonicon and elsewhere.

 I would appreciate that, [Eikadistes](#)! 


[Don](#), do you have a vector file of your Four Atoms version of it? If not, that's okay, too: The picture you uploaded is quite high resolution, and looks like it should be easy enough to trace



If y'all would like to release any file/symbol into the public domain, you can do that using the following template (for example). This effectively voids your own copyright to the specified file/symbol, thereby granting perpetual unlimited usage rights to anyone and everyone. To illustrate: The original text of De Rerum Natura and classical music are in the public domain, but Stallings' translation of DRN and today's number 1 pop song won't be in public domain for many years to come. Template:

Code

This work (the file & symbol uploaded in this post by myself) is dedicated to the public domain

([Happy Birthday To You](#) is a well-known example for why this can matter. Please know that I do *not* assume ill-intentions by anyone here. Copyright is just a topic that is very present in my mind in general )

Post by “Don” of May 13, 2025 at 1:36 PM

[Quote from Julia](#)

Don, do you have a vector file of your Four Atoms version of it

I just threw that together on Paint.net. The image I posted is all I have.

Post by “kochiekoch” of May 14, 2025 at 1:34 PM

[Quote from Joshua](#)

I'd like to throw in one more contender; the myrtle blossom, sacred to Aphrodite/Venus.

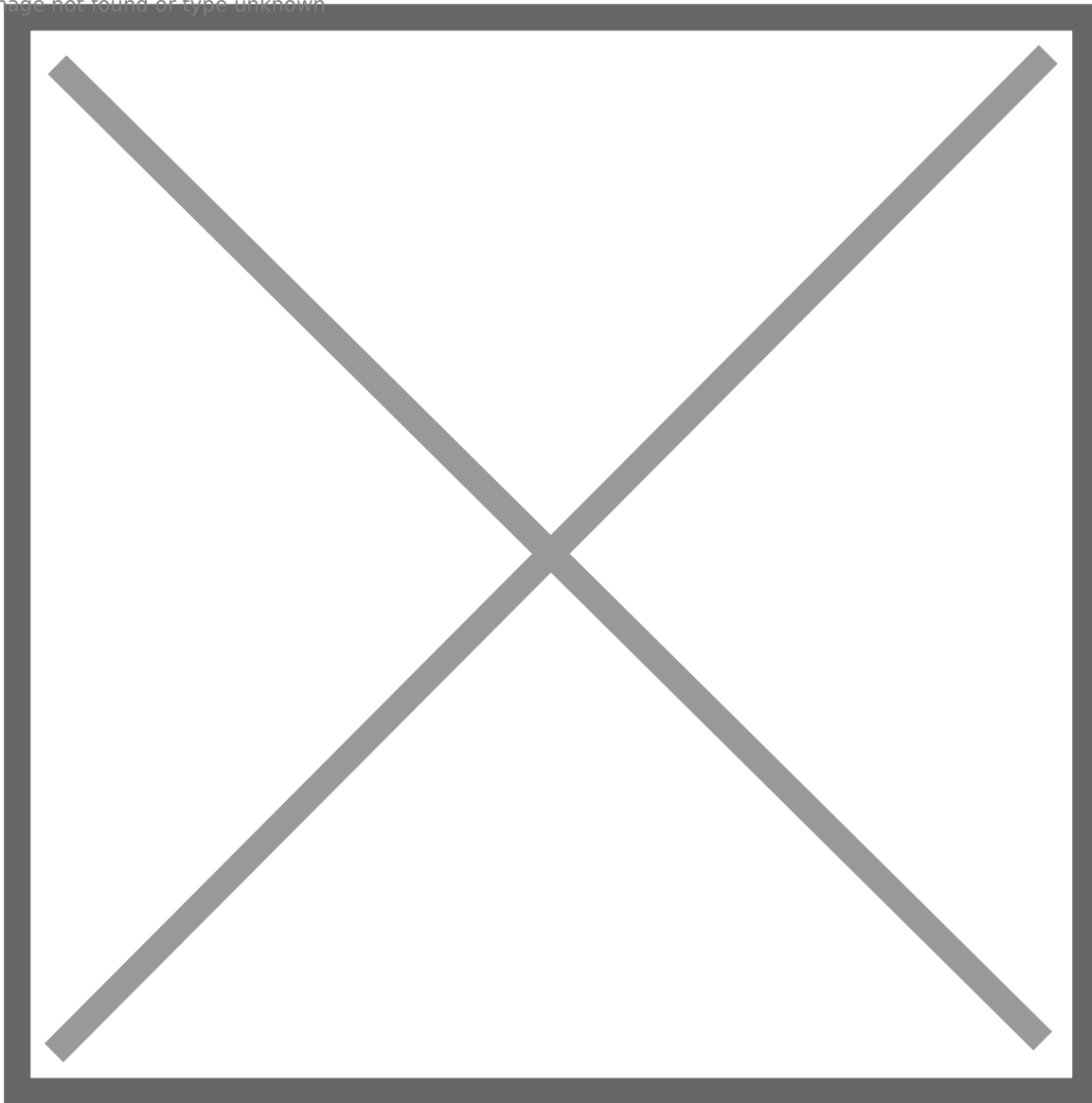
https://toptropicals.com/pics/garden/m1...234_flower_.jpg

Note that this is the True or Common Myrtle, *myrtus communis*. Frescoes featuring this plant have been discovered at Santorini and Pompeii.

I like it! 😊 Also a quick search shows a rose is also a symbol of Venus and Aphrodite, so you got your pick.

Another philosophical position that uses a flower as a symbol is freethought. They use a pansy as a symbol.

Image not found or type unknown



[Humanist Heritage: Freethought pansy](#)

The pansy has a historic association with humanism and freethought, its name deriving from the French 'pensée' meaning 'to think'. [...]

heritage.humanists.uk

Flowers are delicate and non-intimidating, not to mention beautiful and transient. Kind of like the good life. 😊

Post by “Julia” of May 16, 2025 at 12:01 PM

I also liked the *visual* of the common myrtle, but I was skeptical as to its *symbolism*, because — well... — Epicurean philosophy is not primarily about Venus or Aphrodite, so it would, in effect, place a rhetoric device, a poetic figure at the centre of things. See what I mean? It would be sort-of similar to using Iphigenia as a symbol, would it not?

Stamen_%28PSF%29.png

1280px-Myrtus_communis_L._subsp._communis_-_52505075873.png

What I thought could be done is, one could interpret the anther of the myrtle flower as atoms flying into mostly one direction, the filament of the stamen would be their past flight path through the void. It could also be interpreted as the pistil being Epicurus and the stamen being people at the garden. One could arrange the stamen such that they shape the four lines of the tetrapharmakos, as in the diamond/rhombus symbol. But then what are the petals? There might be three in a drawing, showing the three-legged canon of truth.

A flower, just like anything else, should, in my humble opinion, have a good amount of symbolism to go with it; symbolism which is Epicurean in a more narrower sense of the word than Venus or Iphigenia would be on their own.

Post by “kochiekoch” of May 17, 2025 at 8:38 AM

[Quote from Julia](#)

A flower, just like anything else, should, in my humble opinion, have a good amount of symbolism to go with it; symbolism which is Epicurean in a more narrower sense of the word than Venus or Iphigenia would be on their own.

Yeah, there is a lot of deep symbolism there if you break it down isn't there. Although I don't think it's necessary to go to that level of depth for a simple symbol of Epicureanism. Myrtle flowers are great, but I prefer roses. 😊 Also symbolic of Venus and a lot more common and easily obtained.

I don't think poor Iphigenia, brutally murdered by her father, would be a good symbol of Epicureanism in general as her story is sad and ugly and superstitious. She's a cautionary tale.

Venus is a great metaphor for the philosophy, as she symbolizes the beauty and harmony of nature and also of pleasure and desire. The poet Lucretius, secular as he was, featured her prominently in his poem for that and other reasons.

Post by "Don" of May 17, 2025 at 8:48 AM

[Quote from kochieko](#)

The poet Lucretius, secular as he was, featured her prominently in his poem for that and other reasons.

Yes, at least 14 times by name, and most prominently, of course, right at the start.

<https://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/searchresults?target=en&inContent=true&q=Venus&doc=Perseus%3>

And the traditional gods are fine to use metaphorically. I always seem to go back to...

...whoso

Decides to call the ocean Neptune, or

The grain-crop Ceres, and prefers to abuse

The name of Bacchus rather than pronounce

The liquor's proper designation, him

Let us permit to go on calling earth

Mother of Gods, if only he will spare

To taint his soul with foul religion.

Post by "Julia" of May 17, 2025 at 12:09 PM

[Quote from kochieko](#)

I prefer roses. 😊 Also symbolic of Venus and a lot more common and easily obtained.

Roses are, indeed, more easily obtained, but roses are so very common and as a symbol are so heavily pre-charged already, that I wonder if they would serve a symbol's purpose of providing recognition with a reasonable amount of certainty... 🤔

I remain skeptical regarding whether Venus Physica is the way to go. I think there is a difference between "metaphorical" and "symbolic", and to me, Venus is more metaphorical

than symbolic, which remains true, whether or not she was Memmius' and Lucretius' favourite. Venus as a metaphor can be exchanged for something else, without changing Epicurean philosophy as such. On the other hand, the atoms, the tetrastichos, the 20th, and so forth, are fixed — they will exist practically forever, and even if we live on Mars someday, moon on earth will still look the same on that day. I think that's beautiful and poetic 😊

And also: In my opinion, what Lucretius expressed in those lines Don cited is that everyday language need not be relegated (lest one annoy people), so long as people don't take it at face value; just because Lucretius made explicit that the focus is on what people believe, not how they phrase everyday things — where I live, they say "Oh my god!" and "Inshallah!" all the time without thinking much about it... —, that doesn't make it an ideal or something aspirational. Lucretius doesn't say "Do use names of gods for things!"; he says "Let people stick to their old habits, as long as they know it's not real." Doesn't he?

So far, my personal favourites are still the waning gibbous (20er moon) with four atom dots arranged in a diamond, and the sideways rhombus with an atom in the middle 😊

Post by “Kalosyni” of May 17, 2025 at 4:49 PM

Here is something I made using Canva layers (for the shapes and colors) together with a text-to-image (the woodcut).



Post by “Julia” of May 17, 2025 at 6:32 PM

[Quote from Kalosyni](#)

Here is something I made using Canva layers (for the shapes and colors) together with a text-to-image (the woodcut).

Hmmm... I think - and y'all might disagree - but I think a symbol should be so simple that an average 8yo child could reproduce it. It shouldn't be harder than learning by heart how to draw a specific Chinese character (囍), and I think this simplicity is actually an important aspect of these types of symbols 😊

I feel like I'm saying "No" to everything, but I don't do that for the sake of it, nor do I mean to be confrontational, and I sincerely hope I'm expressing myself well. I do appreciate everyone's opinions and thoughts on finding a good symbol! 😊

Post by “Kalosyni” of May 17, 2025 at 7:52 PM

[Quote from Julia](#)

I think a symbol should be so simple that an average 8yo child could reproduce it

A long time ago I tried drawing a nice looking [yin-yang symbol](#)...it looks simple right? ...I ended up going to the library and making a photocopy from a book 😄.

Post by “kochiekoch” of May 17, 2025 at 9:14 PM

[Quote from Julia](#)

Roses are, indeed, more easily obtained, but roses are so very common and as a symbol are so heavily pre-charged already, that I wonder if they would serve a symbol's purpose of providing recognition with a reasonable amount of certainty... 🤔

LOL!!! "A rose by any other name would still smell as sweet"! 😄

[Quote from Julia](#)

I remain skeptical regarding whether Venus Physica is the way to go. I think there is a difference between "metaphorical" and "symbolic", and to me, Venus is more metaphorical than symbolic, which remains true, whether or not she was Memmius' and Lucretius' favourite. Venus as a metaphor can be exchanged for something else, without changing Epicurean philosophy as such. On the other hand, the atoms, the tetrapharmakos, the 20ieth, and so forth, are fixed — they will exist practically forever, and even if we live on Mars someday, moon on earth will still look the same on that day. I think that's beautiful and poetic 😊

That's a very good point. You would want something unmistakably Epicurean as your symbol.

[Quote from Julia](#)

So far, my personal favourites are still the waning gibbous (20er moon) with four atom dots arranged in a diamond, and the sideways rhombus with an atom in the middle 😊

I don't think most people would have a clue that the waning moon is Epicurean. Also true of the four atom dots arraigned in a diamond. Frankly the sideways rhombus looks like an eyeball. Which is too bad because they're apparently available in jewelry now.

So, thinking twice about all this has made me favor a conservative position. The image of Epicurus, used for generations in the ancient world, would be best. It is UNMISTAKABLY Epicurean and would be so to even the uninitiated. (Unless somebody identifies it as Epictetus. I've seen that) 😊

Post by “Julia” of May 19, 2025 at 2:45 PM

[Quote from kochiekoch](#)

I don't think most people would have a clue that the waning moon is Epicurean. Also true of the four atom dots arraigned in a diamond.

Why is that so bad? 🤔 I could generalise it, and it would remain true: "most people would have no clue what Epicurean philosophy is" — and, as far as the general public is concerned, the same would also hold true for Epicurus' face.

I don't think that – with regards to finding a symbol – this a problem, or if it is, it isn't one we can solve. You see, it's probably true that in some parts of the world most of the local people

there would have no clue what the christianist fish symbol means — but *some* people would know, *some* people would recognize it, and it could be the beginning of a bond over shared values. *Some* other people might not recognise it, but get curious and ask, which could be the beginning of a nice conversation, the beginning of a connection over something more than the weather.

And also, those who use the symbol would know what it means to themselves, it would be a reminder, a little non-supernatural ritual or charm, which is also something valuable.

That's enough for me 😊

Post by “kochiekoch” of May 19, 2025 at 7:10 PM

>>Why is that so bad? 🤔 I could generalise it, and it would remain true: "most people would have no clue what Epicurean philosophy is" — and, as far as the general public is concerned, the same would also hold true for Epicurus' face. <<

I couldn't get the darn quote feature to work. 😞 This is my third attempt.

Most people aren't interested in philosophy either, but if they are, the ancient Greek philosophies are all represented by the images of their namesakes.

>>You see, it's probably true that in some parts of the world most of the local people there would have no clue what the christianist fish symbol means — but *some* people would know, *some* people would recognize it, and it could be the beginning of a bond over shared values.<<

Yeah, but they'd mostly know an image of Jesus.

Now that I think about it, human beings are wired to respond to faces. Maybe the easiest way to identify an ideology.

>>And also, those who use the symbol would know what it means to themselves, it would be a reminder, a little non-supernatural ritual or charm, which is also something valuable.<<

LOL!!! You'd have to promote your symbol! Epicurus! He gets us! 😂

[He Gets Us - Wikipedia](#)

Post by “Don” of May 19, 2025 at 10:50 PM

I'm going to go off on a bit of a tangent here, but it's adjacent to ...

[Quote from kochiekoch](#)

You'd have to promote your symbol!

From my perspective (*broadly* generalizing to the point of stereotyping - there: caveat stated), the majority of humans - or at least *many* humans - don't like ambiguity. It's easier to live a world with cut and dried rules. Rules also make it easier to enforce a structure, a hierarchy, and in-group and an out-group. This also relates to this current thread...

Thread

[**What Makes Someone "An Epicurean?"**](#)

In a nearby thread the question was raised about who should be considered to be an Epicurean. No one has the authority to give such a list, and probably no one after Epicurus himself, or the last head of the Epicurean school in Athens in the ancient world, ever had that authority. But we ought to give thought to what the key components of the philosophy are, so we can consider how many of them fit the person we're considering labeling as an Epicurean.

My own first question is "Does the person..."



Cassius

March 30, 2019 at 7:49 PM

Epicurean philosophy, as it's advocated for on this forum (and I think the interpretation here is generally in the right direction), is big on ambiguity, personal responsibility, contextual application of practice, etc. One does not find a Ten Commandments, A Five Pillars, etc. There is no cosmic authority or priesthood asserting "my way or the highway." People who want to point to a [prooftext](#) for their position will find it a little more difficult in the extant writings. For these reasons, it will always be difficult to get a wide community. That said, I also think there are "levels" of understanding that could benefit people of many inclinations. The contextual nature of the philosophy also could lend itself to misunderstanding and shallower and deeper students. But then we get into the "no true Epicurean" would do ABC that we got into in the other thread linked above. Who gets to name the "true Epicureans"?

[Quote from kochiekoch](#)

He gets us! 😄

If we did have "He Gets Us" Super Bowl ads, what would that mean? IF we marketed WWED bracelets (What Would Epicurus Do? - It should be SFOTSE in my opinion but I digress), what *would* Epicurus do in any given situation (other than seek the most pleasure)? But what would that mean? And he "gets us"... what does that mean?

Okay, I'm admittedly being a little provocative.

From what I understand, Epicurus calls us:

- to see the material universe for what it is: atoms and void (in the widest possible modern sense)
- to understand there are no gods doling out punishment or gifts; our behavior is up to us, chance, or necessity
- to judge every desire in light of pleasure and pain
- to understand death exists only after we no longer exist; death is no thing for us because we aren't there when it is
- to understand that justice is a man-made construct; "Natural justice is a symbol or expression of expediency, to prevent one man from harming or being harmed by another." There are no universal rights - only what agreements to neither willfully harm nor to be harmed that can be agreed to at any given time and place (This is the BIG difference between Epicureanism and Humanism. And, I admit, I still struggle with this one.)
- And so on...

Epicureanism has a lot of gray areas, not a lot of black and white answers. There is no "Thou shalt not" list. If someone is even interested if they would see a "He Gets Us" commercial or sees a WWED/SFOTSE bracelet, where do you start?? [AxA](#) 's meet-ups are a great real-world example of the benefits (and potential hazards) of opening up an Epicurean social gathering for discussion.

I'm not saying it can't be done. I look at the way the Stoics have cornered the market for ancient philosophy reborn... So... I guess... if they can do it... Why not the Epicureans?

LOL... I may have talked myself out of a pessimistic perspective... then again.... (insert more pondering here 🤔)

Post by “Cassius” of May 20, 2025 at 7:41 AM

In looking to turn that post in a more optimistic direction I would first start by focusing on the "ambiguity" part, because I think that could be stated better. I don't admit that Epicurus is

ambiguous about the things listed in the post about the nature of the universe. Epicurus very precisely says that there are no supernatural gods and there's no existence after death, no eternal ideal forms, etc.

While we do have lists here and I think it is important to see how they are derived, I very much agree that it is not a good idea to focus on things like "THE four cures" to imply strict formulas which we today package as headlines but which are not well founded in the literature in that kind of way. There are all sorts of combinations that apply in different contexts.

I would say that even if a person were only to embrace the "no supernatural gods", "no life after death," "no eternal forms/essences," "not virtue but pleasure," and "ground reasoning in the senses (and maybe one or two more I am forgetting) then even a simple set of views like that would be ample to serve as a unifying perspective for considering oneself an Epicurean fellow-traveler. Even this list could be shortened - you have to start somewhere.

At least from my own perspective, having friends with those general viewpoints would be more than sufficient reward for the effort we put into studying Epicurus.

As to the bracelets and symbolism I see that as useful but differing widely by context.

Post by “Julia” of May 20, 2025 at 8:36 AM

[Quote from kochiekoch](#)

Yeah, but they'd mostly know an image of Jesus.

Well, yes. Like mostly everyone anywhere in the world knows Coca-Cola *now*, nobody knew Coca-Cola on day one. Today's organised Christianists operate something similar to an international corporation, which, in the past, was an integral part of the military-industrial complex and even operated a private military for aggressive conquest... I mean. I don't know. I think we should define our target audience.

What I am looking for is something that clicks *with Epicureans*, and which can be used in the manner of the Star of David, a cross, and so on -- as a symbol around the house, as a piece of jewelry, and so forth. *To this end*, it shouldn't be overly lewd, offensive or anything else that would make it hard to fly the banners due to backlash from the general public. I can see myself wearing or publicly displaying a 20er moon with four dots on it, for example.

But other than that, I really don't care if non-Epicureans know what it means. They will know with time, just like we all know what someone means when he says "In the Meditations, it

says..." -- the Stoics have sort-of captured an ordinary English word. What if that diary was commonly known as "Aureliatum"? Well, then you'd know that word. What if that somehow clicked with them, and they'd all start using that word starting today? You'd learn it with time.

[Quote from Don](#)

the majority of humans - or at least *many* humans - don't like ambiguity. It's easier to live a world with cut and dried rules. Rules also make it easier to enforce a structure, a hierarchy, and in-group and an out-group.

I agree. (This also applies to modern wild Gorillas and Chimpanzees, as well as pre-historic humans, from what I know.)

[Quote from Don](#)

Who gets to name the "true Epicureans"?

I'd like to counter by example: Two anarchists meet by chance, they recognise each other by use of the anarchist's symbol of an A in a circle ◻. They might exchange numbers, meet, and discuss anarchism, often in a heated debate, often disagreeing on what the right way is -- but they'll still be connected. Two christianists meet by chance, recognise each other by use of a cross. Two judaists meet by chance, recognise each other by use of a star of david. Same thing. Just because we look for and propose a symbol that we hope will click with most Epicureans of the general persuasion we have on this forum, as you outlined does *not* mean we register a trademark and start policing who calls themselves Epicurean... (Even though I'd love to make all those overpriced "Epicurean" wineries pay trademark royalties into a fund towards preserving the Herculaneum papyri 😊)

[Quote from Kalosyni](#)

an Epicurean symbol must have an interface between feeling and usefulness.

[Quote from Cassius](#)

There are all sorts of combinations that apply in different contexts.

[Quote from Cassius](#)

As to the bracelets and symbolism I see that as useful but differing widely by context.

[Quote from Don](#)

From what I understand, Epicurus calls us:

to see [...] to understand [...] to judge [...] And so on...

In my opinion, these aspects are all symbolised in the waning gibbous (20er moon) with four atom dots. Let me recap, in no particular order, the symbolism as far as it was outlined:

- The four dots represent the atoms, and the space between/around them, is the void
- Historically, the moon and the stars (which the four dots can also be) have provided literal guidance to traveling humans, just as they provide figurative guidance to us
- The celestial bodies have inspired art, poetry, and scientific research
- The four invisible lines between the dots represent the quadrifugaco, the lines of the tetrapharmakos
- The four lines are invisible, because abstract concepts stem from the biochemical reality material atoms form in our brains, but they don't have a literal, direct existence in the sense of a Platonic realm of ideal forms
- The space between and around also points to where the Gods live.
- The different size of the atoms alludes to both the Epicurean ideas about not every atom being equal, as well as the shibboleth about the size of the sun
- It could also be seen as an eye, as in *Sic Fac Omnia Tamquam Spectet Epicurus*.
- The moon ties back to an ancient tradition as well as The Man himself, and...
- also to the Epicurean emphasis of friendship and community, and with that, it ties into
- to Epicurean ideas of justice (because without it, we couldn't be friends for long...)
- The dots can be a birds-eye view of four people in the garden (represented by the moon)
- Because they're "on the moon" an emphasize of *lathe biosas* can be seen, too
- The points at the top (a triangle pointing up) and bottom (a triangle pointing down) of the diamond shape represent Pain and Pleasure.
- The points to the left and right (triangle pointing left and right) represent Choice and Avoidance
- They can also be Right and Wrong, as in ethics and justice
- The four atoms can be: Physics, Atomics, Canonics, and Ethics
- The lower three atoms can be Sensations, Anticipations and Feelings, leading to the upper one: our Judgement about what is true in the world
- The four atoms are arranged in a diamond, the most durable natural physical substance (we currently know of), representing for the unshakable enduring trust in the Canon and the physical nature of the Cosmos with no supernatural intervention.
- The 20th moon is perpetually "born", "grows up" and "dies" again, which can be seen as a circle of life
- However, in moving through it's cycle, moon might fade from view, but it never truly disappears: nothing comes from nothing.

- It can also represent the linear, steady, forward-only passage of time (we cannot turn back time, not can we pause it)
- The space around the moon is as infinite as the universe itself
- Three atoms can be the canon, with the fourth being
- Even on nights we cannot see the 20th moon, anywhere on the night sky we can usually find four stars roughly arranged in a diamond on both hemispheres; this symbolises the eternal wisdom in what the four atoms represent, how they're there every day of the week, at any time of the day, and can offer us guidance through life even when it's not a time to celebrate
- This is also represented by the earth's moon looking that same way on earth practically forever (100 million years from now, human descendents will look back at me with an amused chuckle)
- because any constellation will do, it also says that there is no special meaning to the stars, symbolising the *stance against superstitions* (as can be found in like today's zodiac signs, ancient Babylonian / Hellenistic astrology, religionism, etc)
- ...

That's a total of 27 interpretations already (I'm sure more could be found), and I argue that is not a weakness, but a strength: The symbol offers something for everyone, making it viable for broad adoption, and leading to the 28th interpretation: There is no universally agreed-upon authority issuing decrees about what "a true Epicurean" is. The symbol itself is a space for exploration, it is what your senses and judgement tell you it is, and that meta-level is itself Epicurean 😊

5585-20ermoon.jpg unknown

(Copy & Paste from [Don](#) in [this post](#).)

Post by “Cassius” of May 20, 2025 at 9:12 AM

That list of connections is interesting in itself.

Of these, how many are *distinctly* Epicurean?

I'm asking in general now, what widely-known positions of Epicurus are *distinctly Epicurean*?

1. The Swerve (anyone disagree?)
2. ?
3. ?

Post by “Kalosyni” of May 20, 2025 at 9:40 AM

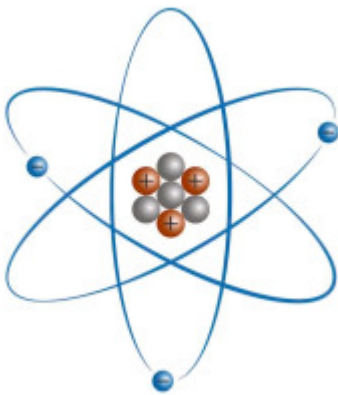
[Quote from Julia](#)

wearing or publicly displaying a 20er moon with four dots on it, for example.

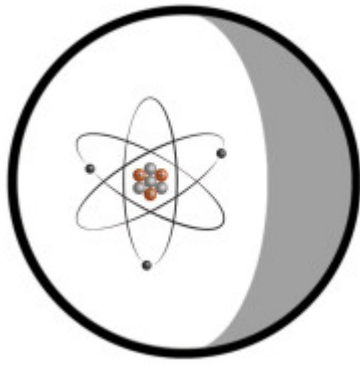
I think that this is an interesting investigation. Everyone will have unique ideas for what symbolizes Epicurean philosophy. It may take time for those who feel similarly (to wear or display) to discover what feels right for them. Perhaps everyone has their own personal "Epicurean symbol". We can have multiple symbols, but I think all "Epicureans" should be able to recognize the symbol without further explanation - because the symbol "should" (lol, in my opinion) clearly reflect an Epicurean idea. And so I think the four dots requires one Epicurean to explain to another Epicurean what it means, so for me personally it doesn't work (just my opinion).

Here are some more ideas for symbols (ideas rather than finished symbols, and so the atom could end up being rendered differently):

The atom itself:



The atom in the 20er moon:



Post by “Julia” of May 20, 2025 at 12:44 PM

[Quote from Kalosyni](#)

The atom itself:

This symbol reminds me of the famous three body problem:

[Quote from Wikipedia](#)

Unlike the two-body problem, the three-body problem has no general closed-form solution, meaning **there is no equation that always solves it**. When three bodies orbit each other, the resulting dynamical system is chaotic for most initial conditions. Because there are no solvable equations for most three-body systems, **the only way to predict the motions of the bodies is to estimate them**

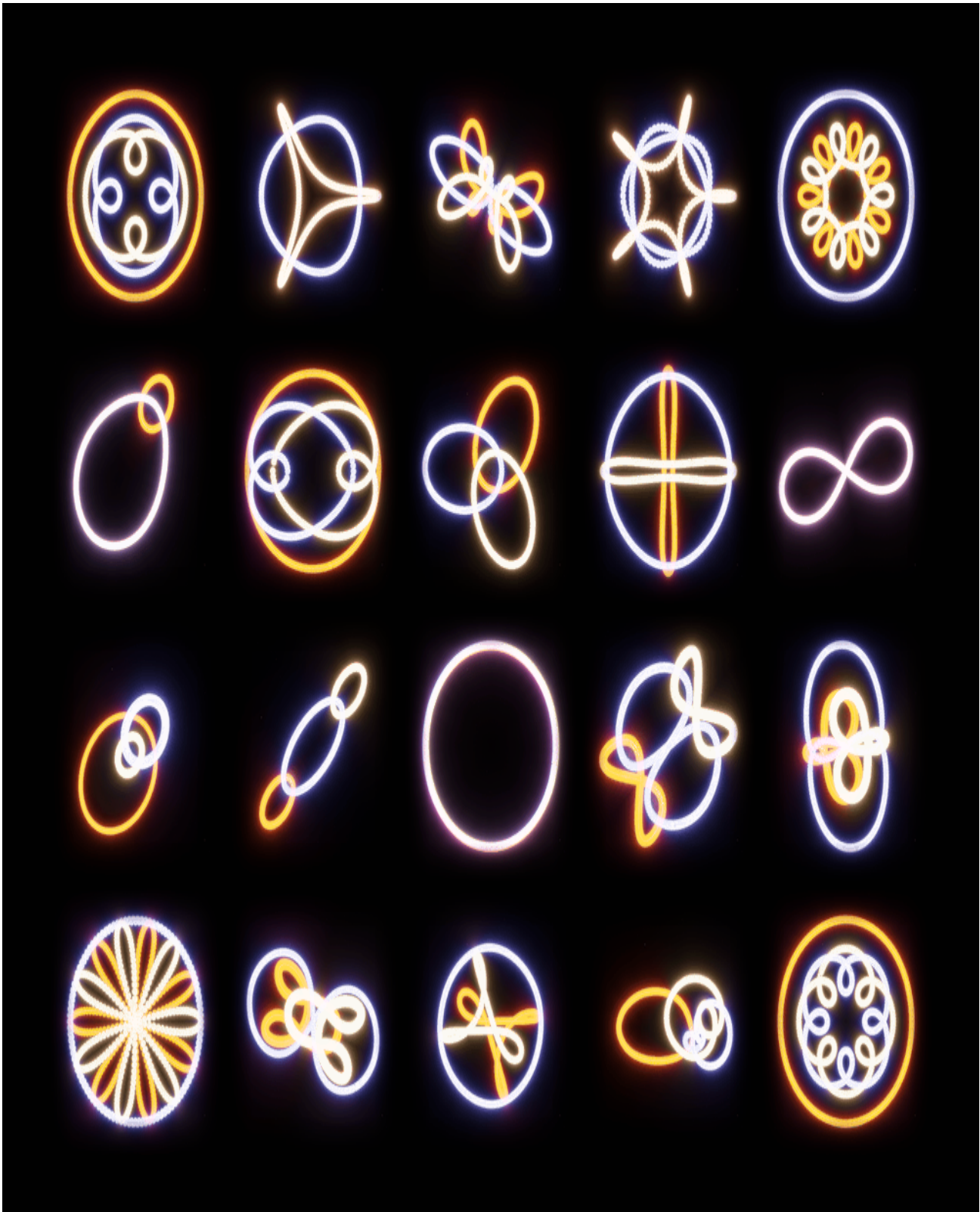
This characteristic might allude to the swerve, the motion of atoms, (after some generalisation) the shibboleth about the size of the sun, the fact that there are no absolute truths, that there is no "ten commandments" list, no universal authority for being "a true Epicurean", that the only way to solve Choice and Avoidance is to estimate the future, to predict in each moment, and so forth.

On the other hand, there are *some* stable three-body systems, many of which draw out simple yet beautiful patterns, thereby linking sciences and art, and some look not unlike the symbol [Kalosyni](#) just used, which is quite universally recognised as "an atom". Those stable systems might also be seen as representing the Epicurean path towards eventually mastering the contradicting aspects of life to find one's way, the duality of kinetic and katastematic pleasure

(the bodies move but the system remains stable), and so on. Again, many many different interpretations are possible.

Here are some patterns of stable three-body systems (taken from Wikipedia):

→ [CLICK HERE FOR ANIMATION](#) ←



The one in the top-left corner draws a pattern similar to the four dots we discussed at length so far. The one at the bottom-left might be friends facing each other in a walled garden — but it

could also be a nuclear core with a layer of electrons around it.

Numbered left-to-right, top-to-bottom: top-left is #1, top-right is #5, bottom-left is #16, bottom-right is #20.

All those 3-body systems with a circle could use the moon's circumference to represent said circle -- but they don't have to. I think we should avoid those:

#3: too complex

#10: looks like an infinite sign ∞

#13: just a circle...

#18: too complex

#19: too complex

Which are your favourites? What do y'all think about the idea in general?

[Martin](#), do you have a suggestion? 😊

Post by “kochiekoch” of May 20, 2025 at 2:25 PM

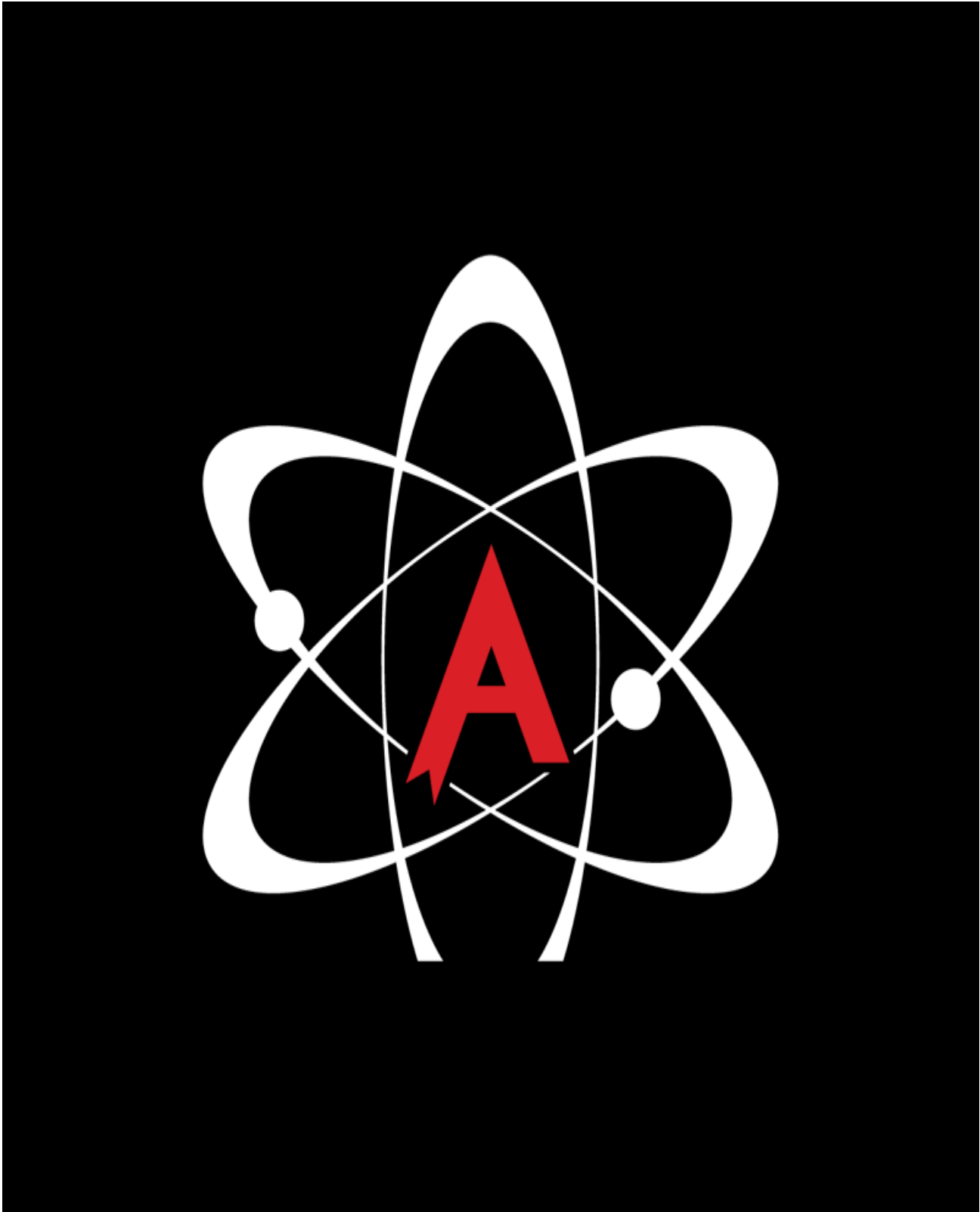
I asked an AI bot called Co-Pilot to draw me a symbol of Epicurean philosophy. 😊

Seeing how these things have come out in the past, I thought it would be AWFUL!

But you know, it's not half bad.

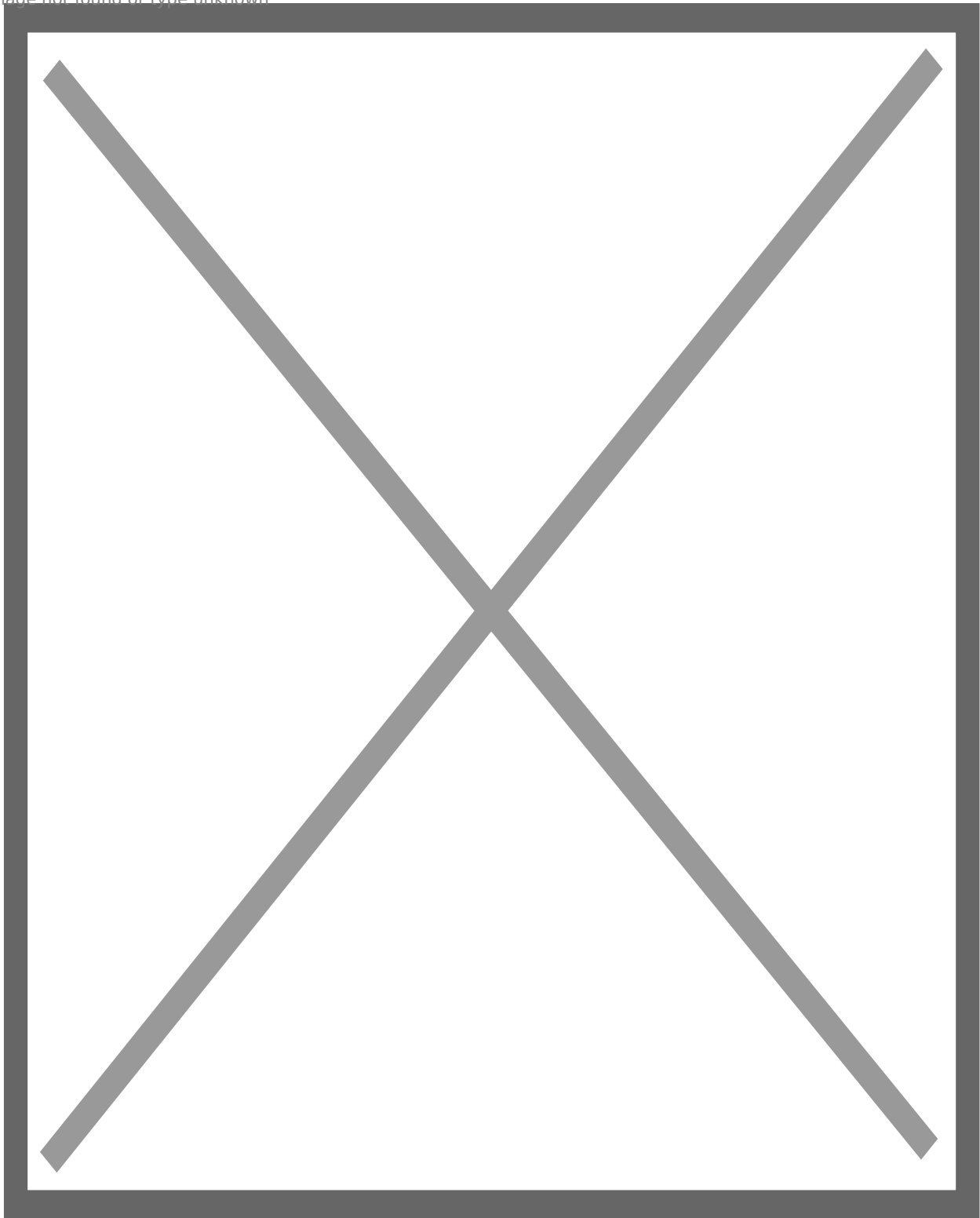


Post by "Don" of May 20, 2025 at 3:14 PM



The American Atheists symbol.

Image not found or type unknown



[Our Logo](#)

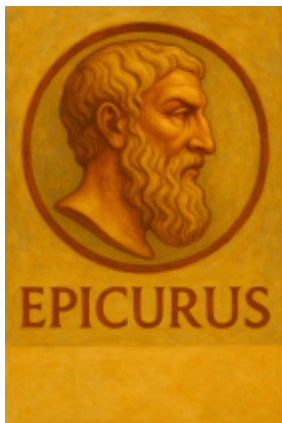
An international symbol for atheism has long been needed. When American Atheists was formed in 1963, a contemporary scientific symbol was chosen; this...

Post by “Cassius” of May 20, 2025 at 3:17 PM

@Steve - As far as I am concerned that is one of the best line drawings I have seen Steve. Can you get it to reprint with the word "Epicurus" under it - which might make it more usable in more situations? I know in my experience it's not easy to get an AI to redraw from an original.

Post by “kochiekoch” of May 20, 2025 at 3:28 PM

Coming right up courtesy of Copilot. In living color! 😊



Post by “Julia” of May 20, 2025 at 3:32 PM

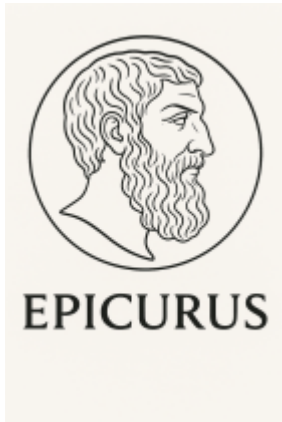
[Quote from Cassius](#)

one of the best line drawings I have seen

Indeed!

Post by “kochiekoch” of May 20, 2025 at 3:37 PM

You did specify a line drawing. So here it is. 😊



Post by “Don” of May 20, 2025 at 6:13 PM

I despise AI for artwork on a number of levels... But that's not bad. I'd certainly prefer someone using that as a prompt and not using that.

Post by “Cassius” of May 20, 2025 at 6:31 PM

[Quote from Don](#)

I despise AI for artwork on a number of levels... But that's not bad. I'd certainly prefer someone using that as a prompt and not using that.

Perhaps a typo there [Don](#) ? Not sure what you mean....

Post by “Don” of May 20, 2025 at 6:57 PM

[Quote from Cassius](#)

[Quote from Don](#)

I despise AI for artwork on a number of levels... But that's not bad. I'd certainly prefer someone using that as a prompt and not using that.

Perhaps a typo there [Don](#) ? Not sure what you mean....

Which part?

1. I despise the use of AI for creating artwork (Copilot in this case) . It violates copyright with its ingestion of images from which to "learn." It deprives humans of exercising creativity.
2. That said, it pains me to say "That's not bad." I can appreciate what it came up with, but the way it came up with it is the problem.
3. If a human wanted to use that AI-generated image as a prompt to create a line drawing, I would find that preferable.
4. In light of all that, I'd greatly prefer that particular AI-generated image NOT be used as "the symbol" of the school.

That's my personal opinion.

Post by “Cassius” of May 20, 2025 at 7:38 PM

[Quote from Don](#)

3. If a human wanted to use that AI-generated image as a prompt to create a line drawing, I would find that preferable.

That's the part I didn't understand - got it!

Yes these considerations reflect some of our recent discussions.

It is desirable to:

- 1 - Discourage AI artwork here.
- 2 - Promote Epicurean Philosophy.,

If the use of AI legitimately in any respect serves goal 2 *better than any alternative that is currently available to us*, then I would put priority 2 first. Of course that's not generally going to be the case. In this case, the artwork is genuinely useful, I think, plus is it indicative of what others are seeing as to AI as to Epicurus. That in itself is a huge topic that I do not think we can ignore, just as we can't ignore wikipedia.

But of course, having noted all the above, that artwork will never be adopted here as a symbol associated with Epicureanfriends. A profile of some type might at some point be something good to use, but it won't be that one.

I realize that this might prompt renewal of that discussion and if so I'll move that part to the AI discussion thread if needed.

Post by “Julia” of May 21, 2025 at 5:48 AM

To be perfectly honest, while Epicurus has his place in my home decoration, I don't see how a line-drawing like that would translate into jewellery (which matters to me personally) or clothing suitable for everyday contexts. There are an infinite number of ways to wear, include, embed, and display the religionists' symbols; on the other hand, the line drawing of Epicurus' profile doesn't strike me as something that would work equally well for everyday life. If you contrast the religionists' symbols with seal rings, fraternity rings, and family crests, and imagine those two being opposite ends of the same spectrum, you might see what I try to express: The religionists' symbols are "lightweight", whereas seals and crests are "more heavy". I'm afraid I lack adequate adjectives to express this well. Allow me to use an example:

Let's imagine a business context, such as working as a bank teller, wearing formal daytime business attire. I could, in any number of ways, easily wear a 20er moon with or without some kind of modification, such as the four dots. On the other hand, it might be tricky to wear a line drawing of Epicurus' profile – not to his fault, but simply as an expression of the times we live in. Similarly, one of the medieval [Memento Mori](#) / [Vanitas](#) figures and drawings might have been perfectly fine in their time, but today, they're rather a bit much as soon as the general public gets involved. Likewise, a cross with a detailed human body hanging from it might no longer fly, but the symbolic cross itself won't hardly ever cause any problem. See what I mean? Please note that I don't say the line drawing is gruesome or that it has connotations akin to a family crest. I'm saying that some things are perfectly fine, per se, but they still don't work in every context. Even in very Roman Catholic parts of the world I don't remember people wearing detailed crosses anymore, nor do I recall displays of Memento Mori figures in public or semi-public areas – and this is the case even though the majority of inhabitants in those regions would probably agree with the underlying message. This illustrates how not everything that

works well for a wall, doorway or shrine also works well as a necklace or ring. We've set out to look for a *symbol* for Epicurean philosophy, not for its *seal*.

I would prefer something simpler, something which can be adopted as part of everyday life, something which can be used in (virtually) every situation of life.

Post by “Cassius” of May 21, 2025 at 6:19 AM

Julia have you seen Bryan's more recent work in making rings/jewelry? [Bryan](#) I know we have seen some of that in the Zoom meetings but maybe you could point us to a current location?

Post by “Julia” of May 21, 2025 at 6:38 AM

[Quote from Cassius](#)

have you seen Bryan's more recent work in making rings/jewelry?

Not yet 😊

Post by “Don” of May 21, 2025 at 6:59 AM

FYI

Thread

[Epicurean Rings / Jewelry / Coins / Mementos](#)

So the sources say that ancient Epicureans had votive busts and specifically mentions that they also wore RINGS with the likeness of Epicurus. Here is a sample I got of what an Epicurus ring would look like, as a possible product for my business thetwentiers.com. It's a small ring, but it expands, and the face of Epicurus does not fit entirely into it but it still looks like Epicurus. Do others think there is a market for this?

Hiram

April 22, 2019 at 6:38 PM

I'd also bring up that saints' medals and crucifixes (with the body of Jesus) still are popular with the Catholic crowd, ex. <https://www.smalldevotions.com/collections/catholic-medals>

Additionally, [Julia](#) , if you or anyone would like to wear a waning gibbous moon as a personal expression of a dedication to Epicurean philosophy, I think that would be great. The 20er moon is a nice graphic symbol. I just remain skeptical of the ability of our little forum to essentially vote (in the widest sense) on a new symbol to represent the school and to have it catch on. I could be wrong, but even in this thread there are a myriad of reactions to it. Unfortunately, the waning gibbous moon symbol *as a symbol* doesn't appear to have historical precedent for the school although the name "Twentier" was definitely applied historically to the Epicureans. The face of Epicurus does have historical foundations to being displayed by students of the school, enough so to even be mocked by Cicero (it was Cicero, right?).

Post by "Julia" of May 21, 2025 at 9:36 AM

[Quote from Don](#)

and to have it catch on

I'm willing to try - it's not like we need to invest our life savings or anything - and just see where we end up amongst ourselves and what happens in dialogue with other groups; same as the initial proposition which started the thread. Even if whatever we come up with won't take the world by storm tomorrow, I still see value in having the conversation 😊

[Quote from Don](#)

saints' medals and crucifixes (with the body of Jesus) still are popular with the Catholic crowd

They do use them, but - in my personal experience - I don't remember anyone wearing it openly in an everyday setting. To stick with my example, I cannot recount a bank teller openly sporting one of these as a necklace, in contrast to, say, plain crosses or stars of david, and that applies to deeply catholic areas as well. If they wear one of the ones you liked, they're mostly out of sight underneath a shirt, attached to a wall, or glued to the dashboard of the vehicle 🤔

Thank you for the thread you liked; I'll check that out! 👍

Post by “Cassius” of May 21, 2025 at 10:05 AM

[Quote from Julia](#)

I'm willing to try - it's not like we need to invest our life savings or anything - and just see where we end up

As Don would say BY ZEUS that's the kind of attitude we need here on lots of things!

Post by “Don” of May 21, 2025 at 1:23 PM

[Quote from Cassius](#)

[Quote from Julia](#)

I'm willing to try - it's not like we need to invest our life savings or anything - and just see where we end up

As Don would say BY ZEUS that's the kind of attitude we need here on lots of things!

I appreciate the enthusiasm; but, honestly, I'm not sure what "trying" looks like in this context. I swear I don't want to be difficult. However, it seems to me we can't even come to a consensus on this thread. And if we did, what then? Everyone starts using it (is mandated to use it?) on social media. Everyone buys a hat or jewelry with THE symbol on it and starts wearing it? And how to get the Society of Epicurus to buy in? They're using the Tau/Phi combo symbol. It's a fun discussion, but I don't understand the logistics of getting something to the point of catching on.

Post by “Julia” of May 21, 2025 at 2:44 PM

As far as I am concerned, I'm already happy with what we've got so far. What would make things even better, is if we found something that clicked with most of us here. To me, *so far*, that's definitely the 20er moon with four atoms (diamond) – or maybe five (sideways rhombus with a dot in the middle).

Personally, I'll not expect anyone to evangelise or use it or "buy a hat" 😊
After that, if anyone is in touch with other groups, and likes to play ping-pong back with the "It's been a few years, but here is the epicureanfriends.com answer to the ☐ suggestion -- what do y'all think about it?" that would be great.

I think just putting things out there and letting the free market of ideas sort it out is fine, unless, of course, you have a secret advertising budget I'm not yet aware of 😊😎

For example, I liked the scroll with a Latin inscription shown [in this post](#) and might get one with, for example, the spelled out SFOTSE on it. For me, it's firstly about finding a way to...have explicitly Epicurean items about myself, be that a ring, bracelet, necklace – or a trucker cap, and secondly, I'm quite certain that having a symbol like that would serve our cause of spreading the word (but I myself just happen to not be much of a missionary type of person) 😊

You see: Even if SoE reject whatever we suggest, that's still dialogue and they might have a counter proposal. Other than "this feels like a waste of time" (which is fine to feel that way) I don't see what we have to lose 😊

Post by “Julia” of May 21, 2025 at 3:52 PM

Instead of superimposing it onto the illuminated section of the lunar surface, I tried to turn Epicurus' profile itself into the moon's surface, if you see what I mean? I'm no good at graphic design, so bear with me... (Please note I reused the AI-generated profile from [this post](#) earlier in the same thread.)

I think a version of this which isn't broken in half a dozen ways might be good, but then...how to simplify the profile further without losing it's characteristics...

PS: When did "Twentier" start to be used to refer to adherents of the Epicurean school? Would this be Ancient Greek or Latin? Can anyone copy & paste the actual letters here? I have no idea how Greek numerals (...-th & ...-er) work... 😊

[Eikadistes](#): You can probably point me to the sources for this? ↑ I know it's in your name, but I don't quite know what is anachronistic and what isn't, and so forth. (I speak neither Latin nor Greek.)



Post by “Joshua” of May 21, 2025 at 4:40 PM

[Julia, Don](#) has a write-up that might be relevant to your question [here](#).

And [here](#) is a thread where the question of Epicurus' birthday was raised in 2022.

Edit: another [thread](#) in the chain that led to the current paper by Don.

Post by “Cassius” of May 21, 2025 at 5:50 PM

[Quote from Julia](#)

You see: Even if SoE reject whatever we suggest, that's still dialogue and they might have a counter proposal. Other than "this feels like a waste of time" (which is fine to feel that way) I don't see what we have to lose 😊

While I would be shocked if there were wide consensus among existing Epicurean aficionados, I still think the exercise is very useful. I almost see it as a "Rorschach test" of what individuals see as the most important aspects of Epicurean philosophy. It's amazing how people look differently even at the general subject of talking about how symbolism should work. Should the symbol be related to something that is "unique" about Epicurus, or is it ok for it to be about something that he's often associated with (atomism) but not at all as the trailblazer (that would have to go to Democritus or one of the earlier atomists.)

So I have no real hope of any consensus arising in the near future, but at the same time I think the exercise is great food for thought for everyone.

Post by “Kalosyni” of May 21, 2025 at 7:56 PM

[Quote from Cassius](#)

what individuals see as the most important aspects of Epicurean philosophy.

That sounds like a good poll question! (from post 88 above).

Post by “Julia” of May 22, 2025 at 1:04 AM

[Quote from Kalosyni](#)

What do you feel is the most important aspect of Epicurean philosophy?

Personally, I'd say the method of truth-finding is at the core, because – after taking into account that we're engaging in philosophy, which implies that we're *already* trying to find a method for attaining the good life *before* whatever we do becomes specifically Epicurean (as opposed to generally philosophical) – because once the method of truth-finding is given, I'd expect that one would, with time and effort, rebuild something reasonably similar to Epicurean philosophy.

To rephrase that, I don't firstly hold Epicurean philosophy as divine; I don't even hold it as useful first; I first hold it as *true*, and thus, that which generates that sensation/feeling of truth, to me, is the core – and it is from truth, that everything else follows.

The feeling of *conviction* is a fundamental human emotion, which can be triggered by deep brain stimulation in isolation, which means: the subjects will report feeling very profoundly convinced, but they won't be able to tell you of what – they're just very, very convinced. This shows how the feeling of conviction is just as much a hardwired dimension of our emotional landscape as love and fear.

And what's more, in my experience with religionism, it was the same there: the conviction of truth preceded everything else – but couldn't be maintained, because – well... – it wasn't actually true, was it.

Is that really different for you?

[Quote from Joshua](#)

[Julia](#), [Don](#) has a write-up that might be relevant to your question [here](#).

And [here](#) is a thread where the question of Epicurus' birthday was raised in 2022.

Edit: another [thread](#) in the chain that led to the current paper by Don.

You're right - I didn't think to search first! Thank you for pointing me to some good places 😊

Post by “Martin” of May 22, 2025 at 2:58 AM

Quote

Which are your favourites? What do y'all think about the idea in general?

[Martin](#), do you have a suggestion? 😊

I do not have a particular preference for any of the suggestions in this thread so far and have none on my own. Among the shown stable three body systems, this one appears to be optimum between simplicity and complexity and provides multiple aspects for symbolism:

[5_4_800_36_downscaled-Pick1-2.jpg](#)

Post by “Don” of May 22, 2025 at 6:17 AM



reminded me of...

"Epicureanism, the final philosophy... Where no philosophy has gone before..."

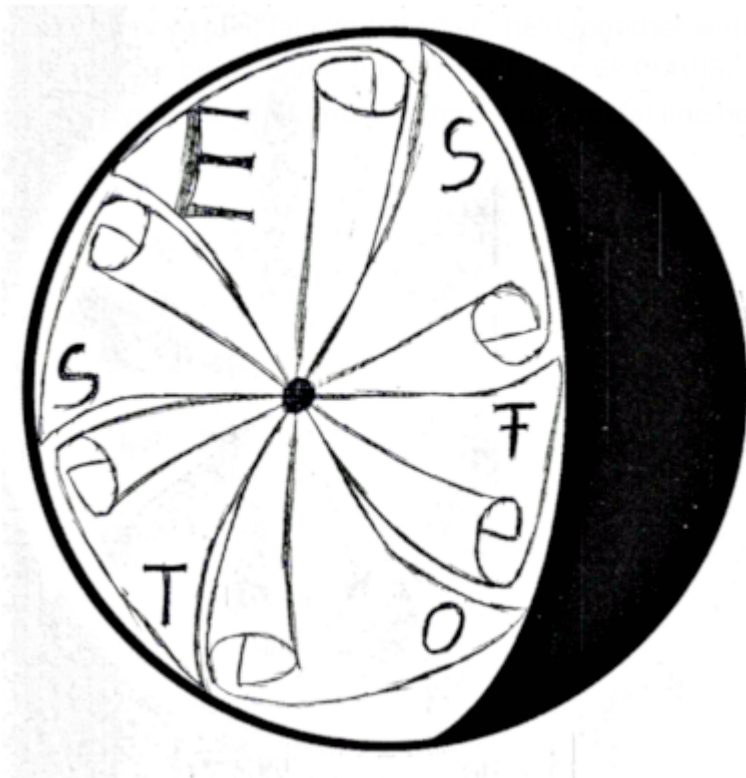
Post by “Kalosyni” of May 22, 2025 at 7:19 AM

Post 89 above is set up as an anonymous poll. With the following question:

"What do you feel is the most important aspect of Epicurean philosophy?"

And, I think that this question would be important with regard to creating an Epicurean symbol.

Post by “Julia” of May 22, 2025 at 7:52 AM



i gemstone, inside the waning gibbous.
: cetera. (I'm not good at drawing, but
r the F; that's just by mistake 😊)

Post by “Kalosyni” of May 23, 2025 at 7:57 AM

Here's an idea... the material realm originating in atoms can naturally evolve as humans, to live as blissfully as the gods (who are themselves composed only of a type of material matter) .



Post by “Kalosyni” of May 24, 2025 at 4:43 PM

Another idea...



This came to me after seeing [Eikadistes](#) recent [t-shirt design](#).

Post by “Rolf” of May 24, 2025 at 6:26 PM

Some great ideas here! I've really been enjoying looking at all of them.

I'm firmly in the camp of "symbols should be simple enough for a child to draw". With that in mind, I like the idea of a full cup as a symbol, representing the vessel analogy and thus the prudent pursuit of pleasure - neither ascetic nor reckless.

Post by "Don" of May 24, 2025 at 7:34 PM

[Quote from Kalosyni](#)

Another idea...



This came to me after seeing [Eikadistes](#) recent [t-shirt design](#).

And the krater was the vase for mixing water and wine for gatherings, so, that along with the 20er moon encapsulates the gatherings on that day of the month.

Post by "Rolf" of May 24, 2025 at 7:45 PM

Decided to try learning Inkscape at one in the morning... Harder than I thought! Think I'll stick to pen and paper for now.

That said, I'm liking the idea of a full kylix as a symbol more and more. Beyond Lucretius' vessel analogy itself, the classic ancient Greek wine cup represents pleasure (and not ascetic "necessary only" pleasure!) and ties back to the historical and cultural origins of the philosophy.

I also toyed with the idea of combining a balance scale with the kylix - the scale "plates" hanging from each handle or something like that, to represent prudent and measured pursuit of pleasure. However, it would perhaps be overly complex for a simple symbol.

Post by "Rolf" of May 24, 2025 at 7:57 PM

I also believe that a good symbol should be able to be represented in many different styles and colours while remaining recognizable. Here's a couple of examples of the Christian cross. Here's a couple of examples of the (unadorned) kylix I threw



together in Canva.