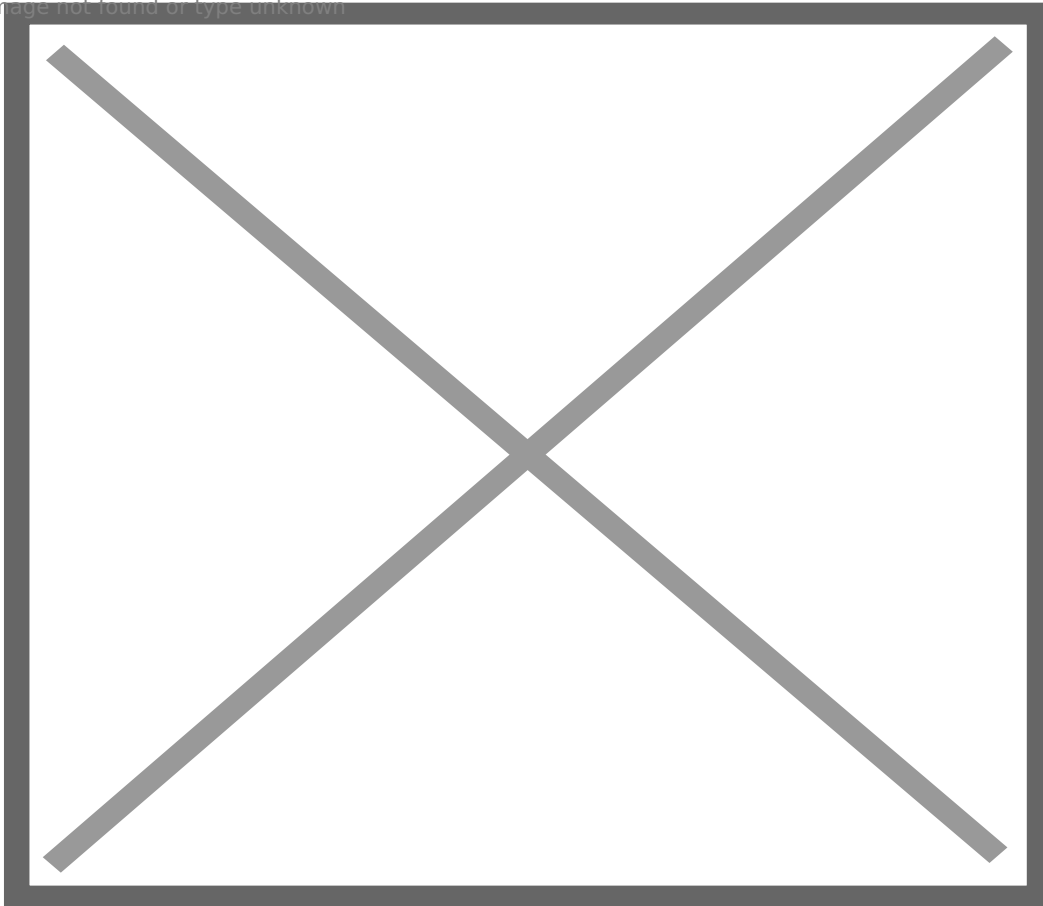


General Notes On Fundamentals of Nature

Post by "Cassius" of June 13, 2024 at 10:23 PM

This thread is for discussion of the list of twelve fundamentals such as suggested by DeWitt or Clay here:

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[Twelve Fundamentals of Nature - Epicureanfriends.com](https://www.epicureanfriends.com)
www.epicureanfriends.com

Post by "Don" of June 13, 2024 at 11:12 PM

[Quote from Cassius](#)

This thread is for discussion of the list of twelve fundamentals ***such as suggested by DeWitt or Clay***

Just to be clear, if *anyone* - DeWitt, Clay, Cassius, me, etc., - wants to assemble twelve "fundamentals" they're welcome to do it. There is *zero fragmentary evidence* for any definitive list of "twelve fundamentals" that Epicurus wrote and circulated. The only place this occurs - the ONLY place as far as I can find - is the one in Diogenes Laertius (10.44): *colour varies with the arrangement of the atoms he states in his "Twelve Rudiments". Δώδεκα στοιχειώσεσί ; further, that they are not of any and every size ; at any rate no atom has ever been seen by our sense.*

I think any of us could go through the letter to Herodotus, or to Pythocles, or Lucretius, and pull out twelve random "fundamentals" in Epicurean physics... and it would be just as "authoritative" as the one DeWitt and Clay put together. We have no idea what was contained in Epicurus' "Twelve Rudiments" other than that he said:

1. color varies with the arrangement of the atoms
2. atoms aren't of any and every size
3. no atom has ever been seen by our senses

...according to Diogenes Laertius. And we don't know if those 3 were "rudiments/fundamentals" or if they were describing another fundamental or... anything.

This is a soapbox of mine that I insist on standing on every once in a while. *Finis* for now.

Post by "Godfrey" of June 14, 2024 at 12:48 AM

One could also dig through Lucretius, but your point stands [Don](#).

Post by "Cassius" of June 14, 2024 at 6:14 AM

Yes as to Godfrey's point, I gather that's exactly what both DeWitt and Clay say that they did - they went through the letter to Herodotus and Lucretius and compared the sections of basic physics to assemble a likely list of the twelve "most important" or that seem to stand out in the sequence of building the physics system up to its highest level outline form.

As with the rest it's a shame we don't have Epicurus' version of this text, just as Don says, and that we have to re-create our own.

Also I should note that the only reason this thread got started was that I deleted subforums that had been set up for discussing potential individual items since those subforums had not been used. This thread is just a general comment, and future discussion of individual aspects can be posted as individual threads, rather than worrying about subforums.

Post by “TauPhi” of June 14, 2024 at 8:31 AM

I'm with [Don](#) on this one. I have nothing against the fundamentals as they are all in line with Epicurean physics as we know it, but please consider changing introductory sentence:

'The Elementary Principles of Nature below are as set forth by Epicurus and summarized in English by Norman Dewitt in his book “Epicurus And His Philosophy.”'

This statement is misleading. The elementary principles are set forth by Norman Dewitt and are based on Epicurean physics. Dewitt didn't just summarize these - he compiled the list. Until we know otherwise, we can't claim that Epicurus set these twelve fundamentals forth.

Also a technical remark - the links to each of the principles are currently broken.

Post by “Cassius” of June 14, 2024 at 8:33 AM

Good suggestions - thank you. Yes those links were set for the subforums which were just deleted. Thanks for picking that up.

Post by “Cassius” of June 14, 2024 at 8:40 AM

Updated. That page is much better now. Thanks to Don for his commentary and to Godfrey and Tau Phi for the suggestions.