

The Garland of Tranquility and a Reposed Life

Post by “Joshua” of May 17, 2025 at 2:28 PM

[Cassius](#); We may want to move these posts to a new thread.

I'm curious to know what you've found from Clay, [Don](#). Here is a passage from Athenaeus, [Deipnosophistae](#), on one possible meaning of κυλιστός (round, large, easily rolled);

Quote

I find also, in the **comic poets** [see *Pamela Gordon above re: New Comedy*], mention made of a kind of garland called κυλιστός, and I find that Archippus mentions it in his *Rhinion*, in these lines—

- *He went away unhurt to his own house, Having laid aside his cloak, but having on His ἐκκύλιστος garland.*

And Alexis, in his *Agonis*, or *The Colt*, says—

- *This third man has a κυλιστός garland Of fig-leaves; but while living he delighted In similar ornaments:*

and in his *Sciron* he says—

- *Like a κυλιστός garland in suspense.*

[p. 1084] Antiphanes also mentions it in his *Man in Love with Himself*. And Eubulus, in his *Ænomaus*, or *Pelops*, saying—

- *Brought into circular shape, Like a κυλιστός garland.*

What, then, is this κυλιστός? For I am aware that Nicander of Thyatira, in his *Attic Nouns*, speaks as follows,— “ἐκκυλίσιοι στέφανοι, and especially those made of roses.” And now I ask what species of garland this was, O Cynulcus; and do not tell me that I am to understand the word as meaning merely large. For you are a man who are fond of not only picking things little known out of books, but of even digging out such matters; like the philosophers in the *Joint Deceiver* of Baton the comic poet; men whom Sophocles also mentions in his *Fellow Feasters*, and who resemble you,—

- *You should not wear a beard thus well perfumed, And 'tis a shame for you, of such high birth, To be reproached as the son of your belly, When you might*

rather be call'd your father's son.

Since, then, you are sated not only with the heads of glaucus, but also with that ever-green herb, which that Anthedonian Deity¹² ate, and became immortal, give us an answer now about the subject of discussion, that we may not think that when you are dead, you will be metamorphosed, as the divine Plato has described in his treatise on the Soul. For he says that those who are addicted to gluttony, and insolence, and drunkenness, and who are restrained by no modesty, may naturally become transformed into the race of asses, and similar animals.

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And here is the Greek text which I won't re-format;

Quote

εὐρίσκω δὲ καὶ παρὰ τοῖς κωμικοῖς ΚΥΛΙΣΤΟΝ τινα καλούμενον στέφανον καὶ μνημονεύοντα αὐτοῦ Ἄρχιππον ἐν Ῥίνωνι διὰ τούτων 'I 687 K':

ἀθῶος ἀποδοὺς θοίματιον ἀπέρχεται,

στέφανον ἔχων τῶν ἐκκυλίστων οἴκαδε.

Ἄλεξις δ' ἐν μὲν Ἀγωνίδι ἢ Ἰππίσκῳ 'II 298 K':

ὁ τρίτος οὗτος δ' ἔχει

σύκων κυλιστὸν στέφανον. ἀλλ' ἔχαιρε καὶ

ζῶν τοῖς τοιούτοις.

ἐν δὲ τῷ Σκίρωνί φησι 'ib. 373':

ὥσπερ κυλιστὸς στέφανος αἰωρούμενος.

μνημονεύει δ' αὐτοῦ καὶ Ἀντιφάνης ἐν Ἐαυτοῦ Ἐρῶντι 'ib. 31', Εὐβουλος δ' ἐν

Οἰνομάῳ ἢ Πέλοπι 'ib. 190':

περιφοραῖς κυκλούμενος

ὥσπερ κυλιστὸς στέφανος.

τίς οὖν οὗτος ὁ κυλιστός; οἶδα γὰρ τὸν Θυατειρητὸν Νίκανδρον ἐν τοῖς Ἀττικοῖς

Ὄνόμασι λέγοντα τάδε: 'ἐκκύλιστοι στέφανοι καὶ μάλιστα οἱ ἐκ ῥόδων.' καὶ τὸ εἶδος

ὁποῖον ζητῶ, ὧ Κύνουлке. καὶ μή μοι εἴπης ὅτι δεῖ τοὺς ἀδρούς ἀκούειν. σὺ γὰρ εἶ ὁ τὰ

ἐν τοῖς βιβλίοις ἀπόρρητα οὐ μόνον ἐκλέγων ἀλλὰ καὶ ἐξορύττων, καθάπερ οἱ παρὰ

Βάτωνι τῷ κωμωδιοποιῷ ἐν Συνεξαπατῶντι φιλόσοφοι 'III 329 K', περὶ ὧν καὶ

Σοφοκλῆς Συνδείπνω φησίν, οὐσί σοι παραπλησίους 'fr. 139 N':

οὔτοι γένειον ὧδε χρῆ διηλιφῆς

φοροῦντα κἀντίπαιδα καὶ γένει μέγαν

γαστρὸς καλεῖσθαι παῖδα, τοῦ πατρὸς παρόν.

ἐπειδὴ οὖν ἤδη καὶ σὺ πεπλήρωσαι οὐ μόνον τῶν τοῦ γλαύκου κρανίων ἀλλὰ καὶ τῆς

ἀειζώου βοτάνης, ἧς ὁ Ἀθηδόνιος ἐκεῖνος δαίμων ἐμφορηθεὶς ἀθάνατος πάλιν ητις

γένεον, λέγε ἡμῖν περὶ τοῦ προκειμένου, ἵνα μὴ κατὰ τὸν θεῖον Πλάτωνα 'Phaed. p.

81e' ὑπολάβωμέν σε ἀποθανόντα μεταμορφωθῆναι [ἐν τῷ περὶ Ψυχῆς]: τοὺς μὲν γὰρ τὰς γαστριμαργίας τε καὶ ὕβρεις καὶ φιλοποσίας μεμελετηκότας καὶ μὴ διευλαβουμένους εἰς τὰ τῶν ὄνων γένη καὶ τῶν τοιοῦτων θηρίων εἰκὸς ἐνδύεσθαι.'

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I find this interesting for several reasons; one is the connection in this passage between garlands and the "Epicurean" vices of gluttony, drunkenness, insolence, and immodesty. Another connection is with the proem to the [fourth book](#) of Lucretius;

Quote

I traverse the distant haunts of the Pierides, never trodden before by the foot of man. 'Tis my joy to approach those untasted springs and drink my fill, 'tis my joy to pluck new flowers and gather a glorious coronal for my head from spots whence before the muses have never wreathed the forehead of any man. First because I teach about great things, and hasten to free the mind from the close bondage of religion, then because on a dark theme I trace verses so full of light, touching all with the muses' charm. For that too is seen to be not without good reason; for even as healers, when they essay to give loathsome wormwood to children, first touch the rim all round the cup with the sweet golden moisture of honey, so that the unwitting age of children may be beguiled as far as the lips, and meanwhile may drink the bitter draught of wormwood, and though charmed may not be harmed, but rather by such means may be restored and come to health; so now, since this philosophy full often seems too bitter to those who have not tasted it, and the multitude shrinks back away from it, I have desired to set forth to you my reasoning in the sweet-tongued song of the muses, and as though to touch it with the pleasant honey of poetry, if perchance I might avail by such means to keep your mind set upon my verses, while you take in the whole nature of things, and are conscious of your profit.

-Cyril Bailey translation

So I offer 'thrice-garlanded' as one more possibility. And I also cannot help but think of this passage from [Coleridge](#);

Quote

Weave a circle round him thrice,
And close your eyes with holy dread
For he on honey-dew hath fed,
And drunk the milk of Paradise.

Post by “Joshua” of May 17, 2025 at 5:35 PM

More on garlands;

Plutarch, [That Epicurus Actually Makes a Pleasant Pife Impossible](#);

Quote

No sufficient praise therefore or equivalent to their deserts can be given those who, for the restraining of such bestial passions, have set down laws, established policy and government of state, instituted magistrates and ordained good and wholesome laws. But who are they that utterly confound and abolish this? Are they not those who withdraw themselves and their followers from all part in the government? Are they not those who say that the garland (στέφανος [garland, wreath, chaplet, crown]) of tranquillity and a reposed life are far more valuable than all the kingdoms and principalities in the world? Are they not those who declare that reigning and being a king is a mistaking the path and straying from the right way of felicity? And they write in express terms: “We are to treat how a man may best keep and preserve the end of Nature, and how he may from the very beginning avoid entering of his own free will and voluntarily upon offices of magistracy, and government over the people.” And yet again, these other words are theirs: “There is no need at all that a man should tire out his mind and body to preserve the Greeks, and to obtain from them a crown of wisdom; but to eat and drink well, O Timocrates, without prejudicing, but rather pleasing the flesh.”

Post by “Don” of May 17, 2025 at 5:39 PM

[Quote from Joshua](#)

More on garlands;

On first blush, I like where you're going since it has that festive connotation.

I'll get back to you ASAP

PS I'm also at a craft beer festival so ... 😊

Post by "Bryan" of May 17, 2025 at 9:53 PM

[Quote from Joshua](#)

'thrice-garlanded'

I fully agree with your line of thinking, Joshua.

The sentence ending with "**ὤθεισθαι / to be pushed**" has led most translators toward the "wheel" interpretation -- but it can just as easily mean "compelled."

With that problem out of the way, **τρικύλιστος** certainly has a basic meaning of "**rolled three times**" -- but with **κυλιστός** meaning "*twined in a circle*, an epithet of a kind of garland" (as LSJ states, and as you and Athenaïos have shown) -- "**rolled**" can certainly refer to a **garland**. (It seems most of the "garlands" Athenaïos is discussing are worn on the head, so I think we are talking about **wreaths**.)

So the only remaining mystery is the prefix "**three**" -- which could easily be a colloquialism for either **entwining three different plants** to make one wreath, or just **placing one upon the other** -- the effect would be similar.

Regarding "Three," we do see our Philōnídēs of Laodíkeia honored with three distinct wreaths (στέφανοι) in the inscription Attica, IG II2 1236:

"...the people honored him: both [the elder] Philōnídēs himself and his sons Philōnídēs and Dicaearchus - with citizenship, and crowned them with **(1) a wreath of laurel** and again with **(2) a golden wreath...** ...to praise [the elder] Philōnídēs of Laodicea and his sons Philōnídēs and Dicaearchus, and to crown each of them with **(3) a wreath of myrtle**, which it is customary to use when crowning their own benefactors."

Significantly, these are specifically honors given to Philōnídēs **by the Athenians**.

So it could mean, in the context of Epikouros' letter to Themísta, "*with all the honors you have given me in your letter*" (i.e., *crowned with multiple compliments*)"

Post by "Don" of May 17, 2025 at 11:20 PM

Quote from Joshua

[footnote 35.] Clay (1998: 247), who offers the translation “on a three-wheeled cart,” stresses the writer’s “enthusiasm and warmth.”

Clay 1998 is from Diskin Clay. *Paradosis & Survival: Three Chapters in the History of Epicurean Philosophy*. University of Michigan Press: Ann Arbor, 1998. p. 247.

Quote from Diskin Clay

...the letter Epicurus wrote to Themista in Lampsacus, telling her that if she and Leonteus could not come to him, he would join them "on a three-wheeled cart" (τρικυλιστος) wherever they say. 51

51. As the phrase is sometimes rendered; in his Loeb translation of Diogenes Laertius, R.D. Hicks renders the adjective "to spin thrice on my own axis." For a less enthusiastic interpretation, cf. Usener's *Glossarium Epicureum*, edd. M. Gigante and W. Schmid (Rome 1997) 677.

The Usener reference might be available from [Bryan](#). [Bryan](#) Do I remember you have a copy of the *Glossarium*?

I also [saw](#):

(Serbian *kolo* circle; Greek κύκλος circle, κυλιστός twined in a circle). The Serbian word **KOLO** also means 'dance' (Serb. *kolo igrati* - dance, celebrate; here we can see that Latin *celebratio* clearly corresponds to the Serbian word '*kolovrat*' [*vrteći se u kolu* - to rotate in a circle]).

So, the spinning three times and intertwining could refer to some kind of dancing. After all, friendship dances round in a circle as in a chorus.

For reference for the garland:

[Henry George Liddell, Robert Scott, A Greek-English Lexicon, Κκ , κύκνοψις , κυ^λ-ιστός](#)

I like the garland idea but I'm also intrigued by the dance possibility. Garlands are usually *stephanos*?

Post by “Bryan” of May 17, 2025 at 11:37 PM

[Quote from Don](#)

Glossarium

Yes on page 677, Usener says "τρικαλίνδητος, τρικυλίνδητος. ac similiter τρικυμία dicta. Epicurus dicit 'paratus sum ad vos quocumque iubebitis me ut trochum praecipiti cursu volventem agere (trudere)'"

So he takes it as as a colloquialism, but based on the wheel imagery.

Post by “Joshua” of May 18, 2025 at 1:08 AM

Dewitt's paper on this is only just over a page long, and he does point out that in Diogenes Laertius Timocrates is quoted claiming that Epicurus could not rise out of his chair.

Quote

[7] further, [Timocrates asserts] that Epicurus's acquaintance with philosophy was small and his acquaintance with life even smaller ; that his bodily health was pitiful,¹² so much so that for many years he was unable to rise from his chair ;

[7] τόν τε Ἐπίκουρον πολλὰ κατὰ τὸν λόγον ἡγνοηκένα καὶ πολὺ μᾶλλον κατὰ τὸν βίον, τό τε σῶμα ἐλεεινῶς διακεῖσθαι, ὡς πολλῶν ἐτῶν μὴ δύνασθαι ἀπὸ τοῦ φορείου διαναστῆναι

He also points out that the word ὠθεῖσθαι is "omitted by Bailey, and can only mean '*get myself pushed*'".

So he suggests something like this;

“If you [plural], and Themista in particular invite me, I can have myself pushed in a three-wheeled cart to wherever you are”

He further suggests that this is not an offer to go there quickly. Dewitt thinks that a slow and laborious journey is signified, and that Epicurus is saying he would make that journey with all its hardships for his friends.

Quote

Epicurus, however, was not a paralytic, and his conveyance was certainly "pushed."

(I have a feeling [Don](#) will enjoy that word 'certainly'...)

Post by “Don” of May 18, 2025 at 5:37 AM

[Quote from Bryan](#)

[Quote from Don](#)

Glossarium

Yes on page 677, Usener says "τρικαλίνδητος, τρικυλίνδητος. ac similiter τρικυμία dicta. Epicurus dicit 'paratus sum ad vos quocumque iubebitis me ut trochum praecipiti cursu volventem agere (trudere)'"

So he takes it as as a colloquialism, but based on the wheel imagery.

"Epicurus says 'I am ready to go wherever you order me to go, as if I were a little whirling at a headlong course (to push)'" (via Google Translate)

Post by “Don” of May 18, 2025 at 6:38 AM

[Quote from Joshua](#)

[Cassius](#) We may want to move these posts to a new thread.

I believe [Joshua](#) is referring to these digressions on the three wheeled cart. Not exactly pertinent to the personal motto thread but a fascinating topic.

Post by “Kalosyni” of May 18, 2025 at 8:52 AM

Regarding Joshua's post 36 and this: Are they not those who say that the garland (στέφανος) of tranquillity and a reposed life are far more valuable than all the kingdoms and principalities in the world?

In Buddhism the garland represents a collection of teachings: "In [Mahayana Buddhism](#), a garland, or avatamsaka, can refer to a vast collection of teachings, particularly within the [Avatamsaka Sutra](#). This sutra is considered one of the most influential in East Asian Buddhism. In Sanskrit, "avatamsaka" can mean "a great number," "a multitude," or "a collection," and is often translated as "Garland of Buddhas" or "Buddha's Fine Garland," [according to Wikipedia](#)."

Post by “Kalosyni” of May 18, 2025 at 9:07 AM

But it still ends up pointing to a wreath:

"In Classical [Sanskrit](#), *avataṃsa*, *vataṃsa* and *uttamaṃsa* (from stem *taṃs*, meaning "to decorate") ^[2] all mean [garland](#), wreath, or any circular ornament, such as an earring^[3]; suffix -ka often functions either as a diminutive or plural. Thus, the title may be rendered in English as *A Garland of Buddhas*, *Buddha Ornaments*, or *Buddha's Fine Garland*." -- [Wikipedia](#)

...and yet we could think of the [Principal Doctrines](#) as a "garland" -- a collection of teachings.