

Torquatus - In Defense of Epicurus - New Home Page Video

Post by "Cassius" of October 25, 2025 at 5:55 PM

Today we're introducing a new home page attraction - a new media presentation of Torquatus's Defense of Epicurus in On Ends. There's lots to say about the current state of this and where this will go, but let's start with this:

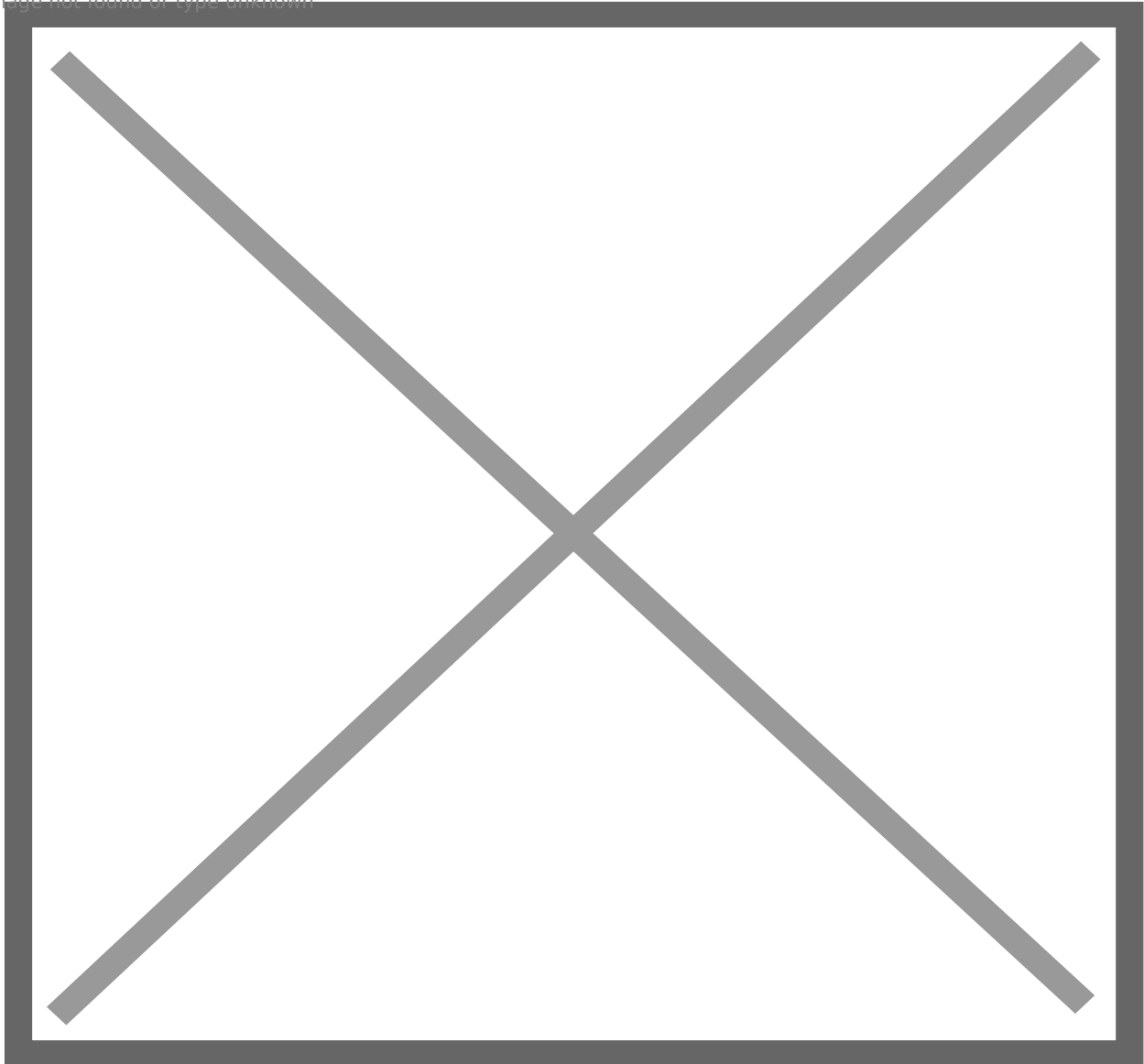
1. This audio voice is far from perfect. Much effort has been put into this version, but the AI voice has a long way to go, so lower your expectations. We want the best, but we also want to reach as many people with this information as possible. If we wait for perfection, some will miss having this available to him that might otherwise see it.
2. The text is adapted from the same versions that we already have on the website, but it needs to be improved. I will be placing this text on "Github," a public site where text can be edited in a collaborative manner. I will appreciate submissions for corrections and will get them up as soon as possible. Again, the tradeoff here is that if we wait for perfection before we publish this, some will miss it who might otherwise profit from it.
3. One merit of this audio voice is that it is entirely in the public domain. We can continue to work on improving it and distribute this with no copyright concerns whatsoever.
4. It will be desirable to add graphics throughout the video to illustrate the text. That will be a huge task, and suggestions on how to do that will be appreciated.
5. As this text is not copyrighted, anyone who wants to proceed on their own to produce a better version is welcome to do so. Our goal is to promote the philosophy of Epicurus with the best material available, not to promote the graphics skill of me (which are obviously poor) or of anyone else.
6. Check [THIS POST](#) for more technical info.
7. We will be regularly updating this to improve the text and presentation quality. One side effect of that, however, is that it is not possible to proofread a new version, without watching the whole thing. That means regression errors may creep into another part of the file as a result of editing an existing error. Please feel free to report any and all errors anytime you observe one, as we may not already be aware of it for this reason.

Recent podcast discussions have called back to my mind that this narrative preserved by Cicero is probably, even more so than Lucretius, the most concise and insightful presentation of Epicurean philosophy in the last 2000 years. It deserves a prominent place here, so this is to get started in bringing it to a larger audience.

Post by "Cassius" of October 25, 2025 at 9:07 PM

I am aware of several audio glitches and at least one error in the text that I am in the process of correcting. I will maintain updated copies of the text here:

Image not found or type unknown



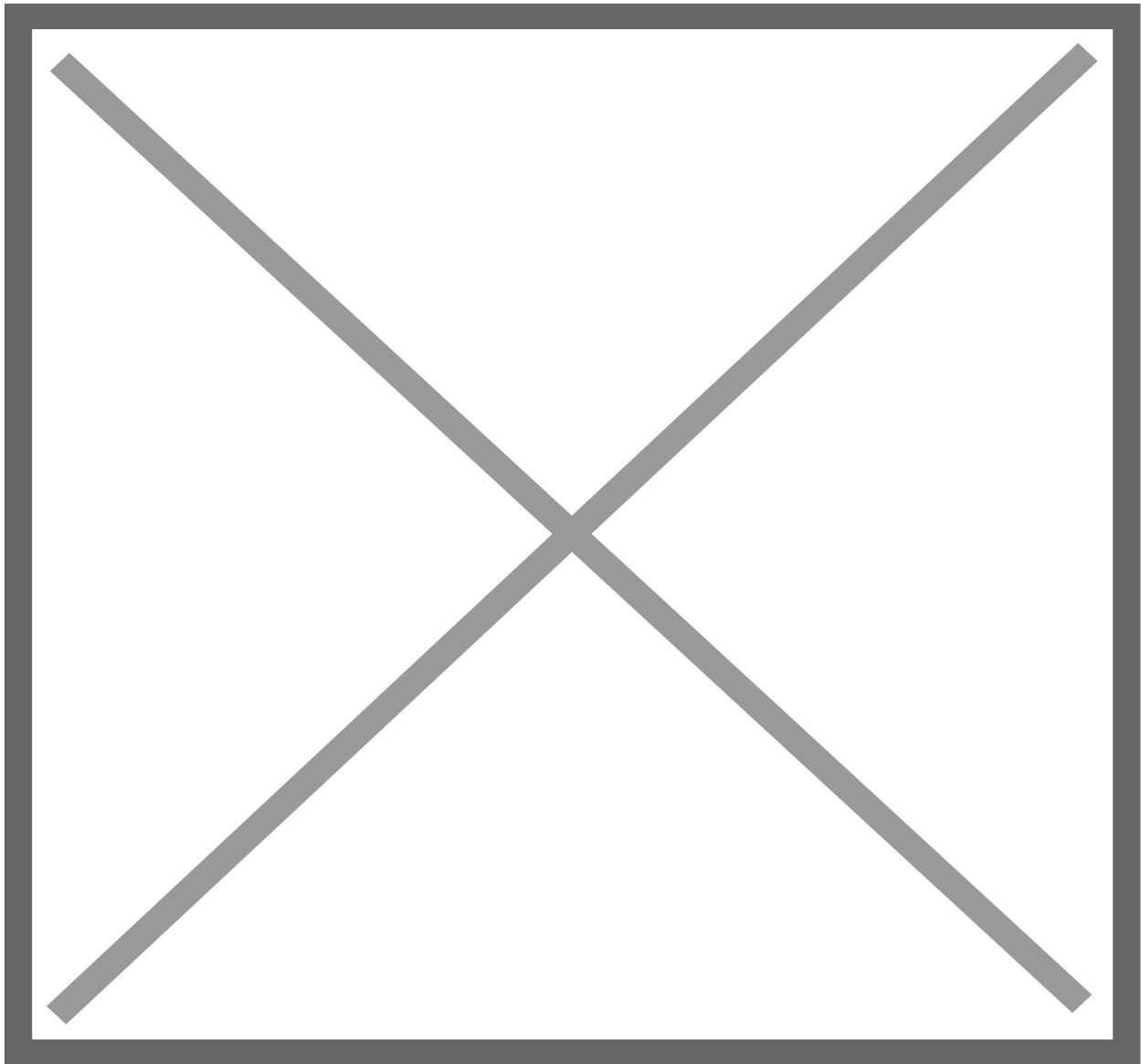
[GitHub - cassiusamicus/torquatus: Torquatus' Defense of Epicurus](#)

Torquatus' Defense of Epicurus. Contribute to cassiusamicus/torquatus development by creating an account on GitHub.

github.com

And I will upload updated copies of the video to Youtube as changes are made.

Feel free to use this thread to make suggestions for corrections or improvements. If possible, include with your comment the time of the section of the video to which the change would apply. Alternately, the line number of the text is available here:



[torquatus/torquatus.txt at main · cassiusamicus/torquatus](#)

Torquatus' Defense of Epicurus. Contribute to cassiusamicus/torquatus development by creating an account on GitHub.
github.com

Post by “Cassius” of October 26, 2025 at 2:57 AM

For anyone who might be thinking of reviewing the video and making note of issues to report, I will have a revised copy up by about 3pm at latest which will correct the issues current I known to me. Especially after that I will appreciate all issue reports.

Post by “Cassius” of October 26, 2025 at 2:33 PM

The latest revision is up. The text of this version will be on github in just a few minutes. While the voice still needs much improvement, I think most of the major audio bugs have been swatted. I just discovered one at 30:47 - please report others if you come across them. I am thinking that the text is coming together and most if not all obvious typos are completed, so it will soon be time to move from focusing on the text to focusing on the voice. I will post details on how this is being generated so anyone with technical aptitude can perhaps contribute to that side.

Improving the test accuracy and wording will continue to be desirable, so don't hesitate to make suggestions there.

Post by “Don” of October 26, 2025 at 2:52 PM

[Quote from Cassius](#)

While the voice still needs much improvement

Do you want some of us to provide human voices instead of AI? How many minutes is the segment to read?

Post by “Cassius” of October 26, 2025 at 3:13 PM

Thanks for the suggestion, but unfortunately individual voice contributions will not help much, for a couple of reasons:

- The material that I am trying to make use of now is generally an hour or more long. including such things as the Velleius section of On the Nature of the Gods, and long sections of Cicero's other works where Epicurus is mentioned, and even the entire Lucretius poem, so those are also going to be long.
- I want to target long term constant improvement, meaning constantly improving both the audio and video with better voices and eventually illustrations and moving pictures to stay on top of the latest technology.
- I've been thinking about what "we" bring to the table in this kind of project, and it seems to me that what no one else is likely to duplicate is to prepare modern American English versions of these based on the public domain translations. There are many people who can do this kind of technology, but IMHO not many who are well equipped to judge what the texts "should" say in modern American english, just as you've done with Menoeceus. We CANNOT let the perfect be the enemy of the good because we'll never reach perfection, but we can produce reasonably accurate modern English versions that will be useable for people who will simply never be willing to read Bailey or the others. And in truth there's no reason to use 18th or 19th century phrasing in these renderings anyway.
- And our goal ought to be something that can be TOTALLY freely distributed, both as to the text and to the final media form. As to the text, posting it on github makes clear that anyone can use the text as a base, even if they don't want to cooperate with us.
- I am also going to post this following paragraph in the first post to document the public domain engine that I'm using now. Hopefully we will have some techies who know how to do this better than I do, and they can help us improve the voice rendering faster. But at the moment, the current engine works well enough to allow us to run the texts through them and proof the results. The renderings will get better and better as the technology improves, but the texts won't improve unless we take the time to have people who "understand" them supervise the texts that are input.
- Even the current Coqui TTS engine can no doubt be better in more competent hands than mine. I feel sure I am not optimizing my settings correctly , as some of the text sounds fine while in other sections the model goes wild with emotion. To some extent i am addressing those problems with word choice and order, but there are technical issues too that I don't understand yet.

Quote

This project employs the **Coqui TTS open-source text-to-speech engine**, specifically the **multilingual, multi-speaker "XTTS-v2" model**. XTTS-v2 is a transformer-based neural network designed for expressive, natural-sounding speech generation across many languages and voices. It reproduces human intonation and rhythm by processing text at the sentence level and synthesizing waveforms directly from the model's internal acoustic representations. The implementation uses the **Python Coqui-TTS library**, running locally in **CPU mode** for portability and stability,

with customized parameters to control pace and clarity—such as a **sampling rate of 22.05 kHz**, a **pause duration of 0.25 seconds** between segments, and a neutral male speaker profile known as “*Craig Gutsy*.” Audio segments are generated sequentially, merged into continuous narration, and paired with synchronized subtitles and a video overlay produced through **FFmpeg**. The entire process is fully open-source, requiring no external API calls, and emphasizes reproducibility, offline privacy, and fine control over both narration and presentation.

The **Coqui TTS** engine and its included models are distributed under the **Mozilla Public License 2.0 (MPL-2.0)**, a permissive open-source license that allows free use, modification, and redistribution of the software, provided that source-code changes remain publicly available under the same terms. This ensures that all derivative works remain part of the open research ecosystem while allowing commercial and non-commercial use alike.

Post by “Cassius” of October 28, 2025 at 11:24 AM

Latest version updated to main page and posted to Facebook with this intro:

Here is a new audio-with-text version of Torquatus' Defense of Epicurus from Cicero's "On Ends," delivered by the Roman Senator and Praetor (military commander) Lucius Manlius Torquatus. For two thousand years this has been one of the most clear, concise, and compelling explanations of Epicurean Philosophy available anywhere. As many people know, portions of Torquatus' speech were coded into the "Res Ipsum" jumble of Latin that publishers use for "dummy" text. It seems likely that the decision to choose this text, even in jumbled form, reflects an understanding of the desirability of preserving the memory of this text forever. Over time we will continue to work to improve the quality of rendering of this voice and media. In the meantime this present version can be shared and referenced whenever you need access to the strongest and most unapologetic defense of the Epicurean way of life that has been delivered since the days of the original Garden.

[Log into Facebook](#)