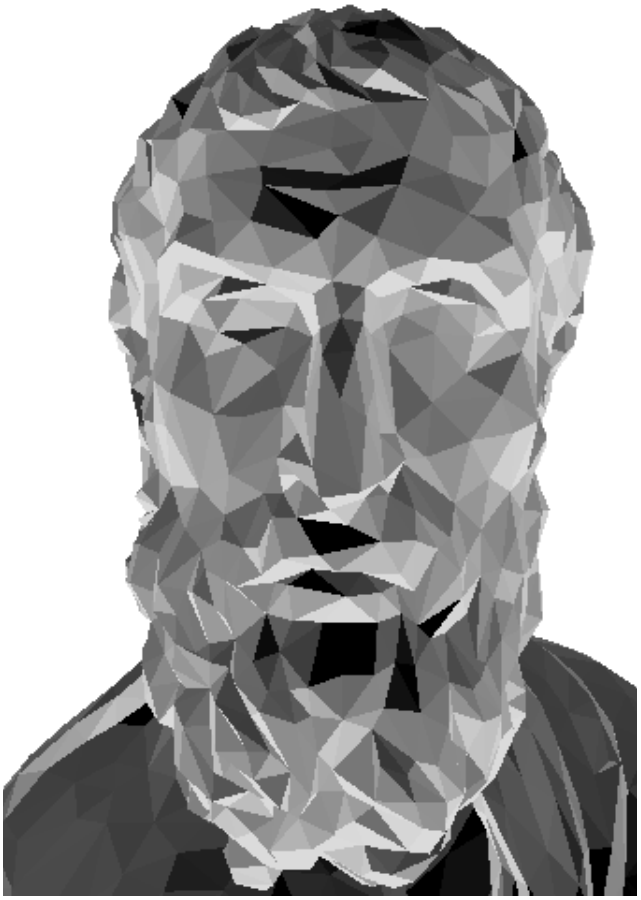
Diogenes Laërtius

Lives of Eminent Philosophers

Book X - Epicurus



comparative reading based on translations by:

Charles Duke Yonge (1853)
Robert Drew Hicks (1925)
Cyril Bailey (1926)

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Laërtius, c. 222-235

Ἐπίκουρος Νεοκλέους καὶ Χαιρεστράτης, Ἀθηναῖος, τῶν δήμων Γαργήττιος, γένους τοῦ τῶν Φιλαϊδῶν, ὥς φησι Μητρόδωρος ἐν τῷ Περὶ εὐγενείας. τοῦτόν φασιν ἄλλοι τε καὶ Ἡρακλείδης ἐν τῇ Σωτίωνος ἐπιτομῇ κληρουχησάντων Ἀθηναίων τὴν Σάμον ἐκεῖθι τραφῆναι· ὀκτωκαιδεκέτη δ’ ἐλθεῖν εἰς Ἀθήνας, Ξενοκράτους μὲν ἐν Ἀκαδημείᾳ, Ἀριστοτέλους δ’ ἐν Χαλκίδι διατρίβοντος. τελευτήσαντος δὲ Ἀλεξάνδρου τοῦ Μακεδόνος καὶ τῶν Ἀθηναίων ἐκπεσόντων ὑπὸ Περδίκκου μετελθεῖν εἰς Κολοφῶνα πρὸς τὸν πατέρα·

Yonge, 1853

Epicurus was an Athenian, and the son of Neocles and Chaerestrate, of the deme of Gargettus, and of the family of the Philaidae, as Metrodorus tells us in his treatise on Nobility of Birth. Some writers, and among them Heracleides, in his Abridgment of Sotion, say that as the Athenians had colonised Samos, he was brought up there, and came to Athens in his eighteenth year, while Xenocrates was president of the Academy, and Aristotle at Chalcis. But after the death of Alexander the Macedonian, when the Athenians were driven out of Samos by Perdiccas, Epicurus went to Colophon to his father.

Hicks, 1925

Epicurus, son of Neocles and Chaerestrate, was a citizen of Athens of the deme Gargettus, and, as Metrodorus says in his book On Noble Birth, of the family of the Philaidae. He is said by Heraclides in his Epitome of Sotion, as well as by other authorities, to have been brought up at Samos after the Athenians had sent settlers there and to have come to Athens at the age of eighteen, at the time when Xenocrates was lecturing at the Academy and Aristotle in Chalcis. Upon the death of Alexander of Macedon and the expulsion of the Athenian settlers from Samos by Perdiccas, Epicurus left Athens to join his father in Colophon.

Bailey, 1926

EPICURUS, son of Neocles and Chaerestrata, was an Athenian of the deme of Gargettus, and the family of the Philaidae, as Metrodorus says in his work on Nobility of Birth. Heraclides in his epitome of Sotion and others say that the Athenians having colonized Samos, Epicurus was brought up there. In his eighteenth year, as they say, he came to Athens, when Xenocrates was at the Academy and Aristotle was living in Chalcis. After the death of Alexander of Macedon, when the Athenians were driven out of Samos by Perdiccas, he went to join his father in Colophon.

Laërtius, c. 222-235

χρόνον δέ τινα διατρίψαντα αὐτόθι καὶ μαθητὰς ἀθροίσαντα πάλιν ἐπανελθεῖν εἰς Ἀθήνας ἐπὶ Ἀναξικράτους· καὶ μέχρι μέν τινος κατ’ ἐπιμιξίαν τοῖς ἄλλοις φιλοσοφεῖν, ἔπειτα ἰδίᾳ ἀπο τὴν ἀπ’ αὐτοῦ κληθεῖσαν αἵρεσιν συστήσαντα. ἐφάψασθαι δὲ φιλοσοφίας αὐτός φησιν ἔτη γεγονὼς τεσσαρεσκαίδεκα. Ἀπολλόδωρος δ’ ὁ Ἐπικούρειος ἐν τῷ πρώτῳ περὶ τοῦ Ἐπικούρου βίου φησὶν ἐλθεῖν αὐτὸν ἐπὶ φιλοσοφίαν καταγνόντα τῶν γραμματιστῶν ἐπειδὴ μὴ ἐδυνήθησαν ἑρμηνεῦσαι αὐτῷ τὰ περὶ τοῦ παρ’ Ἡσιόδῳ χάους. φησὶ δ’ Ἕρμιππος γραμματοδιδάσκαλον αὐτὸν γεγενῆσθαι, ἔπειτα μέντοι περιτυχόντα τοῖς Δημοκρίτου βιβλίοις ἐπὶ φιλοσοφίαν ᾖξαι·

Yonge, 1853

And when he had spent some time there, and collected some disciples, he again returned to Athens, in the year of Anaxicrates [307/6 B.C.], and for some time studied philosophy, mingling with the rest of the philosophers; but subsequently, he somehow or other established the school which was called after his name; and he used to say, that he began to study philosophy when he was fourteen years of age; but Apollodorus the Epicurean, in the first book of his account of the life of Epicurus, says, that he came to the study of philosophy, having conceived a great contempt for the grammarians, because they could not explain to him the statements in Hesiodus respecting Chaos. But Hermippus tells us, that he himself was a teacher of grammar, and that afterwards, having come across the books of Democritus, he applied himself with zeal to philosophy,

Hicks, 1925

For some time he stayed there and gathered disciples, but returned to Athens in the archonship of Anaxicrates. And for a while, it is said, he prosecuted his studies in common with the other philosophers, but afterwards put forward independent views by the foundation of the school called after him. He says himself that he first came into contact with philosophy at the age of fourteen. Apollodorus the Epicurean, in the first book of his Life of Epicurus, says that he turned to philosophy in disgust at the schoolmasters who could not tell him the meaning of “chaos” in Hesiod. According to Hermippus, however, he started as a schoolmaster, but on coming across the works of Democritus turned eagerly to philosophy.

Bailey, 1926

Having stayed there some time and gathered disciples he returned again to Athens in the archonship of Anaxicrates. For a while he joined with others in the study of philosophy, but later taught independently, when he had founded the school called after him. He tells us himself that he first made acquaintance with philosophy at the age of fourteen. Apollodorus the Epicurean in the first book of his Life of Epicurus says that he took to philosophy because he despised the teachers of literature, since they were not able to explain to him the passage about Chaos in Hesiod. Hermippus says that Epicurus was at one time a schoolmaster and then after he met with the writings of Democritus, he took eagerly to philosophy.

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διὸ καὶ τὸν Τίμωνα φάσκειν περὶ αὐτοῦ·

ὕστατος αὖ φυσικῶν καὶ κύντατος, ἐκ Σάμου ἐλθὼν γραμμοδιδασκαλίδης, ἀναγωγότατος ζωόντων.

Συνεφιλοσόφουν δ’ αὐτῷ προτρεψαμένῳ καὶ οἱ ἀδελφοὶ τρεῖς, ὄντες Νεοκλῆς Χαιρέδημος Ἀριστόβουλος, καθά φησι Φιλόδημος ὁ Ἐπικούρειος ἐν τῷ δεκάτῳ τῆς τῶν φιλοσόφων συντάξεως· ἀλλὰ καὶ δοῦλος Μῦς ὄνομα, καθά φησι Μυρωνιανὸς ἐν Ὁμοίοις ἱστορικοῖς κεφαλαίοις.

Διότιμος δ’ ὁ Στωικὸς δυσμενῶς ἔχων πρὸς αὐτὸν πικρότατα αὐτὸν διαβέβληκεν, ἐπιστολὰς φέρων πεντήκοντα ἀσελγεῖς ὡς Ἐπικούρου· καὶ ὁ τὰ εἰς Χρύσιππον ἀναφερόμενα ἐπιστόλια ὡς Ἐπικούρου συντάξας.

Yonge, 1853

on which account Timon says of him: The last of all the natural philosophers, And the most shameless too, did come from Samos, A grammar teacher, and the most ill-bred And most unmanageable of mankind. And he had for his companions in his philosophical studies, his three brothers, Neocles, Chaeredemus, and Aristobulus, who were excited by his exhortations, as Philodemus the Epicurean relates in the tenth book of the Classification of Philosophers. He had also a slave, whose name was Mys, as Myronianus tells us in his Similar Historical Chapters. But Diotimus the Stoic was very hostile to him, and calumniated him in a most bitter manner, publishing fifty obscene letters, and attributing them to Epicurus, and also giving him the credit of the letters, which generally go under the name of Chrysippus.

Hicks, 1925

Hence the point of Timon’s allusion in the lines: Again there is the latest and most shameless of the physicists, the schoolmaster’s son from Samos, himself the most uneducated of mortals. At his instigation his three brothers, Neocles, Chaeredemus, and Aristobulus, joined in his studies, according to Philodemus the Epicurean in the tenth book of his comprehensive work On Philosophers; furthermore his slave named Mys, as stated by Myronianus in his Historical Parallels. Diotimus the Stoic, who is hostile to him, has assailed him with bitter slanders, adducing fifty scandalous letters as written by Epicurus; and so too did the author who ascribed to Epicurus the epistles commonly attributed to Chrysippus.

Bailey, 1926

And this is why Timon says about him: Last and most shameless of the scientists, infant school teacher from Samos, the most stubborn of all living beings. His three brothers, Neocles, Chaeredemus, and Aristobulus, joined him in studying philosophy at his suggestion, according to Philodemus the Epicurean in the tenth book of his Comparison of Philosophies. Also a slave called Mys, as Muronianus says in his chapters on historical coincidences. Diotimus the Stoic, who is ill-disposed to Epicurus, has calumniated him most bitterly by producing fifty lewd letters as Epicurus’ work; so has the writer who has assigned to Epicurus the collection of “billets-doux” which were attributed to Chrysippus,

Laërtius, c. 222-235

ἀλλὰ καὶ οἱ περὶ Ποσειδώνιον τὸν Στωικὸν καὶ Νικόλαος καὶ Σωτίων ἐν τοῖς δώδεκα τῶν ἐπιγραφομένων Διοκλείων ἐλέγχων, ἅ ἐστι περὶ τῆς εἰκάδος, καὶ Διονύσιος ὁ Ἁλικαρνασσεύς. καὶ γὰρ σὺν τῇ μητρὶ περιιόντα αὐτὸν ἐς τὰ οἰκίδια καθαρμοὺς ἀναγινώσκειν, καὶ σὺν τῷ πατρὶ γράμματα διδάσκειν λυπροῦ τινος μισθαρίου. ἀλλὰ καὶ τῶν ἀδελφῶν ἕνα προαγωγεύειν, καὶ Λεοντίῳ συνεῖναι τῇ ἑταίρᾳ. τὰ δὲ Δημοκρίτου περὶ τῶν ἀτόμων καὶ Ἀριστίππου περὶ τῆς ἡδονῆς ὡς ἴδια λέγειν. μὴ εἶναί τε γνησίως ἀστόν, ὡς Τιμοκράτης φησὶ καὶ Ἡρόδοτος ἐν τῷ Περὶ Ἐπικούρου ἐφηβείας. Μιθρῆν τε αἰσχρῶς κολακεύειν τὸν Λυσιμάχου διοικητήν, ἐν ταῖς ἐπιστολαῖς Παιᾶνα καὶ ἄνακτα καλοῦντα·

Yonge, 1853

And Poseidonius the Stoic, and Nicolaus, and Sotion, in the twelfth of these books, which are entitled the Refutations of Diocles, of which there are altogether twenty-four volumes, and Dionysius of Halicarnassus, have also attacked him with great severity; for they say that he used to accompany his mother when she went about the small cottages, performing purification, and that he used to read the formula, and that he used also to keep a school with his father at very low terms. Also, that he, as well as one of his brothers, was a most profligate man in his morals, and that he used to live with Leontiŏn, the courtesan. Moreover, that he claimed the books of Democritus on Atoms, and that of Aristippus on Pleasure, as his own; and that he was not a legitimate citizen; and this last fact is asserted also by Timocrates, and by Herodotus, in his treatises on the Youth of Epicurus. They also say that he used to flatter Mithras, the steward of Lysimachus, in a disgraceful manner, calling him in his letters Paean, and King;

Hicks, 1925

They are followed by Posidonius the Stoic and his school, and Nicolaus and Sotion in the twelfth book of his work entitled Dioclean Refutations, consisting of twenty-four books; also by Dionysius of Halicarnassus. They allege that he used to go round with his mother to cottages and read charms, and assist his father in his school for a pitiful fee; further, that one of his brothers was a pander and lived with Leontion the courtesan; that he put forward as his own the doctrines of Democritus about atoms and of Aristippus about pleasure; that he was not a genuine Athenian citizen, a charge brought by Timocrates and by Herodotus in a book On the Training of Epicurus as a Cadet; that he basely flattered Mithras, the minister of Lysimachus, bestowing on him in his letters Apollo’s titles of Healer and Lord.

Bailey, 1926

and also Posidonius the Stoic and his followers, as well as Nicolaus and Sotion in the twelve books of the “Arguments of Diocles” which are named after the Epicurean celebration of The Twentieth; also Dionysius of Halicarnassus. For they say that he used to go round from house to house with his mother reading out the purification prayers, and assisted his father in elementary teaching for a miserable pittance. They add that one of his brothers prostituted himself and kept company with Leontion, the hetaera. Also that he took Democritus’ atomic theory and Aristippus’ theory of pleasure and taught them as his own. Further, that he was not an Athenian born, as Timocrates says, and Herodotus too in his book The Youth of Epicurus. He is also said to have used degrading flattery towards Mithres, the steward of Lysimachus, calling him in his letters both “Saviour” and “My lord.”

Laërtius, c. 222-235

ἀλλὰ καὶ Ἰδομενέα καὶ Ἡρόδοτον καὶ Τιμοκράτην τοὺς ἔκπυστα αὐτοῦ τὰ κρύφια ποιήσαντας ἐγκωμιάζειν καὶ κολακεύειν αὐτὸ τοῦτο. ἔν τε ταῖς ἐπιστολαῖς πρὸς μὲν Λεόντιον Παιὰν ἄναξ, φίλον Λεοντάριον, οἵου κροτοθορύβου ἡμᾶς ἐνέπλησας ἀναγνόντας σου τὸ ἐπιστόλιον· πρὸς δὲ Θεμίσταν τὴν Λεοντέως γυναῖκα Οἷός τε, φησίν, εἰμί, ἐὰν μὴ ὑμεῖς πρός με ἀφίκησθε, αὐτὸς τρικύλιστος, ὅπου ἂν ὑμεῖς καὶ Θεμίστα παρακαλῆτε, ὠθεῖσθαι. πρὸς δὲ Πυθοκλέα ὡραῖον ὄντα Καθεδοῦμαι, φησί, προσδοκῶν τὴν ἱμερτὴν καὶ ἰσόθεόν σου εἴσοδον. καὶ πάλιν πρὸς Θεμίσταν γράφων νομίζει αὐτῇ παραινεῖν, καθά φησι Θεόδωρος ἐν τῷ τετάρτῳ τῶν Πρὸς Ἐπίκουρον.

Yonge, 1853

and also that he flattered Idomeneus, and Herodotus, and Timocrates who had revealed all his secret practices, and that he flattered them on this very account. And in his letter to Leontiŏn, he says, “O lord Paean, my dear Leontiŏn, what transports of joy did I feel when I read your charming letter.” And to Themista, the wife of Leonteus, he writes, “I am ready and prepared, if you do not come to me, to roll myself to wherever you and Themista invite me.” And he addresses Pythocles, a beautiful youth, thus, “I will sit quiet,” says he, “awaiting your longed-for and god-like approach.” And at another time, writing to Themista, he says, “That he had determined to make his way with her,” as Theodorus tells us in the fourth book of his treatises against Epicurus.

Hicks, 1925

Furthermore that he extolled Idomeneus, Herodotus, and Timocrates, who had published his esoteric doctrines, and flattered them for that very reason. Also that in his letters he wrote to Leontion, “O Lord Apollo, my dear little Leontion, with what tumultuous applause we were inspired as we read your letter.” Then again to Themista, the wife of Leonteus: “I am quite ready, if you do not come to see me, to spin thrice on my own axis and be propelled to any place that you, including Themista, agree upon”; and to the beautiful Pythocles he writes: “I will sit down and await thy divine advent, my heart’s desire.” And, as Theodorus says in the fourth book of his work, Against Epicurus, in another letter to Themista he thinks he preaches to her.

Bailey, 1926

Idomeneus too and Herodotus and Timocrates, who divulged his secrets, he is said to have praised and flattered all the same. And in his letters he wrote to Leontion, “Lord and Saviour, my dearest Leontion, what a hurrahing you drew from us, as we read aloud your dear letter,” and to Themista, Leonteus’ wife, “If you two don’t come to me, I am capable of arriving with a hop, skip and jump, wherever you and Themista summon me.” And to Pythocles, who was young and beautiful, he writes, “I will sit down and wait for your lovely and godlike appearance.” And again in writing to Themista he calls her (by a most flattering name), as Theodorus says in the fourth book of his attack on Epicurus.

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καὶ ἄλλαις δὲ πολλαῖς ἑταίραις γράφειν, καὶ μάλιστα Λεοντίῳ, ἧς καὶ Μητρόδωρον ἐρασθῆναι. ἔν τε τῷ Περὶ τέλους γράφειν οὕτως· Οὐ γὰρ ἔγωγε ἔχω τί νοήσω τἀγαθόν, ἀφαιρῶν μὲν τὰς διὰ χυλῶν ἡδονάς, ἀφαιρῶν δὲ τὰς δι’ ἀφροδισίων καὶ τὰς δι’ ἀκροαμάτων καὶ τὰς διὰ μορφῆς. ἔν τε τῇ πρὸς Πυθοκλέα ἐπιστολῇ γράφειν Παιδείαν δὲ πᾶσαν, μακάριε, φεῦγε τἀκάτιον ἀράμενος. Ἐπίκτητός τε κιναιδολόγον αὐτὸν καλεῖ καὶ τὰ μάλιστα λοιδορεῖ.

Καὶ μὴν καὶ Τιμοκράτης ἐν τοῖς ἐπιγραφομένοις Εὐφραντοῖς ὁ Μητροδώρου μὲν ἀδελφός, μαθητὴς δὲ αὐτοῦ τῆς σχολῆς ἐκφοιτήσας φησὶ δὶς αὐτὸν τῆς ἡμέρας ἐμεῖν ἀπὸ τρυφῆς, ἑαυτόν τε διηγεῖται μόγις ἐκφυγεῖν ἰσχῦσαι τὰς νυκτερινὰς ἐκείνας φιλοσοφίας καὶ τὴν μυστικὴν ἐκείνην συνδιαγωγήν.

Yonge, 1853

He also wrote to many other courtesans, and especially to Leontiŏn, with whom Metrodorus also was in love. And in his treatise on the Chief Good, he writes thus, “For I do not know what I can consider good, if I put out of sight the pleasures which arise from flavours, and those which are derived from amatory pleasures, and from music and from the contemplation of beauty.” And in his letter to Pythocles, he writes, “Set sail, my dear boy, and avoid all sorts of education.” Epictetus also attacks him as a most debauched man, and reproaches him most vehemently, and so does Timocrates, the brother of Metrodorus, in his treatise entitled the Merry Guests, and this Timocrates had been a disciple in his school, though he afterwards abandoned it; and he says that he used to vomit twice a day, in consequence of his intemperance; and that he himself had great difficulty in escaping from this nocturnal philosophy, and that mystic kind of association.

Hicks, 1925

It is added that he corresponded with many courtesans, and especially with Leontion, of whom Metrodorus also was enamoured. It is observed too that in his treatise On the Ethical End he writes in these terms: “I know not how to conceive the good, apart from the pleasures of taste, sexual pleasures, the pleasures of sound and the pleasures of beautiful form.” And in his letter to Pythocles: “Hoist all sail, my dear boy, and steer clear of all culture.” Epictetus calls him preacher of effeminacy and showers abuse on him. Again there was Timocrates, the brother of Metrodorus, who was his disciple and then left the school. He in the book entitled Merriment asserts that Epicurus vomited twice a day from over-indulgence, and goes on to say that he himself had much ado to escape from those notorious midnight philosophizings and the confraternity with all its secrets;

Bailey, 1926

They say that he wrote to many other women of pleasure and particularly to Leontion, with whom Metrodorus was also in love; and that in the treatise On the End of Life he wrote, “I know not how I can conceive the good, if I withdraw the pleasures of taste and withdraw the pleasures of love and those of hearing and sight.” Again in the letter to Pythocles they say he wrote “Blest youth, set sail in your bark and flee from every form of culture.” Epictetus moreover calls him a filthy talker and abuses him roundly. And even Timocrates, who was the brother of Metrodorus and a disciple of Epicurus, after he had abandoned the school, wrote in a book with the title Pleasant Things that Epicurus used to vomit twice a day owing to his luxurious living, and that he himself was scarcely able to escape from his philosophical disquisitions during the night and from the community of the initiates.

Laërtius, c. 222-235

τόν τε Ἐπίκουρον πολλὰ κατὰ τὸν λόγον ἠγνοηκέναι καὶ πολὺ μᾶλλον κατὰ τὸν βίον, τό τε σῶμα ἐλεεινῶς διακεῖσθαι, ὡς πολλῶν ἐτῶν μὴ δύνασθαι ἀπὸ τοῦ φορείου διαναστῆναι· μνᾶν τε ἀναλίσκειν ἡμερησίαν εἰς τὴν τράπεζαν, ὡς αὐτὸς ἐν τῇ πρὸς Λεόντιον ἐπιστολῇ γράφει καὶ ἐν ταῖς πρὸς τοὺς ἐν Μυτιλήνῃ φιλοσόφους. συνεῖναί τε αὐτῷ τε καὶ Μητροδώρῳ ἑταίρας καὶ ἄλλας, Μαμμάριον καὶ Ἡδεῖαν καὶ Ἐρώτιον καὶ Νικίδιον. καὶ ἐν ταῖς ἑπτὰ καὶ τριάκοντα βίβλοις ταῖς Περὶ φύσεως τὰ πλεῖστα ταὐτὰ λέγειν καὶ ἀντιγράφειν ἐν αὐταῖς ἄλλοις τε καὶ Ναυσιφάνει τὰ πλεῖστα καὶ αὐτῇ λέξει φάσκειν οὕτως· “Ἀλλ’ ἴτωσαν· εἶχε γὰρ ἐκεῖνος ὠδίνων τὴν ἀπὸ τοῦ στόματος καύχησιν τὴν σοφιστικήν, καθάπερ καὶ ἄλλοι πολλοὶ τῶν ἀνδραπόδων.”

Yonge, 1853

He also accuses Epicurus of shameful ignorance in his reasoning, and still more especially in all matters relating to the conduct of life. And says that he was in a pitiable state of health, so that he could not for many years rise up from his sofa; and that he used to spend a mina a day on his eating, as he himself states in his letter to Leontiŏn, and in that to the philosophers at Mytilene. He also says that many courtesans used to live with him and Metrodorus; and among them Marmariŏn, and Hedeia, and Erotiŏn, and Nicidiŏn. And in the thirty-seven books which he wrote about natural philosophy, they say that he says a great many things of the same kind over and over again, and that in them he writes in contradiction of other philosophers, and especially of Nausiphanes, and speaks as follows, word for word: “But let them be gone. For this man had a continual labour, striving to bring forth the sophistical boastfulness of his mouth, like many other slaves.”

Hicks, 1925

further, that Epicurus’s acquaintance with philosophy was small and his acquaintance with life even smaller; that his bodily health was pitiful, so much so that for many years he was unable to rise from his chair; and that he spent a whole mina daily on his table, as he himself says in his letter to Leontion and in that to the philosophers at Mitylene. Also that among other courtesans who consorted with him and Metrodorus were Mammarion and Hedia and Erotion and Nikidion. He alleges too that in his thirty-seven books On Nature Epicurus uses much repetition and writes largely in sheer opposition to others, especially to Nausiphanes, and here are his own words: “Nay, let them go hang: for, when labouring with an idea, he too had the sophist’s off-hand boast-fulness like many another servile soul”;

Bailey, 1926

He adds that Epicurus was profoundly ignorant of philosophy, and still more so of practical life, that his body was miserably weak, so that for many years he was unable to rise from his portable couch. Further, that he spent no less than a mina a day on his food, as Epicurus writes himself in the letter to Leontion and in the letters to the philosophers in Mytilene. Moreover, there were other women who lived with him and Metrodorus, named Mammarion and Hedeia and Erotion and Nicidion. He adds that in the thirty-seven books On Nature he repeats himself for the most part and attacks many other philosophers in them, but Nausiphanes most of all, saying in his own words, “Away with them all, for Nausiphanes, like many another slave, was in travail with that wordy braggart, sophistic.”

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καὶ αὐτὸν Ἐπίκουρον ἐν ταῖς ἐπιστολαῖς περὶ Ναυσιφάνους λέγειν· “Ταῦτα ἤγαγεν αὐτὸν εἰς ἔκστασιν τοιαύτην, ὥστε μοι λοιδορεῖσθαι καὶ ἀποκαλεῖν διδάσκαλον.” πλεύμονά τε αὐτὸν ἐκάλει καὶ ἀγράμματον καὶ ἀπατεῶνα καὶ πόρνην· τούς τε περὶ Πλάτωνα Διονυσοκόλακας καὶ αὐτὸν Πλάτωνα χρυσοῦν, καὶ Ἀριστοτέλη ἄσωτον, καταφαγόντα τὴν πατρῴαν οὐσίαν στρατεύεσθαι καὶ φαρμακοπωλεῖν· φορμοφόρον τε Πρωταγόραν καὶ γραφέα Δημοκρίτου καὶ ἐν κώμαις γράμματα διδάσκειν· Ἡράκλειτόν τε κυκητὴν καὶ Δημόκριτον Ληρόκριτον καὶ Ἀντίδωρον Σαννίδωρον· τούς τε Κυνικοὺς ἐχθροὺς τῆς Ἑλλάδος· καὶ τοὺς διαλεκτικοὺς πολυφθόρους, Πύρρωνα δ’ ἀμαθῆ καὶ ἀπαίδευτον. Μεμήνασι δ’ οὗτοι.

Yonge, 1853

And Epicurus also speaks of Nausiphanes in his letters, in the following terms: “These things led him on to such arrogance of mind, that he abused me and called me a schoolmaster.” He used also to call him Lungs, and Blockhead, and Humbug, and Fornicator. And he used to call Plato’s followers Flatterers of Dionysius, but Plato himself he called Golden. Aristotle he called a debauchee and a glutton, saying that he joined the army after he had squandered his patrimony, and sold drugs. He used to call Protagoras a porter, and the secretary of Democritus, and to say that he taught boys their letters in the streets. Heracleitus, he called a disturber; Democritus, he nicknamed Lerocrates; and Antidorus, Samidorus; the Cynics he called the enemies of Greece; and the Dialecticians he charged with being eaten up with envy. Pyrrhon, he said, was ignorant and unlearned.

Hicks, 1925

besides, he himself in his letters says of Nausiphanes: “This so maddened him that he abused me and called me pedagogue.” Epicurus used to call this Nausiphanes jelly-fish, an illiterate, a fraud, and a trollop; Plato’s school he called “the toadies of Dionysius,” their master himself the “golden” Plato, and Aristotle a profligate, who after devouring his patrimony took to soldiering and selling drugs; Protagoras a pack-carrier and the scribe of Democritus and village schoolmaster; Heraclitus a muddler; Democritus Lerocritus (the nonsense-monger); and Antidorus Sannidorus (fawning gift-bearer); the Cynics foes of Greece; the Dialecticians despoilers; and Pyrrho an ignorant boor.

Bailey, 1926

He says that Epicurus himself in his letters about Nausiphanes said, “This drove him to such a state of fury that he abused me and ironically called me Master.” He used to call Nausiphanes “The mollusk,” “The illiterate,” “The cheat,” “The harlot.” The followers of Plato he called “Flatterers of Dionysus,” and Plato himself “The golden man,” and Aristotle “The debauchee,” saying that he devoured his inheritance and then enlisted and sold drugs. Protagoras he called “Porter” or “Copier of Democritus,” saying that he taught in the village schools. Heraclitus he called “The Muddler,” Democritus [he called] Lerocritus (“judge of nonsense”), Antidorus he called Sannidorus (“Maniac”), the Cynics [he called] “Enemies of Hellas,” the Logicians [he called] “The destroyers,” and Pyrrho [he called] “The uneducated fool.”

Laërtius, c. 222-235

τῷ γὰρ ἀνδρὶ μάρτυρες ἱκανοὶ τῆς ἀνυπερβλήτου πρὸς πάντας εὐγνωμοσύνης ἥ τε πατρὶς χαλκαῖς εἰκόσι τιμήσασα, οἵ τε φίλοι τοσοῦτοι τὸ πλῆθος ὡς μηδ’ ἂν πόλεσιν ὅλαις μετρεῖσθαι δύνασθαι· οἵ τε γνώριμοι πάντες ταῖς δογματικαῖς αὐτοῦ σειρῆσι προσκατασχεθέντες, πλὴν Μητροδώρου τοῦ Στρατονικέως πρὸς Καρνεάδην ἀποχωρήσαντος, τάχα βαρυνθέντος ταῖς ἀνυπερβλήτοις αὐτοῦ χρηστότησιν· ἥ τε διαδοχή, πασῶν σχεδὸν ἐκλιπουσῶν τῶν ἄλλων, ἐς ἀεὶ διαμένουσα καὶ νηρίθμους ἀρχὰς ἀπολύουσα ἄλλην ἐξ ἄλλης τῶν γνωρίμων·

Yonge, 1853

But these men who say this are all crazy, for there are plenty of witnesses of the unsurpassable kindness of the man to everybody; both his own country which honoured him with brazen statues, and his friends who are so numerous that they could not be counted in whole cities; and all his acquaintances who were bound to him by nothing but the charms of his doctrine, none of whom ever deserted him, except Metrodorus, the son of Stratoniceus, who went over to Carneades, probably because he was not able to bear with equanimity the unapproachable excellence of Epicurus. Also, the perpetual succession of his school, which, when every other school decayed, continued without any falling off, and produced a countless number of philosophers, succeeding one another without any interruption.

Hicks, 1925

But these people are stark mad. For our philosopher has abundance of witnesses to attest his unsurpassed goodwill to all men – his native land, which honoured him with statues in bronze; his friends, so many in number that they could hardly be counted by whole cities, and indeed all who knew him, held fast as they were by the siren-charms of his doctrine, save Metrodorus of Stratonicea, who went over to Carneades, being perhaps burdened by his master’s excessive goodness; the School itself which, while nearly all the others have died out, continues for ever without interruption through numberless reigns of one scholarch after another;

Bailey, 1926

But these calumniators are all mad. For Epicurus has witnesses enough and to spare to his unsurpassed kindness to all men. There is his country which honoured him with bronze statues, his friends so numerous that they could not even be reckoned by entire cities, and his disciples who all remained bound forever by the charm of his teaching, except Metrodorus, son of Stratoniceus, who went over to Carneades, overweighted perhaps by Epicurus’ excessive goodness. There is also the permanent continuance of the school after almost all the others had come to an end, and that though it had a countless succession of heads from among the disciples.

Laërtius, c. 222-235

ἥ τε πρὸς τοὺς γονέας εὐχαριστία καὶ ἡ πρὸς τοὺς ἀδελφοὺς εὐποιία πρός τε τοὺς οἰκέτας ἡμερότης, ὡς δῆλον κἀκ τῶν διαθηκῶν αὐτοῦ καὶ ὅτι αὐτοὶ συνεφιλοσόφουν αὐτῷ, ὧν ἦν ἐνδοξότατος ὁ προειρημένος Μῦς· καθόλου τε ἡ πρὸς πάντας αὐτοῦ φιλανθρωπία. τῆς μὲν γὰρ πρὸς θεοὺς ὁσιότητος καὶ πρὸς πατρίδα φιλίας ἄλεκτος ἡ διάθεσις· ὑπερβολῇ γὰρ ἐπιεικείας οὐδὲ πολιτείας ἥψατο. καὶ χαλεπωτάτων δὲ καιρῶν κατασχόντων τηνικάδε τὴν Ἑλλάδα, αὐτόθι καταβιῶναι, δὶς ἢ τρὶς [εἰς] τοὺς περὶ τὴν Ἰωνίαν τόπους πρὸς τοὺς φίλους διαδραμόντα. οἳ καὶ πανταχόθεν πρὸς αὐτὸν ἀφικνοῦντο καὶ συνεβίουν αὐτῷ ἐν τῷ κήπῳ-καθά φησι καὶ Ἀπολλόδωρος· ὃν καὶ ὀγδοήκοντα μνῶν πρίασθαι.

Yonge, 1853

We may also speak here of his gratitude towards his parents, and his kindness to his brothers, and his gentleness to his servants (as is plain from his will, and from the fact too, that they united with him in his philosophical studies, and the most eminent of them was the one whom I have mentioned already, named Mys); and his universal philanthropy towards all men. His piety towards the gods, and his affection for his country was quite unspeakable; though, from an excess of modesty, he avoided affairs of the state. And though he lived when very difficult times oppressed Greece, he still remained in his own country, only going two or three times across to Ionia to see his friends, who used to throng to him from all quarters, and to live with him in his garden, as we are told by Apollodorus (this garden he bought for eighty minae).

Hicks, 1925

his gratitude to his parents, his generosity to his brothers, his gentleness to his servants, as evidenced by the terms of his will and by the fact that they were members of the School, the most eminent of them being the aforesaid Mys; and in general, his benevolence to all mankind. His piety towards the gods and his affection for his country no words can describe. He carried deference to others to such excess that he did not even enter public life. He spent all his life in Greece, notwithstanding the calamities which had befallen her in that age; when he did once or twice take a trip to Ionia, it was to visit his friends there. Friends indeed came to him from all parts and lived with him in his garden. This is stated by Apollodorus, who also says that he purchased the garden for eighty minae;

Bailey, 1926

There is again his grateful devotion to his parents, his generosity to his brothers, and his gentleness towards his servants, of whom the most notable was Mys, already mentioned, as is proved by his will and the part they took in his philosophical discussions. In short, there is his benevolence to all. Of his reverence towards the gods and his love of his country it would be impossible to speak adequately. But from excess of modesty he would not take any part in politics. Yet although Greece was at that time in great straits, he continued to live there, and only once or twice made a voyage to Ionia and the neighborhood to see his friends. But they came to him from all quarters, and took up their abode with him in the garden, as Apollodorus says [who adds that he bought it for eighty minae.

Laërtius, c. 222-235

Διοκλῆς δ’ ἐν τῇ τρίτῃ τῆς ἐπιδρομῆς φησιν-εὐτελέστατα καὶ λιτότατα διαιτώμενοι· “κοτύλῃ γοῦν,” φησίν, “οἰνιδίου ἠρκοῦντο, τὸ δὲ πᾶν ὕδωρ ἦν αὐτοῖς ποτόν.” τόν τ’ Ἐπίκουρον μὴ ἀξιοῦν εἰς τὸ κοινὸν κατατίθεσθαι τὰς οὐσίας, καθάπερ τὸν Πυθαγόραν κοινὰ τὰ φίλων λέγοντα· ἀπιστούντων γὰρ εἶναι τὸ τοιοῦτον· εἰ δ’ ἀπίστων οὐδὲ φίλων. αὐτός τέ φησιν ἐν ταῖς ἐπιστολαῖς, ὕδατι μόνον ἀρκεῖσθαι καὶ ἄρτῳ λιτῷ. καί, “πέμψον μοι τυροῦ,” φησί, “κυθριδίου, ἵν’ ὅταν βούλωμαι πολυτελεύσασθαι δύνωμαι.” τοιοῦτος ἦν ὁ τὴν ἡδονὴν εἶναι τέλος δογματίζων, ὃν καὶ Ἀθήναιος δι’ ἐπιγράμματος οὕτως ὑμνεῖ·

Yonge, 1853

And Diocles, in the third book of his Overview, says that they all lived in the most simple and economical manner; “They were content,” says he, “with a small cup of light wine, and all the rest of their drink was water.” He also tells us that Epicurus would not allow his followers to throw their property into a common stock, as Pythagoras did, who said that the possessions of friends were held in common. For he said that such a doctrine as that was suited rather for those who distrusted one another; and that those who distrusted one another were not friends. But he himself in his letters, says that he is content with water and plain bread, and adds, “Send me a cup, so that if I wish to have a feast, I may have the means.” This was the real character of the man who laid down the doctrine that pleasure was the chief good; who Athenaeus thus mentions in an epigram:

Hicks, 1925

and to the same effect Diocles in the third book of his Epitome speaks of them as living a very simple and frugal life; at all events they were content with half a pint of thin wine and were, for the rest, thorough-going water-drinkers. He further says that Epicurus did not think it right that their property should be held in common, as required by the maxim of Pythagoras about the goods of friends; such a practice in his opinion implied mistrust, and without confidence there is no friendship. In his correspondence he himself mentions that he was content with plain bread and water. And again: “Send me a little pot of cheese, that, when I like, I may fare sumptuously.” Such was the man who laid down that pleasure was the end of life. And here is the epigram in which Athenaeus eulogizes him:

Bailey, 1926

Diocles in the third book of his Course in Philosophy confirms this], living a most frugal and simple life. Indeed, he says, they were satisfied with half a pint of wine, and for the most part drank water. He adds that Epicurus did not recommend them to put their belongings into a common stock, as did Pythagoras, who said that “Friends have all in common.” For to do so implied distrust: and distrust could not go with friendship. Epicurus himself says in his letters that he was content with nothing but water and a bit of bread. “Send me,” he says, “some preserved cheese, that when I like I may have a feast.” Such was the man who taught that the end is pleasure. Athenaeus sings his praise in an epigram:

Life of Epicurus |12|

Laërtius, c. 222-235

ἄνθρωποι, μοχθεῖτε τὰ χείρονα, καὶ διὰ κέρδος ἄπληστοι νεικέων ἄρχετε καὶ πολέμων· τᾶς φύσιος δ’ ὁ πλοῦτος ὅρον τινὰ βαιὸν ἐπίσχει, αἱ δὲ κεναὶ κρίσιες τὰν ἀπέραντον ὁδόν, τοῦτο Νεοκλῆος πινυτὸν τέκος ἢ παρὰ Μουσέων ἔκλυεν ἢ Πυθοῦς ἐξ ἱερῶν τριπόδων.

εἰσόμεθα δὲ καὶ μᾶλλον προϊόντες ἔκ τε τῶν δογμάτων ἔκ τε τῶν ῥητῶν αὐτοῦ.

Μάλιστα δ’ ἀπεδέχετο, φησὶ Διοκλῆς, τῶν ἀρχαίων Ἀναξαγόραν, καίτοι ἔν τισιν ἀντειρηκὼς αὐτῷ, καὶ Ἀρχέλαον τὸν Σωκράτους διδάσκαλον. ἐγύμναζε δέ, φησί, τοὺς γνωρίμους καὶ διὰ μνήμης ἔχειν τὰ ἑαυτοῦ συγγράμματα.

Yonge, 1853

O men, you labour for pernicious ends; | And out of eager avarice, begin | Quarrels and wars. And yet the wealth of nature | Fixes a narrow limit for desires, | Though empty judgment is insatiable. | This lesson the wise child of Neocles | Had learnt by ear, instructed by the Muses, | Or at the sacred shrine of Delphi’s God.

And as we advance further, we shall learn this fact from his dogmas, and his maxims. Of all the ancient philosophers he was, as we are told by Diocles, most attached to Anaxagoras (although on some points he argued against him); and to Archelaus, the master of Socrates. And, Diocles adds, he used to accustom his pupils to preserve his writings in their memory.

Hicks, 1925

Ye toil, O men, for paltry things and incessantly | begin strife and war for gain; but nature’s wealth | extends to a moderate bound, whereas vain judgements | have a limitless range. This message Neocles’ wise son | heard from the Muses or from the sacred tripod at Delphi.

And, as we go on, we shall know this better from his doctrines and his sayings. Among the early philosophers, says Diocles, his favourite was Anaxagoras, although he occasionally disagreed with him, and Archelaus the teacher of Socrates. Diocles adds that he used to train his friends in committing his treatises to memory.

Bailey, 1926

Men toil at mean pursuits, for love of gain, | Insatiate they welcome war and strife; | Their idle fancies lead on endless paths, | But nature’s wealth is set in narrow bounds. | This truth the prudent son of Neocles | Learnt from the Muses or Apollo’s shrine.

The truth of this we shall know better as we go on from his own words and teaching. Diocles says that of the earlier philosophers he showed most sympathy with Anaxagoras, though on certain points he opposed him, and with Arclielaus, the master of Socrates. And, he adds, he used to practice his disciples in getting his writings by heart.

Laërtius, c. 222-235

Τοῦτον Ἀπολλόδωρος ἐν Χρονικοῖς Ναυσιφάνους ἀκοῦσαί φησι καὶ Πραξιφάνους· αὐτὸς δὲ οὔ φησιν, ἀλλ' ἑαυτοῦ, ἐν τῇ πρὸς Εὐρύλοχον ἐπιστολῇ. ἀλλ' οὐδὲ Λεύκιππόν τινα γεγενῆσθαί φησι φιλόσοφον, οὔτε αὐτὸς Ἕρμαρχος, ὃν ἔνιοί φασι καὶ Ἀπολλόδωρος ὁ Ἐπικούρειος διδάσκαλον Δημοκρίτου γεγενῆσθαι. Δημήτριος δέ φησιν ὁ Μάγνης καὶ Ξενοκράτους αὐτὸν ἀκοῦσαι.

Κέχρηται δὲ λέξει κυρίᾳ κατὰ τῶν πραγμάτων, ἣν ὅτι ἰδιωτάτη ἐστίν, Ἀριστοφάνης ὁ γραμματικὸς αἰτιᾶται. σαφὴς δ' ἦν οὕτως, ὡς καὶ ἐν τῷ Περὶ ῥητορικῆς ἀξιοῖ μηδὲν ἄλλο ἢ σαφήνειαν ἀπαιτεῖν.

Yonge, 1853

Apollodorus, in his Chronicles, asserts that he was a pupil of Nausiphanes, and Praxiphanes; but he himself does not mention this; but says in his letter to Eurylochus, that he had been his own instructor. He also agreed with Hermarchus in not admitting that Leucippus deserved to be called a philosopher; though some authors, among whom is Apollodorus, speak of him as the master of Democritus. Demetrius the Magnesian says that he was a pupil of Xenocrates also. He uses plain language in his works with respect to anything he is speaking of, for which Aristophanes, the grammarian, blames him, on the ground of that style being vulgar. But he was such an admirer of perspicuity, that even in his treatise on Rhetoric, he aims at and recommends nothing but clearness of expression.

Hicks, 1925

Apollodorus in his Chronology tells us that our philosopher was a pupil of Nausiphanes and Praxiphanes; but in his letter to Eurylochus, Epicurus himself denies it and says that he was self-taught. Both Epicurus and Hermarchus deny the very existence of Leucippus the philosopher, though by some and by Apollodorus the Epicurean he is said to have been the teacher of Democritus. Demetrius the Magnesian affirms that Epicurus also attended the lectures of Xenocrates. The terms he used for things were the ordinary terms, and Aristophanes the grammarian credits him with a very characteristic style. He was so lucid a writer that in the work On Rhetoric he makes clearness the sole requisite.

Bailey, 1926

Apollodorus in his Chronicles asserts that he listened to the teaching of Nausiphanes and Praxiphanes. Epicurus himself denies this in his letter to Eurylochus, and says he was his own teacher. And indeed both Epicurus and Hermarchus deny that there ever was such a philosopher as Leucippus, whom Apollodorus the Epicurean and others say was the master of Democritus. Demetrius of Magnesia says that he was also a follower of Xenocrates. He uses current diction to expound his theory, but Aristophanes the grammarian censures it as being too peculiar. But he was clear in expression, Just as in his book On Rhetoric he insists on clearness above everything.

Laërtius, c. 222-235

καὶ ἐν ταῖς ἐπιστολαῖς ἀντὶ τοῦ Χαίρειν Εὖ πράττειν καὶ Σπουδαίως ζῆν.

Ἀρίστων δέ φησιν ἐν τῷ Ἐπικούρου βίῳ τὸν Κανόνα γράψαι αὐτὸν ἐκ τοῦ Ναυσιφάνους Τρίποδος, οὗ καὶ ἀκοῦσαί φησιν αὐτόν, ἀλλὰ καὶ Παμφίλου τοῦ Πλατωνικοῦ ἐν Σάμῳ. ἄρξασθαί τε φιλοσοφεῖν ἐτῶν ὑπάρχοντα δυοκαίδεκα, ἀφηγήσασθαι δὲ τῆς σχολῆς ἐτῶν ὄντα δύο πρὸς τοῖς τριάκοντα.

Ἐγεννήθη δέ, φησὶν Ἀπολλόδωρος ἐν Χρονικοῖς, κατὰ τὸ τρίτον ἔτος τῆς ἑνάτης καὶ ἑκατοστῆς Ὀλυμπιάδος ἐπὶ Σωσιγένους ἄρχοντος μηνὸς Γαμηλιῶνος ἑβδόμῃ, ἔτεσιν ὕστερον τῆς Πλάτωνος τελευτῆς ἑπτά.

Yonge, 1853

And in his letters, instead of the usual civil expressions, “Greeting,” “Farewell,” and so on, he substitutes, “May you act well,” “May you live virtuously,” and expressions of that sort. Some of his biographers assert that it was he who composed the treatise entitled the Canon, in imitation of the Tripod of Nausiphanes, whose pupil they say that he was, and add that he was also a pupil of Pamphilus, the Platonist at Samos. They further tell us that he began to study philosophy at twelve years of age, and that he presided over his school thirty-two years. And he was born as we are told by Apollodorus, in his Chronicles, in the third year of the hundred and ninth Olympiad, in the archonship of Sosigenes [342/1 B.C.], on the seventh day of the month Gamelion [January/February], seven years after the death of Plato.

Hicks, 1925

And in his correspondence he replaces the usual greeting, “I wish you joy,” by wishes for welfare and right living, “May you do well,” and “Live well.” Ariston says in his Life of Epicurus that he derived his work entitled The Canon from the Tripod of Nausiphanes, adding that Epicurus had been a pupil of this man as well as of the Platonist Pamphilus in Samos. Further, that he began to study philosophy when he was twelve years old, and started his own school at thirty-two. He was born, according to Apollodorus in his Chronology, in the third year of the 109th Olympiad, in the archonship of Sosigenes, on the seventh day of the month Gamelion, in the seventh year after the death of Plato.

Bailey, 1926

In his letters he used to say “Prosper” or “Live well,” instead of the conventional introduction “Be happy.” Ariston in his Life of Epicurus says that he borrowed The Canon from the Tripod of Nausiphanes, whose pupil he says he was, as well as being a disciple of Pamphilus the Platonist in Samos. He states that Epicurus began philosophy at the age of twelve, and was at the head of his School at thirty-two. He was born, says Apollodorus in the Chronicles, in the third year of the 109th Olympiad in the archonship of Sosigenes on the seventh day of the month Gamelion, seven years after the death of Plato.

Laërtius, c. 222-235

ὑπάρχοντα δ’ αὐτὸν ἐτῶν δύο καὶ τριάκοντα πρῶτον ἐν Μυτιλήνῃ καὶ Λαμψάκῳ συστήσασθαι σχολὴν ἐπὶ ἔτη πέντε· ἔπειθ’ οὕτως εἰς Ἀθήνας μετελθεῖν καὶ τελευτῆσαι κατὰ τὸ δεύτερον ἔτος τῆς ἑβδόμης καὶ εἰκοστῆς καὶ ἑκατοστῆς Ὀλυμπιάδος ἐπὶ Πυθαράτου ἔτη βιώσαντα δύο πρὸς τοῖς ἑβδομήκοντα. τήν τε σχολὴν διαδέξασθαι Ἕρμαρχον Ἀγεμόρτου Μυτιληναῖον. τελευτῆσαι δ’ αὐτὸν λίθῳ τῶν οὔρων ἐπισχεθέντων, ὥς φησι καὶ Ἕρμαρχος ἐν ἐπιστολαῖς, ἡμέρας νοσήσαντα τετταρεσκαίδεκα. ὅτε καί φησιν Ἕρμιππος ἐμβάντα αὐτὸν εἰς πύελον χαλκῆν κεκραμένην ὕδατι θερμῷ καὶ αἰτήσαντα ἄκρατον ῥοφῆσαι·

Yonge, 1853

And when he was thirty-two years of age, he first set up his school at Mytilene, and after that at Lampsacus; and when he had spent five years in these two cities, he came to Athens; and he died there in the second year of the hundred and twenty-seventh Olympiad, in the archonship of Pytharatus [271/0 B.C.], when he had lived seventy-two years. And Hermarchus, the son of Agemarchus, and a citizen of Mytilene, succeeded him in his school. He died of the stone, as Hermarchus mentions in his letters, after having been ill a fortnight; and at the end of the fortnight, Hermippus says that he went into a brazen bath, properly tempered with warm water, and asked for a cup of pure wine and drank it;

Hicks, 1925

When he was thirty-two he founded a school of philosophy, first in Mitylene and Lampsacus, and then five years later removed to Athens, where he died in the second year of the 127th Olympiad, in the archonship of Pytharatus, at the age of seventy-two; and Hermarchus the son of Agemortus, a Mitylenaean, took over the School. Epicurus died of renal calculus after an illness which lasted a fortnight: so Hermarchus tells us in his letters. Hermippus relates that he entered a bronze bath of lukewarm water and asked for unmixed wine, which he swallowed,

Bailey, 1926

When he was thirty-two he started his school, first for five years at Mitylene and Lampsacus, and then he migrated to Athens. There he died in the second year of the 127th Olympiad in the archonship of Pytharatus, at the age of seventy-two. Hermarchus of Mitylene, son of Agemortus, succeeded to the headship of the school. Epicurus died of a stone in the bladder, as Hermarchus also says in his letters, after an illness of fourteen days. Hermippus tells us that as he was dying he got into a bronze bath filled with hot water, and asked for a cup of unmixed wine, which he gulped down.

Epicurus, c. 270 BCE

τοῖς τε φίλοις παραγγείλαντα τῶν δογμάτων μεμνῆσθαι οὕτω τελευτῆσαι.

Καὶ ἔστιν ἡμῶν εἰς αὐτὸν οὕτω·

χαίρετε, καὶ μέμνησθε τὰ δόγματα· τοῦτ' Ἐπίκουρος ὕστατον εἶπε φίλοις τοὔπος ἀποφθίμενος· θερμὴν δὲ πύελον γὰρ ἐληλύθεεν καὶ ἄκρατον ἔσπασεν, εἶτ' Ἀΐδην ψυχρὸν ἐπεσπάσατο.

οὗτος μὲν ὁ βίος τἀνδρός, ἥδε δὲ ἡ τελευτή.

Καὶ διέθετο ὧδε· "Κατὰ τάδε δίδωμι τὰ ἐμαυτοῦ πάντα Ἀμυνομάχῳ Φιλοκράτους Βατῆθεν καὶ Τιμοκράτει Δημητρίου Ποταμίῳ κατὰ τὴν ἐν τῷ Μητρῴῳ ἀναγεγραμμένην ἑκατέρῳ δόσιν,

Yonge, 1853

and having recommended his friends to remember his doctrines, he expired. And there is an epigram of ours on him, couched in the following language:

"Now, farewell, remember all my words;" | This was the dying charge of Epicurus. | Then to the bath he went, and drank some wine, | And sank beneath the cold embrace of Hades.

Such was the life of the man, and such was his death.

And he made his will in the following terms: "According to this, my will, I give all my possessions to Amynomachus, of Bate, the son of Philocrates, and to Timocrates, of Potamos, the son of Demetrius; according to the deed of gift to each, which is deposited in the Metroum;

Hicks, 1925

and then, having bidden his friends remember his doctrines, breathed his last. Here is something of my own about him:

Farewell, my friends; the truths I taught hold fast: | Thus Epicurus spake, and breathed his last. | He sat in a warm bath and neat wine quaff'd, | And straightway found chill death in that same draught.

Such was the life of the sage and such his end.

His last will was as follows: "On this wise I give and bequeath all my property to Amynomachus, son of Philocrates of Bate and Timocrates, son of Demetrius of Potamus, to each severally according to the items of the deed of gift laid up in the Metron,

Bailey, 1926

Then, having adjured his friends to remember his teaching, he expired. I have composed the following epigram on him:

"Farewell, remember my sayings." Thus spake at his death Epicurus, | These the last words as he died spake he aloud to his friends. | Then in a hot bath he laid him, a goblet of wine he demanded, | Quaffed it, and soon the cold air quaffed he of Hades below.

Such was Epicurus' life and such his death.

His will was as follows: I hereby leave all my possessions to Amynomachus, son of Philocrates, of the deme of Bate, and Timocrates, son of Demetrius, of the deme of Potamos, according to the form of gift to each registered in the Metroum,

Epicurus, c. 270 BCE

ἐφ’ ᾧ τε τὸν μὲν κῆπον καὶ τὰ προσόντα αὐτῷ παρέξουσιν Ἑρμάρχῳ Ἀγεμόρτου Μυτιληναίῳ καὶ τοῖς συμφιλοσοφοῦσιν αὐτῷ καὶ οἷς ἂν Ἕρμαρχος καταλίπῃ διαδόχοις τῆς φιλοσοφίας, ἐνδιατρίβειν κατὰ φιλοσοφίαν· καὶ ἀεὶ δὲ τοῖς φιλοσοφοῦσιν ἀπὸ ἡμῶν, ὅπως ἂν συνδιασώσωσιν Ἀμυνομάχῳ καὶ Τιμοκράτει κατὰ τὸ δυνατόν, τὴν ἐν τῷ κήπῳ διατριβὴν παρακατατίθεμαι τοῖς τ’ αὐτῶν κληρονόμοις, ἐν ᾧ ἄν ποτε τρόπῳ ἀσφαλέστατον ᾖ, ὅπως ἂν κἀκεῖνοι διατηρῶσιν τὸν κῆπον, καθάπερ καὶ αὐτοὶ οἷς ἂν οἱ ἀπὸ ἡμῶν φιλοσοφοῦντες παραδίδωσιν. τὴν δ’ οἰκίαν τὴν ἐν Μελίτῃ παρεχέτωσαν Ἀμυνόμαχος καὶ Τιμοκράτης ἐνοικεῖν Ἑρμάρχῳ καὶ τοῖς μετ’ αὐτοῦ φιλοσοφοῦσιν, ἕως ἂν Ἕρμαρχος ζῇ.

Yonge, 1853

on condition that they make over my garden and all that is attached to it to Hermarchus, of Mytilene, the son of Agemortus; and to those who study philosophy with him, and to whomsoever Hermarchus leaves as his successors in his school, that they may abide and dwell in it, in the study and practice of philosophy; and I give it also to all those who study philosophy according to my doctrines, that they may, to the best of their ability, maintain my school which exists in my garden, in concert with Amynomachus and Timocrates; and I enjoin their heirs to do the same in the most perfect and secure manner that they can; so that they also may maintain my garden, as those also shall to whom my immediate successors hand it down. As for the house in Melite, that Amynomachus and Timocrates shall allow Hermarchus that he may live in it during his life, together with all his companions in philosophy.

Hicks, 1925

on condition that they shall place the garden and all that pertains to it at the disposal of Hermarchus, son of Agemortus, of Mitylene, and the members of his society, and those whom Hermarchus may leave as his successors, to live and study in. And I entrust to my School in perpetuity the task of aiding Amynomachus and Timocrates and their heirs to preserve to the best of their power the common life in the garden in whatever way is best, and that these also (the heirs of the trustees) may help to maintain the garden in the same way as those to whom our successors in the School may bequeath it. And let Amynomachus and Timocrates permit Hermarchus and his fellow-members to live in the house in Melite for the lifetime of Hermarchus.

Bailey, 1926

on condition that they make over the garden and all that goes with it to Hermarchus, son of Ageniortus, of Mitylene, and to those who study philosophy with him and to those whom Hermarchus may leave as his successors in the school, for them to live there in the pursuit of philosophy. And to those who hereafter follow my philosophy I assign the right to live in the garden, that they may assist Amynomachus and Timocrates to maintain it to the best of their power, and to their heirs, in whatever way may give the securest possession, that they too may preserve the garden, and after them those to whom the disciples of my school may hand it on. The house in Melite, Amynomachus and Timocrates shall assign for a dwelling to Hermarchus and to those who study philosophy with him, as long as Hermarchus shall live.

Epicurus, c. 270 BCE

“Ἐκ δὲ τῶν γινομένων προσόδων τῶν δεδομένων ἀφ’ ἡμῶν Ἀμυνομάχῳ καὶ Τιμοκράτει κατὰ τὸ δυνατὸν μεριζέσθωσαν μεθ’ Ἑρμάρχου σκοπούμενοι εἵς τε τὰ ἐναγίσματα τῷ τε πατρὶ καὶ τῇ μητρὶ καὶ τοῖς ἀδελφοῖς, καὶ ἡμῖν εἰς τὴν εἰθισμένην ἄγεσθαι γενέθλιον ἡμέραν ἑκάστου ἔτους τῇ προτέρᾳ δεκάτῃ τοῦ Γαμηλιῶνος, ὥσπερ καὶ εἰς τὴν γινομένην σύνοδον ἑκάστου μηνὸς ταῖς εἰκάσι τῶν συμφιλοσοφούντων ἡμῖν εἰς τὴν ἡμῶν τε καὶ Μητροδώρου κατατεταγμένην. συντελείτωσαν δὲ καὶ τὴν τῶν ἀδελφῶν ἡμέραν τοῦ Ποσειδεῶνος· συντελείτωσαν δὲ καὶ τὴν Πολυαίνου τοῦ Μεταγειτνιῶνος καθάπερ καὶ ἡμεῖς.

Yonge, 1853

“Out of the income which is derived from that property, which is here bequeathed by me to Amynomachus and Timocrates, I will that they, consulting with Hermarchus, shall arrange in the best manner possible the offerings to the names in honour of the memory of my father, and mother, and brothers, and myself, and that my birthday may be kept as it has been in the habit of being kept, on the tenth day of the month Gamelion; and that the reunion of all the philosophers of our school, established in honour of Metrodorus and myself, may take place on the twentieth day of every month. They shall also celebrate, as I have been in the habit of doing myself, the day consecrated to my brothers, in the month Poseideon; and the day consecrated to memory of Polyaenus, in the month Metageitnion.

Hicks, 1925

“And from the revenues made over by me to Amynomachus and Timocrates let them to the best of their power in consultation with Hermarchus make separate provision (1) for the funeral offerings to my father, mother, and brothers, and (2) for the customary celebration of my birthday on the tenth day of Gamelion in each year, and for the meeting of all my School held every month on the twentieth day to commemorate Metrodorus and myself according to the rules now in force. Let them also join in celebrating the day in Poseideon which commemorates my brothers, and likewise the day in Metageitnion which commemorates Polyaenus, as I have done hitherto.

Bailey, 1926

The income of the property left by me to Amynomachus and Timocrates shall be divided by them as far as possible, with the advice of Hermarchus, for the offerings in honor of my father and mother and brothers, and for the customary celebration of my birthday every year on the tenth of Gamelion, and likewise for the assembly of my disciples which takes place on the twentieth of each month, having been established in recollection of myself and Metrodorus. Let them also keep the day of my brothers in Poseideon and the day of Polyaenus in Metageitmon, as I have done myself.

Epicurus, c. 270 BCE

“Ἐπιμελείσθωσαν δὲ καὶ Ἀμυνόμαχος καὶ Τιμοκράτης τοῦ υἱοῦ τοῦ Μητροδώρου Ἐπικούρου καὶ τοῦ υἱοῦ τοῦ Πολυαίνου, φιλοσοφούντων αὐτῶν καὶ συζώντων μεθ’ Ἑρμάρχου. ὡσαύτως δὲ τῆς θυγατρὸς τῆς Μητροδώρου τὴν ἐπιμέλειαν ποιείσθωσαν, καὶ εἰς ἡλικίαν ἐλθοῦσαν ἐκδότωσαν ᾧ ἂν Ἕρμαρχος ἕληται τῶν φιλοσοφούντων μετ’ αὐτοῦ, οὔσης αὐτῆς εὐτάκτου καὶ πειθαρχούσης Ἑρμάρχῳ. διδότωσαν δ’ Ἀμυνόμαχος καὶ Τιμοκράτης ἐκ τῶν ὑπαρχουσῶν ἡμῖν προσόδων εἰς τροφὴν τούτοις, ὅ τι ἂν αὐτοῖς κατ’ ἐνιαυτὸν ἐπιδέχεσθαι δοκῇ σκοπουμένοις μεθ’ Ἑρμάρχου.

Yonge, 1853

“Amynomachus and Timocrates shall be the guardians of Epicurus, the son of Metrodorus, and of the son of Polyaenus, as long as they study philosophy under, and live with Hermarchus. In the same way also, they shall be the guardians of the daughter of Metrodorus, and when she is of marriageable age, they shall give her to whomsoever Hermarchus shall select of his companions in philosophy, provided she is well behaved and obedient to Hermarchus. And Amynomachus and Timocrates shall, out of my income, give them such a sum for their support as shall appear sufficient year by year, after due consultation with Hermarchus.

Hicks, 1925

“And let Amynomachus and Timocrates take care of Epicurus, the son of Metrodorus, and of the son of Polyaenus, so long as they study and live with Hermarchus. Let them likewise provide for the maintenance of Metrodorus’s daughter, so long as she is well-ordered and obedient to Hermarchus; and, when she comes of age, give her in marriage to a husband selected by Hermarchus from among the members of the School; and out of the revenues accruing to me let Amynomachus and Timocrates in consultation with Hermarchus give to them as much as they think proper for their maintenance year by year.

Bailey, 1926

Amynomachus and Timocrates shall take care of Epicurus, the son of Metrodorus, and of the son of Polyaenus, provided they devote themselves to philosophy and live with Hermarchus. Likewise they shall take care of Metrodorus’ daughter, and when she comes of age shall give her in marriage to one of his disciples whom Hermarchus shall choose, provided she is well-behaved and obedient to Hermarchus. Amynomachus and Timocrates shall set aside for the maintenance of these children such sum out of the revenues of my estate as shall seem good to them each year in consultation with Hermarchus.

Epicurus, c. 270 BCE

“Ποιείσθωσαν δὲ μεθ’ αὐτῶν καὶ Ἕρμαρχον κύριον τῶν προσόδων, ἵνα μετὰ τοῦ συγκαταγεγηρακότος ἡμῖν ἐν φιλοσοφίᾳ καὶ καταλελειμμένου ἡγεμόνος τῶν συμφιλοσοφούντων ἡμῖν ἅπαντα γίνηται. τὴν δὲ προῖκα τῷ θήλει παιδίῳ, ἐπειδὰν εἰς ἡλικίαν ἔλθῃ, μερισάτωσαν Ἀμυνόμαχος καὶ Τιμοκράτης ὅσον ἂν ἐπιδέχηται ἀπὸ τῶν ὑπαρχόντων ἀφαιροῦντες μετὰ τῆς Ἑρμάρχου γνώμης. ἐπιμελείσθωσαν δὲ καὶ Νικάνορος, καθάπερ καὶ ἡμεῖς, ἵν’ ὅσοι τῶν φιλοσοφούντων ἡμῖν χρείαν ἐν τοῖς ἰδίοις παρεσχημένοι καὶ τὴν πᾶσαν οἰκειότητα ἐνδεδειγμένοι συγκαταγηράσκειν μεθ’ ἡμῶν προείλοντο ἐν φιλοσοφίᾳ, μηδενὸς τῶν ἀναγκαίων ἐνδεεῖς καθεστήκωσιν παρὰ τὴν ἡμετέραν δύναμιν.

Yonge, 1853

“And they shall associate Hermarchus with themselves in the management of my revenues, in order that everything may be done with the approval of that man who has grown old with me in the study of philosophy, and who is now left as the president of all those who have studied philosophy with us. And as for the dowry for the girl when she is come to marriageable age, let Amynomachus and Timocrates arrange that, taking for the purpose such a sum from my property as shall seem to them, in conjunction with Hermarchus, to be reasonable. And let them also take care of Nicanor, as we ourselves have done; in order that all those who have studied philosophy with us, and who have assisted us with their means, and who have shown great friendship for us, and who have chosen to grow old with us in the study of philosophy, may never be in want of anything as far as our power to prevent it may extend.

Hicks, 1925

“Let them make Hermarchus trustee of the funds along with themselves, in order that everything may be done in concert with him, who has grown old with me in philosophy and is left at the head of the School. And when the girl comes of age, let Amynomachus and Timocrates pay her dowry, taking from the property as much as circumstances allow, subject to the approval of Hermarchus. Let them provide for Nicanor as I have hitherto done, so that none of those members of the school who have rendered service to me in private life and have shown me kindness in every way and have chosen to grow old with me in the School should, so far as my means go, lack the necessaries of life.

Bailey, 1926

They shall give Hermarchus authority with themselves over the income, in order that everything may be done in consultation with the man who has grown old with me in the study of philosophy and has been left by me head of the school. The dowry for the girl, when she comes of age, shall be apportioned by Amynomachus and Timocrates, who shall take a suitable sum from the capital with the approval of Hermarchus. They shall also take care of Nicanor, as I have done, to show that those who have studied with me and have met my needs from their own resources and shown me every mark of friendship and elected to grow old with me in the study of philosophy, may not lack for anything that is necessary, as far as lies in my power.

Epicurus, c. 270 BCE

“Δοῦναι δὲ τὰ βιβλία τὰ ὑπάρχοντα ἡμῖν πάντα Ἑρμάρχῳ.

“Ἐὰν δέ τι τῶν ἀνθρωπίνων περὶ Ἕρμαρχον γένηται πρὸ τοῦ τὰ Μητροδώρου παιδία εἰς ἡλικίαν ἐλθεῖν, δοῦναι Ἀμυνόμαχον καὶ Τιμοκράτην, ὅπως ἂν εὐτακτούντων αὐτῶν ἕκαστα γίνηται τῶν ἀναγκαίων, κατὰ τὸ δυνατὸν ἀπὸ τῶν καταλελειμμένων ὑφ’ ἡμῶν προσόδων. καὶ τῶν λοιπῶν ἁπάντων ὡς συντετάχαμεν ἐπιμελείσθωσαν, ὅπως ἂν κατὰ τὸ ἐνδεχόμενον ἕκαστα γίγνηται. ἀφίημι δὲ τῶν παίδων ἐλεύθερον Μῦν, Νικίαν, Λύκωνα· ἀφίημι δὲ καὶ Φαίδριον ἐλευθέραν.”

Yonge, 1853

“I further enjoin them to give all my books to Hermarchus;

“and, if anything should happen to Hermarchus before the children of Metrodorus are grown up, then I desire that Amynomachus and Timocrates, shall take care that, provided they are well behaved, they shall have everything that is necessary for them, as far as the estate which I leave behind me shall allow such things to be furnished to them. And the same men shall also take care of everything else that I have enjoined; so that it may all be fulfilled, as far as the case may permit. Of my slaves, I hereby emancipate Mys, and Nicias, and Lycon: I also give Phaedriŏn her freedom.”

Hicks, 1925

“All my books to be given to Hermarchus.

“And if anything should happen to Hermarchus before the children of Metrodorus grow up, Amynomachus and Timocrates shall give from the funds bequeathed by me, so far as possible, enough for their several needs, as long as they are well ordered. And let them provide for the rest according to my arrangements; that everything may be carried out, so far as it lies in their power. Of my slaves I manumit Mys, Nicias, Lycon, and I also give Phaedrium her liberty.”

Bailey, 1926

They are to give all the books that belong to me to Hermarchus.

And if any mortal chance befall Hermarchus before Metrodorus’ children come of age, Amynomachus and Timocrates shall as far as possible provide all that is necessary from the income of my estate, if the children are well-behaved. They shall carefully carry out all my other arrangements, so that each may be fulfilled as far as possible. Of my slaves I set free Mys, Nicias and Lycon, and I also set Phaedrium free.

Letter to Idomeneus |22|

Epicurus, c. 270 BCE

Ἤδη δὲ τελευτῶν γράφει πρὸς Ἰδομενέα τήνδε ἐπιστολήν·

“Τὴν μακαρίαν ἄγοντες καὶ ἅμα τελευταίαν ἡμέραν τοῦ βίου ἐγράφομεν ὑμῖν ταυτί. στραγγουρικά τε παρηκολούθει καὶ δυσεντερικὰ πάθη ὑπερβολὴν οὐκ ἀπολείποντα τοῦ ἐν ἑαυτοῖς μεγέθους. ἀντιπαρετάττετο δὲ πᾶσι τούτοις τὸ κατὰ ψυχὴν χαῖρον ἐπὶ τῇ τῶν γεγονότων ἡμῖν διαλογισμῶν μνήμῃ. σὺ δ’ ἀξίως τῆς ἐκ μειρακίου παραστάσεως πρὸς ἐμὲ καὶ φιλοσοφίαν ἐπιμελοῦ τῶν παίδων Μητροδώρου.”

Καὶ έθετο μὲν ὧδε.

Μαθητὰς δὲ ἔσχε πολλοὺς μέν, σφόδρα δὲ ἐλλογίμους Μητρόδωρον Ἀθηναίου ἢ Τιμοκράτους καὶ Σάνδης Λαμψακηνόν· ὃς ἀφ’ οὗ τὸν ἄνδρα ἔγνω, οὐκ ἀπέστη ἀπ’ αὐτοῦ πλὴν ἓξ μηνῶν εἰς τὴν οἰκείαν, ἔπειτ’ ἐπανῆλθε.

Yonge, 1853

And when he was at the point of death, he wrote the following letter to Idomeneus: “We have written this letter to you on a happy day to us, which is also the last day of our life. For strangury has attacked me, and also a dysentery, so violent that nothing can be added to the violence of my sufferings. But the cheerfulness of my mind, which arises from there collection of all my philosophical contemplation, counterbalances all these afflictions. And I beg you to take care of the children of Metrodorus, in a manner worth of the devotion shown by the youth to me, and to philosophy.” Such then as I have given it, was his will.

He had a great number of pupils, of whom the most eminent included Metrodorus, the son of Athenaeus or Timocrates and Sande, of Lampsacus; who, from the time that he first became acquainted with him, never left him, except one when he went home for six months, after which he returned to him.

Hicks, 1925

And when near his end he wrote the following letter to Idomeneus: “On this blissful day, which is also the last of my life, I write this to you. My continual sufferings from strangury and dysentery are so great that nothing could augment them; but over against them all I set gladness of mind at the remembrance of our past conversations. But I would have you, as becomes your life-long attitude to me and to philosophy, watch over the children of Metrodorus.” Such were the terms of his will.

Among his disciples, of whom there were many, the following were eminent: Metrodorus, the son of Athenaeus (or of Timocrates) and of Sande, a citizen of Lampsacus, who from his first acquaintance with Epicurus never left him except once for six months spent on a visit to his native place, from which he returned to him again.

Bailey, 1926

When he was on the point of death he wrote the following letter to Idomeneus: “On this truly happy day of my life, as I am at the point of death, I write this to you. The disease in my bladder and stomach are pursuing their course, lacking nothing of their natural severity: but against all this is the joy in my heart at the recollection of my conversations with you. Do you, as I might expect from your devotion from boyhood to me and to philosophy, take good care of the children of Metrodorus.” Such then was his will.

He had many disciples, but among the most distinguished was first Metrodorus, son of Athenaeus (or Timocrates) and Sande, of Lampsacus. From the time when he first came to know Epicurus he never left him, except when he went to his native city for six months, and then he came back.

Other Epicureans |23|

Laërtius, c. 222-235

γέγονε δὲ ἀγαθὸς πάντα, καθὰ καὶ Ἐπίκουρος ἐν προηγουμέναις γραφαῖς μαρτυρεῖ καὶ ἐν τῷ τρίτῳ Τιμοκράτους. τοιοῦτος δ’ ὢν καὶ τὴν ἀδελφὴν Βατίδα ἐξέδοτο Ἰδομενεῖ, καὶ Λεόντιον τὴν Ἀττικὴν ἑταίραν ἀναλαβὼν εἶχε παλλακήν. ἦν δὲ καὶ ἀκατάπληκτος πρός τε τὰς ὀχλήσεις καὶ τὸν θάνατον, ὡς Ἐπίκουρος ἐν τῷ πρώτῳ Μητροδώρῳ φησί. φασὶ δὲ καὶ πρὸ ἑπτὰ ἐτῶν αὐτοῦ τελευτῆσαι πεντηκοστὸν τρίτον ἔτος ἄγοντα, καὶ αὐτὸς Ἐπίκουρος ἐν ταῖς προειρημέναις διαθήκαις, ὡς προαπεληλυθότος αὐτοῦ δηλονότι, ἐπισκήπτει περὶ τῆς ἐπιμελείας αὐτοῦ τῶν παίδων. ἔσχε δὲ καὶ τὸν προειρημένον εἰκαῖόν τινα ἀδελφὸν τοῦ Μητροδώρου Τιμοκράτην.

Yonge, 1853

And he was a virtuous man in every respect, as Epicurus tells us in his Fundamental Principles. And he also bears witness to his virtue in the third book of his Timocrates. And being a man of this character, he gave his sister Batis in marriage to Idomeneus; and he himself had Leontiŏn, the Attic courtesan, for his concubine. He was very unmoved at all disturbances, and even at death; as Epicurus tells us, in the first book of his Metrodorus. He is said to have died seven years before Epicurus himself, in the fifty-third year of his age. And Epicurus himself, in the will which I have given above, gives many charges about the guardianship of his children, showing by this that he had been dead some time. He also had a brother whom I have mentioned before, of the name of Timocrates, a trifling, silly man.

Hicks, 1925

His goodness was proved in all ways, as Epicurus testifies in the introductions to his works and in the third book of the Timocrates. Such he was: he gave his sister Batis to Idomeneus to wife, and himself took Leontion the Athenian courtesan as his concubine. He showed dauntless courage in meeting troubles and death, as Epicurus declares in the first book of his memoir. He died, we learn, seven years before Epicurus in his fifty-third year, and Epicurus himself in his will already cited clearly speaks of him as departed, and enjoins upon his executors to make provision for Metrodorus’s children. The above-mentioned Timocrates also, the brother of Metrodorus and a giddy fellow, was another of his pupils.

Bailey, 1926

He was a good man in all respects, as Epicurus too bears witness in prologues to his writings and in the third book of his Timocrates. Such was his character: his sister Batis he married to Idomeneus, and had for his own mistress Leontion the Athenian hetaera. He was imperturbable in the face of trouble and of death, as Epicurus says in the first book of his Metrodorus. They say that he died at the age of fifty-two, seven years before Epicurus, and of this Epicurus gives evidence, since in the will already quoted he makes provision for the care of his children, implying that he had already died. He had also as a disciple Timocrates, Metrodorus’ brother, who has been mentioned already, an aimless person.

Other Epicureans |24|

Laërtius, c. 222-235

Βιβλία δέ ἐστι τοῦ Μητροδώρου τάδε·

Πρὸς τοὺς ἰατρούς, τρία, Περὶ αἰσθήσεων, Πρὸς Τιμοκράτην, Περὶ μεγαλοψυχίας, Περὶ τῆς Ἐπικούρου ἀρρωστίας, Πρὸς τοὺς διαλεκτικούς, Πρὸς τοὺς σοφιστάς, ἐννέα, Περὶ τῆς ἐπὶ σοφίαν πορείας, Περὶ τῆς μεταβολῆς, Περὶ πλούτου, Πρὸς Δημόκριτον, Περὶ εὐγενείας.

Ἦν καὶ Πολύαινος Ἀθηνοδώρου Λαμψακηνός, ἐπιεικὴς καὶ φιλικός, ὡς οἱ περὶ Φιλόδημόν φασι. καὶ ὁ διαδεξάμενος αὐτὸν Ἕρμαρχος Ἀγεμόρτου Μυτιληναῖος, ἀνὴρ πατρὸς μὲν πένητος, τὰς δ’ ἀρχὰς προσέχων ῥητορικοῖς.

Φέρεται καὶ τούτου βιβλία κάλλιστα τάδε·

Yonge, 1853

The writings of Metrodorus are these:

three books addressed to Physicians; one essay on the Sensations; one addressed to Timocrates; one on Magnanimity; one on the Illness of Epicurus; one addressed to the Dialecticians; nine books against the Sophists; one on the Road to Wisdom; one on Change; one on Riches; one against Democritus; one on Nobility of Birth.

Likewise Polyaenus, of Lampsacus, the son of Athenodorus, was a man of mild and friendly manners, as Philodemus particularly assures us. And his successor was Hermarchus, of Mytilene, the son of Agemortus (a poor man), whose favourite pursuit was rhetoric.

And the following excellent works of his are extant:

Hicks, 1925

Metrodorus wrote the following works:

Against the Physicians, in three books; Of Sensations; Against Timocrates; Of Magnanimity; Of Epicurus’s Weak Health; Against the Dialecticians; Against the Sophists, in nine books; The Way to Wisdom; Of Change; Of Wealth; In Criticism of Democritus; Of Noble Birth.

Next came Polyaenus, son of Athenodorus, a citizen of Lampsacus, a just and kindly man, as Philodemus and his pupils affirm. Next came Epicurus’s successor Hermarchus, son of Agemortus, a citizen of Mytilene, the son of a poor man and at the outset a student of rhetoric.

There are in circulation the following excellent works by him:

Bailey, 1926

Metrodorus’ writings were as follows:

Three books Against the Physicians; About Sensations; To Timocrates; Concerning Magnanimity; About Epicurus’ Ill Health; Against the Logicians; Nine books Against the Sophists; Concerning the Path To Wisdom; Concerning Change; Concerning Wealth; Against Democritus; Concerning Nobility of Birth.

There was also Polyaenus, son of Athenodorus, of Lampsacus, a modest and friendly man, as Philodemus and his followers say. Also Hermarchus, Epicurus’ successor, son of Agemortus, of Mytilene, the son of a poor father, and at first a student of rhetoric.

His best books are said to be

Other Epicureans |25|

Laërtius, c. 222-235

Ἐπιστολικὰ, περὶ Ἐμπεδοκλέους εἴκοσι καὶ δύο, Περὶ τῶν μαθημάτων, Πρὸς Πλάτωνα, Πρὸς Ἀριστοτέλην.

Ἐτελεύτα δὲ παραλύσει, γενόμενος ἱκανὸς ἀνήρ.

Λεοντεύς τε Λαμψακηνὸς ὁμοίως καὶ ἡ τούτου γυνὴ Θεμίστα, πρὸς ἣν καὶ γέγραφεν ὁ Ἐπίκουρος· ἔτι τε Κολώτης καὶ Ἰδομενεύς, καὶ αὐτοὶ Λαμψακηνοί. καὶ οὗτοι μὲν ἐλλόγιμοι, ὧν ἦν καὶ Πολύστρατος ὁ διαδεξάμενος Ἕρμαρχον· ὃν διεδέξατο Διονύσιος· ὃν Βασιλείδης. καὶ Ἀπολλόδωρος δ’ ὁ Κηποτύραννος γέγονεν ἐλλόγιμος, ὃς ὑπὲρ τετρακόσια συνέγραψε βιβλία· δύο τε Πτολεμαῖοι Ἀλεξανδρεῖς, ὅ τε μέλας καὶ ὁ λευκός. Ζήνων τε ὁ Σιδώνιος, ἀκροατὴς Ἀπολλοδώρου, πολυγράφος ἀνήρ·

Yonge, 1853

Twenty-two books of letters about Empedocles; an essay on Mathematics; a treatise against Plato; another against Aristotle.

And he died of paralysis, being a most eminent man.

There was also Leonteus, of Lampsacus, and his wife Themista, to whom Epicurus wrote. There were also Colotes and Idomeneus; and these also were natives of Lampsacus. And among the most eminent philosophers of the school of Epicurus, were Polystratus, who succeeded Hermarchus, and Dionysius who succeeded him, and Basileides who succeeded him. Likewise Apollodorus, who was nicknamed the tyrant of the garden, was a very eminent man, and wrote more than four hundred books. And there were the two Ptolemaei of Alexandria, Ptolemaeus the Black, and Ptolemaeus the Fair. And Zenon of Sidon, a pupil of Apollodorus, a very voluminous author;

Hicks, 1925

Correspondence concerning Empedocles, in twenty-two books; Of Mathematics; Against Plato; Against Aristotle.

He died of paralysis, but not till he had given full proof of his ability.

And then there is Leonteus of Lampsacus and his wife Themista, to whom Epicurus wrote letters; further, Colotes and Idomeneus, who were also natives of Lampsacus. All these were distinguished, and with them Polystratus, the successor of Hermarchus; he was succeeded by Dionysius, and he by Basilides. Apollodorus, known as the tyrant of the garden, who wrote over four hundred books, is also famous; and the two Ptolemaei of Alexandria, the one black and the other white; and Zeno of Sidon, the pupil of Apollodorus, a voluminous author;

Bailey, 1926

these twenty-two essays in the form of letters On Empedocles; On Science; Against Plato; Against Aristotle.

He was a good man and died of paralysis.

Likewise there was Leontius of Lampsacus and his wife Themista, to whom Epicurus addressed one of his letters. Also Colotes and Idomeneus, both of Lampsacus. They too were distinguished, as was also Polystratus who succeeded Hermarchus; then followed Dionysius and after him Basilides. Apollodorus the “King of the Garden” was also famous, and wrote over four hundred volumes. There were also the two Ptolemies of Alexandria, the Black and the White, Zeno of Sidon, a pupil of Apollodorus, a prolific writer,

Laërtius, c. 222-235

καὶ Δημήτριος ὁ ἐπικληθεὶς Λάκων· Διογένης τε ὁ Ταρσεὺς ὁ τὰς ἐπιλέκτους σχολὰς συγγράψας· καὶ Ὡρίων καὶ ἄλλοι οὓς οἱ γνήσιοι Ἐπικούρειοι σοφιστὰς ἀποκαλοῦσιν.

Ἦσαν δὲ καὶ ἄλλοι Ἐπίκουροι τρεῖς· ὅ τε Λεοντέως υἱὸς καὶ Θεμίστας· ἕτερος Μάγνης· τέταρτος ὁπλομάχος.

Γέγονε δὲ πολυγραφώτατος ὁ Ἐπίκουρος, πάντας ὑπερβαλλόμενος πλήθει βιβλίων· κύλινδροι μὲν γὰρ πρὸς τοὺς τριακοσίους εἰσί. γέγραπται δὲ μαρτύριον ἔξωθεν ἐν αὐτοῖς οὐδέν, ἀλλ’ αὐτοῦ εἰσιν Ἐπικούρου φωναί. ἐζήλου δὲ αὐτὸν Χρύσιππος ἐν πολυγραφίᾳ, καθά φησι Καρνεάδης παράσιτον αὐτὸν τῶν βιβλίων ἀποκαλῶν· εἰ γάρ τι γράψαι ὁ Ἐπίκουρος, φιλονεικεῖ τοσοῦτον γράψαι ὁ Χρύσιππος.

Yonge, 1853

and Demetrius, who was surnamed the Laconian; and Diogenes of Tarsus, who wrote the Select Dialogues; and Orion, and others whom the genuine Epicureans call Sophists.

There were also three other persons of the name of Epicurus; first, the son of Leonteus and Themista; secondly, a native of Magnesia; and lastly, a gladiator.

And Epicurus was a most voluminous author, exceeding all men in the number of his books; for there are more than three hundred volumes of them; and in the whole of them there is not one citation from other sources, but they are filled wholly with the sentiments of Epicurus himself. In the quantity of his writings he was rivalled by Chrysippus, as Carneades asserts, who calls him a parasite of the books of Epicurus; for if ever this latter wrote anything, Chrysippus immediately set his heart on writing a book of equal size;

Hicks, 1925

and Demetrius, who was called the Laconian; and Diogenes of Tarsus, who compiled the select lectures; and Orion, and others whom the genuine Epicureans call Sophists.

There were three other men who bore the name of Epicurus: one the son of Leonteus and Themista; another a Magnesian by birth; and a third, a drill-sergeant.

Epicurus was a most prolific author and eclipsed all before him in the number of his writings: for they amount to about three hundred rolls, and contain not a single citation from other authors; it is Epicurus himself who speaks throughout. Chrysippus tried to outdo him in authorship according to Carneades, who therefore calls him the literary parasite of Epicurus. “For every subject treated by Epicurus, Chrysippus in his contentiousness must treat at equal length;

Bailey, 1926

Demetrius called the Laconian, Diogenes of Tarsus who wrote Selected Lessons, Orion, and others whom the genuine Epicureans call Sophists.

There were three other Epicuruses, the son of Leonteus and Themista, another, who was a Magnesian, while the fourth was a drill-sergeant.

Epicurus was a very prolific writer, and exceeded all others in the bulk of his works, of which there are more than three hundred rolls. There is not in them one single citation from another author - it is all Epicurus’ own words. Chrysippus tried to rival him in the amount of his writings, as Carneades tells us, calling him the parasite who fed on Epicurus’ books. “Whenever Epicurus wrote anything, Chrysippus felt bound in rivalry to write the equivalent;

Laërtius, c. 222-235

καὶ διὰ τοῦτο καὶ πολλάκις ταὐτὰ γέγραφε καὶ τὸ ἐπελθόν, καὶ ἀδιόρθωτα εἴακε τῷ ἐπείγεσθαι· καὶ τὰ μαρτύρια τοσαῦτά ἐστιν ὡς ἐκείνων μόνων γέμειν τὰ βιβλία, καθάπερ καὶ παρὰ Ζήνωνι ἔστιν εὑρεῖν καὶ παρὰ Ἀριστοτέλει. καὶ τὰ συγγράμματα μὲν Ἐπικούρῳ τοσαῦτα καὶ τηλικαῦτα, ὧν τὰ βέλτιστά ἐστι τάδε·

Περὶ φύσεως, ἑπτὰ καὶ τριάκοντα, Περὶ ἀτόμων καὶ κενοῦ, Περὶ ἔρωτος, Ἐπιτομὴ τῶν πρὸς τοὺς φυσικούς, Πρὸς τοὺς Μεγαρικούς, Διαπορίαι, Κύριαι δόξαι, Περὶ αἱρέσεων καὶ φυγῶν, Περὶ τέλους, Περὶ κριτηρίου ἢ Κανών, Χαιρέδημος, Περὶ θεῶν, Περὶ ὁσιότητος,

Yonge, 1853

and in this way he often wrote the same thing over again; putting down whatever came into his head; and he published it all without any corrections, by reason of his haste. And he quotes such numbers of testimonies from other authors, that his books are entirely filled with them alone; as one may find also in the works of Aristotle and Zeno. Such then, so numerous are the works of Epicurus; the chief of which are the following:

thirty-seven treatises on Natural Philosophy; one on Atoms and the Void; one on Love; an abridgment of the Arguments employed against the Natural Philosophers; one against the Doctrines of the Megarians; Problems; Fundamental Propositions; a treatise on Choice and Avoidance; another on the Chief Good; another on the Criterion, called also the Canon; Chaeredemus, a treatise on the Gods; one on Piety;

Hicks, 1925

hence he has frequently repeated himself and set down the first thought that occurred to him, and in his haste has left things unrevised, and he has so many citations that they alone fill his books: nor is this unexampled in Zeno and Aristotle.“ Such, then, in number and character are the writings of Epicurus, the best of which are the following:

Of Nature, thirty-seven books; Of Atoms and Void; Of Love; Epitome of Objections to the Physicists; Against the Megarians; Problems; Sovran Maxims; Of Choice and Avoidance; Of the End; Of the Standard, a work entitled Canon; Chaeredemus; Of the Gods; Of Piety;

Bailey, 1926

and this is why he often repeats himself and says whatever occurs to him, and has left a great deal uncorrected in his hurry; moreover, he has so many quotations that his books are filled with them and nothing else, a characteristic which one may observe also in the writings of Zeno and Aristotle. Such are the numerous and important works of Epicurus, of which the best are the following:

On Nature, thirty-seven books; On Atoms And Void; On Love; Epitome of the books Against the Physicists; Against the Megarians; Problems; Principal Doctrines; On Choice and Avoidance; On the End; the Criterion, or The Canon; Chaeredemus; On the Gods; On Religion;

Laërtius, c. 222-235

Ἡγησιάναξ, Περὶ βίων δ′, Περὶ δικαιοπραγίας, Νεοκλῆς πρὸς Θεμίσταν, Συμπόσιον, Εὐρύλοχος πρὸς Μητρόδωρον, Περὶ τοῦ ὁρᾶν, Περὶ τῆς ἐν τῇ ἀτόμῳ γωνίας, Περὶ ἁφῆς, Περὶ εἱμαρμένης, Περὶ παθῶν δόξαι πρὸς Τιμοκράτην, Προγνωστικόν, Προτρεπτικός, Περὶ εἰδώλων, Περὶ φαντασίας, Ἀριστόβουλος, Περὶ μουσικῆς, Περὶ δικαιοσύνης καὶ τῶν ἄλλων ἀρετῶν, Περὶ δώρων καὶ χάριτος, Πολυμήδης, Τιμοκράτης γ′, Μητρόδωρος ε′, Ἀντίδωρος β′, Περὶ νόσων δόξαι πρὸς Μίθρην, Καλλιστόλας, Περὶ βασιλείας, Ἀναξιμένης, Ἐπιστολαί.

Ἃ δὲ αὐτῷ δοκεῖ ἐν αὐτοῖς ἐκθέσθαι πειράσομαι τρεῖς ἐπιστολὰς αὐτοῦ παραθέμενος, ἐν αἷς πᾶσαν τὴν ἑαυτοῦ φιλοσοφίαν ἐπιτέτμηται·

Yonge, 1853

Hegesianax; four essays on Lives; one on Just Dealing; Neocles; one essay addressed to Themista; the Banquet; Eurylochus; one essay addressed to Metrodorus; one on Seeing; one on the Angle in an Atom; one on Touch; one on Fate; Opinions on the Passions; one treatise addressed to Timocrates; Prognostics; Exhortations; a treatise on Images; one on Perceptions; Aristobulus; an essay on Music; one on Justice and the other Virtues; one on Gifts and Gratitude; Polymedes; Timocrates, a treatise in three books; Metrodorus, in five books; Antidorus, in two books; Opinions about Diseases, addressed to Mithras; Callistolas; an essay on Kingly Power; Anaximenes; Letters.

And I will endeavour to give an abridgment of the doctrines contained in these works, as it may be agreeable, quoting three letters of his, in which is the epitome of all his philosophy.

Hicks, 1925

Hegesianax; Of Human Life, four books; Of Just Dealing; Neocles: dedicated to Themista; Symposium; Eurylochus: dedicated to Metrodorus; Of Vision; Of the Angle in the Atom; Of Touch; Of Fate; Theories of the Feelings – against Timocrates; Discovery of the Future; Introduction to Philosophy; Of Images; Of Presentation; Aristobulus; Of Music; Of Justice and the other Virtues; Of Benefits and Gratitude; Polymedes; Timocrates, three books; Metrodorus, five books; Antidorus, two books; Theories about Diseases (and Death) – to Mithras; Callistolas; Of Kingship; Anaximenes; Correspondence.

The views expressed in these works I will try to set forth by quoting three of his epistles, in which he has given an epitome of his whole system.

Bailey, 1926

Hegesianax; On Lives, four books; On Just Action; Neocles, addressed to Themista; Symposium; Eurylochus, addressed to Metrodorus; On Vision; On the Corner in the Atom; On Touch; On Fate; On Internal Sensations, maxims addressed to Timocrates; Prognostic; The Protreptic; On Images; On Perception; Aristobulus; On Music; On Justice And The Other Virtues; On Gifts and Gratitude; Polymedes; Timocrates, three books; Metrodorus, five books; Antidorus, two books; On Disease, maxims addressed to Mithras; Callistolas; On Royal Power; Anaximenes; Letters.

I will now endeavour to expound the doctrines which he sets forth in these works and will put before you three of his letters, in which he has abridged his whole philosophy.

Laërtius, c. 222-235

θήσομεν δὲ καὶ τὰς Κυρίας αὐτοῦ δόξας καὶ εἴ τι ἔδοξεν ἐκλογῆς ἀξίως ἀνεφθέγχθαι, ὥστε σὲ πανταχόθεν καταμαθεῖν τὸν ἄνδρα κἂν κρίνειν εἰδέναι.

Τὴν μὲν οὖν πρώτην ἐπιστολὴν γράφει πρὸς Ἡρόδοτον <ἥτις ἐστὶ περὶ τῶν φυσικῶν· τὴν δὲ δευτέραν πρὸς Πυθοκλέα>, ἥτις ἐστὶ περὶ μεταρσίων· τὴν τρίτην πρὸς Μενοικέα, ἔστι δ’ ἐν αὐτῇ τὰ περὶ βίων. ἀρκτέον δὴ ἀπὸ τῆς πρώτης, ὀλίγα προειπόντα περὶ τῆς διαιρέσεως τῆς κατ’ αὐτὸν φιλοσοφίας.

Διαιρεῖται τοίνυν εἰς τρία, τό τε κανονικὸν καὶ φυσικὸν καὶ ἠθικόν.

Yonge, 1853

I will also give his fundamental and peculiar opinions, and any adages which he uttered which appear worthy of being selected, so that you may be thoroughly acquainted with the man, and may also judge that I understand him.

Now the first letter is one that he wrote to Herodotus, on the subject of Natural Philosophy; the second is one that he wrote to Pythocles, which is about the Heavenly Bodies; the third is addressed to Menoeceus, in which there are discussions about how to live. We must now begin with the first, after having said a little by way of preface concerning the divisions of philosophy which he adopted.

Now he divides philosophy into three parts. The canonical, the physical, and the ethical.

Hicks, 1925

I will also set down his Sovran Maxims and any other utterance of his that seems worth citing, that you may be in a position to study the philosopher on all sides and know how to judge him.

The first epistle is addressed to Herodotus and deals with physics; the second to Pythocles and deals with astronomy or meteorology; the third is addressed to Menoeceus and its subject is human life. We must begin with the first after some few preliminary remarks upon his division of philosophy.

It is divided into three parts – Canonic, Physics, Ethics.

Bailey, 1926

I will also give you the Principal Doctrines, and a selection from his sayings which seem most worthy of mention. You will thus be able to understand Epicurus from every point of view and could form a judgment on him.

The first letter he writes to Herodotus and it deals with Physics; the second is to Pythocles and it deals with Celestial Phenomena; the third is to Menoeceus, and contains the moral teaching. We must begin with the first letter, but I will first speak briefly about the divisions of his philosophy.

It is divided into three parts, the Canonicon (or Procedure), the Physics and the Ethics.

Laërtius, c. 222-235

τὸ μὲν οὖν κανονικὸν ἐφόδους ἐπὶ τὴν πραγματείαν ἔχει, καὶ ἔστιν ἐν ἑνὶ τῷ ἐπιγραφομένῳ Κανών· τὸ δὲ φυσικὸν τὴν περὶ φύσεως θεωρίαν πᾶσαν, καὶ ἔστιν ἐν ταῖς Περὶ φύσεως βίβλοις ἑπτὰ καὶ τριάκοντα καὶ ταῖς ἐπιστολαῖς κατὰ στοιχεῖον· τὸ δὲ ἠθικὸν τὰ περὶ αἱρέσεως καὶ φυγῆς· ἔστι δὲ καὶ ἐν ταῖς Περὶ βίων βίβλοις καὶ ἐπιστολαῖς καὶ τῷ Περὶ τέλους. εἰώθασι μέντοι τὸ κανονικὸν ὁμοῦ τῷ φυσικῷ τάττειν· καλοῦσι δ’ αὐτὸ περὶ κριτηρίου καὶ ἀρχῆς, καὶ στοιχειωτικόν· τὸ δὲ φυσικὸν περὶ γενέσεως καὶ φθορᾶς, καὶ περὶ φύσεως· τὸ δὲ ἠθικὸν περὶ αἱρετῶν καὶ φευκτῶν καὶ περὶ βίων καὶ τέλους.

Yonge, 1853

The canonical, which serves as an introduction to knowledge, is contained in the single treatise which is called the Canon. The physical embraces the whole range of speculation on subjects of natural philosophy, and is contained in the thirty-seven books on nature, and in the letters again it is discussed in an elementary manner. The ethical contains the discussions of Choice and Avoidance; and is comprised in the books about lives, and in some of the Letters, and in the treatise of the Chief Good. Accordingly, most people are in the habit of combining the canonical divisions with the physical; and then they designate the whole under the names of the criterion of the truth, and a discussion of principles, and elements. And they say that the physical division is concerned with production, and destruction, and nature; and that the ethical division has reference to the objects of choice and avoidance, and lives, and the chief good of mankind.

Hicks, 1925

Canonic forms the introduction to the system and is contained in a single work entitled The Canon. The physical part includes the entire theory of Nature: it is contained in the thirty-seven books Of Nature and, in a summary form, in the letters. The ethical part deals with the facts of choice and aversion: this may be found in the books On Human Life, in the letters, and in his treatise Of the End. The usual arrangement, however, is to conjoin canonic with physics, and the former they call the science which deals with the standard and the first principle, or the elementary part of philosophy, while physics proper, they say, deals with becoming and perishing and with nature; ethics, on the other hand, deals with things to be sought and avoided, with human life and with the end-in-chief.

Bailey, 1926

The Canonicon gives the method of approach to the system, and is contained in the work called The Canon. The Physics contains all the investigation into nature, and is contained in the thirty-seven books On Nature and in an abridged form in the letters. The Ethics deals with choice and avoidance, and is contained in the books On Lives and the letters and the book on The End. The Epicureans usually group the Canonicon with the Physics and state that it deals with the criterion of truth and the fundamental principles and contains the elements of the system. The Physics deals with creation and dissolution and with nature; the Ethics with things to be chosen or avoided, with the conduct of life and its purpose.

Laërtius, c. 222-235

Τὴν διαλεκτικὴν ὡς παρέλκουσαν ἀποδοκιμάζουσιν· ἀρκεῖν γὰρ τοὺς φυσικοὺς χωρεῖν κατὰ τοὺς τῶν πραγμάτων φθόγγους. ἐν τοίνυν τῷ Κανόνι λέγων ἐστὶν ὁ Ἐπίκουρος κριτήρια τῆς ἀληθείας εἶναι τὰς αἰσθήσεις καὶ προλήψεις καὶ τὰ πάθη, οἱ δ' Ἐπικούρειοι καὶ τὰς φανταστικὰς ἐπιβολὰς τῆς διανοίας· λέγει δὲ καὶ ἐν τῇ πρὸς Ἡρόδοτον ἐπιτομῇ καὶ ἐν ταῖς Κυρίαις δόξαις· "πᾶσα γάρ," φησίν, "αἴσθησις ἄλογός ἐστι καὶ μνήμης οὐδεμιᾶς δεκτική· οὔτε γὰρ ὑφ' αὑτῆς κινεῖται οὔτε ὑφ' ἑτέρου κινηθεῖσα δύναταί τι προσθεῖναι ἢ ἀφελεῖν· οὐδὲ ἔστι τὸ δυνάμενον αὐτὰς διελέγξαι.

Yonge, 1853

Dialectics they wholly reject as superfluous. For they say that the correspondence of words with things is sufficient for the natural philosopher, so as to enable him to advance with certainty in the study of nature. Now, in the Canon, Epicurus says that the criteria of truth are the senses, and their preconceptions, and the passions. But the Epicureans, in general, add also the perceptive impressions of the intellect. And he says the same thing in his Abridgment, which he addresses to Herodotus, and also in his Fundamental Principles. For, says he, the senses are devoid of reason, nor are they capable of receiving any impressions of memory. For they are not by themselves the cause of any motion, and when they have received any impression from any external cause, then they can add nothing to it, nor can they subtract anything from it. Moreover, they are out of the reach of any control;

Hicks, 1925

They reject dialectic as superfluous; holding that in their inquiries the physicists should be content to employ the ordinary terms for things. Now in The Canon Epicurus affirms that our sensations and preconceptions and our feelings are the standards of truth; the Epicureans generally make perceptions of mental presentations to be also standards. His own statements are also to be found in the Summary addressed to Herodotus and in the Sovran Maxims. Every sensation, he says, is devoid of reason and incapable of memory; for neither is it self-caused nor, regarded as having an external cause, can it add anything thereto or take anything therefrom. Nor is there anything which can refute sensations or convict them of error:

Bailey, 1926

Logic they reject as misleading. For they say it is sufficient for physicists to be guided by what things say of themselves. Thus in The Canon Epicurus says that the tests of truth are the sensations and concepts and the feelings; the Epicureans add to these the intuitive apprehensions of the mind. And this he says himself too in the summary addressed to Herodotus and in the Principal Doctrines. For, he says, all sensation is irrational and does not admit of memory; for it is not set in motion by itself, nor when it is set in motion by something else, can it add to it or take from it. Nor is there anything which can refute the sensations.

Laërtius, c. 222-235

οὔτε γὰρ ἡ ὁμογένεια αἴσθησις τὴν ὁμογενῆ διὰ τὴν ἰσοσθένειαν, οὔθ’ ἡ ἀνομογένεια τὴν ἀνομογένειαν, οὐ γὰρ τῶν αὐτῶν εἰσι κριτικαί· οὔτε μὴν λόγος, πᾶς γὰρ λόγος ἀπὸ τῶν αἰσθήσεων ἤρτηται. οὔθ’ ἡ ἑτέρα τὴν ἑτέραν, πάσαις γὰρ προσέχομεν. καὶ τὸ τὰ ἐπαισθήματα δ’ ὑφεστάναι πιστοῦται τὴν τῶν αἰσθήσεων ἀλήθειαν. ὑφέστηκε δὲ τό τε ὁρᾶν ἡμᾶς καὶ ἀκούειν ὥσπερ τὸ ἀλγεῖν· ὅθεν καὶ περὶ τῶν ἀδήλων ἀπὸ τῶν φαινομένων χρὴ σημειοῦσθαι. καὶ γὰρ καὶ ἐπίνοιαι πᾶσαι ἀπὸ τῶν αἰσθήσεων γεγόνασι κατά τε περίπτωσιν καὶ ἀναλογίαν καὶ ὁμοιότητα καὶ σύνθεσιν, συμβαλλομένου τι καὶ τοῦ λογισμοῦ. τά τε τῶν μαινομένων φαντάσματα καὶ κατ’ ὄναρ ἀληθῆ, κινεῖ γάρ· τὸ δὲ μὴ ὂν οὐ κινεῖ.“

Yonge, 1853

for one sensation cannot judge of another which resembles itself; for they have all an equal value. Nor can one judge of another which is different from itself; since their objects are not identical. In other words, one sensation cannot control another, since the effects of all of them influence us equally. Again, Reason cannot pronounce on the senses; for we have already said that all reasoning has the senses for its foundation. Reality and the evidence of sensation establish the certainty of the senses; for the impressions of sight and hearing are just as real, just as evident, as pain. It follows from these considerations that we ought to judge of things which are obscure by their analogy to those which we perceive directly. In fact, every notion proceeds from the senses, either directly, or in consequence of some analogy, or proportion, or combination. Reasoning having always a share in these last operations. The visions of insanity and of sleep have a real object for they act upon us; and that which has no reality can produce no action.

Hicks, 1925

one sensation cannot convict another and kindred sensation, for they are equally valid; nor can one sensation refute another which is not kindred but heterogeneous, for the objects which the two senses judge are not the same; nor again can reason refute them, for reason is wholly dependent on sensation; nor can one sense refute another, since we pay equal heed to all. And the reality of separate perceptions guarantees the truth of our senses. But seeing and hearing are just as real as feeling pain. Hence it is from plain facts that we must start when we draw inferences about the unknown. For all our notions are derived from perceptions, either by actual contact or by analogy, or resemblance, or composition, with some slight aid from reasoning. And the objects presented to madmen and to people in dreams are true, for they produce effects – i.e. movements in the mind – which that which is unreal never does.

Bailey, 1926

For a similar sensation cannot refute a similar because it is equivalent in validity, nor a dissimilar a dissimilar, for the objects of which they are the criteria are not the same; nor again can reason, for all reason is dependent upon sensations; nor can one sensation refute another, for we attend to them all alike. Again, the fact of apperception confirms the truth of the sensations. And seeing and hearing are as much facts as feeling pain. From this it follows that as regards the imperceptible we must draw inferences from phenomena. For all thoughts have their origin in sensations by means of coincidence and analogy and similarity and combination, reasoning too contributing something. And the visions of the insane and those in dreams are true, for they cause movement, and that which does not exist cannot cause movement.

Laërtius, c. 222-235

Τὴν δὲ πρόληψιν λέγουσιν οἱονεὶ κατάληψιν ἢ δόξαν ὀρθὴν ἢ ἔννοιαν ἢ καθολικὴν νόησιν ἐναποκειμένην, τουτέστι μνήμην τοῦ πολλάκις ἔξωθεν φανέντος, οἷον τὸ Τοιοῦτόν ἐστιν ἄνθρωπος· ἅμα γὰρ τῷ ῥηθῆναι ἄνθρωπος εὐθὺς κατὰ πρόληψιν καὶ ὁ τύπος αὐτοῦ νοεῖται προηγουμένων τῶν αἰσθήσεων. παντὶ οὖν ὀνόματι τὸ πρώτως ὑποτεταγμένον ἐναργές ἐστι· καὶ οὐκ ἂν ἐζητήσαμεν τὸ ζητούμενον εἰ μὴ πρότερον ἐγνώκειμεν αὐτό· οἷον Τὸ πόρρω ἑστὼς ἵππος ἐστὶν ἢ βοῦς· δεῖ γὰρ κατὰ πρόληψιν ἐγνωκέναι ποτὲ ἵππου καὶ βοὸς μορφήν· οὐδ’ ἂν ὠνομάσαμέν τι μὴ πρότερον αὐτοῦ κατὰ πρόληψιν τὸν τύπον μαθόντες. ἐναργεῖς οὖν εἰσιν αἱ προλήψεις· καὶ τὸ δοξαστὸν ἀπὸ προτέρου τινὸς ἐναργοῦς ἤρτηται, ἐφ’ ὃ ἀναφέροντες λέγομεν, οἷον Πόθεν ἴσμεν εἰ τοῦτό ἐστιν ἄνθρωπος;

Yonge, 1853

By preconception, the Epicureans meant a sort of comprehension as it were, or right opinion, or notion, or general idea which exists in us; or, in other words, the recollection of an external object often perceived beforehand. Such for instance, is the idea: “Man is being of such and such nature.” At the same moment that we utter the word man, we conceive the figure of a man, in virtue of a preconception which we owe to the preceding operations of the senses. Therefore, the first notion which each word awakens in us is a correct one; in fact, we could not seek for anything if we had not previously some notion of it. To enable us to affirm that what we see at a distance is a horse or an ox, we must have some preconception in our minds which makes us acquainted with the form of a horse and an ox. We could not give names to things, if we had not preliminary notion of what the things were. These preconceptions then furnish us with certainty. And with respect to judgments, their certainty depends on our referring them to some previous notion, of itself certain, in virtue of which we affirm such and such a judgment; for instance, “How do we know whether this thing is a man?”

Hicks, 1925

By preconception they mean a sort of apprehension or a right opinion or notion, or universal idea stored in the mind; that is, a recollection of an external object often presented, e.g. Such and such a thing is a man: for no sooner is the word “man” uttered than we think of his shape by an act of preconception, in which the senses take the lead. Thus the object primarily denoted by every term is then plain and clear. And we should never have started an investigation, unless we had known what it was that we were in search of. For example: The object standing yonder is a horse or a cow. Before making this judgement, we must at some time or other have known by preconception the shape of a horse or a cow. We should not have given anything a name, if we had not first learnt its form by way of preconception. It follows, then, that preconceptions are clear. The object of a judgement is derived from something previously clear, by reference to which we frame the proposition, e.g. “How do we know that this is a man?”

Bailey, 1926

The concept they speak of as an apprehension or right opinion or thought or general idea stored within the mind, that is to say a recollection of what has often been presented from without, as for instance “Such and such a thing is a man,” for the moment the word “man” is spoken, immediately by means of the concept his form too is thought of, as the senses give us the information. Therefore the first signification of every name is immediate and clear evidence. And we could not look for the object of our search, unless we have first known it. For instance, we ask, “Is that standing yonder a horse or a cow?” To do this we must know by means of a concept the shape of horse and of cow. Otherwise we could not have named them, unless we previously knew their appearance by means of a concept. So the concepts are clear and immediate evidence. Further, the decision of opinion depends on some previous clear and immediate evidence, to which we refer when we express it: for instance, “How do we know whether this is a man?”

Laërtius, c. 222-235

τὴν δὲ δόξαν καὶ ὑπόληψιν λέγουσιν, ἀληθῆ τέ φασι καὶ ψευδῆ· ἂν μὲν γὰρ ἐπιμαρτυρῆται ἢ μὴ ἀντιμαρτυρῆται, ἀληθῆ εἶναι· ἐὰν δὲ μὴ ἐπιμαρτυρῆται ἢ ἀντιμαρτυρῆται, ψευδῆ τυγχάνειν. ὅθεν προσμένον εἰσήχθη· οἷον τὸ προσμεῖναι καὶ ἐγγὺς γενέσθαι τῷ πύργῳ καὶ μαθεῖν ὁποῖος ἐγγὺς φαίνεται.

Πάθη δὲ λέγουσιν εἶναι δύο, ἡδονὴν καὶ ἀλγηδόνα, ἱστάμενα περὶ πᾶν ζῷον, καὶ τὴν μὲν οἰκεῖον, τὴν δὲ ἀλλότριον· δι’ ὧν κρίνεσθαι τὰς αἱρέσεις καὶ φυγάς. τῶν τε ζητήσεων εἶναι τὰς μὲν περὶ τῶν πραγμάτων, τὰς δὲ περὶ ψιλὴν τὴν φωνήν. καὶ ταῦτα δὴ περὶ τῆς διαιρέσεως καὶ τοῦ κριτηρίου στοιχειωδῶς.

Ἀνιτέον δὲ ἐπὶ τὴν ἐπιστολήν.

“Ἐπίκουρος Ἡροδότῳ χαίρειν.

Yonge, 1853

The Epicureans also refer to ‘opinion’ as supposition. And say that it is at times true, and at times false; for that, if it is supported by testimony, and not contradicted by testimony, then it is true; but if it is not supported by testimony, and is contradicted by testimony, then it is false. On which account they have introduced the expression of “waiting,” as if, before pronouncing that a thing seen is a tower, we must wait till we come near, and learn what it looks like when we are near it. They say that there are two passions, pleasure and pain, which affect everything alive. And that the one is natural, and the other foreign to our nature; with reference to which all objects of choice and avoidance are judged of. They say also, that there are two kinds of investigation; the one about facts, the other about mere words. And this is as far as an elementary sketch can go - their doctrine about division, and about the criterion.

Let us now go to the letter:

Epicurus to Herodotus, wishing he may do well.

Hicks, 1925

Opinion they also call conception or assumption, and declare it to be true and false; for it is true if it is subsequently confirmed or if it is not contradicted by evidence, and false if it is not subsequently confirmed or is contradicted by evidence. Hence the introduction of the phrase, “that which awaits” confirmation, e.g. to wait and get close to the tower and then learn what it looks like at close quarters. They affirm that there are two states of feeling, pleasure and pain, which arise in every animate being, and that the one is favourable and the other hostile to that being, and by their means choice and avoidance are determined; and that there are two kinds of inquiry, the one concerned with things, the other with nothing but words. So much, then, for his division and criterion in their main outline.

But we must return to the letter.

“Epicurus to Herodotus, greeting.

Bailey, 1926

Opinion they also call supposition, and say that it may be true or false: if it is confirmed or not contradicted, it is true ; if it is not confirmed or is contradicted, it is false. For this reason was introduced the notion of the problem awaiting confirmation: for example, waiting to come near the tower and see how it looks to the near view. The internal sensations they say are two, pleasure and pain, which occur to every living creature, and the one is akin to nature and the other alien: by means of these two choice and avoidance are determined. Of investigations some concern actual things, others mere words. This is a brief summary of the division of their philosophy and their views on the criterion of truth. Now we must proceed to the letter.

Letter to Herodotus |35|

Epicurus, c. 301-300 BCE

Τοῖς μὴ δυναμένοις, ὦ Ἡρόδοτε, ἕκαστα τῶν περὶ φύσεως ἀναγεγραμμένων ἡμῖν ἐξακριβοῦν μηδὲ τὰς μείζους τῶν συντεταγμένων βίβλους διαθρεῖν, ἐπιτομὴν τῆς ὅλης πραγματείας εἰς τὸ κατασχεῖν τῶν ὁλοσχερωτάτων δοξῶν τὴν μνήμην ἱκανῶς αὐτοῖς παρεσκεύασα, ἵνα παρ' ἑκάστους τῶν καιρῶν ἐν τοῖς κυριωτάτοις βοηθεῖν αὐτοῖς δύνωνται, καθ' ὅσον ἂν ἐφάπτωνται τῆς περὶ φύσεως θεωρίας. καὶ τοὺς προβεβηκότας δὲ ἱκανῶς ἐν τῇ τῶν ὅλων ἐπιβλέψει τὸν τύπον τῆς ὅλης πραγματείας τὸν κατεστοιχειωμένον δεῖ μνημονεύειν· τῆς γὰρ ἀθρόας ἐπιβολῆς πυκνὸν δεόμεθα, τῆς δὲ κατὰ μέρος οὐχ ὁμοίως.

Yonge, 1853

For those, Herodotus, who are not able accurately to comprehend all the things which I have written about nature, nor able to investigate those larger books which I have composed on the subject, I have made an abridgment of the whole discussion on this question as far as I thought sufficient to enable them to recollect accurately the most fundamental points; that so, on all occasions, they might be able to assist themselves on the most important and undeniable principles; in proportion as they devoted themselves to speculations on natural philosophy. And here it is necessary for those who have made sufficient progress in their view of the general question, to recollect the principles laid down as elements of the whole discussion; for we have still greater need of a correct notion of the whole, than we have even of an accurate understanding of the details.

Hicks, 1925

For those who are unable to study carefully all my physical writings or to go into the longer treatises at all, I have myself prepared an epitome of the whole system, Herodotus, to preserve in the memory enough of the principal doctrines, to the end that on every occasion they may be able to aid themselves on the most important points, so far as they take up the study of Physics. Those who have made some advance in the survey of the entire system ought to fix in their minds under the principal headings an elementary outline of the whole treatment of the subject. For a comprehensive view is often required, the details but seldom.

Bailey, 1926

For those who are unable, Herodotus, to work in detail through all that I have written about nature, or to peruse the larger books which I have composed, I have already prepared at sufficient length an epitome of the whole system, that they may keep adequately in mind at least the most general principles in each department, in order that as occasion arises they may be able to assist themselves on the most important points, in so far as they undertake the study of nature. But those also who have made considerable progress in the survey of the main principles ought to bear in mind the scheme of the whole system set forth in its essentials. For we have frequent need of the general view, but not so often of the detailed exposition.

Letter to Herodotus |36|

Epicurus, c. 301-300 BCE

βαδιστέον μὲν οὖν καὶ ἐπ’ ἐκεῖνα συνεχῶς, ἐν ‹δὲ› τῇ μνήμῃ τὸ τοσοῦτο ποιητέον, ἀφ’ οὗ ἥ τε κυριωτάτη ἐπιβολὴ ἐπὶ τὰ πράγματα ἔσται καὶ δὴ καὶ τὸ κατὰ μέρος ἀκρίβωμα πᾶν ἐξευρήσεται, τῶν ὁλοσχερωτάτων τύπων εὖ περιειλημμένων καὶ μνημονευομένων· ἐπεὶ καὶ τῷ τετελεσιουργημένῳ τοῦτο κυριώτατον τοῦ παντὸς ἀκριβώματος γίνεται, τὸ ταῖς ἐπιβολαῖς ὀξέως δύνασθαι χρῆσθαι καὶ ‹τοῦτο ἀδύνατον μὴ πάντων› πρὸς ἁπλᾶ στοιχειώματα καὶ φωνὰς συναγομένων. οὐ γὰρ οἷόν τε τὸ πύκνωμα τῆς συνεχοῦς τῶν ὅλων περιοδείας εἶναι μὴ δυναμένου διὰ βραχεῶν φωνῶν ἅπαν ἐμπεριλαβεῖν ἐν αὐτῷ τὸ καὶ κατὰ μέρος ἂν ἐξακριβωθέν.

Yonge, 1853

We must therefore, give preference to former knowledge, and lay up in our memory those principles on which we may rest, in order to arrive at an exact perception of things, and at a certain knowledge of particular objects. Now one has arrived at that point when one has thoroughly embraced the conceptions, and, if I may so express myself, the most essential forms, and when one has impressed them adequately on one’s senses. For this clear and precise knowledge of the whole, taken together, necessarily facilitates one’s particular perceptions, when one has brought one’s ideas back to the elements and simple terms. In short, a veritable synthesis, comprising the entire circle of the phenomena of the universe, ought to be able to encompass in itself, and in a few words, all the particular facts which have been previously studied.

Hicks, 1925

To the former, then – the main heads – we must continually return, and must memorize them so far as to get a valid conception of the facts, as well as the means of discovering all the details exactly when once the general outlines are rightly understood and remembered; since it is the privilege of the mature student to make a ready use of his conceptions by referring every one of them to elementary facts and simple terms. For it is impossible to gather up the results of continuous diligent study of the entirety of things, unless we can embrace in short formulas and hold in mind all that might have been accurately expressed even to the minutest detail.

Bailey, 1926

Indeed it is necessary to go back on the main principles, and constantly to fix in one’s memory enough to give one the most essential comprehension of the truth. And in fact the accurate knowledge of details will be fully discovered, if the general principles in the various departments are thoroughly grasped and borne in mind; for even in the case of one fully initiated the most essential feature in all accurate knowledge is the capacity to make a rapid use of observation and mental apprehension, and this can be done if everything is summed up in elementary principles and formulae. For it is not possible for anyone to abbreviate the complete course through the whole system, if he cannot embrace in his own mind by means of short formulae all that might be set out with accuracy in detail.

Letter to Herodotus |37|

Epicurus, c. 301-300 BCE

ὅθεν δὴ πᾶσι χρησίμης οὔσης τοῖς ᾠκειωμένοις φυσιολογίᾳ τῆς τοιαύτης ὁδοῦ, παρεγγυῶν τὸ συνεχὲς ἐνέργημα ἐν φυσιολογίᾳ καὶ τοιούτῳ μάλιστα ἐγγαληνίζον τῷ βίῳ ποιήσασθαι, καὶ τοιαύτην τινὰ ἐπιτομὴν ‹συνέθηκα› καὶ στοιχείωσιν τῶν ὅλων δοξῶν. Πρῶτον μὲν οὖν τὰ ὑποτεταγμένα τοῖς φθόγγοις, ὦ Ἡρόδοτε, δεῖ εἰληφέναι, ὅπως ἂν τὰ δοξαζόμενα ἢ ζητούμενα ἢ ἀπορούμενα ἔχωμεν εἰς ταῦτα ἀναγαγόντες ἐπικρίνειν, καὶ μὴ ἄκριτα πάντα ἡμῖν ‹ᾖ› εἰς ἄπειρον ἀποδεικνύουσιν ἢ κενοὺς φθόγγους ἔχωμεν·

Yonge, 1853

This method being useful even to those who are already familiarised with the laws of the universe, I recommend them, while still pursuing without intermission the study of nature, which contributes more than anything else to the tranquillity and happiness of life, to make a concise statement, or summary of their opinions. First of all then Herodotus, one must determine with exactness the notion comprehended under each separate word, in order to be able to refer to it, as to a certain criterion, the conceptions which emanate from ourselves, the ulterior researches and the difficulties; otherwise the judgment has no foundation. One goes on from demonstration to demonstration ad infinitum; or else one gains nothing beyond mere words.

Hicks, 1925

Hence, since such a course is of service to all who take up natural science, I, who devote to the subject my continuous energy and reap the calm enjoyment of a life like this, have prepared for you just such an epitome and manual of the doctrines as a whole. In the first place, Herodotus, you must understand what it is that words denote, in order that by reference to this we may be in a position to test opinions, inquiries, or problems, so that our proofs may not run on untested ad infinitum, nor the terms we use be empty of meaning.

Bailey, 1926

Wherefore since the method I have described is valuable to all those who are accustomed to the investigation of nature, I who urge upon others the constant occupation in the investigation of nature, and find my own peace chiefly in a life so occupied, have composed for you another epitome on these lines, summing up the first principles of the whole doctrine. First of all, Herodotus, we must grasp the ideas attached to words, in order that we may be able to refer to them and so to judge the inferences of opinion or problems of investigation or reflection, so that we may not either leave everything uncertain and go on explaining to infinity or use words devoid of meaning.

Letter to Herodotus |38|

Epicurus, c. 301-300 BCE

ἀνάγκη γὰρ τὸ πρῶτον ἐννόημα καθ’ ἕκαστον φθόγγον βλέπεσθαι καὶ μηθὲν ἀποδείξεως προσδεῖσθαι, εἴπερ ἕξομεν τὸ ζητούμενον ἢ ἀπορούμενον καὶ δοξαζόμενον ἐφ’ ὃ ἀνάξομεν. Εἶτα κατὰ τὰς αἰσθήσεις δεῖ πάντα τηρεῖν καὶ ἁπλῶς τὰς παρούσας ἐπιβολὰς εἴτε διανοίας εἴθ’ ὅτου δήποτε τῶν κριτηρίων, ὁμοίως δὲ καὶ τὰ ὑπάρχοντα πάθη, ὅπως ἂν καὶ τὸ προσμένον καὶ τὸ ἄδηλον ἔχωμεν οἷς σημειωσόμεθα, ταῦτα δὲ διαλαβόντας συνορᾶν ἤδη περὶ τῶν ἀδήλων. Πρῶτον μὲν ὅτι οὐδὲν γίνεται ἐκ τοῦ μὴ ὄντος· πᾶν γὰρ ἐκ παντὸς ἐγίνετ’ ἂν σπερμάτων γε οὐθὲν προσδεόμενον.

Yonge, 1853

In fact, it is absolutely necessary that we should perceive directly, and without the assistance of any demonstration, the fundamental notion which every word expresses, if we wish to have any foundation to which we may refer our researches, our difficulties, and our personal judgments, whatever in other respects may be the criterion which we adopt, whether we take as our standard the impressions produced on our senses, or the actual impression in general; or whether we cling to the idea by itself, or to any other criterion. We must also note carefully the impressions which we receive in the presence of objects, in order to bring ourselves back to that point in the circumstances in which it is necessary to suspend the judgment, or even when the question is about things, the evidence of which is not immediately perceived. When these foundations are once laid we may pass to the study of those things, about which the evidence is not immediate. And, first of all, we must admit that nothing can come of that which does not exist; for, were the fact otherwise, then everything would be produced from everything, and there would be no need of any seed.

Hicks, 1925

For the primary signification of every term employed must be clearly seen, and ought to need no proving; this being necessary, if we are to have something to which the point at issue or the problem or the opinion before us can be referred. Next, we must by all means stick to our sensations, that is, simply to the present impressions whether of the mind or of any criterion whatever, and similarly to our actual feelings, in order that we may have the means of determining that which needs confirmation and that which is obscure. When this is clearly understood, it is time to consider generally things which are obscure. To begin with, nothing comes into being out of what is non-existent. For in that case anything would have arisen out of anything, standing as it would in no need of its proper germs.

Bailey, 1926

For this purpose it is essential that the first mental image associated with each word should be regarded, and that there should be no need of explanation, if we are really to have a standard to which to refer a problem of investigation or reflection or a mental inference. And besides we must keep all our investigations in accord with our sensations, and in particular with the immediate apprehensions whether of the mind or of any one of the instruments of judgment, and likewise in accord with the feelings existing in us, in order that we may have indications whereby we may judge both the problem of sense perception and the unseen. Having made these points clear, we must now consider things imperceptible to the senses. First of all, that nothing is created out of that which does not exist: for if it were, everything would be created out of everything with no need of seeds.

Epicurus, c. 301-300 BCE

καὶ εἰ ἐφθείρετο δὲ τὸ ἀφανιζόμενον εἰς τὸ μὴ ὄν, πάντα ἂν ἀπωλώλει τὰ πράγματα, οὐκ ὄντων τῶν εἰς ἃ διελύετο. Καὶ μὴν καὶ τὸ πᾶν ἀεὶ τοιοῦτον ἦν οἷον νῦν ἐστι, καὶ ἀεὶ τοιοῦτον ἔσται. οὐθὲν γάρ ἐστιν εἰς ὃ μεταβαλεῖ. παρὰ γὰρ τὸ πᾶν οὐθέν ἐστιν, ὃ ἂν εἰσελθὸν εἰς αὐτὸ τὴν μεταβολὴν ποιήσαιτο. Ἀλλὰ μὴν καὶ (τοῦτο καὶ ἐν τῇ Μεγάλῃ ἐπιτομῇ φησι κατ’ ἀρχήν, καὶ ἐν τῇ α Περὶ φύσεως) τὸ πᾶν ἐστι ‹σώματα καὶ κενόν›. σώματα μὲν γὰρ ὡς ἔστιν, αὐτὴ ἡ αἴσθησις ἐπὶ πάντων μαρτυρεῖ, καθ’ ἣν ἀναγκαῖον τὸ ἄδηλον τῷ λογισμῷ τεκμαίρεσθαι, ὥσπερ προεῖπον τὸ πρόσθεν.

Yonge, 1853

And if that which disappeared were so absolutely destroyed as to become non-existent, then every thing would soon perish, as the things with which they would be dissolved would have no existence. But, in truth, the universal whole always was such as it now is, and always will be such. For there is nothing into which it can change; for there is nothing beyond this universal whole which can penetrate into it, and produce any change in it. *[And Epicurus establishes the same principles at the beginning of the Great Abridgment; and in the first book of his treatise on Nature.]* Now the universal whole is a body; for our senses bear us witness in every case that bodies have a real existence; and the evidence of the senses, as I have said before, ought to be the rule of our reasoning about everything which is not directly perceived.

Hicks, 1925

And if that which disappears had been destroyed and become non- existent, everything would have perished, that into which the things were dissolved being non-existent. Moreover, the sum total of things was always such as it is now, and such it will ever remain. For there is nothing into which it can change. For outside the sum of things there is nothing which could enter into it and bring about the change. Further *[this he says also in the Larger Epitome near the beginning and in his First Book “On Nature”]*, the whole of being consists of bodies and space. For the existence of bodies is everywhere attested by sense itself, and it is upon sensation that reason must rely when it attempts to infer the unknown from the known.

Bailey, 1926

And again, if that which disappears were destroyed into that which did not exist, all things would have perished, since that into which they were dissolved would not exist. Furthermore, the universe always was such as it is now, and always will be the same. For there is nothing into which it changes: for outside the universe there is nothing which could come into it and bring about the change. Moreover, the universe is bodies and space: for that bodies exist, sense itself witnesses in the experience of all men, and in accordance with the evidence of sense we must of necessity judge of the imperceptible by reasoning, as I have already said.

Letter to Herodotus |40|

Epicurus, c. 301-300 BCE

εἰ ‹δὲ› μὴ ἦν ὃ κενὸν καὶ χώραν καὶ ἀναφῆ φύσιν ὀνομάζομεν, οὐκ ἂν εἶχε τὰ σώματα ὅπου ἦν οὐδὲ δι’ οὗ ἐκινεῖτο, καθάπερ φαίνεται κινούμενα· παρὰ δὲ ταῦτα οὐθὲν οὐδ’ ἐπινοηθῆναι δύναται οὔτε περιληπτῶς οὐτ’ ἀναλόγως τοῖς περιληπτοῖς, ὡς καθ’ ὅλας φύσεις λαμβανόμενα καὶ μὴ ὡς τὰ τούτων συμπτώματα ἢ συμβεβηκότα λεγόμενα. Καὶ μὴν καὶ τῶν (τοῦτο καὶ ἐν τῇ πρώτῃ Περὶ φύσεως καὶ ἐν τῇ ι δ καὶ ι ε καὶ τῇ Μεγάλῃ ἐπιτομῇ) σωμάτων τὰ μέν ἐστι συγκρίσεις τὰ δ’ ἐξ ὧν αἱ συγκρίσεις πεποίηνται·

Yonge, 1853

Otherwise, if that which we call the void, or space, or intangible nature, had not a real existence, there would be nothing on which the bodies could be contained, or across which they could move, as we see that they really do move. Let us add to the reflection that one cannot conceive, either in virtue of perception, or of any analogy founded on perception, any general quality peculiar to all beings which is not either an attribute, or an accident of the body, or of the void. *[The same principles are laid down in the first, and fourteenth, and fifteenth book of the treatise on Nature; and also in the Great Abridgment.]* Now, of bodies, some are combinations, and some are the elements out of which these combinations are formed.

Hicks, 1925

And if there were no space (which we call also void and place and intangible nature), bodies would have nothing in which to be and through which to move, as they are plainly seen to move. Beyond bodies and space there is nothing which by mental apprehension or on its analogy we can conceive to exist. When we speak of bodies and space, both are regarded as wholes or separate things, not as the properties or accidents of separate things. Again *[he repeats this in the First Book and in Books XIV. and XV. of the work “On Nature” and in the Larger Epitome]*, of bodies some are composite, others the elements of which these composite bodies are made.

Bailey, 1926

And if there were not that which we term void and place and intangible existence, bodies would have nowhere to exist and nothing through which to move, as they are seen to move. And besides these two, nothing can even be thought of either by conception or on the analogy of things conceivable such as could be grasped as whole existences and not spoken of as the accidents or properties of such existences. Furthermore, among bodies some are compounds, and others those of which compounds are formed.

Letter to Herodotus |41|

Epicurus, c. 301-300 BCE

ταῦτα δέ ἐστιν ἄτομα καὶ ἀμετάβλητα, εἴπερ μὴ μέλλει πάντα εἰς τὸ μὴ ὂν φθαρήσεσθαι, ἀλλ’ ἰσχύοντα ὑπομενεῖν ἐν ταῖς διαλύσεσι τῶν συγκρίσεων πλήρη τὴν φύσιν ὄντα καὶ οὐκ ἔχοντα ὅπῃ ἢ ὅπως διαλυθήσεται. ὥστε τὰς ἀρχὰς ἀτόμους ἀναγκαῖον εἶναι σωμάτων φύσεις. Ἀλλὰ μὴν καὶ τὸ πᾶν ἄπειρόν ἐστι· τὸ γὰρ πεπερασμένον ἄκρον ἔχει· τὸ δὲ ἄκρον παρ’ ἕτερόν τι θεωρεῖται· ‹ἀλλὰ μὴν τὸ πᾶν οὐ παρ’ ἕτερόν τι θεωρεῖται·› ὥστε οὐκ ἔχον ἄκρον πέρας οὐκ ἔχει· πέρας δὲ οὐκ ἔχον ἄπειρον ἂν εἴη καὶ οὐ πεπερασμένον. Καὶ μὴν καὶ τῷ πλήθει τῶν σωμάτων ἄπειρόν ἐστι τὸ πᾶν καὶ τῷ μεγέθει τοῦ κενοῦ·

Yonge, 1853

These last are indivisible, and protected from every kind of transformation; otherwise everything would be resolved into non-existence. They exist by their own force, in the midst of the dissolution of the combined bodies, being absolutely full, and as such offering no handle for destruction to take hold of. It follows, therefore, as a matter of absolute necessity, that the principles of things must be corporeal, indivisible elements. The universe is infinite. For that which is finite has an extreme, and that which has an extreme is looked at in relationship to something else. Consequently, that which has not an extreme, has no boundary; and if it has no boundary, it must be infinite, and not terminated by any limit. The universe then is infinite, both with reference to the quantity of bodies of which it is made up, and to the magnitude of the void;

Hicks, 1925

These elements are indivisible and unchangeable, and necessarily so, if things are not all to be destroyed and pass into non-existence, but are to be strong enough to endure when the composite bodies are broken up, because they possess a solid nature and are incapable of being anywhere or anyhow dissolved. It follows that the first beginnings must be indivisible, corporeal entities. Again, the sum of things is infinite. For what is finite has an extremity, and the extremity of anything is discerned only by comparison with something else. (Now the sum of things is not discerned by comparison with anything else: hence, since it has no extremity, it has no limit; and, since it has no limit, it must be unlimited or infinite. Moreover, the sum of things is unlimited both by reason of the multitude of the atoms and the extent of the void.

Bailey, 1926

And these latter are indivisible and unalterable (if, that is, all things are not to be destroyed into the non- existent, but something permanent is to remain behind at the dissolution of compounds): they are completely solid in nature, and can by no means be dissolved in any part. So it must needs be that the first beginnings are indivisible corporeal existences. Moreover, the universe is boundless. For that which is bounded has an extreme point: and the extreme point is seen against something else. So that as it has no extreme point, it has no limit; and as it has no limit, it must be boundless and not bounded. Furthermore, the infinite is boundless both in the number of the bodies and in the extent of the void.

Letter to Herodotus |42|

Epicurus, c. 301-300 BCE

εἴ τε γὰρ ἦν τὸ κενὸν ἄπειρον, τὰ δὲ σώματα ὡρισμένα, οὐθαμοῦ ἂν ἔμενε τὰ σώματα, ἀλλ’ ἐφέρετο κατὰ τὸ ἄπειρον κενὸν διεσπαρμένα, οὐκ ἔχοντα τὰ ὑπερείδοντα καὶ στέλλοντα κατὰ τὰς ἀνακοπάς· εἴ τε τὸ κενὸν ἦν ὡρισμένον, οὐκ ἂν εἶχε τὰ ἄπειρα σώματα ὅπου ἐνέστη. Πρός τε τούτοις τὰ ἄτομα τῶν σωμάτων καὶ μεστά, ἐξ ὧν καὶ αἱ συγκρίσεις γίνονται καὶ εἰς ἃ διαλύονται, ἀπερίληπτά ἐστι ταῖς διαφοραῖς τῶν σχημάτων· οὐ γὰρ δυνατὸν γενέσθαι τὰς τοσαύτας διαφορὰς ἐκ τῶν αὐτῶν σχημάτων περιειλημμένων. καὶ καθ’ ἑκάστην δὲ σχημάτισιν ἁπλῶς ἄπειροί εἰσιν αἱ ὅμοιαι, ταῖς δὲ διαφοραῖς οὐχ ἁπλῶς ἄπειροι, ἀλλὰ μόνον ἀπερίληπτοι,

Yonge, 1853

for if the void were infinite, the bodies being finite, then, the bodies would not be able to rest in any place; they would be transported about, scattered across the infinite void for want of any power to steady themselves, or to keep one another in their places by mutual repulsion. If, on the other hand, the void were finite, the bodies being infinite, then the bodies clearly could never be contained in the void. Again: the atoms within the bodies, and these full elements from which the combined bodies come, and into which they resolve themselves, assume an incalculable variety of forms, for the numerous differences which the bodies present cannot possibly result from an aggregate of the same forms. Each variety of forms contains an innumerable amount of atoms, but there is not for that reason an infinity of atoms; it is only the number of them which is beyond all calculation.

Hicks, 1925

For if the void were infinite and bodies finite, the bodies would not have stayed anywhere but would have been dispersed in their course through the infinite void, not having any supports or counter-checks to send them back on their upward rebound. Again, if the void were finite, the infinity of bodies would not have anywhere to be. Furthermore, the atoms, which have no void in them – out of which composite bodies arise and into which they are dissolved – vary indefinitely in their shapes; for so many varieties of things as we see could never have arisen out of a recurrence of a definite number of the same shapes. The like atoms of each shape are absolutely infinite; but the variety of shapes, though indefinitely large, is not absolutely infinite.

Bailey, 1926

For if on the one hand the void were boundless, and the bodies limited in number, the bodies could not stay anywhere, but would be carried about and scattered through the infinite void, not having other bodies to support them and keep them in place by means of collisions. But if, on the other hand, the void were limited, the infinite bodies would not have room wherein to take their place. Besides this the indivisible and solid bodies, out of which too the compounds are created and into which they are dissolved, have an incomprehensible number of varieties in shape: for it is not possible that such great varieties of things should arise from the same atomic shapes, if they are limited in number. And so in each shape the atoms are quite infinite in number, but their differences of shape are not quite infinite, but only incomprehensible in number.

Letter to Herodotus |43|

Epicurus, c. 301-300 BCE

(οὐδὲ γάρ φησιν ἐνδοτέρω εἰς ἄπειρον τὴν τομὴν τυγχάνειν. λέγει δέ, ἐπειδὴ αἱ ποιότητες μεταβάλλονται) εἰ μέλλει τις μὴ καὶ τοῖς μεγέθεσιν ἁπλῶς εἰς ἄπειρον αὐτὰς ἐκβάλλειν. Κινοῦνταί τε συνεχῶς αἱ ἄτομοι (φησὶ δὲ ἐνδοτέρω καὶ ἰσοταχῶς αὐτὰς κινεῖσθαι τοῦ κενοῦ τὴν εἶξιν ὁμοίαν παρεχομένου καὶ τῇ κουφοτάτῃ καὶ τῇ βαρυτάτῃ) τὸν αἰῶνα, καὶ αἱ μὲν εἰς μακρὰν ἀπ᾽ ἀλλήλων διιστάμεναι, αἱ δὲ αὐτοῦ τὸν παλμὸν ἴσχυσαι, ὅταν τύχωσι τῇ περιπλοκῇ κεκλειμέναι ἢ στεγαζόμεναι παρὰ τῶν πλεκτικῶν.

Yonge, 1853

[Epicurus adds, a little lower down, that divisibility, ad infinitum, is impossible; for says he, the only things which change are the qualities; unless, indeed one wishes to proceed from division to division, till one arrives absolutely at infinite smallness.] The atoms are in a continual state of motion. *[He says, farther on, that they move with an equal rapidity from all eternity, since the void offers no more resistance to the lightest than it does to the heaviest.]* Among the atoms, some are separated by great distances but others come very near to one another in the formations of combined bodies, or at times are enveloped by others which are combining; but in this latter case they, nevertheless, preserve their own peculiar motion,

Hicks, 1925

[For neither does the divisibility go on "ad infinitum," he says below; but he adds, since the qualities change, unless one is prepared to keep enlarging their magnitudes also simply "ad infinitum."] The atoms are in continual motion through all eternity. *[Further, he says below, that the atoms move with equal speed, since the void makes way for the lightest and heaviest alike.]* Some of them rebound to a considerable distance from each other, while others merely oscillate in one place when they chance to have got entangled or to be enclosed by a mass of other atoms shaped for entangling.

Bailey, 1926

And the atoms move continuously for all time, some of them falling straight down, others swerving, and others recoiling from their collisions. And of the latter, some are borne on, separating to a long distance from one another, while others again recoil and recoil, whenever they chance to be checked by the interlacing with others, or else shut in by atoms interlaced around them.

Letter to Herodotus |44|

Epicurus, c. 301-300 BCE

ἥ τε γὰρ τοῦ κενοῦ φύσις ἡ διορίζουσα ἑκάστην αὐτὴν τοῦτο παρασκευάζει, τὴν ὑπέρεισιν οὐχ οἵα τε οὖσα ποιεῖσθαι· ἥ τε στερεότης ἡ ὑπάρχουσα αὐταῖς κατὰ τὴν σύγκρουσιν τὸν ἀποπαλμὸν ποιεῖ, ἐφ' ὁπόσον ἂν ἡ περιπλοκὴ τὴν ἀποκατάστασιν ἐκ τῆς συγκρούσεως διδῷ. ἀρχὴ δὲ τούτων οὐκ ἔστιν, ἀιδίων τῶν ἀτόμων οὐσῶν καὶ τοῦ κενοῦ. (φησὶ δ' ἐνδοτέρω μηδὲ ποιότητά τινα περὶ τὰς ἀτόμους εἶναι πλὴν σχήματος καὶ μεγέθους καὶ βάρους· τὸ δὲ χρῶμα παρὰ τὴν θέσιν τῶν ἀτόμων ἀλλάττεσθαι ἐν ταῖς Δώδεκα στοιχειώσεσί φησι. πᾶν τε μέγεθος μὴ εἶναι περὶ αὐτάς· οὐδέποτε γοῦν ἄτομος ὤφθη αἰσθήσει.)

Yonge, 1853

thanks to the nature of the void, which separates the one from the other, and yet offers them no resistance. The solidity which they possess causes them, while knocking against one another, to re-act the one upon the other; till at last the repeated shocks bring on the dissolution of the combined body; and for all this there is no external cause, the atoms and the void being the only causes. *[He says, further on, that the atoms have no peculiar quality of their own, except from magnitude and weight. As to colour, he says in the twelfth book of his Principia, that it varies according to the position of the atoms. Moreover, he does not attribute to the atoms any kind of dimensions; and accordingly, no atom has ever been perceived by the senses.]*

Hicks, 1925

This is because each atom is separated from the rest by void, which is incapable of offering any resistance to the rebound; while it is the solidity of the atom which makes it rebound after a collision, however short the distance to which it rebounds, when it finds itself imprisoned in a mass of entangling atoms. Of all this there is no beginning, since both atoms and void exist from everlasting. *[He says below that atoms have no quality at all except shape, size, and weight. But that colour varies with the arrangement of the atoms he states in his "Twelve Rudiments"; further, that they are not of any and every size; at any rate no atom has ever been seen by our sense.]*

Bailey, 1926

For on the one hand the nature of the void which separates each atom by itself brings this about, as it is not able to afford resistance, and on the other hand the hardness which belongs to the atoms makes them recoil after collision to as great a distance as the interlacing permits separation after the collision. And these motions have no beginning, since the atoms and the void are the cause.

Letter to Herodotus |45|

Epicurus, c. 301-300 BCE

Ἡ τοσαύτη δὴ φωνὴ τούτων πάντων μνημονευομένων τὸν ἱκανὸν τύπον ὑποβάλλει τῆς τῶν ὄντων φύσεως ἐπινοίας. Ἀλλὰ μὴν καὶ κόσμοι ἄπειροί εἰσιν, οἵ θ’ ὅμοιοι τούτῳ καὶ ἀνόμοιοι. αἵ τε γὰρ ἄτομοι ἄπειροι οὖσαι, ὡς ἄρτι ἀπεδείχθη, φέρονται καὶ πορρώτατω· οὐ γὰρ κατανήλωνται αἱ τοιαῦται ἄτομοι, ἐξ ὧν ἂν γένοιτο κόσμος ἢ ὑφ’ ὧν ἂν ποιηθείη, οὔτ’ εἰς ἕνα οὔτ’ εἰς πεπερασμένους, οὔθ’ ὅσοι τοιοῦτοι οὔθ’ ὅσοι διάφοροι τούτοις. ὥστε οὐδὲν τὸ ἐμποδοστατῆσόν ἐστι πρὸς τὴν ἀπειρίαν τῶν κόσμων.

Yonge, 1853

But this expression, if people only recollect what is here said, will by itself offer to the thoughts a sufficient image of the nature of things. But, again, the worlds also are infinite, whether they resemble this one of ours or whether they are different from it. For, as the atoms are, as to their number, infinite, as I have proved above, they necessarily move about at immense distances; for besides the infinite multitude of atoms, of which the world is formed, or by which it is produced, could not be entirely absorbed by one single world, nor even by any worlds, the number of which was limited, whether we suppose them like this word of ours, or different form it. There is therefore, no fact inconsistent with an infinity of worlds.

Hicks, 1925

The repetition at such length of all that we are now recalling to mind furnishes an adequate outline for our conception of the nature of things. Moreover, there is an infinite number of worlds, some like this world, others unlike it. For the atoms being infinite in number, as has just been proved, are borne ever further in their course. For the atoms out of which a world might arise, or by which a world might be formed, have not all been expended on one world or a finite number of worlds, whether like or unlike this one. Hence there will be nothing to hinder an infinity of worlds.

Bailey, 1926

These brief sayings, if all these points are borne in mind, afford a sufficient outline for our understanding of the nature of existing things. Furthermore, there are infinite worlds both like and unlike this world of ours. For the atoms being infinite in number, as was proved already, are borne on far out into space. For those atoms, which are of such nature that a world could be created out of them or made by them, have not been used up either on one world or on a limited number of worlds, nor again on all the worlds which are alike, or on those which are different from these. So that there nowhere exists an obstacle to the infinite number of the worlds.

Letter to Herodotus |46|

Epicurus, c. 301-300 BCE

Καὶ μὴν καὶ τύποι ὁμοιοσχήμονες τοῖς στερεμνίοις εἰσί, λεπτότησιν ἀπέχοντες μακρὰν τῶν φαινομένων. οὔτε γὰρ ἀποστάσεις ἀδυνατοῦσι ἐν τῷ περιέχοντι γίνεσθαι τοιαῦται οὔτ' ἐπιτηδειότητες πρὸς κατεργασίας τῶν κοιλωμάτων καὶ λειοτήτων [γίνεσθαι], οὔτε ἀπόρροιαι τὴν ἐξῆς θέσιν καὶ βάσιν διατηροῦσαι, ἥνπερ καὶ ἐν τοῖς στερεμνίοις εἶχον· τούτους δὲ τοὺς τύπους εἴδωλα προσαγορεύομεν. καὶ μὴν καὶ ἡ διὰ τοῦ κενοῦ φορὰ κατὰ μηδεμίαν ἀπάντησιν τῶν ἀντικοψάντων γινομένη πᾶν μῆκος περιληπτὸν ἐν ἀπερινοήτῳ χρόνῳ συντελεῖ. βράδους γὰρ καὶ τάχους ἀντικοπὴ καὶ οὐκ ἀντικοπὴ ὁμοίωμα λαμβάνει.

Yonge, 1853

Moreover, there are images resembling, as far as their form goes, the solid bodies which we see, but which differ materially from them in the thinness of their substance. In fact it is not impossible but that there may be in space some secretions of this kind and an aptitude to form surfaces without depth, and of an extreme thinness; or else that from the solids there may emanate some particles which preserve the connection, the disposition, and the motion which they had in the body. I give the name of images to these representations; and indeed, their movement through the void taking place, without meeting any obstacle or hindrance, traverses all imaginable extent in an inconceivable moment of time; for it is the meeting of obstacles, or the absence of obstacles, which produces the rapidity or the slowness of their motion.

Hicks, 1925

Again, there are outlines or films, which are of the same shape as solid bodies, but of a thinness far exceeding that of any object that we see. For it is not impossible that there should be found in the surrounding air combinations of this kind, materials adapted for expressing the hollowness and thinness of surfaces, and effluxes preserving the same relative position and motion which they had in the solid objects from which they come. To these films we give the name of ‘images’ or ‘idols.’ Furthermore, so long as nothing comes in the way to offer resistance, motion through the void accomplishes any imaginable distance in an inconceivably short time. For resistance encountered is the equivalent of slowness, its absence the equivalent of speed.

Bailey, 1926

Moreover, there are images like in shape to the solid bodies, far surpassing perceptible things in their subtlety of texture. For it is not impossible that such emanations should be formed in that which surrounds the objects, nor that there should be opportunities for the formation of such hollow and thin frames, nor that there should be effluences which preserve the respective position and order which they had before in the solid bodies: these images we call idols. *[Bailey transfers the rest of this section to the end of section 61.]*

Letter to Herodotus |47|

Epicurus, c. 301-300 BCE

οὐ μὴν οὐδ’ ἅμα κατὰ τοὺς διὰ λόγου θεωρητοὺς χρόνους αὐτὸ τὸ φερόμενον σῶμα ἐπὶ τοὺς πλείους τόπους ἀφικνεῖται - ἀδιανόητον γάρ - καὶ τοῦτο συναφικνούμενον ἐν αἰσθητῷ χρόνῳ ὅθεν δήποθεν τοῦ ἀπείρου οὐκ ἐξ οὗ ἂν περιλάβωμεν τὴν φορὰν τόπου ἔσται ἀφιστάμενον· ἀντικοπῇ γὰρ ὅμοιον ἔσται, κἂν μέχρι τοσούτου τὸ τάχος τῆς φορᾶς μὴ ἀντικοπὲν καταλίπωμεν· χρήσιμον δὴ καὶ τοῦτο κατασχεῖν τὸ στοιχεῖον. εἶθ’ ὅτι τὰ εἴδωλα ταῖς λεπτότησιν ἀνυπερβλήτοις κέχρηται οὐθὲν ἀντιμαρτυρεῖ τῶν φαινομένων· ὅθεν καὶ τάχη ἀνυπέρβλητα ἔχει, πάντα πόρον σύμμετρον ἔχοντα πρὸς τὸ ἀπείροις αὐτῶν μηθὲν ἀντικόπτειν ἢ ὀλίγα ἀντικόπτειν †πολλαῖς δὲ καὶ ἀπείροις εὐθὺς ἀντικόπτειν τι.

Yonge, 1853

At all events, a body in motion does not find itself, at any momentum imaginable, in two places at the same time; that is quite inconceivable. From what ever point of infinity it arrives at some appreciable moment, and whatever may be the spot it its course in which we perceive its motion, it has evidently quitted that spot at the moment of our thought; for this motion which, as we have admitted up to this point, encounters no obstacle to its rapidity, is wholly in the same condition as that the rapidity of which is diminished by the shock of some resistance. It is useful, also, to retain this principle, and to know that the images have an incomparable thinness; which fact indeed is in no respect contradicted by sensible appearances. From which it follows that their rapidity also is incomparable; for they find everywhere an easy passage, and besides, their minuteness causes them to experience no shock, or at all events to experience but a very slight one, while a multitude of elements very soon encounter some resistance.

Hicks, 1925

Not that, if we consider the minute times perceptible by reason alone, the moving body itself arrives at more than one place simultaneously (for this too is inconceivable), although in time perceptible to sense it does arrive simultaneously, however different the point of departure from that conceived by us. For if it changed its direction, that would be equivalent to its meeting with resistance, even if up to that point we allow nothing to impede the rate of its flight. This is an elementary fact which in itself is well worth bearing in mind. In the next place the exceeding thinness of the images is contradicted by none of the facts under our observation. Hence also their velocities are enormous, since they always find a void passage to fit them. Besides, their incessant effluence meets with no resistance, or very little, although many atoms, not to say an unlimited number, do at once encounter resistance.

Bailey, 1926

[Bailey transfers the first part of this section to the end of section 62.] Next, nothing among perceptible things contradicts the belief that the images have unsurpassable fineness of texture. And for this reason they have also unsurpassable speed of motion, since the movement of all their atoms is uniform, and besides nothing or very few things hinder their emission by collisions, whereas a body composed of many or infinite atoms is at once hindered by collisions.

Letter to Herodotus |48|

Epicurus, c. 301-300 BCE

πρός τε τούτοις ὅτι ἡ γένεσις τῶν εἰδώλων ἅμα νοήματι συμβαίνει· καὶ γὰρ ῥεῦσις ἀπὸ τῶν σωμάτων τοῦ ἐπιπολῆς συνεχής, οὐκ ἐπίδηλος τῇ μειώσει διὰ τὴν ἀνταναπλήρωσιν, σῴζουσα τὴν ἐπὶ τοῦ στερεμνίου θέσιν καὶ τάξιν τῶν ἀτόμων ἐπὶ πολὺν χρόνον, εἰ καὶ ἐνίοτε συγχεομένη ὑπάρχει, καὶ συστάσεις ἐν τῷ περιέχοντι ὀξεῖαι διὰ τὸ μὴ δεῖν κατὰ βάθος τὸ συμπλήρωμα γίνεσθαι, καὶ ἄλλοι δὲ τρόποι τινὲς γεννητικοὶ τῶν τοιούτων φύσεών εἰσιν. οὐθὲν γὰρ τούτων ἀντιμαρτυρεῖται ταῖς αἰσθήσεσιν, ἂν βλέπῃ τις τίνα τρόπον τὰς ἐναργείας, ‹τ›ίνα καὶ τὰς συμπαθείας ἀπὸ τῶν ἔξωθεν πρὸς ἡμᾶς ἀνοίσει.

Yonge, 1853

One must not forget that the production of images is simultaneous with the thought; for from the surface of the bodies images of this kind are continually flowing off in an insensible manner indeed, because they are immediately replaced. They preserve for a long time the same disposition and the same arrangement that the atoms do in the solid body, although, notwithstanding, their form may be sometimes altered. The direct production of images in space is equally instantaneous, because these images are only light substances destitute of depth. But there are other manners in which phenomena of this kind are produced; for there is nothing in all this which at all contradicts the senses, if one only considers in what way the senses are exercised, and if one is inclined to explain the relation which is established between external objects and ourselves.

Hicks, 1925

Besides this, remember that the production of the images is as quick as thought. For particles are continually streaming off from the surface of bodies, though no diminution of the bodies is observed, because other particles take their place. And those given off for a long time retain the position and arrangement which their atoms had when they formed part of the solid bodies, although occasionally they are thrown into confusion. Sometimes such films are formed very rapidly in the air, because they need not have any solid content; and there are other modes in which they may be formed. For there is nothing in all this which is contradicted by sensation, if we in some sort look at the clear evidence of sense, to which we should also refer the continuity of particles in the objects external to ourselves.

Bailey, 1926

Besides this, nothing contradicts the belief that the creation of the idols takes place as quick as thought. For the flow of atoms from the surface of bodies is continuous, yet it cannot be detected by any lessening in the size of the object because of the constant filling up of what is lost. The flow of images preserves for a long time the position and order of the atoms in the solid body, though it is occasionally confused. Moreover, compound idols are quickly formed in the air around, because it is not necessary for their substance to be filled in deep inside: and besides there are certain other methods in which existences of this sort are produced. For not one of these beliefs is contradicted by our sensations, if one looks to see in what way sensation will bring us the clear visions from external objects, and in what way again the corresponding sequences of qualities and movements.

Letter to Herodotus |49|

Epicurus, c. 301-300 BCE

Δεῖ δὲ καὶ νομίζειν ἐπεισιόντος τινὸς ἀπὸ τῶν ἔξωθεν τὰς μορφὰς ὁρᾶν ἡμᾶς καὶ διανοεῖσθαι· οὐ γὰρ ἂν ἐναποσφραγίσαιτο τὰ ἔξω τὴν ἑαυτῶν φύσιν τοῦ τε χρώματος καὶ τῆς μορφῆς διὰ τοῦ ἀέρος τοῦ μεταξὺ ἡμῶν τε κἀκείνων, οὐδὲ διὰ τῶν ἀκτίνων ἢ ὧν δήποτε ῥευμάτων ἀφ’ ἡμῶν πρὸς ἐκεῖνα παραγινομένων, οὕτως ὡς τύπων τινῶν ἐπεισιόντων ἡμῖν ἀπὸ τῶν πραγμάτων ὁμοχρόων τε καὶ ὁμοιομόρφων κατὰ τὸ ἐναρμόττον μέγεθος εἰς τὴν ὄψιν ἢ τὴν διάνοιαν, ὠκέως ταῖς φοραῖς χρωμένων,

Yonge, 1853

Also, one must admit that something passes from external objects into us in order to produce in us sight and the knowledge of forms; for it is difficult to conceive that external objects can affect us through the medium of the air which is between us and them, or by means of rays, whatever emissions proceed from us to them, so as to give us an impression of their form and colour. This phenomenon, on the contrary, is perfectly explained, if we admit that certain images of the same colour, of the same shape, and of a proportionate magnitude pass from these objects to us, and so arrive at being seen and comprehended.

Hicks, 1925

We must also consider that it is by the entrance of something coming from external objects that we see their shapes and think of them. For external things would not stamp on us their own nature of colour and form through the medium of the air which is between them and us, or by means of rays of light or currents of any sort going from us to them, so well as by the entrance into our eyes or minds, to whichever their size is suitable, of certain films coming from the things themselves, these films or outlines being of the same colour and shape as the external things themselves.

Bailey, 1926

Now we must suppose too that it is when something enters us from external objects that we not only see but think of their shapes. For external objects could not make on us an impression of the nature of their own colour and shape by means of the air which lies between us and them, nor again by means of the rays or effluences of any sort which pass from us to them — nearly so well as if models, similar in color and shape, leave the objects and enter according to their respective size either into our sight or into our mind;

Epicurus, c. 301-300 BCE

εἶτα διὰ ταύτην τὴν αἰτίαν τοῦ ἑνὸς καὶ συνεχοῦς τὴν φαντασίαν ἀποδιδόντων καὶ τὴν συμπάθειαν ἀπὸ τοῦ ὑποκειμένου σῳζόντων κατὰ τὸν ἐκεῖθεν σύμμετρον ἐπερεισμὸν ἐκ τῆς κατὰ βάθος ἐν τῷ στερεμνίῳ τῶν ἀτόμων πάλσεως. καὶ ἣν ἂν λάβωμεν φαντασίαν ἐπιβλητικῶς τῇ διανοίᾳ ἢ τοῖς αἰσθητηρίοις εἴτε μορφῆς εἴτε συμβεβηκότων, μορφή ἐστιν αὕτη τοῦ στερεμνίου, γινομένη κατὰ τὸ ἑξῆς πύκνωμα ἢ ἐγκατάλειμμα τοῦ εἰδώλου. [Τὸ δὲ ψεῦδος καὶ τὸ διημαρτημένον ἐν τῷ προσδοξαζομένῳ ἀεί ἐστιν ‹ἐπὶ τοῦ προσμένοντος› ἐπιμαρτυρηθήσεσθαι ἢ μὴ ἀντιμαρτυρηθήσεσθαι, εἶτ’ οὐκ ἐπιμαρτυρουμένου ‹ἢ ἀντιμαρτυρουμένου› κατά τινα κίνησιν ἐν ἡμῖν αὐτοῖς συνημμένην τῇ φανταστικῇ ἐπιβολῇ, διάληψιν δὲ ἔχουσαν, καθ’ ἣν τὸ ψεῦδος γίνεται].

Yonge, 1853

These images are animated by an exceeding rapidity, and as on the other side, the solid object forming a compact mass, and comprising a vast quantity of atoms, emits always the same quantity of particles, the vision is continued, and only produces in us one single perception which preserves always the same relation to the object. Every conception, every sensible perception which bears upon the form or the other attributes of these images, is only the same form of the solid perceived directly, either in virtue of a sort of actual and continued condensation of the image, or in consequence of the traces which it has left in us. Error and false judgments always depend upon the supposition that a preconceived idea will be confirmed, or at all events will not be overturned, by evidence. Then, when it is not confirmed, we form our judgments in virtue of a sort of initiation of the thoughts connected, it is true, with the perception, and with a direct representation; but still connected also with a conception peculiar to ourselves, which is the parent of error.

Hicks, 1925

They move with rapid motion; and this again explains why they present the appearance of the single continuous object, and retain the mutual interconnexion which they had in the object, when they impinge upon the sense, such impact being due to the oscillation of the atoms in the interior of the solid object from which they come. And whatever presentation we derive by direct contact, whether it be with the mind or with the sense-organs, be it shape that is presented or other properties, this shape as presented is the shape of the solid thing, and it is due either to a close coherence of the image as a whole or to a mere remnant of its parts. Falsehood and error always depend upon the intrusion of opinion (when a fact awaits) confirmation or the absence of contradiction, which fact is afterwards frequently not confirmed (or even contradicted) [following a certain movement in ourselves connected with, but distinct from, the mental picture presented – which is the cause of error.]

Bailey, 1926

moving along swiftly, and so by this means reproducing the image of a single continuous thing and preserving the corresponding sequence of qualities and movements from the original object as the result of their uniform contact with us, kept up by the vibration of the atoms deep in the interior of the concrete body. And every image which we obtain by an act of apprehension on the part of the mind or of the sense-organs, whether of shape or of properties, this image is the shape or the properties of the concrete object, and is produced by the constant repetition of the image or the impression it has left. Now falsehood and error always lie in the addition of opinion with regard to what is waiting to be confirmed or not contradicted, and then is not confirmed or is contradicted.

Letter to Herodotus |51|

Epicurus, c. 301-300 BCE

ἥ τε γὰρ ὁμοιότης τῶν φαντασμῶν οἱονεὶ ἐν εἰκόνι λαμβανομένων ἢ καθ’ ὕπνους γινομένων ἢ κατ’ ἄλλας τινὰς ἐπιβολὰς τῆς διανοίας ἢ τῶν λοιπῶν κριτηρίων οὐκ ἄν ποτε ὑπῆρχε τοῖς οὖσί τε καὶ ἀληθέσι προσαγορευομένοις, εἰ μὴ ἦν τινα καὶ ταῦτα πρὸς ἃ ‹ἐπι›βάλλομεν· τὸ δὲ διημαρτημένον οὐκ ἂν ὑπῆρχεν, εἰ μὴ ἐλαμβάνομεν καὶ ἄλλην τινὰ κίνησιν ἐν ἡμῖν αὐτοῖς συνημμένην μὲν ‹τῇ φανταστικῇ ἐπιβολῇ›, διάληψιν δὲ ἔχουσαν· κατὰ δὲ ταύτην [τὴν συνημμένην τῇ φανταστικῇ ἐπιβολῇ, διάληψιν δὲ ἔχουσαν], ἐὰν μὲν μὴ ἐπιμαρτυρηθῇ ἢ ἀντιμαρτυρηθῇ, τὸ ψεῦδος γίνεται· ἐὰν δὲ ἐπιμαρτυρηθῇ ἢ μὴ ἀντιμαρτυρηθῇ, τὸ ἀληθές.

Yonge, 1853

In fact the representations which intelligence reflects like a mirror, whether one perceives them in a dream or by any other conceptions of the intellect, or of any other of the criteria, can never resemble the objects that one calls real and true, unless there were objects of this kind perceived directly. And, on the other side, error could not be possible, if we did not receive some other motion also, a sort of initiative of intelligence connected, it is true, with direct representation, but going beyond that representative. These conceptions being connected with direct perception which produces the representation, but going beyond it, in consequence of a motion peculiar to the individual though, produces error when it is not confirmed by evidence, or when it is contradicted by evidence; but when it is confirmed, or when it is not contradicted by evidence, then it produces truth.

Hicks, 1925

For the presentations which, e.g., are received in a picture or arise in dreams, or from any other form of apprehension by the mind or by the other criteria of truth, would never have resembled what we call the real and true things, had it not been for certain actual things of the kind with which we come in contact. Error would not have occurred, if we had not experienced some other movement in ourselves, conjoined with, but distinct from, the perception of what is presented. And from this movement, if it be not confirmed or be contradicted, falsehood results; while, if it be confirmed or not contradicted, truth results.

Bailey, 1926

For the similarity between the things which exist, which we call real and the images received as a likeness of things and produced either in sleep or through some other acts of apprehension on the part of the mind or the other instruments of judgment, could never be, unless there were some effluences of this nature actually brought into contact with our senses. And error would not exist unless another kind of movement too were produced inside ourselves, closely linked to the apprehension of images, but differing from it; and it is owing to this, supposing it is not confirmed, or is contradicted, that falsehood arises; but if it is confirmed or not contradicted, it is true.

Letter to Herodotus |52|

Epicurus, c. 301-300 BCE

καὶ ταύτην οὖν σφόδρα γε δεῖ τὴν δόξαν κατέχειν, ἵνα μήτε τὰ κριτήρια ἀναιρῆται τὰ κατὰ τὰς ἐναργείας μήτε τὸ διημαρτημένον ὁμοίως βεβαιούμενον πάντα συνταράττῃ. Ἀλλὰ μὴν καὶ τὸ ἀκούειν γίνεται ῥεύματός τινος φερομένου ἀπὸ τοῦ φωνοῦντος ἢ ἠχοῦντος ἢ ψοφοῦντος ἢ ὅπως δήποτε ἀκουστικὸν πάθος παρασκευάζοντος. τὸ δὲ ῥεῦμα τοῦτο εἰς ὁμοιομερεῖς ὄγκους διασπείρεται, ἅμα τινὰ διασῴζοντας συμπάθειαν πρὸς ἀλλήλους καὶ ἑνότητα ἰδιότροπον, διατείνουσαν πρὸς τὸ ἀποστεῖλαν καὶ τὴν ἐπαίσθησιν τὴν ἐπ’ ἐκείνου ὡς τὰ πολλὰ ποιοῦσαν, εἰ δὲ μή γε, τὸ ἔξωθεν μόνον ἔνδηλον παρασκευάζουσαν·

Yonge, 1853

We must carefully preserve these principles in order not to reject the authority of the faculties which perceive truth directly; and not, on the other hand, to allow what is false to be established with equal firmness, so as to throw everything into confusion. Moreover, hearing is produced by some sort of current proceeding from something that speaks, or sounds, or roars, or in any manner causes any sort of audible circumstances. And this current is diffused into small bodies resembling one another in their parts; which, preserving not only some kind of relation between one another, but even a sort of particular identity with the object from which they emanate, puts us, very frequently, into a communication of sentiments with this object, or at least causes us to become aware of the existence of some external circumstance.

Hicks, 1925

And to this view we must closely adhere, if we are not to repudiate the criteria founded on the clear evidence of sense, nor again to throw all these things into confusion by maintaining falsehood as if it were truth. Again, hearing takes place when a current passes from the object, whether person or thing, which emits voice or sound or noise, or produces the sensation of hearing in any way whatever. This current is broken up into homogeneous particles, which at the same time preserve a certain mutual connexion and a distinctive unity extending to the object which emitted them, and thus, for the most part, cause the perception in that case or, if not, merely indicate the presence of the external object.

Bailey, 1926

Therefore we must do our best to keep this doctrine in mind, in order that on the one hand the standards of judgment dependent on the clear visions may not be undermined, and on the other error may not be as firmly established as truth and so throw all into confusion. Moreover, hearing, too, results when a current is carried off from the object speaking or sounding or making a noise, or causing in any other way a sensation of hearing. Now this current is split up into particles, each like the whole, which at the same time preserve a correspondence of qualities with one another and a unity of character which stretches right back to the object which emitted the sound: this unity it is which in most cases produces comprehension in the recipient, or, if not, merely makes manifest the presence of the external object.

Letter to Herodotus |53|

Epicurus, c. 301-300 BCE

ἄνευ γὰρ ἀναφερομένης τινὸς ἐκεῖθεν συμπαθείας οὐκ ἂν γένοιτο ἡ τοιαύτη ἐπαίσθησις. οὐκ αὐτὸν οὖν δεῖ νομίζειν τὸν ἀέρα ὑπὸ τῆς προιεμένης φωνῆς ἢ καὶ τῶν ὁμογενῶν σχηματίζεσθαι - πολλὴν γὰρ ἔνδειαν ἔξει τοῦτο πάσχων ὑπ' ἐκείνης - ἀλλ' εὐθὺς τὴν γινομένην πληγὴν ἐν ἡμῖν, ὅταν φωνὴν ἀφίωμεν, τοιαύτην ἔκθλιψιν ὄγκων τινῶν ῥεύματος πνευματώδους ἀποτελεστικῶν ποιεῖσθαι, ἢ τὸ πάθος τὸ ἀκουστικὸν ἡμῖν παρασκευάζει. Καὶ μὴν καὶ τὴν ὀσμὴν νομιστέον, ὥσπερ καὶ τὴν ἀκοὴν οὐκ ἄν ποτε οὐθὲν πάθος ἐργάσασθαι, εἰ μὴ ὄγκοι τινὲς ἦσαν ἀπὸ τοῦ πράγματος ἀποφερόμενοι σύμμετροι πρὸς τοῦτο τὸ αἰσθητήριον κινεῖν, οἱ μὲν τοῖοι τεταραγμένως καὶ ἀλλοτρίως, οἱ δὲ τοῖοι ἀταράχως καὶ οἰκείως ἔχοντες.

Yonge, 1853

If these currents did not carry with them some sort of sympathy, then there would be no such perception. We must not therefore think that it is the air which receives a certain form, under the action of the voice or some other sound. For it is utterly impossible that the voice should act in this manner on the air. But the percussion produced in us when we, by the utterance of a voice, cause a disengagement of certain particles, constitutes a current resembling a light whisper, and prepares an acoustic feeling for us. We must admit that the case of smelling is the same as that of hearing. There would be no sense of smell if there did not emanate from most objects certain particles capable of producing an impression on the sense of smell. One class being ill-suited to the organ, and consequently producing a disordered state of it, the other being suited to it, and causing it no distress.

Hicks, 1925

For without the transmission from the object of a certain interconnexion of the parts no such sensation could arise. Therefore we must not suppose that the air itself is moulded into shape by the voice emitted or something similar; for it is very far from being the case that the air is acted upon by it in this way. The blow which is struck in us when we utter a sound causes such a displacement of the particles as serves to produce a current resembling breath, and this displacement gives rise to the sensation of hearing. Again, we must believe that smelling, like hearing, would produce no sensation, were there not particles conveyed from the object which are of the proper sort for exciting the organ of smelling, some of one sort, some of another, some exciting it confusedly and strangely, others quietly and agreeably.

Bailey, 1926

For without the transference from the object of some correspondence of qualities, comprehension of this nature could not result. We must not then suppose that the actual air is molded into shape by the voice which is emitted or by other similar sounds — for it will be very far from being so acted upon by it — but that the blow which takes place inside us, when we emit our voice, causes at once a squeezing out of certain particles, which produce a stream of breath, of such a character as to afford us the sensation of hearing. Furthermore, we must suppose that smell too, just like hearing, could never bring about any sensation, unless there were certain particles carried off from the object of suitable size to stir this sense-organ, some of them in a manner disorderly and alien to it, others in a regular manner and akin in nature.

Letter to Herodotus |54|

Epicurus, c. 301-300 BCE

Καὶ μὴν καὶ τὰς ἀτόμους νομιστέον μηδεμίαν ποιότητα τῶν φαινομένων προσφέρεσθαι πλὴν σχήματος καὶ βάρους καὶ μεγέθους καὶ ὅσα ἐξ ἀνάγκης σχήματος συμφυῆ ἐστι. ποιότης γὰρ πᾶσα μεταβάλλει· αἱ δὲ ἄτομοι οὐδὲν μεταβάλλουσιν, ἐπειδή περ δεῖ τι ὑπομένειν ἐν ταῖς διαλύσεσι τῶν συγκρίσεων στερεὸν καὶ ἀδιάλυτον, ὃ τὰς μεταβολὰς οὐκ εἰς τὸ μὴ ὂν ποιήσεται οὐδ’ ἐκ τοῦ μὴ ὄντος, ἀλλὰ κατὰ μεταθέσεις ἐν πολλοῖς, τινῶν δὲ καὶ προσόδους καὶ ἀφόδους. ὅθεν ἀναγκαῖον τὰ [μὴ] μετατιθέμενα ἄφθαρτα εἶναι καὶ τὴν τοῦ μεταβάλλοντος φύσιν οὐκ ἔχοντα, ὄγκους δὲ καὶ σχηματισμοὺς ἰδίους· ταῦτα γὰρ καὶ ἀναγκαῖον ὑπομένειν.

Yonge, 1853

One must also allow, that the atoms possess not one of the qualities of sensible objects, except form, weight, magnitude and anything else is unavoidably inherent in form; in fact, every quality is changeable, but the atoms are necessarily unchangeable; for it is impossible but that in the dissolution of combined bodies, there must be something which continues solid and indestructible, of such a kind, that it will not change either into what does not exist, or out of what does not exist; but that it results either from a simple displacement of parts, which is not the most usual case, or from the addition or subtraction of certain particles. It follows from that, that that which does not admit of any change in itself, is imperishable, participates in no respect in the nature of changeable things, and in a word, has its dimensions and forms immutable determined.

Hicks, 1925

Moreover, we must hold that the atoms in fact possess none of the qualities belonging to things which come under our observation, except shape, weight, and size, and the properties necessarily conjoined with shape. For every quality changes, but the atoms do not change, since, when the composite bodies are dissolved, there must needs be a permanent something, solid and indissoluble, left behind, which makes change possible: not changes into or from the non-existent, but often through differences of arrangement, and sometimes through additions and subtractions of the atoms. Hence these somethings capable of being diversely arranged must be indestructible, exempt from change, but possessed each of its own distinctive mass and configuration. This must remain.

Bailey, 1926

Moreover, we must suppose that the atoms do not possess any of the qualities belonging to perceptible things, except shape, weight, and size, and all that necessarily goes with shape. For every quality changes; but the atoms do not change at all, since there must needs be something which remains solid and indissoluble at the dissolution of compounds, which can cause changes; not changes into the nonexistent or from the non-existent, but changes effected by the shifting of position of some particles, and by the addition or departure of others. For this reason it is essential that the bodies which shift their position should be imperishable and should not possess the nature of what changes, but parts and configuration of their own. For thus much must needs remain constant.

Letter to Herodotus |55|

Epicurus, c. 301-300 BCE

καὶ γὰρ ἐν τοῖς παρ’ ἡμῖν μετασχηματιζομένοις κατὰ τὴν περιαίρεσιν τὸ σχῆμα ἐνυπάρχον λαμβάνεται, αἱ δὲ ποιότητες οὐκ ἐνυπάρχουσαι ἐν τῷ μεταβάλλοντι, ὥσπερ ἐκεῖνο καταλείπεται, ἀλλ’ ἐξ ὅλου τοῦ σώματος ἀπολλύμεναι. ἱκανὰ οὖν τὰ ὑπολειπόμενα ταῦτα τὰς τῶν συγκρίσεων διαφορὰς ποιεῖν, ἐπειδή περ ὑπολείπεσθαί γέ τινα ἀναγκαῖον καὶ ‹μὴ› εἰς τὸ μὴ ὂν φθείρεσθαι. Ἀλλὰ μὴν οὐδὲ δεῖ νομίζειν πᾶν μέγεθος ἐν ταῖς ἀτόμοις ὑπάρχειν, ἵνα μὴ τὰ φαινόμενα ἀντιμαρτυρῇ· παραλλαγὰς δέ τινας μεγεθῶν νομιστέον εἶναι. βέλτιον γὰρ καὶ τούτου προσόντος τὰ κατὰ τὰ πάθη καὶ τὰς αἰσθήσεις γινόμενα ἀποδοθήσεται.

Yonge, 1853

And this is proved plainly enough, because even in the transformations which take place under our eyes, in consequence of the removal of certain parts, we can still recognize the form of these constituent parts; while those qualities, which are not constituent parts, do not remain like the form, but perish in the dissolution of the combination. The attributes which we have indicated, suffice to explain all the differences of combined bodies; for we must inevitably leave something indestructible, lest everything should resolve itself into non-existence. However, one must not believe that every kind of magnitude exists in atoms, lest we find ourselves contradicted by phenomena. But we must admit that there are atoms of different magnitude, because, as that is the case, it is then more easy to explain the impressions and sensations;

Hicks, 1925

For in the case of changes of configuration within our experience the figure is supposed to be inherent when other qualities are stripped off, but the qualities are not supposed, like the shape which is left behind, to inhere in the subject of change, but to vanish altogether from the body. Thus, then, what is left behind is sufficient to account for the differences in composite bodies, since something at least must necessarily be left remaining and be immune from annihilation. Again, you should not suppose that the atoms have any and every size, lest you be contradicted by facts; but differences of size must be admitted; for this addition renders the facts of feeling and sensation easier of explanation.

Bailey, 1926

For even in things perceptible to us which change their shape by the withdrawal of matter it is seen that shape remains to them, whereas the qualities do not remain in the changing object, in the way in which shape is left behind, but are lost from the entire body. Now these particles which are left behind are sufficient to cause the differences in compound bodies, since it is essential that some things should be left behind and not be destroyed into the non-existent. Moreover, we must not either suppose that every size exists among the atoms, in order that the evidence of phenomena may not contradict us, but we must suppose that there are some variations of size. For if this be the case, we can give a better account of what occurs in our feelings and sensations.

Letter to Herodotus |56|

Epicurus, c. 301-300 BCE

πᾶν δὲ μέγεθος ὑπάρχον οὔτε χρήσιμόν ἐστι πρὸς τὰς τῶν ποιοτήτων διαφοράς, ἀφῖχθαί τε ἅμ’ ἔδει καὶ πρὸς ἡμᾶς ὁρατὰς ἀτόμους· ὃ οὐ θεωρεῖται γινόμενον οὔθ’ ὅπως ἂν γένοιτο ὁρατὴ ἄτομος ἔστιν ἐπινοῆσαι. Πρὸς δὲ τούτοις οὐ δεῖ νομίζειν ἐν τῷ ὡρισμένῳ σώματι ἀπείρους ὄγκους εἶναι οὐδ’ ὀπηλίκους οὖν. ὥστε οὐ μόνον τὴν εἰς ἄπειρον τομὴν ἐπὶ τοὔλαττον ἀναιρετέον, ἵνα μὴ πάντα ἀσθενῆ ποιῶμεν κἀν ταῖς περιλήψεσι τῶν ἀθρόων εἰς τὸ μὴ ὂν ἀναγκαζώμεθα τὰ ὄντα θλίβοντες καταναλίσκειν, ἀλλὰ καὶ τὴν μετάβασιν μὴ νομιστέον γίνεσθαι ἐν τοῖς ὡρισμένοις εἰς ἄπειρον μηδ’ ἐ‹πὶ› τοὔλαττον.

Yonge, 1853

at all events, I repeat, it is not necessary for the purpose of explaining the differences of the qualities, to attribute to atoms every kind of magnitude. We must not suppose either, that an atom can become visible to us; for, first of all, one does not see that that is the case, and besides, one cannot even conceive, how an atom is to become visible; besides, we must not believe, that in a finite body there are particles of every sort, infinite in number; consequently, on must not only reject the doctrine of infinite divisibility in parcels smaller and smaller, lest we should be reducing everything to nothing, and find ourselves forced to admit, that in a mass composed of a crowd of elements, existence can reduce itself to non-existence. But one cannot even suppose that a finite can be susceptible of transformation ad infinitum, or even of transformation into smaller objects that itself;

Hicks, 1925

But to attribute any and every magnitude to the atoms does not help to explain the differences of quality in things; moreover, in that case atoms large enough to be seen ought to have reached us, which is never observed to occur; nor can we conceive how its occurrence should be possible, i.e. that an atom should become visible. Besides, you must not suppose that there are parts unlimited in number, be they ever so small, in any finite body. Hence not only must we reject as impossible subdivision ad infinitum into smaller and smaller parts, lest we make all things too weak and, in our conceptions of the aggregates, be driven to pulverize the things that exist, i.e. the atoms, and annihilate them; but in dealing with finite things we must also reject as impossible the progression ad infinitum by less and less increments.

Bailey, 1926

But the existence of atoms of every size is not required to explain the differences of qualities in things, and at the same time some atoms would be bound to come within our ken and be visible; but this is never seen to be the case, nor is it possible to imagine how an atom could become visible. Besides this we must not suppose that in a limited body there can be infinite parts or parts of every degree of smallness. Therefore, we must not only do away with division into smaller and smaller parts to infinity, in order that we may not make all things weak, and so in the composition of aggregate bodies be compelled to crush and squander the things that exist into the non-existent, but we must not either suppose that in limited bodies there is a possibility of continuing to infinity in passing even to smaller and smaller parts.

Letter to Herodotus |57|

Epicurus, c. 301-300 BCE

οὔτε γὰρ ὅπως, ἐπειδὰν ἅπαξ τις εἴπῃ ὅτι ἄπειροι ὄγκοι ἔν τινι ὑπάρχουσιν ἢ ὁπηλίκοι οὖν, ἔστι νοῆσαι· πῶς τ’ ἂν ἔτι τοῦτο πεπερασμένον εἴη τὸ μέγεθος; πηλίκοι γάρ τινες δῆλον ὡς οἱ ἄπειροί εἰσιν ὄγκοι· καὶ οὗτοι ὁπηλίκοι ἄν ποτε ὦσιν, ἄπειρον ἂν ἦν καὶ τὸ μέγεθος. ἄκρον τε ἔχοντος τοῦ πεπερασμένου διαληπτόν, εἰ μὴ καὶ καθ’ ἑαυτὸ θεωρητόν, οὐκ ἔστι μὴ οὐ καὶ τὸ ἐξῆς τούτου τοιοῦτον νοεῖν, καὶ οὕτω κατὰ τὸ ἐξῆς εἰς τοὔμπροσθεν βαδίζοντα εἰς τὸ ἄπειρον ὑπάρχειν κατὰ ‹τὸ› τοιοῦτον ἀφικνεῖσθαι τῇ ἐννοίᾳ.

Yonge, 1853

for when once one has said that there are in an object particles of every kind, infinite in number, there is absolutely no means whatever of imagining that this object can have only a finite magnitude; in fact, it is evident that these particles, infinite in number, have some kind of dimension or other, and whatever this dimension may be in other respects, the objects which are composed of it will have an infinite magnitude; in presenting forms which are determined, and limits which are perceived by the senses, one conceives, easily, without it being necessary to study this last question directly, that this would be the consequence of the contrary supposition, and that consequently, one must come to look at every object as infinite.

Hicks, 1925

For when once we have said that an infinite number of particles, however small, are contained in anything, it is not possible to conceive how it could any longer be limited or finite in size. For clearly our infinite number of particles must have some size; and then, of whatever size they were, the aggregate they made would be infinite. And, in the next place, since what is finite has an extremity which is distinguishable, even if it is not by itself observable, it is not possible to avoid thinking of another such extremity next to this. Nor can we help thinking that in this way, by proceeding forward from one to the next in order, it is possible by such a progression to arrive in thought at infinity.

Bailey, 1926

For if once one says that there are infinite parts in a body or parts of any degree of smallness, it is not possible to conceive how this should be, and indeed how could the body any longer be limited in size? (For it is obvious that these infinite particles must be of some size or other; and however small they may be, the size of the body too would be infinite.) And again, since the limited body has an extreme point, which is distinguishable, even though not perceptible by itself, you cannot conceive that the succeeding point to it is not similar in character, or that if you go on in this way from one point to another, it should be possible for you to proceed to infinity marking such points in your mind.

Letter to Herodotus |58|

Epicurus, c. 301-300 BCE

τό τε ἐλάχιστον τὸ ἐν τῇ αἰσθήσει δεῖ κατανοεῖν ὅτι οὔτε τοιοῦτόν ἐστιν οἷον τὸ τὰς μεταβάσεις ἔχον οὔτε πάντῃ πάντως ἀνόμοιον, ἀλλ’ ἔχον μέν τινα κοινότητα τῶν μεταβατῶν, διάληψιν δὲ μερῶν οὐκ ἔχον· ἀλλ’ ὅταν διὰ τὴν τῆς κοινότητος προσεμφέρειαν οἰηθῶμεν διαλήψεσθαί τι αὐτοῦ, τὸ μὲν ἐπιτάδε, τὸ δὲ ἐπέκεινα, τὸ ἴσον ἡμῖν δεῖ προσπίπτειν. ἐξῆς τε θεωροῦμεν ταῦτα ἀπὸ τοῦ πρώτου καταρχόμενοι καὶ οὐκ ἐν τῷ αὐτῷ, οὐδὲ μέρεσι μερῶν ἁπτόμενα, ἀλλ’ ἢ ἐν τῇ ἰδιότητι τῇ ἑαυτῶν τὰ μεγέθη καταμετροῦντα, τὰ πλεῖω πλεῖον καὶ τὰ ἐλάττω ἔλαττον. ταύτῃ τῇ ἀναλογίᾳ νομιστέον καὶ τὸ ἐν τῇ ἀτόμῳ ἐλάχιστον κεχρῆσθαι·

Yonge, 1853

One must also admit that the most minute particle perceptible to the sense, is neither absolutely like the objects which are susceptible of transformation, nor absolutely different from them. It has some characteristic in common with the object which admit of transformation, but it also differs from them, inasmuch as it does not allow any distinct parts to be discerned in it. When then, in virtue of these common characteristics, and of this resemblance, we wish to form an idea of the smallest particle perceptible by the senses, in taking the objects which change, for our terms of comparison, it is necessary that we should seize on some characteristic common to these different objects. In this way, we examine them successively, from the first to the last, not by themselves, more as composed of parts in juxtaposition, but only in their extent; in other words, we consider, the magnitudes by themselves, and in an abstract manner, inasmuch as they measure, the greater a greater extent, and the smaller a smaller extent. This analogy applies to the atom, as far as we consider it as having the smallest dimensions possible.

Hicks, 1925

We must consider the minimum perceptible by sense as not corresponding to that which is capable of being traversed, i.e. is extended, nor again as utterly unlike it, but as having something in common with the things capable of being traversed, though it is without distinction of parts. But when from the illusion created by this common property we think we shall distinguish something in the minimum, one part on one side and another part on the other side, it must be another minimum equal to the first which catches our eye. In fact, we see these minima one after another, beginning with the first, and not as occupying the same space; nor do we see them touch one another’s parts with their parts, but we see that by virtue of their own peculiar character (i.e. as being unit indivisibles) they afford a means of measuring magnitudes: there are more of them, if the magnitude measured is greater; fewer of them, if the magnitude measured is less. We must recognize that this analogy also holds of the minimum in the atom;

Bailey, 1926

We must notice also that the least thing in sensation is neither exactly like that which admits of progression from one part to another, nor again is it in every respect wholly unlike it, but it has a certain affinity with such bodies, yet cannot be divided into parts. But when on the analogy of this resemblance we think to divide off parts of it, one on the one side and another on the other, it must needs be that another point like the first meets our view. And we look at these points in succession starting from the first, not within the limits of the same point nor in contact part with part, but yet by means of their own proper characteristics measuring the size of bodies, more in a greater body and fewer in a smaller. Now we must suppose that the least part in the atom too bears the same relation to the whole;

Epicurus, c. 301-300 BCE

μικρότητι γὰρ ἐκεῖνο δῆλον ὡς διαφέρει τοῦ κατὰ τὴν αἴσθησιν θεωρουμένου, ἀναλογίᾳ δὲ τῇ αὐτῇ κέχρηται. ἐπεὶ περ καὶ ὅτι μέγεθος ἔχει ἡ ἄτομος, κατὰ τὴν ἐνταῦθα ἀναλογίαν κατηγορήσαμεν, μικρόν τι μόνον μακρὰν ἐκβαλόντες. ἔτι τε τὰ ἐλάχιστα καὶ ἀμερῆ πέρατα δεῖ νομίζειν τῶν μηκῶν τὸ καταμέτρημα ἐξ αὐτῶν πρῶτον τοῖς μείζοσι καὶ ἐλάττοσι παρασκευάζοντα τῇ διὰ λόγου θεωρίᾳ ἐπὶ τῶν ἀοράτων. ἡ γὰρ κοινότης ἡ ὑπάρχουσα αὐτοῖς πρὸς τὰ ἀμετάβατα ἱκανὴ τὸ μέχρι τούτου συντελέσαι, συμφόρησιν δὲ ἐκ τούτων κίνησιν ἐχόντων οὐχ οἷόν τε γίνεσθαι.

Yonge, 1853

Evidently by its minuteness, it differs from all sensible objects, but still this analogy is applicable to it; in a word, we establish by this comparison, that the atom really has some extent, but we exclude all considerable dimensions, for the sake of only investing it with the smallest proportions. We must also admit, in taking for our guide the reasoning which discloses to us things which are invisible to the senses, that the most minute magnitudes, those which are not compound magnitudes, and which from the limit of sensible extent, are the first measure of the other magnitudes which are only called greater or less in their relation to the others. For these relations which they maintain with these particles, which are not subject to transformation, suffice to give them this characteristic of first measure. But they cannot, like atoms, combine themselves, and form compound bodies in virtue of any motion belonging to themselves.

Hicks, 1925

it is only in minuteness that it differs from that which is observed by sense, but it follows the same analogy. On the analogy of things within our experience we have declared that the atom has magnitude; and this, small as it is, we have merely reproduced on a larger scale. And further, the least and simplest things must be regarded as extremities of lengths, furnishing from themselves as units the means of measuring lengths, whether greater or less, the mental vision being employed, since direct observation is impossible. For the community which exists between them and the unchangeable parts (i.e. the minimal parts of area or surface) is sufficient to justify the conclusion so far as this goes. But it is not possible that these minima of the atom should group themselves together through the possession of motion.

Bailey, 1926

for though in smallness it is obvious that it exceeds that which is seen by sensation, yet it has the same relations. For indeed we have already declared on the ground of its relation to sensible bodies that the atom has size, only we placed it far below them in smallness. Further, we must consider these least indivisible points as boundary-marks, providing in themselves as primary units the measure of size for the atoms, both for the smaller and the greater, in our contemplation of these unseen bodies by means of thought. For the affinity which the least parts of the atom have to the homogeneous parts of sensible things is sufficient to justify our conclusion to this extent: but that they should ever come together as bodies with motion is quite impossible.

Letter to Herodotus |60|

Epicurus, c. 301-300 BCE

Καὶ μὴν καὶ τοῦ ἀπείρου ὡς μὲν ἀνωτάτω ἢ κατωτάτω οὐ δεῖ κατηγορεῖν τὸ ἄνω ἢ κάτω. ἴσμεν μέντοι τὸ ὑπὲρ κεφαλῆς, ὅθεν ἂν στῶμεν, εἰς ἄπειρον ἄγειν ὄν, μηδέποτε φανεῖσθαι τοῦτο ἡμῖν, ἢ τὸ ὑποκάτω τοῦ νοηθέντος εἰς ἄπειρον, ἅμα ἄνω τε εἶναι καὶ κάτω πρὸς τὸ αὐτό· τοῦτο γὰρ ἀδύνατον διανοηθῆναι. ὥστε ἔστι μίαν λαβεῖν φορὰν τὴν ἄνω νοουμένην εἰς ἄπειρον καὶ μίαν τὴν κάτω, ἂν καὶ μυριάκις πρὸς τοὺς πόδας τῶν ἐπάνω τὸ παρ᾽ ἡμῶν φερόμενον ‹εἰ› τοὺς ὑπὲρ κεφαλῆς ἡμῶν τόπους ἀφικνῆται ἢ ἐπὶ τὴν κεφαλὴν τῶν ὑποκάτω τὸ παρ᾽ ἡμῶν κάτω φερόμενον· ἡ γὰρ ὅλη φορὰ οὐθὲν ἧττον ἑκατέρα ἑκατέρᾳ ἀντικειμένη ἐπ᾽ ἄπειρον νοεῖται.

Yonge, 1853

Moreover, we must not say (while speaking of the infinite), that such or such a point is the highest point of it, or the lowest. For height and lowness must not be predicated of the infinite. We know, in reality, that if, wishing to determine the infinite, we conceive a point above our head, this point, whatever it may be, will never appear to us to have the character in question: otherwise, that which would be situated above the point so conceived as the limit of the infinite, would be at the same moment, and by virtue of its relation to the same point, both high and low; and this is impossible to imagine. It follows that thought can only conceive that one single movement of transference, from low to high, ad infinitum; and one single movement from high to low. From low to high, when even the object in motion, going from us to the places situated above our heads, meets ten thousand times with the feet of those who are above us; and from high to low, when in the same way it advances towards the heads of those who are below us. For these two movements, looked at by themselves and in their whole, are conceived as really opposed the one to the other, in their progress towards the infinite.

Hicks, 1925

Further, we must not assert ‘up’ or ‘down’ of that which is unlimited, as if there were a zenith or nadir. As to the space overhead, however, if it be possible to draw a line to infinity from the point where we stand, we know that never will this space – or, for that matter, the space below the supposed standpoint if produced to infinity – appear to us to be at the same time ‘up’ and ‘down’ with reference to the same point; for this is inconceivable. Hence it is possible to assume one direction of motion, which we conceive as extending upwards ad infinitum, and another downwards, even if it should happen ten thousand times that what moves from us to the spaces above our heads reaches the feet of those above us, or that which moves downwards from us the heads of those below us. None the less is it true that the whole of the motion in the respective cases is conceived as extending in opposite directions ad infinitum.

Bailey, 1926

Furthermore, in the infinite we must not speak of “up” or “down,” as though with reference to an absolute highest or lowest — and indeed we must say that, though it is possible to proceed to infinity in the direction above our heads from wherever we take our stand, the absolute highest point will never appear to us — nor yet can that which passes beneath the point thought of to infinity be at the same time both up and down in reference to the same thing: for it is impossible to think this. So that it is possible to consider as one single motion that which is thought of as the upward motion to infinity and as another the downward motion, even though that which passes from us into the regions above our heads arrives countless times at the feet of beings above and that which passes downwards from us at the head of beings below; for none the less the whole motions are thought of as opposed, the one to the other, to infinity.

Letter to Herodotus |61|

Epicurus, c. 301-300 BCE

Καὶ μὴν καὶ ἰσοταχεῖς ἀναγκαῖον τὰς ἀτόμους εἶναι, ὅταν διὰ τοῦ κενοῦ εἰσφέρωνται μηθενὸς ἀντικόπτοντος· οὔτε γὰρ τὰ βαρέα θᾶττον οἰσθήσεται τῶν μικρῶν καὶ κούφων, ὅταν γε δὴ μηδὲν ἀπαντᾷ αὐτοῖς· οὔτε τὰ μικρὰ τῶν μεγάλων, πάντα πόρον σύμμετρον ἔχοντα, ὅταν μηθὲν μηδὲ ἐκείνοις ἀντικόπτῃ· οὔθ' ἡ ἄνω οὔθ' ἡ εἰς τὸ πλάγιον διὰ τῶν κρούσεων φορά, οὔθ' ἡ κάτω διὰ τῶν ἰδίων βαρῶν. ἐφ' ὁπόσον γὰρ ἂν κατίσχῃ ἑκάτερον, ἐπὶ τοσοῦτον ἅμα νοήματι τὴν φορὰν σχήσει, ἕως ἀντικόψῃ ἢ ἔξωθεν ἢ ἐκ τοῦ ἰδίου βάρους πρὸς τὴν τοῦ πλήξαντος δύναμιν.

Yonge, 1853

Moreover, all the atoms are necessarily animated by the same rapidity, when they move across the void, or when no obstacle thwarts them. For why should heavy atoms have a more rapid movement than those which are small and light, since in no quarter do they encounter any obstacle? Why, on the other hand, should the small atoms have a rapidity superior to that of the large ones, since both the one and the other find everywhere an easy passage, from the very moment that no obstacle intervenes to thwart their movements? Movement from low to high, horizontal movement to and fro, in virtue of the reciprocal percussion of the atoms, movement downwards, in virtue of their weight, will be all equal, for in whatever sense the atom moves, it must have a movement as rapid as the thought, till the moment when it is repelled, in virtue of some external cause, or of its own proper weight, by the shock of some object which resists it.

Hicks, 1925

When they are travelling through the void and meet with no resistance, the atoms must move with equal speed. Neither will heavy atoms travel more quickly than small and light ones, so long as nothing meets them, nor will small atoms travel more quickly than large ones, provided they always find a passage suitable to their size, and provided also that they meet with no obstruction. Nor will their upward or their lateral motion, which is due to collisions, nor again their downward motion, due to weight, affect their velocity. As long as either motion obtains, it must continue, quick as the speed of thought, provided there is no obstruction, whether due to external collision or to the atoms' own weight counteracting the force of the blow.

Bailey, 1926

Moreover, the atoms must move with equal speed, when they are borne onwards through the void, nothing colliding with them. For neither will the heavy move more quickly than the small and light, when, that is, nothing meets them: nor again the small more quickly than the great, having their whole course uniform, when nothing collides with them either: nor is the motion upwards or sideways owing to blows quicker, nor again that downwards owing to their own weight. For as long as either of the two motions prevails, so long will it have a course as quick as thought, until something checks it either from outside or from its own weight counteracting the force of that which dealt the blow. *[Passage transfered from section 46.]* Moreover, their passage through the void, when it takes place without meeting any bodies which might collide, accomplishes every comprehensible distance in an inconceivably short time. For it is collision and its absence which take the outward appearance of slowness and quickness.

Letter to Herodotus |62|

Epicurus, c. 301-300 BCE

Ἀλλὰ μὴν καὶ κατὰ τὰς συγκρίσεις θάττων ἑτέρα ἑτέρας ῥηθήσεται, τῶν ἀτόμων ἰσοταχῶν οὐσων, τῷ ἐφ’ ἕνα τόπον φέρεσθαι τὰς ἐν τοῖς ἀθροίσμασιν ἀτόμους καὶ κατὰ τὸν ἐλάχιστον συνεχῆ χρόνον, εἰ μὴ ἐφ’ ἕνα κατὰ τοὺς λόγῳ θεωρητοὺς χρόνους· ἀλλὰ πυκνὸν ἀντικόπτουσιν, ἕως ἂν ὑπὸ τὴν αἴσθησιν τὸ συνεχὲς τῆς φορᾶς γίνηται. τὸ γὰρ προσδοξαζόμενον περὶ τοῦ ἀοράτου, ὡς ἄρα καὶ οἱ διὰ λόγου θεωρητοὶ χρόνοι τὸ συνεχὲς τῆς φορᾶς ἔξουσιν, οὐκ ἀληθές ἐστιν ἐπὶ τῶν τοιούτων· ἐπεὶ τό γε θεωρούμενον πᾶν ἢ κατ’ ἐπιβολὴν λαμβανόμενον τῇ διανοίᾳ ἀληθές ἐστι.

Yonge, 1853

Again, even in the compound bodies, one atom does not move more rapidly than another. In fact, if one only looks at the continued movement of an atom which takes place in an indivisible moment of time, the briefest possible, they all have a movement equally rapid. At the same time, an atom has not, in any moment perceptible to the intelligence, a continued movement in the same direction; but rather a series of oscillating movements from which there results, in the last analysis, a continued movement perceptible to the senses. If then, one were to suppose, in virtue of a reasoning on things invisible, that, in the intervals of time accessible to thought, the atoms have a continued movement one would deceive one’s self, for that which is conceived by the thought is true as well as that which is directly perceived.

Hicks, 1925

Moreover, when we come to deal with composite bodies, one of them will travel faster than another, although their atoms have equal speed. This is because the atoms in the aggregates are travelling in one direction during the shortest continuous time, albeit they move in different directions in times so short as to be appreciable only by the reason, but frequently collide until the continuity of their motion is appreciated by sense. For the assumption that beyond the range of direct observation even the minute times conceivable by reason will present continuity of motion is not true in the case before us. Our canon is that direct observation by sense and direct apprehension by the mind are alone invariably true.

Bailey, 1926

Moreover, it will be said that in compound bodies too one atom is faster than another, though as a matter of fact all are equal in speed: this will be said because even in the least period of continuous time all the atoms in aggregate bodies move towards one place, even though in moments of time perceptible only by thought they do not move towards one place but are constantly jostling one against another, until the continuity of their movement comes under the ken of sensation. For the addition of opinion with regard to the unseen, that the moments perceptible only by thought will also contain continuity of motion, is not true in such cases; for we must remember that it is what we observe with the senses or grasp with the mind by an apprehension that is true. *[Passage transfered from section 47.]* Nor must it either be supposed that in moments perceptible only by thought the moving body too passes to the several places to which its component atoms move (for this too is unthinkable, and in that case, when it arrives all together in a sensible period of time from any point that may be in the infinite void, it would not be taking its departure from the place from which we apprehend its motion); for the motion of the whole body will be the outward expression of its internal collisions, even though up to the limits of perception we suppose the speed of its motion not to be retarded by collision. It is of advantage to grasp this first principle as well.

Letter to Herodotus |63|

Epicurus, c. 301-300 BCE

Μετὰ δὲ ταῦτα δεῖ συνορᾶν ἀναφέροντα ἐπὶ τὰς αἰσθήσεις καὶ τὰ πάθη - οὕτω γὰρ ἡ βεβαιοτάτη πίστις ἔσται - ὅτι ἡ ψυχὴ σῶμά ἐστι λεπτομερές, παρ’ ὅλον τὸ ἄθροισμα παρεσπαρμένον, προσεμφερέστατον δὲ πνεύματι, θερμοῦ τινα κρᾶσιν ἔχοντι καὶ πῇ μὲν τούτῳ προσεμφερές, πῇ δὲ τούτῳ. ἔστι δέ τι μέρος πολλὴν παραλλαγὴν εἰληφὸς τῇ λεπτομερείᾳ καὶ αὐτῶν τούτων, συμπαθὲς διὰ τοῦτο μᾶλλον καὶ τῷ λοιπῷ ἀθροίσματι· τοῦτο δὲ πᾶν αἱ δυνάμεις τῆς ψυχῆς δηλοῦσι καὶ τὰ πάθη καὶ αἱ εὐκινησίαι καὶ αἱ διανοήσεις καὶ ὧν στερόμενοι θνῄσκομεν. Καὶ μὴν καὶ ὅτι ἔχει ἡ ψυχὴ τῆς αἰσθήσεως τὴν πλείστην αἰτίαν δεῖ κατέχειν·

Yonge, 1853

Let us now return to the study of the affections, and of the sensations; for this will be the best method of proving that the soul is a bodily substance composed of light particles, diffused over all the members of the body, and presenting a great analogy to a sort of spirit, having an admixture of heat, resembling at one time one, and at another time the other of those two principles. There exists in it a special part, endowed with an extreme mobility, in consequence of the exceeding slightness of the elements which compose it, and also in reference to its more immediate sympathy with the rest of the body. That it is which the faculties of the soul sufficiently prove, and the passions, and the mobility of its nature, and the thoughts, and, in a word, everything, the privation of which is death. We must admit that it is in the soul most especially that the principle of sensation resides.

Hicks, 1925

Next, keeping in view our perceptions and feelings (for so shall we have the surest grounds for belief), we must recognize generally that the soul is a corporeal thing, composed of fine particles, dispersed all over the frame, most nearly resembling wind with an admixture of heat, in some respects like wind, in others like heat. But, again, there is the third part which exceeds the other two in the fineness of its particles and thereby keeps in closer touch with the rest of the frame. And this is shown by the mental faculties and feelings, by the ease with which the mind moves, and by thoughts, and by all those things the loss of which causes death. Further, we must keep in mind that soul has the greatest share in causing sensation.

Bailey, 1926

Next, referring always to the sensations and the feelings, for in this way you will obtain the most trustworthy ground of belief, you must consider that the soul is a body of fine particles distributed throughout the whole structure, and most resembling wind with a certain admixture of heat, and in some respects like to one of these and in some to the other. There is also the part which is many degrees more advanced even than these in fineness of composition, and for this reason is more capable of feeling in harmony with the rest of the structure as well. Now all this is made manifest by the activities of the soul and the feelings and the readiness of its movements and its processes of thought and by what we lose at the moment of death. Further, you must grasp that the soul possesses the chief cause of sensation:

Letter to Herodotus |64|

Epicurus, c. 301-300 BCE

οὐ μὴν εἰλήφει ἂν ταύτην, εἰ μὴ ὑπὸ τοῦ λοιποῦ ἀθροίσματος ἐστεγάζετό πως· τὸ δὲ λοιπὸν ἄθροισμα παρασκευάσαν ἐκείνῃ τὴν αἰτίαν ταύτην μετείληφε καὶ αὐτὸ τοιούτου συμπτώματος παρ' ἐκείνης, οὐ μέντοι πάντων ὧν ἐκείνη κέκτηται· διὸ ἀπαλλαγείσης τῆς ψυχῆς οὐκ ἔχει τὴν αἴσθησιν. οὐ γὰρ αὐτὸ ἐν ἑαυτῷ ταύτην ἐκέκτητο τὴν δύναμιν, ἀλλ' ἑτέρῳ ἅμα συγγεγενημένῳ αὐτῷ παρεσκεύαζεν, ὃ διὰ τῆς συντελεσθείσης περὶ αὐτὸ δυνάμεως κατὰ τὴν κίνησιν σύμπτωμα αἰσθητικὸν εὐθὺς ἀποτελοῦν ἑαυτῷ ἀπεδίδου κατὰ τὴν ὁμούρησιν καὶ συμπάθειαν καὶ ἐκείνῳ, καθάπερ εἶπον.

Yonge, 1853

At the same time, it would not possess this power if it were not enveloped by the rest of the body which communicates it to it, and in its turn receives it from it; but only in certain measure; for there are certain affections of the soul of which it is not capable. It is on that account that, when the soul departs, the body is no longer possessed of sensation; for it has not this power, (namely that of sensation) in itself; but on the other hand, this power can only manifest itself in the soul through the medium of the body. The soul, reflecting the manifestations which are accomplished in the substance which environs it, realizes in itself, in a virtue or power which belongs to it, the sensible affections, and immediately communicates them to the body in virtue of the reciprocal bonds of sympathy which unite it to the body;

Hicks, 1925

Still, it would not have had sensation, had it not been somehow confined within the rest of the frame. But the rest of the frame, though it provides this indispensable condition for the soul, itself also has a share, derived from the soul, of the said quality; and yet does not possess all the qualities of soul. Hence on the departure of the soul it loses sentience. For it had not this power in itself; but something else, congenital with the body, supplied it to body: which other thing, through the potentiality actualized in it by means of motion, at once acquired for itself a quality of sentience, and, in virtue of the neighbourhood and interconnexion between them, imparted it (as I said) to the body also.

Bailey, 1926

yet it could not have acquired sensation, unless it were in some way enclosed by the rest of the structure. And this in its turn having afforded the soul this cause of sensation acquires itself too a share in this contingent capacity from the soul. Yet it does not acquire all the capacities which the soul possesses: and therefore when the soul is released from the body, the body no longer has sensation. For it never possessed this power in itself, but used to afford opportunity for it to another existence, brought into being at the same time with itself: and this existence, owing to the power now consummated within itself as a result of motion, used spontaneously to produce for itself the capacity of sensation and then to communicate it to the body as well, in virtue of its contact and correspondence of movement, as I have already said.

Letter to Herodotus |65|

Epicurus, c. 301-300 BCE

Διὸ δὴ καὶ ἐνυπάρχουσα ἡ ψυχὴ οὐδέποτε ἄλλου τινὸς μέρους ἀπηλλαγμένου ἀναισθητεῖ· ἀλλ’ ἃ ἂν καὶ ταύτης ξυναπόληται τοῦ στεγάζοντος λυθέντος εἴθ’ ὅλου εἴτε καὶ μέρους τινός, ἐάν περ διαμένῃ, σῴζει τὴν αἴσθησιν. τὸ δὲ λοιπὸν ἄθροισμα διαμένον καὶ ὅλον καὶ κατὰ μέρος οὐκ ἔχει τὴν αἴσθησιν ἐκείνου ἀπηλλαγμένου, ὅσον ποτέ ἐστι τὸ συντεῖνον τῶν ἀτόμων πλῆθος εἰς τὴν τῆς ψυχῆς φύσιν. Καὶ μὴν καὶ λυομένου τοῦ ὅλου ἀθροίσματος ἡ ψυχὴ διασπείρεται καὶ οὐκέτι ἔχει τὰς αὐτὰς δυνάμεις οὐδὲ κινεῖται, ὥστε οὐδ’ αἴσθησιν κέκτηται.

Yonge, 1853

that is the reason why the destruction of a part of the body does not draw after it a cessation of all feeling in the soul while it resides in the body, provided that the senses still preserve some energy; although, nevertheless, the dissolution of the corporeal covering, or even of any one of its portions, may sometimes bring on with it the destruction of the soul. The rest of the body, on the other hand, even when it remains, either as a whole, or in any part, loses all feeling by the dispersion of that aggregate of atoms, whatever it may be, that forms the soul. When the entire combination of the body is dissolved, then the soul too is dissolved, and ceases to retain those faculties which were previously inherent in it, and especially the power of motion; so that sensation perishes equally as far as the soul is concerned;

Hicks, 1925

Hence, so long as the soul is in the body, it never loses sentience through the removal of some other part. The containing sheath may be dislocated in whole or in part, and portions of the soul may thereby be lost; yet in spite of this the soul, if it manage to survive, will have sentience. But the rest of the frame, whether the whole of it survives or only a part, no longer has sensation, when once those atoms have departed, which, however few in number, are required to constitute the nature of soul. Moreover, when the whole frame is broken up, the soul is scattered and has no longer the same powers as before, nor the same motions; hence it does not possess sentience either.

Bailey, 1926

Therefore, so long as the soul remains in the body, even though some other part of the body be lost, it will never lose sensation; nay more, whatever portions of the soul may perish too, when that which enclosed it is removed either in whole or in part, if the soul continues to exist at all, it will retain sensation. On the other hand the rest of the structure, though it continues to exist either as a whole or in part, does not retain sensation, if it has once lost that sum of atoms, however small it be, which together goes to produce the nature of the soul. Moreover, if the whole structure is dissolved, the soul is dispersed and no longer has the same powers nor performs its movements, so that it does not possess sensation either.

Letter to Herodotus |66|

Epicurus, c. 301-300 BCE

οὐ γὰρ οἷόν τε νοεῖν αὐτὸ αἰσθανόμενον μὴ ἐν τούτῳ τῷ συστήματι καὶ ταῖς κινήσεσι ταύταις χρώμενον, ὅταν τὰ στεγάζοντα καὶ περιέχοντα μὴ τοιαῦτα ᾖ, ἐν οἷς νῦν οὖσα ἔχει ταύτας τὰς κινήσεις. Ἀλλὰ μὴν καὶ τόδε (λέγει ἐν ἄλλοις καὶ ἐξ ἀτόμων αὐτὴν συγκεῖσθαι λειοτάτων καὶ στρογγυλωτάτων, πολλῷ τινι διαφερουσῶν τῶν τοῦ πυρός· καὶ τὸ μέν τι ἄλογον αὐτῆς, ὃ τῷ λοιπῷ παρεσπάρθαι σώματι· τὸ δὲ λογικὸν ἐν τῷ θώρακι, ὡς δῆλον ἔκ τε τῶν φόβων καὶ τῆς χαρᾶς· ὕπνον τε γίνεσθαι τῶν τῆς ψυχῆς μερῶν τῶν παρ᾽ ὅλην τὴν σύγκρισιν παρεσπαρμένων ἐγκατεχομένων ἢ διαφορουμένων, εἴτ᾽ ἐκπιπτόντων τοῖς ἐπερεισμοῖς. τό τε σπέρμα ἀφ᾽ ὅλων τῶν σωμάτων φέρεσθαι.)

Yonge, 1853

for it is impossible to imagine that it still feels, from the moment when it is no longer in the same conditions of existence, and no longer possesses the same movements of existence in reference to the same organic system; from the moment, in short, when the things which cover and surround it are no longer such, that it retains in them the same movements as before. *[Epicurus expresses the same ideas in other works, and adds that the soul is composed of atoms of the most perfect roundness and lightness; atoms wholly different from those of fire. He distinguishes in it the irrational part which is diffused over the whole body, from the rational part which has its seat in the chest, as is proved by the emotions of fear and joy. He adds that sleep is produced either when the parts of the soul diffused over the whole of the body concentrate themselves, or when they disperse and escape by the pores of the body; for particles emanate from all bodies.]*

Hicks, 1925

For we cannot think of it as sentient, except it be in this composite whole and moving with these movements; nor can we so think of it when the sheaths which enclose and surround it are not the same as those in which the soul is now located and in which it performs these movements. *[He says elsewhere that the soul is composed of the smoothest and roundest of atoms, far superior in both respects to those of fire; that part of it is irrational, this being scattered over the rest of the frame, while the rational part resides in the chest, as is manifest from our fears and our joy; that sleep occurs when the parts of the soul which have been scattered all over the composite organism are held fast in it or dispersed, and afterwards collide with one another by their impacts. The semen is derived from the whole of the body.]*

Bailey, 1926

For it is impossible to imagine it with sensation, if it is not in this organism and cannot effect these movements, when what encloses and surrounds it is no longer the same as the surroundings in which it now exists and performs these movements.

Letter to Herodotus |67|

Epicurus, c. 301-300 BCE

γε δεῖ προσκατανοεῖν, ὅτι τὸ ἀσώματον λέγομεν κατὰ τὴν πλείστην ὁμιλίαν τοῦ ὀνόματος ἐπὶ τοῦ καθ’ ἑαυτὸ νοηθέντος ἄν· καθ’ ἑαυτὸ δὲ οὐκ ἔστι νοῆσαι τὸ ἀσώματον πλὴν τοῦ κενοῦ· τὸ δὲ κενὸν οὔτε ποιῆσαι οὔτε παθεῖν δύναται, ἀλλὰ κίνησιν μόνον δι’ ἑαυτοῦ τοῖς σώμασι παρέχεται. ὥσθ’ οἱ λέγοντες ἀσώματον εἶναι τὴν ψυχὴν ματαιΐζουσιν. οὐθὲν γὰρ ἂν ἐδύνατο ποιεῖν οὔτε πάσχειν, εἰ ἦν τοιαύτη· νῦν δ’ ἐναργῶς ἀμφότερα ταῦτα διαλαμβάνομεν περὶ τὴν ψυχὴν τὰ συμπτώματα.

Yonge, 1853

It must also be observed, that I use the word incorporeal in the usual meaning of the word, to express that which is in itself conceived as such. Now, nothing can be conceived in itself as incorporeal except the void; but the void cannot be either passive or active; it is only the condition and the place of movement. Accordingly, they who pretended that the soul is incorporeal, utter words destitute of sense; for if it had this character, it would not be able either to do or to suffer anything; but, as it is, we see plainly enough that it is liable to both these circumstances.

Hicks, 1925

There is the further point to be considered, what the incorporeal can be, if, I mean, according to current usage the term is applied to what can be conceived as self- existent. But it is impossible to conceive anything that is incorporeal as self-existent except empty space. And empty space cannot itself either act or be acted upon, but simply allows body to move through it. Hence those who call soul incorporeal speak foolishly. For if it were so, it could neither act nor be acted upon. But, as it is, both these properties, you see, plainly belong to soul.

Bailey, 1926

Furthermore, we must clearly comprehend as well, that the incorporeal in the general acceptation of the term is applied to that which could be thought of as such as an independent existence. Now it is impossible to conceive the incorporeal as a separate existence, except the void: and the void can neither act nor be acted upon, but only provides opportunity of motion through itself to bodies. So that those who say that the soul is incorporeal are talking idly. For it would not be able to act or be acted on in any respect, if it were of this nature. But as it is, both these occurrences are clearly distinguished in respect of the soul.

Letter to Herodotus |68|

Epicurus, c. 301-300 BCE

ταῦτα οὖν πάντα τὰ διαλογίσματα ‹τὰ› περὶ ψυχῆς ἀνάγων τις ἐπὶ τὰ πάθη καὶ τὰς αἰσθήσεις, μνημονεύων τῶν ἐν ἀρχῇ ῥηθέντων, ἱκανῶς κατόψεται τοῖς τύποις ἐμπεριειλημμένα εἰς τὸ κατὰ μέρος ἀπὸ τούτων ἐξακριβοῦσθαι βεβαίως. Ἀλλὰ μὴν καὶ τὰ σχήματα καὶ τὰ χρώματα καὶ τὰ μεγέθη καὶ τὰ βάρη καὶ ὅσα ἄλλα κατηγορεῖται σώματος ὡς ἂν ἀεὶ συμβεβηκότα ἢ πᾶσιν ἢ τοῖς ὁρατοῖς καὶ κατὰ τὴν αἴσθησιν αὐτῶν γνωστοῖς, οὔθ’ ὡς καθ’ ἑαυτάς εἰσι φύσεις δοξαστέον - οὐ γὰρ δυνατὸν ἐπινοῆσαι τοῦτο -

Yonge, 1853

Let us then apply all these reasoning to the affections and sensations, recollecting the ideas which we laid down at the beginning, and then we shall see clearly that these general principles contain an exact solution of all the particular cases. As to forms, and hues, and magnitudes, and weight, and the other qualities which one looks upon as attributes, whether it be of every body, or of those bodies only which are visible and perceived by the senses, this is the point of view under which they ought to be considered: they are not particular substances, having a peculiar existence of their own, for that cannot be conceived;

Hicks, 1925

If, then, we bring all these arguments concerning soul to the criterion of our feelings and perceptions, and if we keep in mind the proposition stated at the outset, we shall see that the subject has been adequately comprehended in outline: which will enable us to determine the details with accuracy and confidence. Moreover, shapes and colours, magnitudes and weights, and in short all those qualities which are predicated of body, in so far as they are perpetual properties either of all bodies or of visible bodies, are knowable by sensation of these very properties: these, I say, must not be supposed to exist independently by themselves (for that is inconceivable),

Bailey, 1926

Now if one refers all these reasonings about the soul to the standards of feeling and sensation and remembers what was said at the outset, he will see that they are sufficiently embraced in these general formulae to enable him to work out with certainty on this basis the details of the system as well. Moreover, as regards shape and colour and size and weight and all other things that are predicated of body, as though they were concomitant properties either of all things or of things visible or recognizable through the sensation of these qualities, we must not suppose that they are either independent existences (for it is impossible to imagine that),

Letter to Herodotus |69|

Epicurus, c. 301-300 BCE

οὔτε ὅλως ὡς οὐκ εἰσίν, οὔθ’ ὡς ἕτερ’ ἄττα προσυπάρχοντα τούτῳ ἀσώματα, οὔθ’ ὡς μόρια τούτου, ἀλλ’ ὡς τὸ ὅλον σῶμα καθόλου ἐκ τούτων πάντων τὴν ἑαυτοῦ φύσιν ἔχον ἀίδιον, οὐχ οἷον δὲ εἶναι συμπεφορημένον - ὥσπερ ὅταν ἐξ αὐτῶν τῶν ὄγκων μεῖζον ἄθροισμα συστῇ ἤτοι τῶν πρώτων ἢ τῶν τοῦ ὅλου μεγεθῶν τοῦδε τινὸς ἐλαττόνων - ἀλλὰ μόνον, ὡς λέγω, ἐκ τούτων ἁπάντων τὴν ἑαυτοῦ φύσιν ἔχον ἀίδιον. καὶ ἐπιβολὰς μὲν ἔχοντα ἰδίας πάντα ταῦτά ἐστι καὶ διαλήψεις, συμπαρακολουθοῦντος δὲ τοῦ ἀθρόου καὶ οὐθαμῇ ἀποσχιζομένου, ἀλλὰ κατὰ τὴν ἀθρόαν ἔννοιαν τοῦ σώματος κατηγορίαν εἰληφότος.

Yonge, 1853

nor can one say any more that they have no reality at all. They are not incorporeal substances inherent in the body, nor are they parts of the body. But they constitute by their union, I repeat, the eternal substance of the body. Each of these attributes has ideas and particular perceptions which correspond to it; but they cannot be perceived independently of the whole subject taken entirely. The union of all these perceptions forms the idea of the body.

Hicks, 1925

nor yet to be non-existent, nor to be some other and incorporeal entities cleaving to body, nor again to be parts of body. We must consider the whole body in a general way to derive its permanent nature from all of them, though it is not, as it were, formed by grouping them together in the same way as when from the particles themselves a larger aggregate is made up, whether these particles be primary or any magnitudes whatsoever less than the particular whole. All these qualities, I repeat, merely give the body its own permanent nature. They all have their own characteristic modes of being perceived and distinguished, but always along with the whole body in which they inhere and never in separation from it; and it is in virtue of this complete conception of the body as a whole that it is so designated.

Bailey, 1926

nor that they absolutely do not exist, nor that they are some other kind of incorporeal existence accompanying body, nor that they are material parts of body: rather we should suppose that the whole body in its totality owes its own permanent existence to all these, yet not in the sense that it is composed of properties brought together to form it (as when, for instance, a larger structure is put together out of the parts which compose it, whether the first units of size or other parts smaller than itself, whatever it is), but only, as I say, that it owes its own permanent existence to all of them. All these properties have their own peculiar means of being perceived and distinguished, provided always that the aggregate body goes along with them and is never wrested from them, but in virtue of its comprehension as an aggregate of qualities acquires the predicate of body.

Letter to Herodotus |70|

Epicurus, c. 301-300 BCE

Καὶ μὴν καὶ τοῖς σώμασι συμπίπτει πολλάκις καὶ οὐκ ἀίδιον παρακολουθεῖν οὔτ’ ἐν τοῖς ἀοράτοις καὶ οὔτε ἀσώματα. ὥστε δὴ κατὰ τὴν πλείστην φορὰν τούτῳ τῷ ὀνόματι χρώμενοι φανερὰ ποιοῦμεν τὰ συμπτώματα οὔτε τὴν τοῦ ὅλου φύσιν ἔχειν, ὃ συλλαβόντες κατὰ τὸ ἀθρόον σῶμα προσαγορεύομεν, οὔτε τὴν τῶν ἀίδιον παρακολουθούντων, ὧν ἄνευ σῶμα οὐ δυνατὸν νοεῖσθαι. κατ’ ἐπιβολὰς δ’ ἄν τινας παρακολυθοῦντος τοῦ ἀθρόου ἕκαστα προσαγορευθείη,

Yonge, 1853

Bodies often possess other attributes which are not eternally inherent in them, but which nevertheless, cannot be ranged among the incorporeal and invisible things. Accordingly, it is sufficient to express the general idea of the movement of transference to enable us to conceive in a moment certain distinct qualities, and those combined beings, which, being taken in their totality, receive the name of bodies; and the necessary and eternal attributes without which the body cannot be conceived. There are certain conceptions corresponding to these attributes; but nevertheless, they cannot be known abstractedly, and independently of some subjects;

Hicks, 1925

Again, qualities often attach to bodies without being permanent concomitants. They are not to be classed among invisible entities nor are they incorporeal. Hence, using the term ‘accidents’ in the commonest sense, we say plainly that ‘accidents’ have not the nature of the whole thing to which they belong, and to which, conceiving it as a whole, we give the name of body, nor that of the permanent properties without which body cannot be thought of. And in virtue of certain peculiar modes of apprehension into which the complete body always enters, each of them can be called an accident.

Bailey, 1926

Furthermore, there often happen to bodies and yet do not permanently accompany them accidents, of which we must suppose neither that they do not exist at all nor that they have the nature of a whole body, nor that they can be classed among unseen things nor as incorporeal. So that when according to the most general usage we employ this name, we make it clear that accidents have neither the nature of the whole, which we comprehend in its aggregate and call body, nor that of the qualities which permanently accompany it, without which a given body cannot be conceived.

Letter to Herodotus |71|

Epicurus, c. 301-300 BCE

ἀλλ’ ὅτε δήποτε ἕκαστα συμβαίνοντα θεωρεῖται, οὐκ ἀίδιον τῶν συμπτώματων παρακολουθούντων. καὶ οὐκ ἐξελατέον ἐκ τοῦ ὄντος ταύτην τὴν ἐνάργειαν, ὅτι οὐκ ἔχει τὴν τοῦ ὅλου φύσιν ᾧ συμβαίνει ὃ δὴ καὶ σῶμα προσαγορεύομεν, οὐδὲ τὴν τῶν ἀίδιον παρακολουθούντων, οὐδ’ αὖ καθ’ αὐτὰ νομιστέον - οὐδὲ γὰρ τοῦτο διανοητὸν οὔτ’ ἐπὶ τούτων οὔτ’ ἐπὶ τῶν ἀίδιον συμβεβηκότων - ἀλλ’ ὅπερ καὶ φαίνεται, συμπτώματα πάντα τὰ τοιαῦτα νομιστέον, καὶ οὐκ ἀίδιον παρακολουθοῦντα οὐδ’ αὖ φύσεως καθ’ ἑαυτὰ τάγμα ἔχοντα, ἀλλ’ ὃν τρόπον αὐτὴ ἡ αἴσθησις τὴν ἰδιότητα ποιεῖ, θεωρεῖται.

Yonge, 1853

and further, inasmuch as they are not attributes necessarily inherent in the idea of a body, one can only conceive them in the moment in which they are visible; they are realities nevertheless; and one must not refuse them being an existence merely because they have neither the characteristic of the compound beings to which we give the name of bodies, nor that of the eternal attributes. We should be equally deceived if we were to suppose that they have a separate and independent existence; for that is true neither of them nor of the eternal attributes. They are, as one sees plainly, accidents of the body; accidents which do not of necessity make any part of its nature; which cannot be considered as independent substances, but still to each of which sensation gives the peculiar character under which it appears to us.

Hicks, 1925

But only as often as they are seen actually to belong to it, since such accidents are not perpetual concomitants. There is no need to banish from reality this clear evidence that the accident has not the nature of that whole – by us called body – to which it belongs, nor of the permanent properties which accompany the whole. Nor, on the other hand, must we suppose the accident to have independent existence (for this is just as inconceivable in the case of accidents as in that of the permanent properties); but, as is manifest, they should all be regarded as accidents, not as permanent concomitants, of bodies, nor yet as having the rank of independent existence. Rather they are seen to be exactly as and what sensation itself makes them individually claim to be.

Bailey, 1926

But as the result of certain acts of apprehension, provided the aggregate body goes along with them, they might each be given this name, but only on occasions when each one of them is seen to occur, since accidents are not permanent accompaniments. And we must not banish this clear vision from the realm of existence, because it does not possess the nature of the whole to which it is joined nor that of the permanent accompaniments, nor must we suppose that such contingencies exist independently (for this is inconceivable both with regard to them and to the permanent properties), but, just as it appears in sensation, we must think of them all as accidents occurring to bodies, and that not as permanent accompaniments, or again as having in themselves a place in the ranks of material existence; rather they are seen to be just what our actual sensation shows their proper character to be.

Letter to Herodotus |72|

Epicurus, c. 301-300 BCE

Καὶ μὴν καὶ τόδε γε δεῖ προσκατανοῆσαι σφοδρῶς· τὸν γὰρ δὴ χρόνον οὐ ζητητέον ὥσπερ καὶ τὰ λοιπά, ὅσα ἐν ὑποκειμένῳ ζητοῦμεν ἀνάγοντες ἐπὶ τὰς βλεπομένας παρ᾽ ἡμῖν αὐτοῖς προλήψεις, ἀλλ᾽ αὐτὸ τὸ ἐνάργημα, καθ᾽ ὃ τὸν πολὺν ἢ ὀλίγον χρόνον ἀναφωνοῦμεν, συγγενικῶς τοῦτο περιφέροντες, ἀναλογιστέον. καὶ οὔτε διαλέκτους ὡς βελτίους μεταληπτέον, ἀλλ᾽ αὐταῖς ταῖς ὑπαρχούσαις κατ᾽ αὐτοῦ χρηστέον, οὔτε ἄλλο τι κατ᾽ αὐτοῦ κατηγορητέον, ὡς τὴν αὐτὴν οὐσίαν ἔχοντος τῷ ἰδιώματι τούτῳ - καὶ γὰρ τοῦτο ποιοῦσί τινες - ἀλλὰ μόνον ᾧ συμπλέκομεν τὸ ἴδιον τοῦτο καὶ παραμετροῦμεν, μάλιστα ἐπιλογίστέον.

Yonge, 1853

Another important question is that of time. Here we cannot apply any more the method of examination to which we submit other objects, where we study with reference to a give subject; and which we refer to the preconceptions which exist in ourselves. We must seize, by analogy, and going round the whole circle of things comprised under this general denomination for time - we must seize, I say, that essential character which causes us to say that time is long or short. It is not necessary for that purpose to seek for any new forms of expression as preferable to those which are in common use; we may content ourselves with those by which time is usually indicated. Nor need we, as certain philosophers do, affirm any particular attribute of time, for that would be to suppose that its essence is the same as that of this attribute. It is sufficient to seek for the ingredients of which this particular nature which we call time is composed, and for the means by which it is measured.

Hicks, 1925

There is another thing which we must consider carefully. We must not investigate time as we do the other accidents which we investigate in a subject, namely, by referring them to the preconceptions envisaged in our minds; but we must take into account the plain fact itself, in virtue of which we speak of time as long or short, linking to it in intimate connexion this attribute of duration. We need not adopt any fresh terms as preferable, but should employ the usual expressions about it. Nor need we predicate anything else of time, as if this something else contained the same essence as is contained in the proper meaning of the word ‘time’ (for this also is done by some). We must chiefly reflect upon that to which we attach this peculiar character of time, and by which we measure it.

Bailey, 1926

Moreover, you must firmly grasp this point as well; we must not look for time, as we do for all other things which we look for in an object, by referring them to the general conceptions which we perceive in our own minds, but we must take the direct intuition, in accordance with which we speak of “a long time” or “a short time,” and examine it, applying our intuition to time as we do to other things. Neither must we search for expressions as likely to be better, but employ just those which are in common use about it. Nor again must we predicate of time anything else as having the same essential nature as this special perception, as some people do, but we must turn our thoughts particularly to that only with which we associate this peculiar perception and by which we measure it.

Letter to Herodotus |73|

Epicurus, c. 301-300 BCE

καὶ γὰρ τοῦτο οὐκ ἀποδείξεως προσδεῖται ἀλλ’ ἐπιλογισμοῦ, ὅτι ταῖς ἡμέραις καὶ ταῖς νυξὶ συμπλέκομεν, καὶ τοῖς τούτων μέρεσιν, ὡσαύτως δὲ καὶ τοῖς πάθεσι καὶ ταῖς ἀπαθείαις, καὶ κινήσεσι καὶ στάσεσιν ἴδιόν τι σύμπτωμα, περὶ ταῦτα πάλιν αὐτὸ τοῦτο ἐννοοῦντες, καθὸ χρόνον ὀνομάζομεν (φησὶ δὲ τοῦτο καὶ ἐν τῇ †δευτέρᾳ †Περὶ φύσεως καὶ ἐν τῇ Μεγάλῃ ἐπιτομῇ.) Ἐπί τε τοῖς προειρημένοις τοὺς κόσμους δεῖ καὶ πᾶσαν σύγκρισιν πεπερασμένην τὸ ὁμοειδὲς τοῖς θεωρουμένοις πυκνῶς ἔχουσαν νομίζειν γεγονέναι ἀπὸ τοῦ ἀπείρου, πάντων τούτων ἐκ συστροφῶν ἰδίων ἀποκεκριμένων καὶ μειζόνων καὶ ἐλαττόνων· καὶ πάλιν διαλύεσθαι πάντα, τὰ μὲν θᾶττον, τὰ δὲ βραδύτερον, καὶ τὰ μὲν ὑπὸ τῶν τοιῶνδε, τὰ δὲ ὑπὸ τῶν τοιῶνδε τοῦτο πάσχοντα.

Yonge, 1853

For this we have no need of demonstration; a simple exposition is sufficient. It is, in fact, evident, that we speak of time as composed of days and nights, and parts of days and nights; passiveness and impassability, movement and repose, are equally comprised in time. In short it is evident that in connection with these different states, we can conceive a particular property to which we give the name of time. *[Epicurus lays down the same principles in the second book of his treatise on Nature, and in his Great Abridgment.]* It is from the infinite that the worlds are derived, and all the finite aggregates which present numerous analogies with the things which we observe under our own eyes. Each of these objects, great and small, has been separated from the infinite by a movement peculiar to itself. On the other hand, all these bodies will be successively destroyed, some more, and others less rapidly; some under the influence of one cause, and others because of the agency of some other. *[It is evident, after this, that Epicurus regards the worlds as perishable, since he admits that their parts are capable of transformation. He also says in other places, that the earth rests suspended in the air.]*

Hicks, 1925

No further proof is required: we have only to reflect that we attach the attribute of time to days and nights and their parts, and likewise to feelings of pleasure and pain and to neutral states, to states of movement and states of rest, conceiving a peculiar accident of these to be this very characteristic which we express by the word ‘time.’ *[He says this both in the second book “On Nature” and in the Larger Epitome.]* After the foregoing we have next to consider that the worlds and every finite aggregate which bears a strong resemblance to things we commonly see have arisen out of the infinite. For all these, whether small or great, have been separated off from special conglomerations of atoms; and all things are again dissolved, some faster, some slower, some through the action of one set of causes, others through the action of another. *[It is clear, then, that he also makes the worlds perishable, as their parts are subject to change. Elsewhere he says the earth is supported on the air.]*

Bailey, 1926

For indeed this requires no demonstration, but only reflection, to show that it is with days and nights and their divisions that we associate it and likewise also with internal feelings or absence of feeling, and with movements and states of rest; in connection with these last again we think of this very perception as a peculiar kind of accident, and in virtue of this we call it time. And in addition to what we have already said we must believe that worlds, and indeed every limited compound body which continuously exhibits a similar appearance to the things we see, were created from the infinite, and that all such things, greater and less alike, were separated off from individual agglomerations of matter; and that all are again dissolved, some more quickly, some more slowly, some suffering from one set of causes, others from another.

Epicurus, c. 301-300 BCE

(δῆλον οὖν ὡς καὶ φθαρτούς φησι τοὺς κόσμους, μεταβαλλόντων τῶν μερῶν. καὶ ἐν ἄλλοις τὴν γῆν τῷ ἀέρι ἐποχεῖσθαι.) Ἔτι δὲ τοὺς κόσμους οὔτε ἐξ ἀνάγκης δεῖ νομίζειν ἕνα σχηματισμὸν ἔχοντας, ἀλλὰ (καὶ διαφόρους αὐτοὺς ἐν τῇ ι β Περὶ φύσεώς φησιν) οὓς μὲν γὰρ σφαιροειδεῖς, καὶ ᾠοειδεῖς ἄλλους, καὶ ἀλλοιοσχήμονας ἑτέρους· οὐ μέντοι πᾶν σχῆμα ἔχειν· οὐδὲ ζῷα εἶναι ἀποκριθέντα ἀπὸ τοῦ ἀπείρου. οὐδὲ γὰρ ἂν ἀποδείξειεν οὐδείς, ὡς ‹ἐν› μὲν τῷ τοιούτῳ καὶ οὐκ ἂν ἐμπεριελήφθη τὰ τοιαῦτα σπέρματα ἐξ ὧν ζῷά τε καὶ φυτὰ καὶ τὰ λοιπὰ πάντα ‹τὰ› θεωρούμενα συνίσταται, ἐν δὲ τῷ τοιούτῳ οὐκ ἂν ἐδυνήθη. ὡσαύτως δὲ καὶ ἐντραφῆναι. τὸν αὐτὸν δὲ τρόπον καὶ ἐπὶ γῆς νομιστέον.

Yonge, 1853

We must not believe that all worlds necessarily have one identical form. *[He says, in fact, in the twelfth book of his treatise on the World, that the worlds differ from one another; some being spherical, other elliptical, and others of other shapes.]* Let us also beware of thinking that animals are derived from the infinite; for there is no one who can prove that the seeds from which animals are born, and plants, and all the other objects which we contemplate, have been brought from the exterior in such a world, and that this same world would not have been able to produce them of itself. *[This remark applies particularly to the earth.]*

Hicks, 1925

And further, we must not suppose that the worlds have necessarily one and the same shape. *[On the contrary, in the twelfth book "On Nature" he himself says that the shapes of the worlds differ, some being spherical, some oval, others again of shapes different from these.]* They do not, however, admit of every shape. Nor are they living beings which have been separated from the infinite. For nobody can prove that in one sort of world there might not be contained, whereas in another sort of world there could not possibly be, the seeds out of which animals and plants arise and all the rest of the things we see. *[And the same holds good for their nurture in a world after they have arisen. And so too we must think it happens upon the earth also.]*

Bailey, 1926

And further we must believe that these worlds were neither created all of necessity with one configuration nor yet with every kind of shape. Furthermore, we must believe that in all worlds there are living creatures and plants and other things we see in this world; for indeed no one could prove that in a world of one kind there might or might not have been included the kinds of seeds from which living things and plants and all the rest of the things we see are composed, and that in a world of another kind they could not have been.

Letter to Herodotus |75|

Epicurus, c. 301-300 BCE

Ἀλλὰ μὴν ὑποληπτέον καὶ τὴν φύσιν πολλὰ καὶ παντοῖα ὑπὸ αὐτῶν τῶν πραγμάτων διδαχθῆναί τε καὶ ἀναγκασθῆναι, τὸν δὲ λογισμὸν τὰ ὑπὸ ταύτης παρεγγυηθέντα ὕστερον ἐπακριβοῦν καὶ προσεξευρίσκειν ἐν μέν τισι θᾶττον, ἐν δέ τισι βραδύτερον καὶ ἐν μέν τισι περιόδοις καὶ χρόνοις [ἀπὸ τῶν ἀπὸ τοῦ ἀπείρου] …… ἐν δέ τισι κατ’ ἐλάττους. Ὅθεν καὶ τὰ ὀνόματα ἐξ ἀρχῆς μὴ θέσει γενέσθαι, ἀλλ’ αὐτὰς τὰς φύσεις τῶν ἀνθρώπων καθ’ ἕκαστα ἔθνη ἴδια πασχούσας πάθη καὶ ἴδια λαμβανούσας φαντάσματα ἰδίως τὸν ἀέρα ἐκπέμπειν στελλόμενον ὑφ’ ἑκάστων τῶν παθῶν καὶ τῶν φαντασμάτων, ὡς ἄν ποτε καὶ ἡ παρὰ τοὺς τόπους τῶν ἐθνῶν διαφορὰ εἴη·

Yonge, 1853

Again, we must admit that in many and various respects, nature is both instructed and constrained by circumstances themselves; and that Reason subsequently makes perfect and enriches with additional discoveries the things which it has borrowed from nature; in some cases rapidly, and in others more slowly. And in some cases according to periods and times greater than those which proceed from the infinite; in other cases according to those which are smaller. So, originally it was only in virtue of express agreements that one gave names to things. But men whose ideas and passion varied according to their respective nations, formed these names of their own accord, uttering diverse sounds produced by each passion, or by each idea, following the differences of the situations and of the peoples.

Hicks, 1925

Again, we must suppose that nature too has been taught and forced to learn many various lessons by the facts themselves, that reason subsequently develops what it has thus received and makes fresh discoveries, among some tribes more quickly, among others more slowly, the progress thus made being at certain times and seasons greater, at others less. Hence even the names of things were not originally due to convention, but in the several tribes under the impulse of special feelings and special presentations of sense primitive man uttered special cries. The air thus emitted was moulded by their individual feelings or sense-presentations, and differently according to the difference of the regions which the tribes inhabited.

Bailey, 1926

Moreover, we must suppose that human nature too was taught and constrained to do many things of every kind merely by circumstances; and that later on reasoning elaborated what had been suggested by nature and made further inventions, in some matters quickly, in others slowly, at some epochs and times making great advances, and lesser again at others. And so names too were not at first deliberately given to things, but men’s natures according to their different nationalities had their own peculiar feelings and received their peculiar impressions, and so each in their own way emitted air formed into shape by each of these feelings and impressions, according to the differences made in the different nations by the places of their abode as well.

Letter to Herodotus |76|

Epicurus, c. 301-300 BCE

ὕστερον δὲ κοινῶς καθ’ ἕκαστα ἔθνη τὰ ἴδια τεθῆναι πρὸς τὸ τὰς δηλώσεις ἧττον ἀμφιβόλους γενέσθαι ἀλλήλοις καὶ συντομωτέρως δηλουμένας· τινὰ δὲ καὶ οὐ συνορώμενα πράγματα εἰσφέροντας τοὺς συνειδότας παρεγγυῆσαί τινας φθόγγους τοὺς ‹μὲν› ἀναγκασθέντας ἀναφωνῆσαι, τοὺς δὲ τῷ λογισμῷ ἑλομένους κατὰ τὴν πλείστην αἰτίαν οὕτως ἑρμηνεῦσαι. Καὶ μὴν ἐν τοῖς μετεώροις φορὰν καὶ τροπὴν καὶ ἔκλειψιν καὶ ἀνατολὴν καὶ δύσιν καὶ τὰ σύστοιχα τούτοις μήτε λειτουργοῦντός τινος νομίζειν δεῖ γίνεσθαι καὶ διατάττοντος ἢ διατάξαντος καὶ ἅμα τὴν πᾶσαν μακαριότητα ἔχοντος μετὰ ἀφθαρσίας

Yonge, 1853

At a later period one established in each nation, in a uniform manner, particular terms intended to render the relations more easy, and language more concise. Educated men introduced the notion of things not discoverable by the senses, and appropriated words to them when they found themselves under the necessity of uttering their thoughts; after this, other men, guided in every point by reason, interpreted these words in the same sense. As to the heavenly phenomena, such as the motion and course of the stars, the eclipses, their rising and setting, and all other appearances of the same kind, we must beware of thinking that they are produced by any particular being which has regulated, or whose business it is to regulate, for the future, the order of the world, a being immortal and perfectly happy;

Hicks, 1925

Subsequently whole tribes adopted their own special names, in order that their communications might be less ambiguous to each other and more briefly expressed. And as for things not visible, so far as those who were conscious of them tried to introduce any such notion, they put in circulation certain names for them, either sounds which they were instinctively compelled to utter or which they selected by reason on analogy according to the most general cause there can be for expressing oneself in such a way. Nay more: we are bound to believe that in the sky revolutions, solstices, eclipses, risings and settings, and the like, take place without the ministration or command, either now or in the future, of any being who at the same time enjoys perfect bliss along with immortality.

Bailey, 1926

And then later on by common consent in each nationality special names were deliberately given in order to make their meanings less ambiguous to one another and more briefly demonstrated. And sometimes those who were acquainted with them brought in things hitherto unknown and introduced sounds for them, on some occasions being naturally constrained to utter them, and on others choosing them by reasoning in accordance with the prevailing mode of formation, and thus making their meaning clear. Furthermore, the motions of the heavenly bodies and their turnings and eclipses and risings and settings, and kindred phenomena to these, must not be thought to be due to any being who controls and ordains or has ordained them and at the same time enjoys perfect bliss together with immortality

Letter to Herodotus |77|

Epicurus, c. 301-300 BCE

- οὐ γὰρ συμφωνοῦσι πραγματεῖαι καὶ φροντίδες καὶ ὀργαὶ καὶ χάριτες μακαριότητι, ἀλλ’ ἐν ἀσθενείᾳ καὶ φόβῳ καὶ προσδεήσει τῶν πλησίον ταῦτα γίνεται - μήτε αὖ πῦρ ἅμα ὄντα συνεστραμμένον τὴν μακαριότητα κεκτημένα κατὰ βούλησιν τὰς κινήσεις ταύτας λαμβάνειν· ἀλλὰ πᾶν τὸ σέμνωμα τηρεῖν κατὰ πάντα ὀνόματα φερόμενα ἐπὶ τὰς τοιαύτας ἐννοίας, ἵνα μηδὲν ὑπεναντίον ἐξ αὐτῶν τῷ σεμνώματι δόξῃ· εἰ δὲ μή, τὸν μέγιστον τάραχον ἐν ταῖς ψυχαῖς αὐτὴ ἡ ὑπεναντιότης παρασκευάσει. ὅθεν δὴ κατὰ τὰς ἐξ ἀρχῆς ἐναπολήψεις τῶν συστροφῶν τούτων ἐν τῇ τοῦ κόσμου γενέσει δεῖ δοξάζειν καὶ τὴν ἀνάγκην ταύτην καὶ περίοδον συντελεῖσθαι.

Yonge, 1853

for the cares and anxieties, the benevolence and the anger, far from being compatible with felicity, are, on the contrary, the consequence of weakness, of fear, and of the want which a thing has of something else. We must not fancy either that these globes of fire, which roll on in space, enjoy a perfect happiness, and give themselves, with reflection and wisdom, the motions which they possess. But we must respect the established notions on this subject, provided, nevertheless, that they do not all contradict the respect due to truth; for nothing is more calculated to trouble the soul than this strife of contradictory notions and principles. We must therefore admit that from the first movement impressed on the heavenly bodies since the organization of the world there is derived a sort of necessity which regulates their course to this day.

Hicks, 1925

For troubles and anxieties and feelings of anger and partiality do not accord with bliss, but always imply weakness and fear and dependence upon one’s neighbours. Nor, again, must we hold that things which are no more than globular masses of fire, being at the same time endowed with bliss, assume these motions at will. Nay, in every term we use we must hold fast to all the majesty which attaches to such notions as bliss and immortality, lest the terms should generate opinions inconsistent with this majesty. Otherwise such inconsistency will of itself suffice to produce the worst disturbance in our minds. Hence, where we find phenomena invariably recurring, the invariableness of the recurrence must be ascribed to the original interception and conglomeration of atoms whereby the world was formed.

Bailey, 1926

(for trouble and care and anger and kindness are not consistent with a life of blessedness, but these things come to pass where there is weakness and fear and dependence on neighbors). Nor again must we believe that they, which are but fire agglomerated in a mass, possess blessedness, and voluntarily take upon themselves these movements. But we must preserve their full majestic significance in all expressions which we apply to such conceptions, in order that there may not arise out of them opinions contrary to this notion of majesty. Otherwise this very contradiction will cause the greatest disturbance in men’s souls. Therefore we must believe that it is due to the original inclusion of matter in such agglomerations during the birth-process of the world that this law of regular succession is also brought about.

Letter to Herodotus |78|

Epicurus, c. 301-300 BCE

Καὶ μὴν καὶ τὴν ὑπὲρ τῶν κυριωτάτων αἰτίαν ἐξακριβῶσαι φυσιολογίας ἔργον εἶναι δεῖ νομίζειν, καὶ τὸ μακάριον ἐν τῇ περὶ μετεώρων γνώσει ἐνταῦθα πεπτωκέναι καὶ ἐν τῷ τίνες φύσεις αἱ θεωρούμεναι κατὰ τὰ μετέωρα ταυτί, καὶ ὅσα συγγενῆ πρὸς τὴν εἰς τοῦτο ἀκρίβειαν· ἔτι τε οὐ τὸ πλεοναχῶς ἐν τοῖς τοιούτοις εἶναι καὶ τὸ ἐνδεχόμενον καὶ ἄλλως πως ἔχειν, ἀλλ’ ἁπλῶς μὴ εἶναι ἐν ἀφθάρτῳ καὶ μακαρίᾳ φύσει τῶν διάκρισιν ὑποβαλλόντων ἢ τάραχον μηθέν. καὶ τοῦτο καταλαβεῖν τῇ διανοίᾳ ἔστιν ἁπλῶς εἶναι.

Yonge, 1853

Let us be well assured that it is to physiology that it belongs to determine the causes of the most elevated phenomena, and that happiness consists, above all things, in the science of the heavenly things and their nature, and in the knowledge of analogous phenomena which may aid us in the comprehension of ethics. These heavenly phenomena admit of several explanations; they have no reason of a necessary character, and one may explain them in different manners. In a word, they have no relation - a moment’s consideration will prove this by itself - with those imperishable and happy natures which admit of no division and of no confusion.

Hicks, 1925

Further, we must hold that to arrive at accurate knowledge of the cause of things of most moment is the business of natural science, and that happiness depends on this (viz. on the knowledge of celestial and atmospheric phenomena), and upon knowing what the heavenly bodies really are, and any kindred facts contributing to exact knowledge in this respect. Further, we must recognize on such points as this no plurality of causes or contingency, but must hold that nothing suggestive of conflict or disquiet is compatible with an immortal and blessed nature. And the mind can grasp the absolute truth of this.

Bailey, 1926

Furthermore, we must believe that to discover accurately the cause of the most essential facts is the function of the science of nature, and that blessedness for us in the knowledge of celestial phenomena lies in this and in the understanding of the nature of the existences seen in these celestial phenomena, and of all else that is akin to the exact knowledge requisite for our happiness: in knowing too that what occurs in several ways or is capable of being otherwise has no place here but that nothing which suggests doubt or alarm can be included at all in that which is naturally immortal and blessed. Now this we can ascertain by our mind is absolutely the case.

Letter to Herodotus |79|

Epicurus, c. 301-300 BCE

τὸ δ’ ἐν τῇ ἱστορίᾳ πεπτωκὸς τῆς δύσεως καὶ ἀνατολῆς καὶ τροπῆς καὶ ἐκλείψεως καὶ ὅσα συγγενῆ τούτοις μηθὲν ἔτι πρὸς τὸ μακάριον τῆς γνώσεως συντείνειν ἀλλ’ ὁμοίως τοὺς φόβους ἔχειν τοὺς ταῦτα κατειδότας, τίνες δ’ αἱ φύσεις ἀγνοοῦντας καὶ τίνες αἱ κυριώταται αἰτίαι, καὶ εἰ μὴ προσῄδεσαν ταῦτα· τάχα δὲ καὶ πλείους, ὅταν τὸ θάμβος ἐκ τῆς τούτων προσκατανοήσεως μὴ δύνηται τὴν λύσιν λαμβάνειν κατὰ τὴν περὶ τῶν κυριωτάτων οἰκονομίαν. διὸ δὴ καὶ πλείους αἰτίας εὑρίσκομεν τροπῶν καὶ δύσεων καὶ ἀνατολῶν καὶ ἐκλείψεων καὶ τῶν τοιουτοτρόπων ὥσπερ καὶ ἐν τοῖς κατὰ μέρος γινομένοις,

Yonge, 1853

As for the theoretical knowledge of the rising and setting of the stars, of the movement of the sun between the tropics, of the eclipses, and all other similar phenomena, that is utterly useless, as far as any influence upon happiness that it can have. Moreover, those who, though possessed of this knowledge, are ignorant of nature, and of the most probable causes of the phenomena, are no more protected from fear than if they were in the most complete ignorance; they even experience the most lively fears, for the trouble, with which the knowledge of which they are possessed inspires them, can find no issue, and is not dissipated by a clear perception of the reasons of these phenomena. As to us, we find many explanations of the motions of the sun, of the rising and setting of the stars, of the eclipse and similar phenomena, just as well as of the more particular phenomena.

Hicks, 1925

But when we come to subjects for special inquiry, there is nothing in the knowledge of risings and settings and solstices and eclipses and all kindred subjects that contributes to our happiness; but those who are well- informed about such matters and yet are ignorant what the heavenly bodies really are, and what are the most important causes of phenomena, feel quite as much fear as those who have no such special information – nay, perhaps even greater fear, when the curiosity excited by this additional knowledge cannot find a solution or understand the subordination of these phenomena to the highest causes. Hence, if we discover more than one cause that may account for solstices, settings and risings, eclipses and the like, as we did also in particular matters of detail,

Bailey, 1926

But what falls within the investigation of risings and settings and turnings and eclipses, and all that is akin to this, is no longer of any value for the happiness which knowledge brings, but persons who have perceived all this, but yet do not know what are the natures of these things and what are the essential causes, are still in fear, just as if they did not know these things at all: indeed, their fear may be even greater, since the wonder which arises out of the observation of these things cannot discover any solution or realize the regulation of the essentials. And for this very reason, even if we discover several causes for turnings and settings and risings and eclipses and the like, as has been the case already in our investigation of detail,

Letter to Herodotus |80|

Epicurus, c. 301-300 BCE

καὶ οὐ δεῖ νομίζειν τὴν ὑπὲρ τούτων χρείαν ἀκρίβειαν μὴ ἀπειληφέναι, ὅση πρὸς τὸ ἀτάραχον καὶ μακάριον ἡμῶν συντείνει. ὥστε παραθεωροῦντας ποσαχῶς παρ' ἡμῖν τὸ ὅμοιον γίνεται, αἰτιολογητέον ὑπέρ τε τῶν μετεώρων καὶ παντὸς τοῦ ἀδήλου, καταφρονοῦντας τῶν οὔτε ‹τὸ› μοναχῶς ἔχον ἢ γινόμενον γνωριζόντων οὔτε τὸ πλεοναχῶς συμβαῖνον, ‹ἐπὶ τῶν› τὴν ἐκ τῶν ἀποστημάτων φαντασίαν παραδιδόντων, ἔτι τε ἀγνοοῦντων καὶ ἐν ποίοις οὐκ ἔστιν ἀταρακτῆσαι ‹καὶ ἐν ποίοις ὁμοίως ἀταρακτῆσαι›. ἂν οὖν οἰώμεθα καὶ ὠδί πως ἐνδεχόμενον αὐτὸ γίνεσθαι [καὶ ἐν ποίοις ὁμοίως ἀταρακτῆσαι], αὐτὸ τὸ ὅτι πλεοναχῶς γίνεται γνωρίζοντες, ὥσπερ κἂν ὅτι ὠδί πως γίνεται εἰδῶμεν, ἀταρακτήσομεν.

Yonge, 1853

And one must not think that this method of explanation is not sufficient to procure happiness and tranquillity. Let us content ourselves with examining how it is that similar phenomena are brought about under our own eyes, and let us apply these observations to the heavenly objects and to everything which known only indirectly. Let us despise those people who are unable to distinguish facts susceptible of different explanations from others which can only exist and be explained in one single way. Let us disdain those men who do not know, by means of the different images which result form distance, how to give an account of the different appearances of things; who, in a word, are ignorant about what are the objects which can excite any trouble in us. If, then, we know that such a phenomenon can be brought about in the same manner as another given phenomenon of the same character which does not inspire us with any apprehension; and if, on the other hand, we know that it can take place in many different manners, we shall not be more troubled at sight of it than if we know the real cause of it.

Hicks, 1925

we must not suppose that our treatment of these matters fails of accuracy, so far as it is needful to ensure our tranquillity and happiness. When, therefore, we investigate the causes of celestial and atmospheric phenomena, as of all that is unknown, we must take into account the variety of ways in which analogous occurrences happen within our experience; while as for those who do not recognize the difference between what is or comes about from a single cause and that which may be the effect of any one of several causes, overlooking the fact that the objects are only seen at a distance, and are moreover ignorant of the conditions that render, or do not render, peace of mind impossible – all such persons we must treat with contempt. If then we think that an event could happen in one or other particular way out of several, we shall be as tranquil when we recognize that it actually comes about in more ways than one as if we knew that it happens in this particular way.

Bailey, 1926

we must not suppose that our inquiry into these things has not reached sufficient accuracy to contribute to our peace of mind and happiness. So we must carefully consider in how many ways a similar phenomenon is produced on earth, when we reason about the causes of celestial phenomena and all that is imperceptible to the senses; and we must despise those persons who do not recognize either what exists or comes into being in one way only, or that which may occur in several ways in the case of things which can only be seen by us from a distance, and further are not aware under what conditions it is impossible to have peace of mind. If, therefore, we think that a phenomenon probably occurs in some such particular way, and that in circumstances under which it is equally possible for us to be at peace, when we realize that it may occur in several ways, we shall be just as little disturbed as if we know that it occurs in some particular way.

Letter to Herodotus |81|

Epicurus, c. 301-300 BCE

Ἐπὶ δὲ τούτοις ὅλως ἅπασιν ἐκεῖνο δεῖ κατανοεῖν, ὅτι τάραχος ὁ κυριώτατος ταῖς ἀνθρωπίναις ψυχαῖς γίνεται ἐν τῷ ταὐτὰ μακάριά τε δοξάζειν ‹εἶναι› καὶ ἄφθαρτα καὶ ὑπεναντίας ἔχειν τούτοις ἅμα βουλήσεις καὶ πράξεις καὶ αἰτίας, καὶ ἐν τῷ αἰώνιόν τι δεινὸν ἢ προσδοκᾶν ἢ ὑποπτεύειν κατὰ τοὺς μύθους, εἴτε καὶ αὐτὴν τὴν ἀναισθησίαν τὴν ἐν τῷ τεθνάναι φοβουμένους ὥσπερ οὖσαν κατ’ αὐτούς, καὶ ἐν τῷ μὴ δόξαις ταῦτα πάσχειν ἀλλ’ ἀλόγῳ γέ τινι παραστάσει, ὅθεν μὴ ὁρίζοντας τὸ δεινὸν τὴν ἴσην ἢ καὶ ἐπιτεταμένην ταραχὴν λαμβάνειν τῷ εἰ καὶ ἐδόξαζον ταῦτα·

Yonge, 1853

We must also recollect that which principally contributes to trouble the spirit of men is the persuasion which they cherish that the stars are beings imperishable and perfectly happy, and that then one’s thoughts and actions are in contradiction to the will of these superior beings. They also being deluded by these fables, apprehend an eternity of evils, and they fear the insensibility of death, as if that could affect them. What do I say? It is not even belief, but inconsiderateness and blindness which govern them in every thing, to such a degree that, not calculating these fears, they are just as much troubled as if they really had faith in these vain phantoms.

Hicks, 1925

There is yet one more point to seize, namely, that the greatest anxiety of the human mind arises through the belief that the heavenly bodies are blessed and indestructible, and that at the same time they have volitions and actions and causality inconsistent with this belief; and through expecting or apprehending some everlasting evil, either because of the myths, or because we are in dread of the mere insensibility of death, as if it had to do with us; and through being reduced to this state not by conviction but by a certain irrational perversity, so that, if men do not set bounds to their terror, they endure as much or even more intense anxiety than the man whose views on these matters are quite vague.

Bailey, 1926

And besides all these matters in general we must grasp this point, that the principal disturbance in the minds of men arises because they think that these celestial bodies are blessed and immortal, and yet have wills and actions and motives inconsistent with these attributes; and because they are always expecting or imagining some everlasting misery, such as is depicted in legends, or even fear the loss of feeling in death as though it would concern them themselves; and, again, because they are brought to this pass not by reasoned opinion, but rather by some irrational presentiment, and therefore, as they do not know the limits of pain, they suffer a disturbance equally great or even more extensive than if they had reached this belief by opinion.

Letter to Herodotus |82|

Epicurus, c. 301-300 BCE

ἡ δὲ ἀταραξία τῷ τούτων πάντων ἀπολελύσθαι καὶ συνεχῆ μνήμην ἔχειν τῶν ὅλων καὶ κυριωτάτων. Ὅθεν τοῖς πάθεσι προσεκτέον τοῖς παροῦσι καὶ ταῖς αἰσθήσεσι, κατὰ μὲν τὸ κοινὸν ταῖς κοιναῖς, κατὰ δὲ τὸ ἴδιον ταῖς ἰδίαις, καὶ πάσῃ τῇ παρούσῃ καθ’ ἕκαστον τῶν κριτηρίων ἐναργείᾳ· ἂν γὰρ τούτοις προσέχωμεν, τὸ ὅθεν ὁ τάραχος καὶ ὁ φόβος ἐγίνετο ἐξαιτιολογήσομεν ὀρθῶς καὶ ἀπολύσομεν, ὑπὲρ τε μετεώρων αἰτιολογοῦντες καὶ τῶν λοιπῶν τῶν ἀεὶ παρεμπιπτόντων, ὅσα φοβεῖ τοὺς λοιποὺς ἐσχάτως. Ταῦτά σοι, ὦ Ἡρόδοτε, ἔστι κεφαλαιωδέστατα ὑπὲρ τῆς τῶν ὅλων φύσεως ἐπιτετμημένα.

Yonge, 1853

And the real freedom from this kind of trouble consists in being emancipated from all these things, and in preserving the recollection of all the principles which we have established, especially of the most essential of them. Accordingly, it is well to pay a scrupulous attention to existing phenomena and to the sensations, to the general sensations for general things, and to the particular sensations for particular things. In a word, we must take note of this, the immediate evidence with which each of these judicial faculties furnishes us; for, if we attend to these points, namely, whence confusion and fear arise, we shall divine the causes correctly, and we shall deliver ourselves from those feelings, tracing back the heavenly phenomena to their causes, and also all the other which present themselves at every step, and inspire the common people with extreme terror. This, Herodotus, is a kind of summary and abridgment of the whole question of natural philosophy.

Hicks, 1925

But mental tranquillity means being released from all these troubles and cherishing a continual remembrance of the highest and most important truths. Hence we must attend to present feelings and sense perceptions, whether those of mankind in general or those peculiar to the individual, and also attend to all the clear evidence available, as given by each of the standards of truth. For by studying them we shall rightly trace to its cause and banish the source of disturbance and dread, accounting for celestial phenomena and for all other things which from time to time befall us and cause the utmost alarm to the rest of mankind. Here then, Herodotus, you have the chief doctrines of Physics in the form of a summary.

Bailey, 1926

But peace of mind is being delivered from all this, and having a constant memory of the general and most essential principles. Wherefore we must pay attention to internal feelings and to external sensations in general and in particular, according as the subject is general or particular, and to every immediate intuition in accordance with each of the standards of judgment. For if we pay attention to these, we shall rightly trace the causes whence arose our mental disturbance and fear, and, by learning the true causes of celestial phenomena and all other occurrences that come to pass from time to time, we shall free ourselves from all which produces the utmost fear in other men. Here, Herodotus, is my treatise on the chief points concerning the nature of the general principles, abridged

Letter to Herodotus |83|

Epicurus, c. 301-300 BCE

ὥστ’ ἂν γένοιτο οὗτος ὁ λόγος δυνατός, κατασχεθεὶς μετ’ ἀκριβείας, οἶμαι, ἐὰν μὴ καὶ πρὸς ἅπαντα βαδίσῃ τις τῶν κατὰ μέρος ἀκριβωμάτων, ἀσύμβλητον αὐτὸν πρὸς τοὺς λοιποὺς ἀνθρώπους ἁδρότητα λήψεσθαι. καὶ γὰρ καὶ καθαρὰ ἀφ’ ἑαυτοῦ ποιήσει πολλὰ τῶν κατὰ μέρος ἐξακριβουμένων κατὰ τὴν ὅλην πραγματείαν ἡμῖν, καὶ αὐτὰ ταῦτα ἐν μνήμῃ τιθέμενα συνεχῶς βοηθήσει. τοιαῦτα γάρ ἐστιν, ὥστε καὶ τοὺς κατὰ μέρος ἤδη ἐξακριβοῦντας ἱκανῶς ἢ καὶ τελείως, εἰς τὰς τοιαύτας ἀναλύοντας ἐπιβολὰς τὰς πλείστας τῶν περιοδειῶν ὑπὲρ τῆς ὅλης φύσεως ποιεῖσθαι· ὅσοι δὲ μὴ παντελῶς αὐτῶν τῶν ἀποτελουμένων εἰσίν, ἐκ τούτων καὶ κατὰ τὸν ἄνευ φθόγγων τρόπον τὴν ἅμα νοήματι περίοδον τῶν κυριωτάτων πρὸς γαληνισμὸν ποιοῦνται. Καὶ ἥδε μέν ἐστιν αὐτῷ ἐπιστολὴ περὶ τῶν φυσικῶν. περὶ δὲ τῶν μετεώρων ἥδε. “Ἐπίκουρος Πυθοκλεῖ χαίρειν.

Yonge, 1853

So that, if this reasoning be allowed to be valid, and be preserved carefully in the memory, the man who allows himself to be influenced by it, even though he may not descend to a profound study of its details, will have a great superiority of character over other men. He will personally discover a great number of truths which I have myself set forth in my entire work; and these truths being stored in his memory, will be a constant assistance to him. By means of these principles, those who have descended into the details, and have studied the question sufficiently, will be able, in bringing all their particular knowledge to bear on the general subject, to run over without difficulty almost the entire circle of the natural philosophy; those, on the other hand, who are not yet arrived at perfection, and who have not been able to hear me lecture on these subjects, will be able in their minds to run over the main of the essential notions, and to derive assistance from them for the tranquillity and happiness of life. *[This then is his letter on physics. About the heavenly bodies he writes thus:]*

“Epicurus to Pythocles, wishing he may do well.

Hicks, 1925

So that, if this statement be accurately retained and take effect, a man will, I make no doubt, be incomparably better equipped than his fellows, even if he should never go into all the exact details. For he will clear up for himself many of the points which I have worked out in detail in my complete exposition; and the summary itself, if borne in mind, will be of constant service to him. It is of such a sort that those who are already tolerably, or even perfectly, well acquainted with the details can, by analysis of what they know into such elementary perceptions as these, best prosecute their researches in physical science as a whole; while those, on the other hand, who are not altogether entitled to rank as mature students can in silent fashion and as quick as thought run over the doctrines most important for their peace of mind. *[Such is his epistle on Physics. Next comes the epistle on Celestial Phenomena.]*

“Epicurus to Pythocles, greeting.

Bailey, 1926

so that my account would be easy to grasp with accuracy. I think that, even if one were unable to proceed to all the detailed particulars of the system, he would from this obtain an unrivaled strength compared with other men. For indeed he will clear up for himself many of the detailed points by reference to our general system, and these very principles, if he stores them in his mind, will constantly aid him. For such is their character that even those who are at present engaged in working out the details to a considerable degree, or even completely, will be able to carry out the greater part of their investigations into the nature of the whole by conducting their analysis in reference to such a survey as this. And as for all who are not fully among those on the way to being perfected, some of them can from this summary obtain a hasty view of the most important matters without oral instruction so as to secure peace of mind. *[Such was his letter on Physics: then follows his letter on Celestial Things.]*

Letter to Pythocles |84|

Epicurus, c. 295-290 BCE

Ἤνεγκέ μοι Κλέων ἐπιστολὴν παρὰ σοῦ ἐν ᾗ φιλοφρονούμενός τε περὶ ἡμᾶς διετέλεις ἀξίως τῆς ἡμετέρας περὶ σεαυτὸν σπουδῆς, καὶ οὐκ ἀπιθάνως ἐπειρῶ μνημονεύειν τῶν εἰς μακάριον βίον συντεινόντων διαλογισμῶν, ἐδέου τε σεαυτῷ περὶ τῶν μετεώρων σύντομον καὶ εὐπερίγραφον διαλογισμὸν ἀποστεῖλαι, ἵνα ῥᾳδίως μνημονεύῃς· τὰ γὰρ ἐν ἄλλοις ἡμῖν γεγραμμένα δυσμνημόνευτα εἶναι, καίτοι, ὡς ἔφης, συνεχῶς αὐτὰ βαστάζεις. ἡμεῖς δὲ ἡδέως τέ σου τὴν δέησιν ἀπεδεξάμεθα καὶ ἐλπίσιν ἡδείαις συνεσχέθημεν.

Yonge, 1853

Cleon has brought me your letter, in which you continue to evince towards me an affection worthy of the friendship which I have for you. You devote all your care, you tell me, to engraving in your memory those ideas which contribute to the happiness of life; and you entreat me at the same time to send you a simple abridgment and abstract of my ideas on the heavenly phenomena, in order that you may without difficulty preserve the recollection of them. For, say you, what I have written on this subject in my other works is difficult to recollect, even with continual study. I willingly yield to your desire, and I have good hope,

Hicks, 1925

In your letter to me, of which Cleon was the bearer, you continue to show me affection which I have merited by my devotion to you, and you try, not without success, to recall the considerations which make for a happy life. To aid your memory you ask me for a clear and concise statement respecting celestial phenomena; for what we have written on this subject elsewhere is, you tell me, hard to remember, although you have my books constantly with you. I was glad to receive your request and am full of pleasant expectations.

Bailey, 1926

Cleon brought me a letter from you in which you continue to express a kindly feeling towards me, which is a just return for my interest in you, and you attempt with some success to recall the arguments which lead to a life of blessedness. You ask me to send you a brief argument about the phenomena of the sky in a short sketch, that you may easily recall it to mind. For you say that what I have written in my other works is hard to remember, even though, as you state, you constantly have them in your hands. I was glad to receive your request and felt constrained to answer it by pleasant expectations for the future.

Letter to Pythocles |85|

Epicurus, c. 295-290 BCE

γράψαντες οὖν τὰ λοιπὰ πάντα συντελοῦμεν ἅπερ ἠξίωσας πολλοῖς καὶ ἄλλοις ἐσόμενα χρήσιμα τὰ διαλογίσματα ταῦτα, καὶ μάλιστα τοῖς νεωστὶ φυσιολογίας γνησίου γευομένοις καὶ τοῖς εἰς ἀσχολίας βαθυτέρας, τῶν ἐγκυκλίων τινὸς ἐμπεπλεγμένοις. καλῶς δὴ αὐτὰ διάλαβε, καὶ διὰ μνήμης ἔχων ὀξέως αὐτὰ περιόδευε μετὰ τῶν λοιπῶν ὧν ἐν τῇ μικρᾷ ἐπιτομῇ πρὸς Ἡρόδοτον ἀπεστείλαμεν. Πρῶτον μὲν οὖν μὴ ἄλλο τι τέλος ἐκ τῆς περὶ μετεώρων γνώσεως εἴτε κατὰ συναφὴν λεγομένων εἴτε αὐτοτελῶς νομίζειν εἶναι ἢπερ ἀταραξίαν καὶ πίστιν βέβαιον, καθάπερ καὶ ἐπὶ τῶν λοιπῶν·

Yonge, 1853

that in fulfilling what you ask, I shall be useful too to many others, especially to those who are as yet novices in the real knowledge of nature, and to those to whom the perplexities and the ordinary affairs of life leave but little leisure. Be careful then to seize on those precepts thoroughly, engrave them deeply in your memory, and meditate on them with the abridgment addressed to Herodotus, which I also send you. Know then, that the only aim of the knowledge of the heavenly phenomena, both those which are spoken of in contact with one another, and of those which have a spontaneous existence, is that freedom from anxiety, and that calmness which is derived from a firm belief; and this is the aim of every other science.

Hicks, 1925

We will then complete our writing and grant all you ask. Many others besides you will find these reasonings useful, and especially those who have but recently made acquaintance with the true story of nature and those who are attached to pursuits which go deeper than any part of ordinary education. So you will do well to take and learn them and get them up quickly along with the short epitome in my letter to Herodotus. In the first place, remember that, like everything else, knowledge of celestial phenomena, whether taken along with other things or in isolation, has no other end in view than peace of mind and firm conviction.

Bailey, 1926

Therefore, as I have finished all my other writings I now intend to accomplish your request, feeling that these arguments will be of value to many other persons as well, and especially to those who have but recently tasted the genuine inquiry into nature, and also to those who are involved too deeply in the business of some regular occupation. Therefore lay good hold on it, keep it in mind, and go through it all keenly, together with the rest which I sent in the small epitome to Herodotus. First of all then we must not suppose that any other object is to be gained from the knowledge of the phenomena of the sky, whether they are dealt with in connection with other doctrines or independently, than peace of mind and a sure confidence, just as in all other branches of study.

Letter to Pythocles |86|

Epicurus, c. 295-290 BCE

μήτε τὸ ἀδύνατον [καὶ] παραβιάζεσθαι, μήτε ὁμοίαν κατὰ πάντα τὴν θεωρίαν ἔχειν ἢ τοῖς περὶ βίων λόγοις ἢ τοῖς κατὰ τὴν τῶν ἄλλων φυσικῶν προβλημάτων κάθαρσιν, οἷον ὅτι τὸ πᾶν σῶμα καὶ ἀναφὴς φύσις ἐστίν, ἢ ὅτι ἄτομα στοιχεῖα καὶ πάντα τὰ τοιαῦτα δὴ ὅσα μοναχὴν ἔχει τοῖς φαινομένοις συμφωνίαν· ὅπερ ἐπὶ τῶν μετεώρων οὐχ ὑπάρχει, ἀλλὰ ταῦτά γε πλεοναχὴν ἔχει καὶ τῆς γενέσεως αἰτίαν καὶ τῆς οὐσίας ταῖς αἰσθήσεσι σύμφωνον κατηγορίαν. οὐ γὰρ κατὰ ἀξιώματα κενὰ καὶ νομοθεσίας φυσιολογητέον, ἀλλ’ ὡς τὰ φαινόμενα ἐκκαλεῖται·

Yonge, 1853

It is not good to desire what is impossible, and to endeavour to enunciate a uniform theory about everything; accordingly, we ought not here to adopt the method, which we have followed in our researches into ethics, or in the solution of problems of natural philosophy. We there said, for instance, that there are other things, except bodies and the void, and that the atoms are the principles of things, and so the rest. In a word, we gave a precise and simple explanation for every fact, conformable to appearances. We cannot act in the same way with respect to the heavenly phenomena; these productions may depend upon several different causes, and we may give many different explanations on this subject, equally agreeing with the impression of the senses. Besides, it is not here a question about reasoning on new principles, and of laying down, à priori, rules for the interpretation of nature; the only guides for us to follow are the appearances themselves;

Hicks, 1925

We do not seek to wrest by force what is impossible, nor to understand all matters equally well, nor make our treatment always as clear as when we discuss human life or explain the principles of physics in general – for instance, that the whole of being consists of bodies and intangible nature, or that the ultimate elements of things are indivisible, or any other proposition which admits only one explanation of the phenomena to be possible. But this is not the case with celestial phenomena: these at any rate admit of manifold causes for their occurrence and manifold accounts, none of them contradictory of sensation, of their nature. For in the study of nature we must not conform to empty assumptions and arbitrary laws, but follow the promptings of the facts;

Bailey, 1926

We must not try to force an impossible explanation, nor employ a method of inquiry like our reasoning either about the modes of life or with respect to the solution of other physical problems: witness such propositions as that ‘the universe consists of bodies and the intangible,’ or that ‘the elements are indivisible,‘ and all such statements in circumstances where there is only one explanation which harmonizes with phenomena. For this is not so with the things above us: they admit of more than one cause of coming into being and more than one account of their nature which harmonizes with our sensations.

Letter to Pythocles |87|

Epicurus, c. 295-290 BCE

οὐ γὰρ ἤδη ἀλογίας καὶ κενῆς δόξης ὁ βίος ἡμῶν ἔχει χρείαν, ἀλλὰ τοῦ ἀθορύβως ἡμᾶς ζῆν. πάντα μὲν οὖν γίνεται ἀσείστως κατὰ πάντων κατὰ πλεοναχὸν τρόπον ἐκκαθαιρομένων συμφώνως τοῖς φαινομένοις, ὅταν τις τὸ πιθανολογούμενον ὑπὲρ αὐτῶν δεόντως καταλίπῃ· ὅταν δέ τις τὸ μὲν ἀπολίπῃ τὸ δὲ ἐκβάλῃ ὁμοίως σύμφωνον ὂν τῷ φαινομένῳ, δῆλον ὅτι καὶ ἐκ παντὸς ἐκπίπτει φυσιολογήματος, ἐπὶ δὲ τὸν μῦθον καταρρεῖ. σημεῖα δ’ ἐπὶ τῶν ἐν τοῖς μετεώροις συντελουμένων φέρει τῶν παρ’ ἡμῖν τινα φαινομένων, ἃ θεωρεῖται ᾗ ὑπάρχει· καὶ οὐ τὰ ἐν τοῖς μετώροις φαινόμενα· ταῦτα γὰρ ἐνδέχεται πλεοναχῶς γίνεσθαι.

Yonge, 1853

for that which we have in view is not a set of systems and vain opinions, but much rather a life exempt from every kind disquietude. The heavenly phenomena do not inspire those who give different explanations of them, conformable with appearances, instead of explaining them by hypothesis, with any alarm. But if, abandoning hypothesis, one at the same time renounces the attempt to explain them by means of analogies founded on appearances, then one is placing one’s self altogether at a distance from the science of nature, in order to fall into fables. It is possible that the heavenly phenomena may present some apparent characteristics which appear to assimilate them to those phenomena which we see taking place around ourselves, without there being any real analogy at the bottom. For the heavenly phenomena may depend for their production on many different causes;

Hicks, 1925

for our life has no need now of unreason and false opinion; our one need is untroubled existence. All things go on uninterruptedly, if all be explained by the method of plurality of causes in conformity with the facts, so soon as we duly understand what may be plausibly alleged respecting them. But when we pick and choose among them, rejecting one equally consistent with the phenomena, we clearly fall away from the study of nature altogether and tumble into myth. Some phenomena within our experience afford evidence by which we may interpret what goes on in the heavens. We see how the former really take place, but not how the celestial phenomena take place, for their occurrence may possibly be due to a variety of causes.

Bailey, 1926

For we must not conduct scientific investigation by means of empty assumptions and arbitrary principles, but follow the lead of phenomena: for our life has not now any place for irrational belief and groundless imaginings, but we must live free from trouble. Now all goes on without disturbance as far as regards each of those things which may be explained in several ways so as to harmonize with what we perceive, when one admits, as we are bound to do, probable theories about them. But when one accepts one theory and rejects another, which harmonizes as well with the phenomenon, it is obvious that he altogether leaves the path of scientific inquiry and has recourse to myth. Now we can obtain indications of what happens above from some of the phenomena on earth: for we can observe how they come to pass, though we cannot observe the phenomena in the sky: for they may be produced in several ways.

Letter to Pythocles |88|

Epicurus, c. 295-290 BCE

τὸ μέντοι φάντασμα ἑκάστου τηρητέον καὶ ἐπὶ τὰ συναπτόμενα τούτῳ διαιρετέον, ἃ οὐκ ἀντιμαρτυρεῖται τοῖς παρ᾽ ἡμῖν γινομένοις πλεοναχῶς συντελεῖσθαι. Κόσμος ἐστὶ περιοχὴ τις οὐρανοῦ, ἄστρα τε καὶ γῆν καὶ πάντα τὰ φαινόμενα περιέχουσα, ἀποτομὴν ἔχουσα ἀπὸ τοῦ ἀπείρου, καὶ καταλήγουσα ἐν πέρατι ἢ ἀραιῷ ἢ πυκνῷ - καὶ οὗ λυομένου πάντα τὰ ἐν αὐτῷ σύγχυσιν λήψεται - [καὶ λήγουσαν] ἢ [ἐν] περιαγομένῳ ἢ [ἐν] στάσιν ἔχοντι, καὶ στρογγύλην ἢ τρίγωνον ἢ οἵαν δήποτε περιγραφήν· πανταχῶς γὰρ ἐνδέχεται· τῶν γὰρ φαινομένων οὐδὲν ἀντιμαρτυρεῖ τῷδε τῷ κόσμῳ ἐν ᾧ λῆγον οὐκ ἔστι καταλαβεῖν.

Yonge, 1853

nevertheless, we must observe the appearances presented by each, and we must distinguish the different circumstances which attach to them, and which can be explained in different manners by means of analogous phenomena which arise under our eyes. The world is a collection of things embraced by the heaven, containing the stars, the earth, and all visible objects. This collection, separated from the infinite, is terminated by an extremity, which is either rare, or dense, or revolving, or in a state of repose, or of a round, or triangular, or some shape or other in fact, for it may be any shape the dissolution of which must bring the destruction of everything which they embrace. In fact, it can take place in every sort of way, since there is not one of those things that are seen in this world which proves otherwise, and in which we cannot detect any extremity;

Hicks, 1925

However, we must observe each fact as presented, and further separate from it all the facts presented along with it, the occurrence of which from various causes is not contradicted by facts within our experience. A world is a circumscribed portion of the universe, which contains stars and earth and all other visible things, cut off from the infinite, and terminating [and terminating in a boundary which may be either thick or thin, a boundary whose dissolution will bring about the wreck of all within it] in an exterior which may either revolve or be at rest, and be round or triangular or of any other shape whatever. All these alternatives are possible: they are contradicted by none of the facts in this world, in which an extremity can nowhere be discerned.

Bailey, 1926

Yet we must never desert the appearance of each of these phenomena, and further, as regards what is associated with it, must distinguish those things whose production in several ways is not contradicted by phenomena on earth. A world is a circumscribed portion of sky, containing heavenly bodies and an earth and all the heavenly phenomena, whose dissolution will cause all within it to fall into confusion: it is a piece cut off from the infinite and ends in a boundary either rare or dense, either revolving or stationary: its outline may be spherical or three-cornered, or any kind of shape. For all such conditions are possible, seeing that no phenomenon is evidence against this in our world, in which it is not possible to perceive an ending.

Letter to Pythocles |89|

Epicurus, c. 295-290 BCE

Ὅτι δὲ καὶ τοιοῦτοι κόσμοι εἰσὶν ἄπειροι τὸ πλῆθος ἔστι καταλαβεῖν, καὶ ὅτι καὶ ὁ τοιοῦτος δύναται κόσμος γίνεσθαι καὶ ἐν κόσμῳ καὶ μετακοσμίῳ, ὃ λέγομεν μεταξὺ κόσμων διάστημα, ἐν πολυκένῳ τόπῳ καὶ οὐκ ἐν μεγάλῳ εἰλικρινεῖ καὶ κενῷ, καθάπερ τινές φασιν, ἐπιτηδείων τινῶν σπερμάτων ῥυέντων ἀφ’ ἑνὸς κόσμου ἢ μετακοσμίου ἢ ἀπὸ πλειόνων κατὰ μικρὸν προσθέσεις τε καὶ διαρθρώσεις καὶ μεταστάσεις ποιούντων ἐπ’ ἄλλον τόπον, ἐὰν οὕτω τύχῃ, καὶ ἐπαρδεύσεις ἐκ τῶν ἐχόντων ἐπιτηδείως ἕως τελειώσεως καὶ διαμονῆς ἐφ’ ὅσον τὰ ὑποβληθέντα θεμέλια τὴν προσδοχὴν δύναται ποιεῖσθαι·

Yonge, 1853

and that such worlds are infinite in number is easily seen, and in the metakosmion, as we call the space between the worlds, being a huge space made up of matter and void, but not, as some philosophers pretend, an immensity of space absolutely empty. This production of a world may be explained thus: seeds suitably appropriated to such an end may emanate either from one or from several worlds, or from the space that separates them; they flow towards a particular point where they become collected together and organized; after that, other seeds come to unite them together in such a way as to form a durable whole, a basis, a nucleus to which all successive additions unite themselves.

Hicks, 1925

That there is an infinite number of such worlds can be perceived, and that such a world may arise in a world or in one of the intermundia (by which term we mean the spaces between worlds) in a tolerably empty space and not, as some maintain, in a vast space perfectly clear and void. It arises when certain suitable seeds rush in from a single world or intermundium, or from several, and undergo gradual additions or articulations or changes of place, it may be, and waterings from appropriate sources, until they are matured and firmly settled in so far as the foundations laid can receive them.

Bailey, 1926

And that such worlds are infinite in number we can be sure, and also that such a world may come into being both inside another world and in an interworld, by which we mean a space between worlds; it will be in a place with much void, and not in a large empty space quite void, as some say: this occurs when seeds of the right kind have rushed in from a single world or interworld, or from several: little by little they make junctions and articulations, and cause changes of position to another place, as it may happen, and produce irrigations of the appropriate matter until the period of completion and stability, which lasts as long as the underlying foundations are capable of receiving additions.

Letter to Pythocles |90|

Epicurus, c. 295-290 BCE

οὐ γὰρ ἀθροισμὸν δεῖ μόνον γενέσθαι οὐδὲ δῖνον ἐν ᾧ ἐνδέχεται κόσμον γίνεσθαι κενῷ κατὰ τὸ δοξαζόμενον ἐξ ἀνάγκης, αὔξεσθαί τε ἕως ἂν ἑτέρῳ προσκρούσῃ, καθάπερ τῶν φυσικῶν καλουμένων φησί τις. τοῦτο γὰρ μαχόμενόν ἐστι τοῖς φαινομένοις. Ἥλιός τε καὶ σελήνη καὶ τὰ λοιπὰ ἄστρα ‹οὐ› καθ’ ἑαυτὰ γενόμενα ὕστερον ἐμπεριελαμβάνετο ὑπὸ τοῦ κόσμου καὶ ὅσα γε δὴ σῴζει, ἀλλ’ εὐθὺς διεπλάττετο καὶ αὔξησιν ἐλάμβανεν, ὁμοίως δὲ καὶ γῆ καὶ θάλαττα, κατὰ προσκρίσεις καὶ δινήσεις λεπτομερῶν τινων φύσεων, ἤτοι πνευματικῶν ἢ πυροειδῶν ἢ τὸ συναμφότερον· καὶ γὰρ ταῦτα οὕτως ἡ αἴσθησις ὑποβάλλει.

Yonge, 1853

One must not content one’s self in this question with saying, as one of the natural philosophers has done, that there is a reunion of the elements, or a violent motion in the void under the influence of necessity, and that the body which is thus produced increases until it come to crash against some other; for this doctrine is contrary to appearances. The sun, the moon, and the other stars, were originally formed separately, and were afterwards comprehended in the entire total of the world. All the other objects which our world comprises, for instance, the earth and the sea, were also formed spontaneously, and subsequently gained size, by the addition and violent movement of light substances, composed of elements of fire and air, or even of these two principles at once. This explanation, moreover, is in accordance with the impressions of the senses.

Hicks, 1925

For it is not enough that there should be an aggregation or a vortex in the empty space in which a world may arise, as the necessitarians hold, and may grow until it collide with another, as one of the so- called physicists says. For this is in conflict with facts. The sun and moon and the stars generally were not of independent origin and later absorbed within our world, [such parts of it at least as serve at all for its defence]; but they at once began to take form and grow [and so too did earth and sea] by the accretions and whirling motions of certain substances of finest texture, of the nature either of wind or fire, or of both; for thus sense itself suggests.

Bailey, 1926

For it is not merely necessary for a gathering of atoms to take place, nor indeed for a whirl and nothing more to be set in motion, as is supposed, by necessity, in an empty space in which it is possible for a world to come into being, nor can the world go on increasing until it collides with another world, as one of the so- called physical philosophers says. For this is a contradiction of phenomena. Sun and moon and the other stars were not created by themselves and subsequently taken in by the world, but were fashioned in it from the first and gradually grew in size by the aggregations and whirlings of bodies of minute parts, either windy or fiery or both, for this is what our sensation suggests.

Letter to Pythocles |91|

Epicurus, c. 295-290 BCE

Τὸ δὲ μέγεθος ἡλίου τε καὶ τῶν λοιπῶν ἄστρων κατὰ μὲν τὸ πρὸς ἡμᾶς τηλικοῦτόν ἐστιν ἡλίκον φαίνεται, (τοῦτο καὶ ἐν τῇ ι α Περὶ φύσεως· εἰ γὰρ, φησί, τὸ μέγεθος διὰ τὸ διάστημα ἀποβεβλήκει, πολλῷ μᾶλλον ἂν τὴν χρόαν· ἄλλο γὰρ τούτῳ συμμετρότερον διάστημα οὐθέν ἐστι.) κατὰ δὲ τὸ καθ’ αὐτὸ ἤτοι μεῖζον τοῦ ὁρωμένου ἢ μικρῷ ἔλαττον ἢ τηλικοῦτον [οὐχ ἅμα]. οὕτω γὰρ καὶ τὰ παρ’ ἡμῖν πυρὰ ἐξ ἀποστήματος θεωρούμενα κατὰ τὴν αἴσθησιν θεωρεῖται. καὶ πᾶν δὲ τὸ εἰς τοῦτο τὸ μέρος ἔνστημα ῥᾳδίως διαλυθήσεται ἐάν τις τοῖς ἐναργήμασι προσέχῃ, ὅπερ ἐν τοῖς περὶ φύσεως βιβλίοις δείκνυμεν.

Yonge, 1853

As to the magnitude of the sun and of the other stars, it is, as far as we are concerned, such as it appears to us to be. *[This same doctrine is reproduced, and occurs again in the eleventh book of his treatise on Nature; where he says, “if the distance has made it lose is size, a fortiori, it would take away its brilliancy; for colour has not, any more than size, the property of traversing distance without alteration.”]* But considered by itself, the sun may be a little greater or a little smaller than it appears; or it may be just such as it looks; for that is exactly the case with the fires of common occurrence among men, which are perceived by the senses at distance. Besides, all the difficulties on this subject will be easily explained if one attends to the clear evidence of the perceptions, as I have shown in my books about Nature.

Hicks, 1925

The size of the sun and the remaining stars relatively to us is just as great as it appears. *[This he states in the eleventh book “On Nature.” For, says he, if it had diminished in size on account of the distance, it would much more have diminished its brightness; for indeed there is no distance more proportionate to this diminution of size than is the distance at which the brightness begins to diminish.]* But in itself and actually it may be a little larger or a little smaller, or precisely as great as it is seen to be. For so too fires of which we have experience are seen by sense when we see them at a distance. And every objection brought against this part of the theory will easily be met by anyone who attends to plain facts, as I show in my work On Nature.

Bailey, 1926

The size of sun (and moon) and the other stars is for us what it appears to be; and in reality it is either (slightly) greater than what we see or slightly less or the same size: for so too fires on earth when looked at from a distance seem to the senses. And every objection at this point will easily be dissipated, if we pay attention to the clear vision, as I show in my books about nature.

Letter to Pythocles |92|

Epicurus, c. 295-290 BCE

Ἀνατολὰς καὶ δύσεις ἡλίου καὶ σελήνης καὶ τῶν λοιπῶν ἄστρων καὶ κατὰ ἄναψιν γίνεσθαι δύνασθαι καὶ κατὰ σβέσιν, τοιαύτης οὔσης περιστάσεως καὶ καθ’ ἑκατέρους τοὺς τόπους, ὥστε τὰ προειρημένα ἀποτελεῖσθαι· οὐδὲν γὰρ τῶν φαινομένων ἀντιμαρτυρεῖ· ‹καὶ› κατ’ ἐκφάνειάν τε ὑπὲρ γῆς καὶ πάλιν ἐπιπροσθέτησιν τὸ προειρημένον δύναιτ’ ἂν συντελεῖσθαι· οὐδὲ γάρ τι τῶν φαινομένων ἀντιμαρτυρεῖ. Τάς τε κινήσεις αὐτῶν οὐκ ἀδύνατον μὲν γίνεσθαι κατὰ τὴν τοῦ ὅλου οὐρανοῦ δίνην, ἢ τούτου μὲν στάσιν, αὐτῶν δὲ δίνην κατὰ τὴν ἐξ ἀρχῆς ἐν τῇ γενέσει τοῦ κόσμου ἀνάγκην ἀπογεννηθεῖσαν ἐπ’ ἀνατολῇ,

Yonge, 1853

The rising and setting of the sun, of the moon, and of the stars, may depend on the fact of their becoming lighted up, and extinguished alternately, and in the order which we behold. One may also give other reasons for the phenomenon, which are not contradicted by any sensible appearances; accordingly, one might explain them by the passage of the stars above and below the earth, for the impressions of the senses agree also with this supposition. As to their motion, one may make that depend on the circular movement of the entire heaven. One may also suppose that the stars move, while the heaven itself is immovable; for there is nothing to prevent the idea that originally, before the formation of the world, they may have received, by the appointment of fate, an impulse from east to west,

Hicks, 1925

And the rising and setting of the sun, moon, and stars may be due to kindling and quenching, provided that the circumstances are such as to produce this result in each of the two regions, east and west: for no fact testifies against this. Or the result might be produced by their coming forward above the earth and again by its intervention to hide them: for no fact testifies against this either. And their motions may be due to the rotation of the whole heaven, or the heaven may be at rest and they alone rotate according to some necessary impulse to rise, implanted at first when the world was made

Bailey, 1926

The risings and settings of the sun, moon, and other heavenly bodies may be due to kindling and extinction, the composition of the surrounding matter at the places of rising and setting being such as to lead to these results: for nothing in phenomena is against it. Or again, the effect in question might be produced by their appearance over the top of the earth, and again the interposition of the earth in front of them: for once more nothing in phenomena is against it. Their motions may not impossibly be due to the revolution of the whole heaven, or else it may remain stationary, and they may revolve owing to the natural impulse towards the east, which was produced at the beginning of the world

Epicurus, c. 295-290 BCE

εἶτα τῇ θερμασίᾳ, κατά τινα ἐπινέμησιν τοῦ πυρὸς ἀεὶ ἐπὶ τοὺς ἑξῆς τόπους ἰόντος. Τροπὰς ἡλίου καὶ σελήνης ἐνδέχεται μὲν γίνεσθαι κατὰ λόξωσιν οὐρανοῦ οὕτω τοῖς χρόνοις κατηναγκασμένου· ὁμοίως δὲ καὶ κατὰ ἀέρος ἀντέξωσιν ἢ καὶ ὕλης ἀεὶ ἐπιτηδείας ἐχομένοις ἐμπιπραμένης τῆς δὲ καταλιπούσης, ἢ καὶ ἐξ ἀρχῆς τοιαύτην δίνην κατειληθῆναι τοῖς ἄστροις τούτοις, ὥσθ’ οἷόν τιν’ ἕλικα κινεῖσθαι· πάντα γὰρ τὰ τοιαῦτα καὶ τὰ τούτοις συγγενῆ οὐθενὶ τῶν ἐναργημάτων διαφωνεῖ, ἐάν τις ἀεὶ ἐπὶ τῶν τοιούτων μερῶν ἐχόμενος τοῦ δυνατοῦ εἰς τὸ σύμφωνον τοῖς φαινομένοις ἕκαστον τούτων δύνηται ἐπάγειν, μὴ φοβούμενος τὰς ἀνδραποδώδεις ἀστρολόγων τεχνιτείας.

Yonge, 1853

and that now their movement continues in consequence of their heat, as the fire naturally proceeds onwards in order to seek the nourishment which suits it. The inter-tropical movements of the sun and moon may depend, either on the obliquity impressed by fate on the heaven at certain determined epochs, or on the resistance of the air, or on the fact that these ignited bodies stand in need of being nourished by a matter suitable to their nature, and that this matter fails them; or finally, they may depend on the fact their having originally received an impulse which compels them to move as they do, describing a sort of spiral figure. The sensible evidence does not in the least contradict these different suppositions, and all those of the same kind which one can form, having always a due regard to what is possible, and can bring back each phenomenon to its analogous appearances in sensible facts, without disquieting one’s self about the miserable speculations of the astrologers.

Hicks, 1925

and this through excessive heat, due to a certain extension of the fire which always encroaches upon that which is near it. The turnings of the sun and moon in their course may be due to the obliquity of the heaven, whereby it is forced back at these times. Again, they may equally be due to the contrary pressure of the air or, it may be, to the fact that either the fuel from time to time necessary has been consumed in the vicinity or there is a dearth of it. Or even because such a whirling motion was from the first inherent in these stars so that they move in a sort of spiral. For all such explanations and the like do not conflict with any clear evidence, if only in such details we hold fast to what is possible, and can bring each of these explanations into accord with the facts, unmoved by the servile artifices of the astronomers.

Bailey, 1926

by an excessive heat owing to a spreading of the fire which is always moving on to the regions nearest in succession. The tropics of sun and moon may be caused owing to an obliquity of the whole heaven, which is constrained into this position in the successive seasons; or equally well by an outward impulsion of a current of air, or because the appropriate material successively catches fire, as the former fails; or again, from the beginning this particular form of revolution may have been assigned to these stars, so that they move in a kind of spiral. For all these and kindred explanations are not at variance with any clear-seen facts, if one always clings in such departments of inquiry to the possible and can refer each point to what is in agreement with phenomena without fearing the slavish artifices of the astronomers.

Letter to Pythocles |94|

Epicurus, c. 295-290 BCE

Κενώσεις τε σελήνης καὶ πάλιν πληρώσεις καὶ κατὰ στροφὴν τοῦ σώματος τούτου δύναιντ’ ἂν γίνεσθαι, καὶ κατὰ σχηματισμοὺς ἀέρος ὁμοίως, ἔτι τε καὶ κατὰ προσθετήσεις καὶ κατὰ πάντας τρόπους καθ’ οὓς καὶ τὰ παρ’ ἡμῖν φαινόμενα ἐκκαλεῖται εἰς τὰς τούτου τοῦ εἴδους ἀποδόσεις, ἐὰν μή τις τὸν μοναχῇ τρόπον κατηγαπηκὼς τοὺς ἄλλους κενῶς ἀποδοκιμάζῃ, οὐ τεθεωρηκὼς τί δυνατὸν ἀνθρώπῳ θεωρῆσαι καὶ τί ἀδύνατον, καὶ διὰ τοῦτο ἀδύνατα θεωρεῖν ἐπιθυμῶν. Ἔτι τε ἐνδέχεται ‹μὲν› τὴν σελήνην ἐξ ἑαυτῆς ἔχειν τὸ φῶς, ἐνδέχεται δὲ ἀπὸ τοῦ ἡλίου.

Yonge, 1853

The waning and subsequent replenishing of the moon may depend either on a conversion of this body, or on the different forms which the air when in a fiery state can adopt, or perhaps to the interposition of another body, or lastly, to some one of the causes by which one gives account of the analogous phenomena which pass under our eyes. Provided, however, that one does not obstinately adopt an exclusive mode of explanation; and that, for want of knowing what is possible for a man to explain, and what is inaccessible to his intelligence, one does not throw one’s self into interminable speculations. It may also be possibly the case that the moon has a light of her own, or that she reflects that of the sun.

Hicks, 1925

The waning of the moon and again her waxing might be due to the rotation of the moon’s body, and equally well to configurations which the air assumes; further, it may be due to the interposition of certain bodies. In short, it may happen in any of the ways in which the facts within our experience suggest such an appearance to be explicable. But one must not be so much in love with the explanation by a single way as wrongly to reject all the others from ignorance of what can, and what cannot, be within human knowledge, and consequent longing to discover the indiscoverable. Further, the moon may possibly shine by her own light, just as possibly she may derive her light from the sun;

Bailey, 1926

The wanings of the moon and its subsequent waxings might be due to the revolution of its own body, or equally well to successive conformations of the atmosphere, or again to the interposition of other bodies; they may be accounted for in all the ways in which phenomena on earth invite us to such explanations of these phases; provided only one does not become enamoured of the method of the single cause and groundlessly put the others out of court, without having considered what it is possible for a man to observe and what is not, and desiring therefore to observe what is impossible. Next the moon may have her light from herself or from the sun.

Letter to Pythocles |95|

Epicurus, c. 295-290 BCE

καὶ γὰρ παρ’ ἡμῖν θεωρεῖται πολλὰ μὲν ἐξ ἑαυτῶν ἔχοντα, πολλὰ δὲ ἀφ’ ἑτέρων· καὶ οὐθὲν ἐμποδοστατεῖ τῶν ἐν τοῖς μετεώροις φαινομένων, ἐάν τις τοῦ πλεοναχοῦ τρόπου ἀεὶ μνήμην ἔχῃ καὶ τὰς ἀκολούθους αὐτοῖς ὑποθέσεις ἅμα καὶ αἰτίας συνθεωρῇ καὶ μὴ ἀναβλέπων εἰς τὰ ἀνακόλουθα ταῦτ’ ὀγκοῖ ματαίως καὶ καταρρέπῃ ἄλλοτε ἄλλως ἐπὶ τὸν μοναχὸν τρόπον. Ἡ δὲ ἔμφασις τοῦ προσώπου ἐν αὐτῇ δύναται μὲν γίνεσθαι καὶ κατὰ παραλλαγὴν μερῶν καὶ κατ’ ἐπιπροσθέτησιν, καὶ ὅσοι ποτ’ ἂν τρόποι θεωροῖντο τὸ σύμφωνον τοῖς φαινομένοις κεκτημένοι·

Yonge, 1853

For we see around us many objects which are luminous of themselves, and many other which have only a borrowed light. In a word, one will not be arrested by any of the celestial phenomena, provided that one always recollects that there are many explanations possible; that one examines the principles and reasons which agree with this mode of explanation, and that one does not proceed in accounting for the facts which do not agree with this method, to suffer one’s self to be foolishly carried away, and to propose a separate explanation for each phenomenon, sometimes in one way, and sometimes in another. The appearance of a face in the orb of the moon, may depend either on a displacement of its parts, or on the interposition of some obstacle, or on any other cause capable of accounting for such an appearance.

Hicks, 1925

for in our own experience we see many things which shine by their own light and many also which shine by borrowed light. And none of the celestial phenomena stand in the way, if only we always keep in mind the method of plural explanation and the several consistent assumptions and causes, instead of dwelling on what is inconsistent and giving it a false importance so as always to fall back in one way or another upon the single explanation. The appearance of the face in the moon may equally well arise from interchange of parts, or from interposition of something, or in any other of the ways which might be seen to accord with the facts.

Bailey, 1926

For on earth too we see many things shining with their own, and many with reflected light. Nor is any celestial phenomenon against these explanations, if one always remembers the method of manifold causes and investigates hypotheses and explanations consistent with them, and does not look to inconsistent notions and emphasize them without cause and so fall back in different ways on different occasions on the method of the single cause. The impression of a face in the moon may be due to the variation of its parts or to interposition or to any one of many causes which might be observed, all in harmony with phenomena.

Letter to Pythocles |96|

Epicurus, c. 295-290 BCE

ἐπὶ πάντων γὰρ τῶν μετεώρων τὴν τοιαύτην ἴχνευσιν οὐ προετέον. ἢν γάρ τις ᾖ μαχόμενος τοῖς ἐναργήμασιν, οὐδέποτε μὴ δυνήσεται ἀταραξίας γνησίου μεταλαβεῖν. Ἔκλειψις ἡλίου καὶ σελήνης δύναται μὲν γίνεσθαι καὶ κατὰ σβέσιν, καθάπερ καὶ παρὰ ἡμῖν τοῦτο θεωρεῖται γινόμενον· καὶ ἤδη κατ᾽ ἐπιπροσθέτησιν ἄλλων τινῶν, ἢ γῆς ἢ οὐρανοῦ [ἤ] τινος ἑτέρου τοιούτου. καὶ ὧδε τοὺς οἰκείους ἀλλήλοις τρόπους συνθεωρητέον, καὶ τὰς ἅμα συγκυρήσεις τινῶν ὅτι οὐκ ἀδύνατον γίνεσθαι. (ἐν δὲ τῇ ι β Περὶ φύσεως ταὐτὰ λέγει καὶ πρός, ἥλιον ἐκλείπειν σελήνης ἐπισκοτούσης, σελήνην δὲ τοῦ τῆς γῆς σκιάσματος, ἀλλὰ καὶ κατ᾽ ἀναχώρησιν·

Yonge, 1853

For one must not neglect to apply this same method to all the heavenly phenomena; for, from the moment when one comes to any point of contradiction to the evidence of the senses, it will be impossible to posses perfect tranquillity and happiness. The eclipses of the sun and moon may depend either on the fact that these celestial bodies extinguish themselves, a phenomenon which we often see produced under our eyes, or on the fact of other bodies, the earth, the heaven, or something else of the same kind interposing, between them and us. Besides, we must compare the different modes of explanation appropriate to phenomena, and recollect that it is not impossible that many causes may at one and the same time concur in their production. *[He says the same thing in the twelfth book of his treatise on Nature; and adds that the eclipses of the sun arise from the fact that it penetrates into the shade of the moon, to quit it again presently; and the eclipse of the moon from the fact of its entering into the shade of the earth. We also find the same doctrine asserted by Diogenes, the Epicurean, in the first book of his Select Opinions.]*

Hicks, 1925

For in all the celestial phenomena such a line of research is not to be abandoned; for, if you fight against clear evidence, you never can enjoy genuine peace of mind. An eclipse of the sun or moon may be due to the extinction of their light, just as within our own experience this is observed to happen; and again by interposition of something else – whether it be the earth or some other invisible body like it. And thus we must take in conjunction the explanations which agree with one another, and remember that the concurrence of more than one at the same time may not impossibly happen. *[He says the same in Book XII. of his "De Natura," and further that the sun is eclipsed when the moon throws her shadow over him, and the moon is eclipsed by the shadow of the earth; or again, eclipse may be due to the moon's withdrawal, and this is cited by Diogenes the Epicurean in the first book of his "Epilecta."]*

Bailey, 1926

For in the case of all celestial phenomena this process of investigation must never be abandoned - for if one is in opposition to clear-seen facts, he can never have his part in true peace of mind. The eclipse of sun and moon may take place both owing to their extinction, as we see this effect is produced on earth, or again by the interposition of some other bodies, either the earth or some unseen body or something else of this sort. And in this way we must consider together the causes that suit with one another and realize that it is not impossible that some should coincide at the same time.

Letter to Pythocles |97|

Epicurus, c. 295-290 BCE

τοῦτο δὲ καὶ Διογένης ὁ Ἐπικούρειος ἐν τῇ α τῶν Ἐπιλέκτων.) Ἔτι τε τάξις περιόδου, καθάπερ ἔνια καὶ παρ' ἡμῖν τῶν τυχόντων γίνεται, λαμβανέσθω· καὶ ἡ θεία φύσις πρὸς ταῦτα μηδαμῇ προσαγέσθω, ἀλλ' ἀλειτούργητος διατηρείσθω καὶ ἐν τῇ πάσῃ μακαριότητι. ὡς εἰ τοῦτο μὴ πραχθήσεται ἅπασα ἡ τῶν μετεώρων αἰτιολογία ματαία ἔσται, καθάπερ τισὶν ἤδη ἐγένετο οὐ δυνατοῦ τρόπου ἐφαψαμένοις, εἰς δὲ τὸ μάταιον ἐκπεσοῦσι τῷ καθ' ἕνα τρόπον μόνον οἴεσθαι γίνεσθαι, τοὺς δ' ἄλλους πάντας τοὺς κατὰ τὸ ἐνδεχόμενον ἐκβάλλειν, εἴς τε τὸ ἀδιανόητον φερομένους καὶ τὰ φαινόμενα ἃ δεῖ σημεῖα ἀποδέχεσθαι μὴ δυναμένους συνθεωρεῖν.

Yonge, 1853

The regular and periodical march of these phenomena has nothing in it that ought to surprise us, if we only attend to the analogous facts which take place under our eyes. Above all things let us beware of making the Deity interpose here, for that being we ought to suppose exempt from all toil and perfectly happy; otherwise we shall be only giving vain explanations of the heavenly phenomena, as has happened already to a crowd of authors. Not being able to recognize what is really possible, they have fallen into vain theories, in supposing that for all phenomena there was but one single mode of production, and in rejecting all other explanations which are founded on probability; they have adopted the most unreasonable opinions, for want of placing in the front the study of heavenly phenomena, and of sensible facts, which ought to serve to explain the first.

Hicks, 1925

And further, let the regularity of their orbits be explained in the same way as certain ordinary incidents within our own experience; the divine nature must not on any account be adduced to explain this, but must be kept free from the task and in perfect bliss. Unless this be done, the whole study of celestial phenomena will be in vain, as indeed it has proved to be with some who did not lay hold of a possible method, but fell into the folly of supposing that these events happen in one single way only and of rejecting all the others which are possible, suffering themselves to be carried into the realm of the unintelligible, and being unable to take a comprehensive view of the facts which must be taken as clues to the rest.

Bailey, 1926

Next the regularity of the periods of the heavenly bodies must be understood in the same way as such regularity is seen in some of the events that happen on earth. And do not let the divine nature be introduced at any point into these considerations, but let it be preserved free from burdensome duties and in entire blessedness. For if this principle is not observed, the whole discussion of causes in celestial phenomena is in vain, as it has already been for certain persons who have not clung to the method of possible explanations, but have fallen back on the useless course of thinking that things could only happen in one way, and of rejecting all other ways in harmony with what is possible, being driven thus to what is inconceivable and being unable to compare earthly phenomena, which we must accept as indications.

Letter to Pythocles |98|

Epicurus, c. 295-290 BCE

Μήκη νυκτῶν καὶ ἡμερῶν παραλλάττοντα καὶ παρὰ τὸ ταχείας ἡλίου κινήσεις γίνεσθαι καὶ πάλιν βραδείας ὑπὲρ γῆς ‹ἢ καὶ› παρὰ τὸ μήκη τόπων παραλλάττοντα καὶ τόπους τινὰς περαιοῦν τάχιον ἢ καὶ βραδύτερον, ὡς καὶ παρὰ ἡμῖν τινα θεωρεῖται, οἷς συμφώνως δεῖ λέγειν ἐπὶ τῶν μετεώρων. οἱ δὲ τὸ ἓν λαμβάνοντες τοῖς τε φαινομένοις μάχονται καὶ τὸ ᾗ δυνατὸν ἀνθρώπῳ θεωρῆσαι διαπεπτώκασιν. Ἐπισημασίαι δύνανται γίνεσθαι καὶ κατὰ συγκυρήσεις καιρῶν, καθάπερ ἐν τοῖς ἐμφανέσι παρ’ ἡμῖν ζῷοις, καὶ παρ’ ἑτεροιώσεις ἀέρος καὶ μεταβολάς· ἀμφότερα γὰρ ταῦτα οὐ μάχεται τοῖς φαινομένοις·

Yonge, 1853

The differences in the length of nights and days may arise from the fact that the passage of the sun above the earth is more or less rapid; and more or less slow, according to the length of the regions which it as to pass through. Or, again, to the fact certain regions are passed through more rapidly than others, as is seen to be the case by our own eyes, in those things to which we can compare the heavenly phenomena. As to those who on this point admit only one explanation as possible, they put themselves in opposition to facts, and lose sight of the bounds set to human knowledge. The prognostics which are derived from the stars may, like those which we borrow from animals, arise from a simple coincidence. They may also have other causes, for example, some change in the air; for these two suppositions both harmonize equally with facts;

Hicks, 1925

The variations in the length of nights and days may be due to the swiftness and again to the slowness of the sun’s motion in the sky, owing to the variations in the length of spaces traversed and to his accomplishing some distances more swiftly or more slowly, as happens sometimes within our own experience; and with these facts our explanation of celestial phenomena must agree; whereas those who adopt only one explanation are in conflict with the facts and are utterly mistaken as to the way in which man can attain knowledge. The signs in the sky which betoken the weather may be due to mere coincidence of the seasons, as is the case with signs from animals seen on earth, or they may be caused by changes and alterations in the air. For neither the one explanation nor the other is in conflict with facts,

Bailey, 1926

The successive changes in the length of nights and days may be due to the fact that the sun’s movements above the earth become fast and then slow again because he passes across regions of unequal length or because he traverses some regions more quickly or more slowly, (or again to the quicker or slower gathering of the fires that make the sun), as we observe occurs with some things on earth, with which we must be in harmony in speaking of celestial phenomena. But those who assume one cause fight against the evidence of phenomena and fail to ask whether it is possible for men to make such observations. Signs of the weather may occur owing to the coincidence of occasions, as happens with animals we can all see on earth, and also through alterations and changes in the atmosphere. For both these are in accordance with phenomena.

Letter to Pythocles |99|

Epicurus, c. 295-290 BCE

ἐπὶ δὲ ποίοις παρὰ τοῦτο ἢ τοῦτο τὸ αἴτιον γίνεται οὐκ ἔστι συνιδεῖν. Νέφη δύναται γίνεσθαι καὶ συνίστασθαι καὶ παρὰ πιλήσεις ἀέρος πνευμάτων συνώσει καὶ παρὰ περιπλοκὰς ἀλληλούχων ἀτόμων καὶ ἐπιτηδείων εἰς τὸ τοῦτο τελέσαι, καὶ κατὰ ῥευμάτων συλλογὴν ἀπό τε γῆς καὶ ὑδάτων· καὶ κατ’ ἄλλους δὲ τρόπους πλείους αἱ τῶν τοιούτων συστάσεις οὐκ ἀδυνατοῦσι συντελεῖσθαι. Ἤδη δ’ ἀπ’ αὐτῶν ᾗ μὲν θλιβομένων ᾗ δὲ μεταβαλλόντων ὕδατα δύναται συντελεῖσθαι·

Yonge, 1853

but it is impossible to distinguish in what case one is to attribute them to the one cause or to the other. The clouds may be formed either by the air condensed under the pressure of the winds, or by the agency of atoms set apart for the end, or by emanations from the earth and waters, or by other causes. For there are a great number which are all equally able to produce this effect. When the clouds clash with one another, or undergo any transformation, they produce showers;

Hicks, 1925

and it is not easy to see in which cases the effect is due to one cause or to the other. Clouds may form and gather either because the air is condensed under the pressure of winds, or because atoms which hold together and are suitable to produce this result become mutually entangled, or because currents collect from the earth and the waters; and there are several other ways in which it is not impossible for the aggregations of such bodies into clouds to be brought about. And that being so, rain may be produced from them sometimes by their compression, sometimes by their transformation;

Bailey, 1926

But under what circumstances the cause is produced by this or that, we cannot perceive. Clouds may be produced and formed both by the condensation of the atmosphere owing to compression by winds and by the interlacing of atoms clinging to one another and suitable for producing this result, and again by the gathering of streams from earth and the waters: and there are several other ways in which the formation of such things may not impossibly be brought about. And from them again rain may be produced if they are squeezed in one part or changed in another,

Epicurus, c. 295-290 BCE

ἔτι τε πνεύματα κατὰ ἀποφορὰν ἀπὸ ἐπιτηδείων τόπων, καὶ δι’ ἀέρος κινουμένου, βιαιοτέρας ἐπαρδεύσεως γινομένης ἀπό τινων ἀθροισμάτων ἐπιτηδείων εἰς τὰς τοιαύτας ἐπιπέμψεις. Βροντὰς ἐνδέχεται γίνεσθαι καὶ κατὰ πνεύματος ἐν τοῖς κοιλώμασι τῶν νεφῶν ἀνείλησιν, καθάπερ ἐν τοῖς ἡμετέροις ἀγγείοις καὶ παρὰ πυρὸς πεπνευματωμένου βόμβον ἐν αὐτοῖς, καὶ κατὰ ῥήξεις δὲ νεφῶν καὶ διαστάσεις, καὶ κατὰ παρατρίψεις νεφῶν καὶ κατάξεις πῆξιν εἰληφότων κρυσταλλοειδῆ· καὶ τὸ ὅλον καὶ τοῦτο τὸ μέρος πλεοναχῶς γίνεσθαι λέγειν ἐκκαλεῖται τὰ φαινόμενα.

Yonge, 1853

and the long rains are caused by the motion of the clouds when moved from places suitable to them through the air, when a more violent inundation than usual takes place, from collections of some masses calculated to produce these effects. Thunder possibly arises from the movement of the winds revolving in the cavities of the clouds; of which we may see an image in vessels in our own daily use. It may also arise from the noise of fire acted upon by the wind in them, and from the tearings and ruptures of the clouds when they have received a sort of crystalline consistency. In a word, experience drawn from our sense, teaches us that all these phenomena, and that one in particular, may be produced in many different manners.

Hicks, 1925

or again may be caused by exhalations of moisture rising from suitable places through the air, while a more violent inundation is due to certain accumulations suitable for such discharge. Thunder may be due to the rolling of wind in the hollow parts of the clouds, as it is sometimes imprisoned in vessels which we use; or to the roaring of fire in them when blown by a wind, or to the rending and disruption of clouds, or to the friction and splitting up of clouds when they have become as firm as ice. As in the whole survey, so in this particular point, the facts invite us to give a plurality of explanations.

Bailey, 1926

or again by a downward current of wind moving through the atmosphere from appropriate places, a more violent shower being produced from certain conglomerations of atoms suited to create such downfalls. Thunder may be produced by the rushing about of wind in the hollows of the clouds, as happens in vessels on earth, or by the reverberation of fire filled with wind inside them, or by the rending and tearing of clouds, or by the friction and bursting of clouds when they have been congealed into a form like ice: phenomena demand that we should say that this department of celestial events, just like them all, may be caused in several ways.

Epicurus, c. 295-290 BCE

Καὶ ἀστραπαὶ δ’ ὡσαύτως γίνονται κατὰ πλείους τρόπους· καὶ γὰρ κατὰ παράτριψιν καὶ σύγκρουσιν νεφῶν ὁ πυρὸς ἀποτελεστικὸς σχηματισμὸς ἐξολισθαίνων ἀστραπὴν γεννᾷ. καὶ κατ’ ἐκριπισμὸν ἐκ τῶν νεφῶν ὑπὸ πνευμάτων τῶν τοιούτων σωμάτων ἃ τὴν λαμπηδόνα ταύτην παρασκευάζει· καὶ κατ’ ἐκπιασμόν, θλίψεως τῶν νεφῶν γινομένης εἴθ’ ὑπ’ ἀλλήλων εἴθ’ ὑπὸ πνευμάτων· καὶ κατ’ ἐμπερίληψιν δὲ τοῦ ἀπὸ τῶν ἄστρων κατεσπαρμένου φωτός, εἶτα συνελαυνομένου ὑπὸ τῆς κινήσεως νεφῶν τε καὶ πνευμάτων καὶ διεκπίπτοντος διὰ τῶν νεφῶν, ἢ κατὰ διήθησιν ‹διὰ› τῶν νεφῶν τοῦ λεπτομερεστάτου φωτός· ἢ ἀπὸ τοῦ πυρὸς νέφη συνειλέχθαι καὶ τὰς βροντὰς ἀποτελεῖσθαι [καὶ] κατὰ τὴν τούτου κίνησιν. καὶ κατὰ τὴν τοῦ πνεύματος ἐκπύρωσιν τὴν γινομένην διά τε συντονίαν φορᾶς καὶ διὰ σφοδρὰν κατείλησιν·

Yonge, 1853

One may also assign different causes to lightning; either the shock and collision of the clouds produce a fiery appearance, which is followed by lightning; or the lighting up of the clouds by the winds, produces this luminous appearance; or the mutual pressure of the clouds, or that of the wind against them, disengages the lightning. Or, one might say, that the interception of the light diffused from the stars, arrested for a time in the bosom of the clouds, is driven from them subsequently by their own movements, and by those of the winds, and so escapes from their sides; that the lightning is an extremely subtle light that evaporates from the clouds; that the clouds which carry the thunder are collected masses of fire; that the lightning arises from the motion of the fire, or from the conflagration of the wind, in consequence of the rapidity and continuousness of its motion.

Hicks, 1925

Lightnings too happen in a variety of ways. For when the clouds rub against each other and collide, that collocation of atoms which is the cause of fire generates lightning; or it may be due to the flashing forth from the clouds, by reason of winds, of particles capable of producing this brightness; or else it is squeezed out of the clouds when they have been condensed either by their own action or by that of the winds; or again, the light diffused from the stars may be enclosed in the clouds, then driven about by their motion and by that of the winds, and finally make its escape from the clouds; or light of the finest texture may be filtered through the clouds (whereby the clouds may be set on fire and thunder produced), and the motion of this light may make lightning; or it may arise from the combustion of wind brought about by the violence of its motion and the intensity of its compression;

Bailey, 1926

And lightnings too are produced in several ways: for both owing to the friction and collision of clouds a conformation of atoms which produces fire slips out and gives birth to the lightning, and owing to wind bodies which give rise to this flash are dashed from the clouds: or compression may be the cause, when clouds are squeezed either by one another or by the wind. Or again it may be that the light scattered abroad from the heavenly bodies is taken in by the clouds, and then is driven together by the movement of the clouds and wind, and falls out through the clouds; or else light composed of most subtle particles may filter through the clouds, whereby the clouds may be set on fire by the flame and thunder produced by the movement of the fire. Or the wind may be fired owing to the strain of motion and its violent rotation,

Epicurus, c. 295-290 BCE

καὶ κατὰ ῥήξεις δὲ νεφῶν ὑπὸ πνευμάτων ἔκπτωσίν τε πυρὸς ἀποτελεστικῶν ἀτόμων καὶ τὸ τῆς ἀστραπῆς φάντασμα ἀποτελουσῶν· καὶ κατ᾽ ἄλλους δὲ πλείους τρόπους ῥᾳδίως ἔσται καθορᾶν ἐχόμενον ἀεὶ τῶν φαινομένων καὶ τὸ τούτοις ὅμοιον δυνάμενον συνθεωρεῖν. Προτερεῖ δὲ ἀστραπὴ βροντῆς ἐν τοιᾷδέ τινι περιστάσει νεφῶν καὶ διὰ τὸ ἅμα τῷ τὸ πνεῦμα ἐμπίπτειν ἐξωθεῖσθαι τὸν ἀστραπῆς ἀποτελεστικὸν σχηματισμόν, ὕστερον δὲ τὸ πνεῦμα ἀνειλούμενον τὸν βόμβον ἀποτελεῖν τοῦτον· καὶ κατ᾽ ἔμπτωσιν δὲ ἀμφοτέρων ἅμα τῷ τάχει συντονωτέρῳ κεχρῆσθαι πρὸς ἡμᾶς τὴν ἀστραπήν, ὑστερεῖν δὲ τὴν βροντήν,

Yonge, 1853

One may also attribute the luminous appearance of lightning to the rupture of the clouds under the action of the winds, or to the fall of inflammable atoms. Lastly, one may easily find a number of other explanations, if one applies to sensible facts, in order to search out the analogies which they present to the heavenly phenomena. Lightning precedes thunder, either because it is produced at the same moment that the wind falls on the cloud, while the noise is only heard at the instant when the wind has penetrated into the bosom of the cloud; or, perhaps, the two phenomena being simultaneous, the lightning arrives among us more rapidly than the noise of the thunderbolt,

Hicks, 1925

or, when the clouds are rent asunder by winds, and the atoms which generate fire are expelled, these likewise cause lightning to appear. And it may easily be seen that its occurrence is possible in many other ways, so long as we hold fast to facts and take a general view of what is analogous to them. Lightning precedes thunder, when the clouds are constituted as mentioned above and the configuration which produces lightning is expelled at the moment when the wind falls upon the cloud, and the wind being rolled up afterwards produces the roar of thunder; or, if both are simultaneous, the lightning moves with a greater velocity towards us and the thunder lags behind,

Bailey, 1926

or clouds may be rent by wind and atoms fall out which produce fire and cause the appearance of lightning. And several other methods may easily be observed, if one clings always to phenomena and can compare what is akin to these things. Lightning precedes thunder in such a conformation of the clouds, either because at the moment when the wind dashes in, the formation of atoms which gives rise to lightning is driven out, but afterwards the wind whirls about and produces the reverberation; or because they both dash out at the same moment, but lightning moves at a higher speed towards us, and thunder comes after,

Epicurus, c. 295-290 BCE

καθάπερ ἐπ’ ἐνίων ἐξ ἀποστήματος θεωρουμένων καὶ πληγάς τινας ποιουμένων. Κεραυνὸς ἐνδέχεται γίνεσθαι καὶ κατὰ πλείονας πνευμάτων συλλογὰς καὶ κατείλησιν ἰσχυράν τε ἐκπύρωσιν καὶ κατάρρηξιν μέρους καὶ ἔκπτωσιν ἰσχυροτέραν αὐτοῦ ἐπὶ τοὺς κάτω τόπους, τῆς ῥήξεως γινομένης διὰ τὸ τοὺς ἐξῆς τόπους πυκνοτέρους εἶναι διὰ πίλησιν νεφῶν· καὶ κατ’ αὐτὴν δὲ τὴν τοῦ πυρὸς ἔκπτωσιν ἀνειλουμένου, καθὰ καὶ βροντὴν ἐνδέχεται γίνεσθαι, πλείονος γενομένου καὶ πνευματωθέντος ἰσχυρότερον καὶ ῥήξαντος τὸ νέφος διὰ τὸ μὴ δύνασθαι ὑποχωρεῖν εἰς τὰ ἐξῆς, τῷ πίλησιν γίνεσθαι, τὸ μὲν πολὺ πρὸς ὄρος τι ὑψηλόν, ἐν ᾧ μάλιστα κεραυνοὶ πίπτουσιν, ἀεὶ ‹δὲ› πρὸς ἄλληλα.

Yonge, 1853

as is in fact remarked in other cases when we see at a distance the clash of two objects. The thunderbolt may be produced either by a violent condensation of the winds, or by their rapid motion and conflagrations. It may arise from the fact of the winds meeting in places which are too dense, in consequence of the accumulation of clouds, and then a portion of the current detaches itself and proceeds towards the lower situations; or else it may be caused by the fire which is contained in the bosom of the clouds precipitating itself downwards. As one may suppose that an immense quantity of fire being accumulated in the clouds dilates, violently bursting the substance which envelops it, because the resistance of the centre hinders it from proceeding further. This effect is especially produced in the neighbourhood of high mountains; and, accordingly, they are very frequently struck with the thunderbolts.

Hicks, 1925

exactly as when persons who are striking blows are observed from a distance. A thunderbolt is caused when winds are repeatedly collected, imprisoned, and violently ignited; or when a part is torn asunder and is more violently expelled downwards, the rending being due to the fact that the compression of the clouds has made the neighbouring parts more dense; or again it may be due like thunder merely to the expulsion of the imprisoned fire, when this has accumulated and been more violently inflated with wind and has torn the cloud, being unable to withdraw to the adjacent parts because it is continually more and more closely compressed – [generally by some high mountain where thunderbolts mostly fall].

Bailey, 1926

as in the case of some things seen at a distance and producing blows. Thunderbolts may occur because there are frequent gatherings of wind, which whirls about and is fanned into a fierce flame, and then a portion of it breaks off and rushes violently on the places beneath, the breaking taking place because the regions approached are successively denser owing to the condensation of clouds, or as the result of the actual outburst of the whirling fire, in the same way that thunder may be produced, when the fire becomes too great and is too violently fanned by wind and so breaks through the cloud, because it cannot retreat to the next regions owing to the constant condensation of clouds one on the other.

Epicurus, c. 295-290 BCE

καὶ κατ’ ἄλλους δὲ τρόπους πλείονας ἐνδέχεται κεραυνὸς ἀποτελεῖσθαι· μόνον ὁ μῦθος ἀπέστω· ἀπέσται δέ, ἐάν τις καλῶς τοῖς φαινομένοις ἀκολουθῶν περὶ τῶν ἀφανῶν σημειῶται. Πρηστῆρας ἐνδέχεται γινεσθαι καὶ κατὰ κάθεσιν νέφους εἰς τοὺς κάτω τόπους στυλοειδῶς ὑπὸ πνεύματος ἀθρόου ὠσθέντος, καὶ διὰ τοῦ πνεύματος πολλοῦ φερομένου, ἅμα καὶ τὸ νέφος εἰς τὸ πλάγιον ὠθοῦντος τοῦ ἐκτὸς πνεύματος· καὶ κατὰ περίστασιν δὲ πνεύματος εἰς κύκλον, ἀέρος τινὸς ἐπισυνωθουμένου ἄνωθεν καὶ ῥύσεως πολλῆς πνευμάτων γινομένης καὶ οὐ δυναμένης εἰς τὰ πλάγια διαρρυῆναι διὰ τὴν πέριξ τοῦ ἀέρος πίλησιν.

Yonge, 1853

In short, one may give a number of explanations of the thunderbolt; but we ought, above all things, to be on our guard against fables, and this one will easily be, if one follows faithfully the observable phenomena in the explanation of these things, which are not perceived, except indirectly. Hurricanes may be caused either by the presence of a cloud, which a violent wind sets in motion and precipitates with a spiral movement towards the lower regions, or by a violent gust which bears a cloud into the neighbourhood of some other current, or else by the mere agitation of the wind by itself, when air is brought together from the higher regions and compressed without being able to escape on either side, in consequence of the resistance of the air which surrounds it;

Hicks, 1925

And there are several other ways in which thunderbolts may possibly be produced. Exclusion of myth is the sole condition necessary; and it will be excluded, if one properly attends to the facts and hence draws inferences to interpret what is obscure. Fiery whirlwinds are due to the descent of a cloud forced downwards like a pillar by the wind in full force and carried by a gale round and round, while at the same time the outside wind gives the cloud a lateral thrust; or it may be due to a change of the wind which veers to all points of the compass as a current of air from above helps to force it to move; or it may be that a strong eddy of winds has been started and is unable to burst through laterally because the air around is closely condensed.

Bailey, 1926

And thunderbolts may be produced in other ways too. Only superstition must be excluded, as it will, if one successfully follows the lead of seen phenomena to gain indications about the invisible. Cyclones may be produced either by the driving down of a cloud into the regions below in the form of a pillar, because it is pushed by the wind gathered inside it and is driven on by the violence of the wind, while at the same time the wind outside impels it sideways; or by wind forming into circular motion, while mist is simultaneously thrust down from above; or when a great rush of wind takes place and cannot pass through sideways owing to the surrounding condensation of the atmosphere.

Epicurus, c. 295-290 BCE

καὶ ἕως μὲν γῆς τοῦ πρηστῆρος καθιεμένου στρόβιλοι γίνονται, ὡς ἂν καὶ ἡ ἀπογέννησις κατὰ τὴν κίνησιν τοῦ πνεύματος γίνηται, ἕως δὲ θαλάττης δῖνοι ἀποτελοῦνται. Σεισμοὺς ἐνδέχεται γίνεσθαι καὶ κατὰ πνεύματος ἐν τῇ γῇ ἀπόληψιν καὶ παρὰ μικροὺς ὄγκους αὐτῆς παράθεσιν καὶ συνεχῆ κίνησιν, ὃ τὴν κράδανσιν τῇ γῇ παρασκευάζει. καὶ τὸ πνεῦμα τοῦτο ἢ ἔξωθεν ἐμπεριλαμβάνει ‹ἢ› ἐκ τοῦ πίπτειν [εἰς] ἐδάφη εἰς ἀντροειδεῖς τόπους τῆς γῆς ἐκπνευματοῦντα τὸν πεπιλημένον ἀέρα· ‹καὶ› κατ’ αὐτὴν δὲ τὴν διάδοσιν τῆς κινήσεως ἐκ τῶν πτώσεων ἐδαφῶν πολλῶν καὶ πάλιν ἀνταπόδοσιν, ὅταν πυκνώμασι σφοδροτέροις τῆς γῆς ἀπαντήσῃ, ἐνδέχεται σεισμοὺς ἀποτελεῖσθαι.

Yonge, 1853

when the hurricane descends towards the earth, then there result whirlwinds in proportion to the rapidity of the wind that has produced them; and this phenomenon extends over the sea also. Earthquakes may arise from the wind penetrating into the interior of the earth, or from the earth itself receiving incessantly the addition of exterior particles, and being in incessant motion as to its constituent atoms, being in consequence disposed to a general vibration. That which permits the wind to penetrate is the fact that falls take place in the interior, or that the air being impressed by the winds insinuates itself into the subterranean caverns. The movement which numberless falls and the reaction of the earth communicates to the ground, when this motion meets bodies of greater resistance and solidity, is sufficient to explain the earthquakes.

Hicks, 1925

And when they descend upon land, they cause what are called tornadoes, in accordance with the various ways in which they are produced through the force of the wind; and when let down upon the sea, they cause waterspouts. Earthquakes may be due to the imprisonment of wind underground, and to its being interspersed with small masses of earth and then set in continuous motion, thus causing the earth to tremble. And the earth either takes in this wind from without or from the falling in of foundations, when undermined, into subterranean caverns, thus raising a wind in the imprisoned air. Or they may be due to the propagation of movement arising from the fall of many foundations and to its being again checked when it encounters the more solid resistance of earth.

Bailey, 1926

And when the spout is let down on to the land, whirlwinds are produced in all the various ways in which their creation may occur owing to the movement of the wind, but if it reaches the sea it produces waterspouts. Earthquakes may be brought about both because wind is caught up in the earth, so that the earth is dislocated in small masses and is continually shaken, and that causes it to sway. This wind it either takes into itself from outside, or else because masses of ground fall in into cavernous places in the earth and fan into wind the air that is imprisoned in them. And again, earthquakes may be brought about by the actual spreading of the movement which results from the fall of many such masses of ground and the return shock, when the first motion comes into collision with more densely packed bodies of earth.

Epicurus, c. 295-290 BCE

καὶ κατ’ ἄλλους δὲ πλείους τρόπους τὰς κινήσεις ταύτας τῆς γῆς γίνεσθαι. Τὰ δὲ πνεύματα συμβαίνει γίνεσθαι κατὰ χρόνον ἀλλοφυλίας τινὸς ἀεὶ καὶ κατὰ μικρὸν παρεισδυομένης, καὶ καθ’ ὕδατος ἀφθόνου συλλογήν. τὸ δὲ λοιπὸν πνεύματα γίνεται καὶ ὀλίγων πεσόντων εἰς τὰ πολλὰ κοιλώματα, διαδόσεως τούτων γινομένης. Χάλαζα συντελεῖται καὶ κατὰ πῆξιν ἰσχυροτέραν, πάντοθεν δὲ πνευματωδῶν περίστασίν τινων, καὶ καταμέρισιν· καὶ τῆξιν μετριωτέραν ὑδατοειδῶν τινων, ὁμοῦ ῥῆξιν ἅμα τήν τε σύνωσιν αὐτῶν ποιουμένην καὶ τὴν διάρρηξιν πρὸς τὸ κατὰ μέρη συνίστασθαι πηγνύμενα καὶ κατὰ ἀθρότητα·

Yonge, 1853

One might, however, give an account of them in several other ways. Winds are caused, either by the successive and regular addition of some foreign matter, or else by the reunion of a great quantity of water; and the differences of the winds may arise from the fact that some portions of this same matter fall into the numerous cavities of the earth, and are divided there. Hail is produced by an energetic condensation acting on the ethereal particles which the cold embraces in every direction; or, in consequence of less violent condensation acting however on aqueous particles, and accompanied by division, in such a manner as to produce, at the same time, the reunion of certain elements and of the collective masses; or by the rupture of some dense and compact mass which would explain at the same time, the numerousness of the particles and their individual hardness.

Hicks, 1925

And there are many other causes to which these oscillations of the earth may be due. Winds arise from time to time when foreign matter continually and gradually finds its way into the air; also through the gathering of great store of water. The rest of the winds arise when a few of them fall into the many hollows and they are thus divided and multiplied. Hail is caused by the firmer congelation and complete transformation, and subsequent distribution into drops, of certain particles resembling wind: also by the slighter congelation of certain particles of moisture and the vicinity of certain particles of wind which at one and the same time forces them together and makes them burst, so that they become frozen in parts and in the whole mass.

Bailey, 1926

There are also many other ways in which these motions of the earth may be caused. The winds may be produced when from time to time some alien matter is continually and gradually forcing its way in, or owing to the gathering of a vast quantity of water. The other winds arise when a few (currents of air) fall into many hollow spaces, and cause a spreading of wind. Hail is produced both by a powerful congelation, when certain windy bodies form together from all sides and split up: also by a more moderate congelation of watery bodies and their simultaneous division, which causes at one and the same time their coagulation and separation, so that they cling together as they freeze in their separate parts as well as in their whole masses.

Epicurus, c. 295-290 BCE

ἡ δὲ περιφέρεια οὐκ ἀδυνάτως μὲν ἔχει γίνεσθαι πάντοθεν τῶν ἄκρων ἀποτηκομένων καὶ ἐν τῇ συστάσει πάντοθεν, ὡς λέγεται, κατὰ μέρη ὁμαλῶς περιισταμένων εἴτε ὑδατοειδῶν τινων, εἴτε πνευματοδῶν. Χιόνα δὲ ἐνδέχεται συντελεῖσθαι καὶ ὕδατος λεπτοῦ ἐκχεομένου ἐκ τῶν νεφῶν, διὰ πόρων συμμετρίας καὶ θλίψεως ἐπιτηδείων νεφῶν ἀεὶ ὑπὸ πνεύματος σφοδρᾶς, εἶτα τούτου πῆξιν ἐν τῇ φορᾷ λαμβάνοντος διά τινα ἰσχυρὰν ἐν τοῖς κατώτερον τόποις τῶν νεφῶν ψυχρασίας περίστασιν· καὶ κατὰ πῆξιν δ’ ἐν τοῖς νέφεσιν ὁμαλῆ ἀραιότητα ἔχουσαν τοιαύτη πρόεσις ἐκ τῶν νεφῶν γίνοιτο ἄν, πρὸς ἄλληλα θλιβομένων ὑδατοειδῶν τινων συμπαρακειμένων, ἃ οἱονεὶ σύνωσιν ποιούμενα χάλαζαν ἀποτελεῖ, ὃ μάλιστα γίνεται ἐν τῷ ἔαρι·

Yonge, 1853

As to the spherical form of the hail, one may easily account for that by admitting that the shocks which it receives in every direction make all the angles disappear, or else that at the moment when the different fragments are formed, each of them is equally embraced on all sides by aqueous or ethereal particles. Snow may be produced by a light vapour full of moisture which the clouds allow to escape by passage intended for that end, when they are pressed, in a corresponding manner, by other clouds, and set in motion by the wind. Subsequently, these vapours become condensed in their progress under the action of the cold which surrounds the clouds in the lower regions. It may also be the case that this phenomena is produced by clouds of slight density as they become condensed. In this case the snow which escapes from the clouds would be the result of the contact, or approximation of the aqueous particles, which in a still more condensed state produce hail. This effect is most especially produced in the spring.

Hicks, 1925

The round shape of hailstones is not impossibly due to the extremities on all sides being melted and to the fact that, as explained, particles either of moisture or of wind surround them evenly on all sides and in every quarter, when they freeze. Snow may be formed when a fine rain issues from the clouds because the pores are symmetrical and because of the continuous and violent pressure of the winds upon clouds which are suitable; and then this rain has been frozen on its way because of some violent change to coldness in the regions below the clouds. Or again, by congelation in clouds which have uniform density a fall of snow might occur through the clouds which contain moisture being densely packed in close proximity to each other; and these clouds produce a sort of compression and cause hail, and this happens mostly in spring.

Bailey, 1926

Their circular shape may possibly arise because the comers melt off all round or because at their conformation bodies, whether watery or windy, come together evenly from all directions part by part, as is alleged. Snow may be produced when fine particles of rain are poured out of the clouds owing to the existence of pores of suitable shape and the strong and constant compression by winds of clouds of the right kind; and then the water is congealed in its descent owing to some conformation of excessive coldness in the clouds in the lower regions. Or else owing to congelation in clouds of uniform thinness an exudation of this kind might arise from watery clouds lying side by side and rubbing against one another: for they produce hail by causing coagulation, a process most frequent in the atmosphere.

Letter to Pythocles |108|

Epicurus, c. 295-290 BCE

καὶ κατὰ τρῖψιν δὲ νεφῶν πῆξιν εἰληφότων ἀπόπαλσιν ἂν λαμβάνοι τὸ τῆς χιόνος τοῦτο ἄθροισμα. καὶ κατ’ ἄλλους δὲ τρόπους ἐνδέχεται χιόνα συντελεῖσθαι. Δρόσος συντελεῖται καὶ κατὰ σύνοδον πρὸς ἄλληλα ἐκ τοῦ ἀέρος τῶν τοιούτων, ἃ τῆς τοιαύτης ὑγρασίας ἀποτελεστικὰ γίνεται· καὶ κατὰ φορὰν δὲ ἢ ἀπὸ νοτερῶν τόπων ἢ ὕδατα κεκτημένων, ἐν οἷς τόποις μάλιστα δρόσος συντελεῖται, εἶτα σύνοδον τούτων εἰς τὸ αὐτὸ λαβόντων καὶ ἀποτέλεσιν ὑγρασίας καὶ πάλιν φορὰν ἐπὶ τοὺς κάτω τόπους, καθάπερ ὁμοίως καὶ παρ’ ἡμῖν ἐπὶ πλειόνων τοιαῦτά τινα συντελεῖται.

Yonge, 1853

Snow again, may result from the collection of clouds previously condensed and solidified; or from a whole army of other causes. Dew proceeds from a reunion of particles contained in the air calculated to produce this moist substance. These particles may be also brought from places which are moist or covered with water (for in those places, above all others, it is that dew is abundant). These then reunite, again resume their aqueous form, and fall down. The same phenomena takes place in other cases before our own eyes under many analogies.

Hicks, 1925

And when frozen clouds rub against each other, this accumulation of snow might be thrown off. And there are other ways in which snow might be formed. Dew is formed when such particles as are capable of producing this sort of moisture meet each other from the air: again by their rising from moist and damp places, the sort of place where dew is chiefly formed, and their subsequent coalescence, so as to create moisture and fall downwards, just as in several cases something similar is observed to take place under our eyes.

Bailey, 1926

Or else, owing to the friction of congealed clouds, these nuclei of snow may find occasion to break off. And there are many other ways in which snow may be produced. Dew may be produced both when such particles as are productive of this kind of moisture issue from the atmosphere and meet one another, and also when particles rise from moist regions or regions containing water, in which dew is most naturally produced, and then meet together and cause moisture to be produced, and afterwards fall back on the ground below, as (is) frequently (seen) to be the case in phenomena on earth as well.

Epicurus, c. 295-290 BCE

‹Πάχνη δὲ συντελεῖται› τῶν δρόσων τούτων πῆξίν τινα ποιὰν λαβόντων διὰ περίστασίν τινα ἀέρος ψυχροῦ. Κρύσταλλος συντελεῖται καὶ κατ’ ἔκθλιψιν μὲν τοῦ περιφεροῦς σχηματισμοῦ ἐκ τοῦ ὕδατος, σύνωσιν δὲ τῶν σκαληνῶν καὶ ὀξυγωνίων τῶν ἐν τῇ ὕδατι ὑπαρχόντων, καὶ κατὰ ἔξωθεν δὲ τῶν τοιούτων πρόσκρισιν, ἃ συνελασθέντα πῆξιν τῷ ὕδατι παρεσκεύασε, ποσὰ τῶν περιφερῶν ἐκθλίψαντα. Ἶρις γίνεται κατὰ πρόσλαμψιν [ὑπὸ] τοῦ ἡλίου πρὸς ἀέρα ὑδατοειδῆ, ἢ κατὰ πρόσφυσιν ἰδίαν τοῦ τε φωτὸς καὶ τοῦ ἀέρος, ἢ τὰ τῶν χρωμάτων τούτων ἰδιώματα ποιήσει εἴτε πάντα εἴτε μονοειδῶς, ἀφ’ οὗ πάλιν ἀπολάμποντος τὰ ὁμοροῦντα τοῦ ἀέρος χρῶσιν ταύτην λήψεται, οἵαν θεωροῦμεν, κατὰ πρόσλαμψιν πρὸς τὰ μέρη.

Yonge, 1853

Hoarfrost is dew congealed by the influence of the cold air that surrounds it. Ice is formed either by the wearing away of round atoms contained in the water, and the reunion at scalene and acute angles of the atoms which exist in the water, or by an addition from without of these latter particles, which penetrating into the water, solidify it by driving away an equal amount of round atoms. The rainbow may be produced by the reflection of the solar rays on the moist air; or it may arise from a particular property of light and air, in virtue of which these particular appearances of colour are formed, either because the shades which we perceive result directly from this property, or because, on the contrary, it only produces a single shade, which, reflecting itself on the nearest portion of the air, communicates to them the tints which we observe.

Hicks, 1925

And the formation of hoar-frost is not different from that of dew, certain particles of such a nature becoming in some such way congealed owing to a certain condition of cold air. Ice is formed by the expulsion from the water of the circular, and the compression of the scalene and acute- angled atoms contained in it; further by the accretion of such atoms from without, which being driven together cause the water to solidify after the expulsion of a certain number of round atoms. The rainbow arises when the sun shines upon humid air; or again by a certain peculiar blending of light with air, which will cause either all the distinctive qualities of these colours or else some of them belonging to a single kind, and from the reflection of this light the air all around will be coloured as we see it to be, as the sun shines upon its parts.

Bailey, 1926

(And frost is produced by a change) in the dew-particles, when such particles as we have described undergo a definite kind of congelation owing to the neighborhood of a cold atmosphere. Ice is caused both by the squeezing out from the water of particles of round formation and the driving together of the triangular and acute-angled particles which exist already in the water, and again by the addition from without of particles of this kind, which when driven together produce a congelation in the water, by squeezing out a certain number of the round particles. The rainbow is caused by light shining from the sun on to watery atmosphere: or else by a peculiar union of light and air, which can produce the special qualities of these colours whether all together or separately; from it as it reflects back again the neighbouring regions of the air can take the tint which we see, by means of the shining of the light on to its various parts.

Epicurus, c. 295-290 BCE

Τὸ δὲ τῆς περιφερείας τοῦτου φάντασμα γίνεται διὰ τὸ τὸ διάστημα πάντοθεν ἴσον ὑπὸ τῆς ὄψεως θεωρεῖσθαι, ἢ σύνωσιν τοιαύτην λαμβανουσῶν τῶν ἐν τῷ ἀέρι ‹ἀ›τόμων ἢ ἐν τοῖς νέφεσιν ἀπὸ τοῦ αὐτοῦ ἀέρος [προσφερομένου πρὸς τὴν σελήνην]· ἀποφερομένων ἀτόμων περιφέρειάν τινα καθίεσθαι τὴν σύγκρισιν ταύτην. Ἅλως περὶ τὴν σελήνην γίνεται [καὶ κατὰ] πάντοθεν ἀέρος προσφερομένου πρὸς τὴν σελήνην ἢ τὰ ἀπ’ αὐτῆς ῥεύματα ἀποφερόμενα ὁμαλῶς ἀναστέλλοντος ἐπὶ τοσοῦτον ἐφ’ ὅσον κύκλῳ περιστῆσαι τὸ νεφοειδὲς τοῦτο καὶ μὴ τὸ παράπαν διακρῖναι, ἢ καὶ τὸν πέριξ αὐτῆς ἀέρα ἀναστέλλοντος συμμέτρως πάντοθεν εἰς τὸ περιφερὲς τὸ περὶ αὐτὴν καὶ παχυμερὲς περιστῆσαι.

Yonge, 1853

As to the circular form of the rainbow, that depends either on the fact of the sight perceiving an equal distance in every direction, or the fact of the atoms taking this form when reuniting in the air; or it may be caused by its detaching from the air which moves towards the moon, certain atoms which, being reunited in the clouds, give rise to this circular appearance. The lunar halo arises from the fact of the air, which moves towards the moon from all quarters, uniformly intercepting the rays emitted by this heavenly object, in such a way as to form around it a sort of circular cloud which partially veils it. It may also arise from the fact of the moon uniformly rejecting from all quarters, the air which surrounds it, in such a manner as to produce this circular and opaque covering.

Hicks, 1925

The circular shape which it assumes is due to the fact that the distance of every point is perceived by our sight to be equal; or it may be because, the atoms in the air or in the clouds and deriving from the sun having been thus united, the aggregate of them presents a sort of roundness. A halo round the moon arises because the air on all sides extends to the moon; or because it equably raises upwards the currents from the moon so high as to impress a circle upon the cloudy mass and not to separate it altogether; or because it raises the air which immediately surrounds the moon symmetrically from all sides up to a circumference round her and there forms a thick ring.

Bailey, 1926

The appearance of its round shape is caused because it is perceived by our sight at equal distance from all its points, or else because the atoms in the air or those in the clouds which are derived from the same air, are pressed together in this manner, and so the combination spreads out in a round shape. A halo round the moon is caused either when air is carried towards the moon from all sides, or when the air checks the effluences carried from the moon so equably that it forms them into this cloudy ring all round without any gaps or differences, or else when it checks the air round the moon uniformly on all sides so as to make that which encircles it round and thick in texture.

Epicurus, c. 295-290 BCE

ὅ γίνεται κατὰ μέρη τινὰ ἤτοι ἔξωθεν βιασαμένου τινὸς ῥεύματος ἢ τῆς θερμασίας ἐπιτηδείων πόρων ἐπιλαμβανομένης εἰς τὸ τοῦτο ἀπεργάσασθαι. Κομῆται ἀστέρες γίνονται ἤτοι πυρὸς ἐν τόποις τισὶ διὰ χρόνων τινῶν ἐν τοῖς μετεώροις συντρεφομένου περιστάσεως γινομένης, ἢ ἰδίαν τινὰ κίνησιν διὰ χρόνων τοῦ οὐρανοῦ ἴσχοντος ὑπὲρ ἡμᾶς, ὥστε τὰ τοιαῦτα ἄστρα ἀναφανῆναι, ἢ αὐτὰ ἐν χρόνοις τισὶν ὁρμῆσαι διά τινα περίστασιν καὶ εἰς τοὺς καθ’ ἡμᾶς τόπους ἐλθεῖν καὶ ἐκφανῆ γενέσθαι. τήν τε ἀφάνισιν τούτων γίνεσθαι παρὰ τὰς ἀντικειμένας ταύταις αἰτίας.

Yonge, 1853

And perhaps this opaqueness may be caused by some particle which some current brings from without; perhaps also, the heat communicates to the moon the property of emitting by the pores in its surface, the particles by which this effect is produced. Comets arise either from the fact, that in the circumstances already stated, there are partial conflagrations in certain points of the heaven; or, that at certain periods, the heaven has above our heads a particular movement which causes them to appear. It may also be the case, that being themselves endowed with a peculiar movement, they advance at the end of certain periods of time, and in consequence of particular circumstances, towards the places which we inhabit. The opposite reasons explain their disappearance.

Hicks, 1925

And this happens at certain parts either because a current has forced its way in from without or because the heat has gained possession of certain passages in order to effect this. Comets arise either because fire is nourished in certain places at certain intervals in the heavens, if circumstances are favourable; or because at times the heaven has a particular motion above us so that such stars appear; or because the stars themselves are set in motion under certain conditions and come to our neighbourhood and show themselves. And their disappearance is due to the causes which are the opposite of these.

Bailey, 1926

This comes to pass in different parts either because some current outside forces the air or because heat blocks the passages in such a way as to produce this effect. Comets occur either when fire is collected together in certain regions at certain intervals of time in the upper air because some gathering of matter takes place, or when at certain intervals the heaven above us has some peculiar movement, so that stars of this nature are revealed, or when they themselves at certain seasons start to move on account of some gathering of matter and come into the regions within our ken and appear visible. And their disappearance occurs owing to the opposite causes to these.

Letter to Pythocles |112|

Epicurus, c. 295-290 BCE

Τινὰ ‹ἄστρα› στρέφεται αὐτοῦ, ὃ συμβαίνει οὐ μόνον τῷ τὸ μέρος τοῦτο τοῦ κόσμου ἑστάναι, περὶ ὃ τὸ λοιπὸν στρέφεται, καθάπερ τινές φασιν, ἀλλὰ καὶ τῷ δίνην ἀέρος ἔγκυκλον αὐτοῖς περιεστάναι, ἣ κωλυτικὴ γίνεται τοῦ περιπολεῖν ὡς καὶ τὰ ἄλλα. ἢ καὶ διὰ τὸ ἐξῆς μὲν αὐτοῖς ὕλην ἐπιτηδείαν μὴ εἶναι, ἐν δὲ τοῦτῳ τῷ τόπῳ ἐν ᾧ κείμενα θεωρεῖται· καὶ κατ’ ἄλλους δὲ πλείονας τρόπους τοῦτο δυνατὸν συντελεῖσθαι, ἐάν τις δύνηται τὸ σύμφωνον τοῖς φαινομένοις συλλογίζεσθαι. Τινὰ τῶν ἄστρων πλανᾶσθαι, εἰ οὕτω ταῖς κινήσεσι χρώμενα συμβαίνει,

Yonge, 1853

Certain stars return to the same point in accomplishing their revolutions; and this arises, not only as has been sometimes believed, from the fact of the pole of the world, around which they move, being immovable, but also from the fact that the gyrations of the air which surrounds them, hinder them from deviations like the wandering stars. Perhaps also, this may be caused by the fact, that except in the route in which they move, and in which we perceive them, they do not find any material suitable to their nature. One may also explain this phenomenon in many other manners, reasoning according to observable facts; thus, it is possible that certain stars may be wandering because that is the nature of their movements,

Hicks, 1925

Certain stars may revolve without setting not only for the reason alleged by some, because this is the part of the world round which, itself unmoved, the rest revolves, but it may also be because a circular eddy of air surrounds this part, which prevents them from travelling out of sight like other stars; or because there is a dearth of necessary fuel farther on, while there is abundance in that part where they are seen to be. Moreover there are several other ways in which this might be brought about, as may be seen by anyone capable of reasoning in accordance with the facts. The wanderings of certain stars, if such wandering is their actual motion,

Bailey, 1926

Some stars ‘revolve in their place’(as Homer says), which comes to pass not only because this part of the world is stationary and round it the rest revolves, as some say, but also because a whirl of air is formed in a ring round it, which prevents their moving about as do the other stars: or else it is because there is not a succession of appropriate fuel for them, but only in this place in which they are seen fixed. And there are many other ways in which this may be brought about, if one is able to infer what is in agreement with phenomena. That some of the stars should wander in their course, if indeed it is the case that their movements are such,

Epicurus, c. 295-290 BCE

τινὰ δὲ μὴ [κινεῖσθαι] ἐνδέχεται μὲν καὶ παρὰ τὸ κύκλῳ κινούμενα ἐξ ἀρχῆς οὕτω κατηναγκάσθαι, ὥστε τὰ μὲν κατὰ τὴν αὐτὴν δῖναν φέρεσθαι ὁμαλὴν οὖσαν, τὰ δὲ κατὰ τὴν ἅμα τισὶν ἀνομαλίαις χρωμένην· ἐνδέχεται δὲ καὶ καθ’ οὓς τόπους φέρεται οὗ μὲν παρεκτάσεις ἀέρος εἶναι ὁμαλεῖς ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτὸ συνωθούσας κατὰ τὸ ἑξῆς ὁμαλῶς τε ἐκκαούσας, οὗ δὲ ἀνωμαλεῖς οὕτως, ὥστε τὰς θεωρουμένας παραλλαγὰς συντελεῖσθαι. τὸ δὲ μίαν αἰτίαν τούτων ἀποδιδόναι, πλεοναχῶς τῶν φαινομένων ἐκκαλουμένων, μανικὸν καὶ οὐ καθηκόντως πραττόμενον ὑπὸ τῶν τὴν ματαίαν ἀστρολογίαν ἐζηλωκότων καὶ εἰς τὸ κενὸν αἰτίας τινῶν ἀποδιδόντων, ὅταν τὴν θείαν φύσιν μηθαμῇ λειτουργιῶν ἀπολύωσι.

Yonge, 1853

and, for the same reason, others may be immovable. It is also possible, that the same necessity which has originally given them their circular movement, may have compelled some to follow their orbit regularly, and have subjected others to an irregular process; we may also suppose that the uniform character of the centre which certain stars traverse favours their regular march, and their return to a certain point; and that in the case of others, on the contrary, the differences of the centre produce the changes which we observe. Besides, to assign one single cause to all these phenomena, when the experience of our senses suggests us several, is folly. It is the conduct of ignorant astrologers covetous of a vain knowledge, who assigning imaginary causes to facts, wish to leave wholly to the Deity the care of the government of the universe.

Hicks, 1925

and the regular movement of certain other stars, may be accounted for by saying that they originally moved in a circle and were constrained, some of them to be whirled round with the same uniform rotation and others with a whirling motion which varied; but it may also be that according to the diversity of the regions traversed in some places there are uniform tracts of air, forcing them forward in one direction and burning uniformly, in others these tracts present such irregularities as cause the motions observed. To assign a single cause for these effects when the facts suggest several causes is madness and a strange inconsistency; yet it is done by adherents of rash astronomy, who assign meaningless causes for the stars whenever they persist in saddling the divinity with burdensome tasks.

Bailey, 1926

while others do not move in this manner, may be due to the reason that from the first as they moved in their circles they were so constrained by necessity that some of them move along the same regular orbit, and others along one which is associated with certain irregularities: or it may be that among the regions to which they are carried in some places there are regular tracts of air which urge them on successively in the same direction and provide flame for them regularly, while in other places the tracts are irregular, so that the aberrations which we observe result. But to assign a single cause for these occurrences, when phenomena demand several explanations, is madness, and is quite wrongly practiced by persons who are partisans of the foolish notions of astrology, by which they give futile explanations of the causes of certain occurrences, and all the time do not by any means free the divine nature from the burden of responsibilities.

Letter to Pythocles |114|

Epicurus, c. 295-290 BCE

Τινὰ ἄστρα ὑπολειπόμενά τινων θεωρεῖσθαι συμβαίνει καὶ παρὰ τὸ βραδύτερον συμπεριφέρεσθαι τὸν αὐτὸν κύκλον περιιόντα, καὶ παρὰ τὸ τὴν ἐναντίαν κινεῖσθαι ἀντισπώμενα ὑπὸ τῆς αὐτῆς δίνης, καὶ παρὰ τὸ περιφέρεσθαι τὰ μὲν διὰ πλείονος τόπου, τὰ δὲ δι’ ἐλάττονος, τὴν αὐτὴν δῖναν περικυκλοῦντα. τὸ δὲ ἁπλῶς ἀποφαίνεσθαι περὶ τούτων καθῆκόν ἐστι τοῖς τερατεύεσθαί τι πρὸς τοὺς πολλοὺς βουλομένοις. Οἱ λεγόμενοι ἀστέρες ἐκπίπτειν καὶ παρὰ μέρος καὶ παρὰ τρῖψιν νεφῶν δύνανται συντελεῖσθαι καὶ παρὰ ἔκπτωσιν, οὗ ἂν ἡ ἐκπνευμάτωσις γένηται, καθάπερ καὶ ἐπὶ τῶν ἀστραπῶν ἐλέγομεν·

Yonge, 1853

Some stars [the planets] appear to be left behind by others in their progress; this arises either from the fact of their having a slower motion, though traversing the same circle; or, because, though they are drawn on by the same propelling power, they have, nevertheless, a movement proper to themselves in a contrary direction; or it may be caused by the fact that, though all are placed in the same sphere of movement, still some have more space to traverse, and others less. To give one uniform and positive explanation of all these facts, is not consistent with the conduct of any people but those who love to flash prodigies in the eyes of the multitude. Falling stars may be particles detached from the stars, or fragments resulting from their collision; they may also be produced by the fall of substances which are set on fire by the action of the wind;

Hicks, 1925

That certain stars are seen to be left behind by others may be because they travel more slowly, though they go the same round as the others; or it may be that they are drawn back by the same whirling motion and move in the opposite direction; or again it may be that some travel over a larger and others over a smaller space in making the same revolution. But to lay down as assured a single explanation of these phenomena is worthy of those who seek to dazzle the multitude with marvels. Falling stars, as they are called, may in some cases be due to the mutual friction of the stars themselves, in other cases to the expulsion of certain parts when that mixture of fire and air takes place which was mentioned when we were discussing lightning;

Bailey, 1926

That some stars should be seen to be left behind by others is caused because though they move round in the same orbit they are carried along more slowly, and also because they really move in the opposite direction though they are dragged back by the same revolution: also because some are carried round through a greater space and some through a lesser, though all perform the same revolution. But to give a single explanation of these occurrences is only suitable to those who wish to make a show to the many. What are called falling stars may be produced in part by the rubbing of star against star, and by the falling out of the fragments wherever an outburst of wind occurs, as we explained in the case of lightning-flashes:

Epicurus, c. 295-290 BCE

καὶ κατὰ σύνοδον δὲ ἀτόμων πυρὸς ἀποτελεστικῶν συμφυλίας γενομένης εἰς τὸ τοῦτο τελέσαι, καὶ κατὰ κίνησιν οὗ ἂν ἡ ὁρμὴ ἐξ ἀρχῆς κατὰ τὴν σύνοδον γένηται· καὶ κατὰ πνευμάτων δὲ συλλογὴν ἐν πυκνώμασίν τισιν [ἐν] ὁμιχλοειδέσι καὶ ἐκπύρωσιν τούτων διὰ τὴν κατείλησιν εἶτ’ ἐπέκρηξιν ‹ἐκ› τῶν περιεχόντων, καὶ ἐφ’ ὃν ἂν τόπον ἡ ὁρμὴ γένηται τῆς φορᾶς, εἰς τοῦτον φερομένων. καὶ ἄλλοι δὲ τρόποι εἰς τοῦτο τελέσαι ἀμύθητοί εἰσιν. Αἱ δ’ ἐπισημασίαι αἱ γινόμεναι ἐπί τισι ζῴοις κατὰ συγκύρημα γίνονται τοῦ καιροῦ. οὐ γὰρ τὰ ζῷα ἀνάγκην τινὰ προσφέρεται τοῦ ἀποτελεσθῆναι χειμῶνα, οὐδὲ κάθηταί τις θεία φύσις παρατηροῦσα τὰς τῶν ζῴων τούτων ἐξόδους κἄπειτα τὰς ἐπισημασίας ταύτας ἐπιτελεῖ.

Yonge, 1853

by the reunion of inflammable atoms which are made to come together so as to produce this effect by a sort of reciprocal attraction; or else by the movement which is produced in consequence of the reunion of atoms in the very place where they meet. It may also happen that the light vapours reunite and become condensed under the form of clouds, that they then take fire in consequence of their rotary motion, and that, bursting the obstacles which surround them, they proceed towards the places whither the force by which they are animated drags them. In short, this phenomenon also may admit a great number of explanations. The forecasts which are drawn from certain animals arise from a fortuitous concourse of circumstances; for there is no necessary connection between certain animals and winter. They do not produce it; nor is there any divine nature sitting aloft watching the exits of these animals, and then fulfilling signs of this kind.

Hicks, 1925

or it may be due to the meeting of atoms capable of generating fire, which accord so well as to produce this result, and their subsequent motion wherever the impulse which brought them together at first leads them; or it may be that wind collects in certain dense mist-like masses and, since it is imprisoned, ignites and then bursts forth upon whatever is round about it, and is carried to that place to which its motion impels it. And there are other ways in which this can be brought about without recourse to myths. The fact that the weather is sometimes foretold from the behaviour of certain animals is a mere coincidence in time. For the animals offer no necessary reason why a storm should be produced; and no divine being sits observing when these animals go out and afterwards fulfilling the signs which they have given.

Bailey, 1926

or else by the meeting of atoms productive of fire, when a gathering of kindred material occurs to cause this, and a movement in the direction of the impulse which results from the original meeting; or else by a gathering of wind in certain dense and misty formations, and its ignition as it whirls round, and then its bursting out of what encloses it and its rush towards the spot to which the impulse of its flight tends. And there are other ways in which this result may be brought about, quite free from superstition. The signs of the weather which are given by certain animals result from mere coincidence of occasion. For the animals do not exert any compulsion for winter to come to an end, nor is there some divine nature which sits and watches the outgoings of these animals and then fulfills the signs they give.

Letter to Pythocles |116|

Epicurus, c. 295-290 BCE

οὐδὲ γὰρ ‹ἂν› εἰς τὸ τυχὸν ζῷον κἂν μικρῷ χαριέστερον ᾖ, ἡ τοιαύτη μωρία ἐκπέσοι, μὴ ὅτι εἰς παντελῆ εὐδαιμονίαν κεκτημένον. Ταῦτα δὲ πάντα, Πυθόκλεις, μνημόνευσον· κατὰ πολύ τε γὰρ τοῦ μύθου ἐκβήσῃ καὶ τὰ ὁμογενῆ τούτοις συνορᾶν δυνήσῃ, μάλιστα δὲ σεαυτὸν ἀπόδος εἰς τὴν τῶν ἀρχῶν καὶ ἀπειρίας καὶ τῶν συγγενῶν τούτοις θεωρίαν, ἔτι τε κριτηρίων καὶ παθῶν, καὶ οὗ ἕνεκεν ταῦτα ἐκλογιζόμεθα. ταῦτα γὰρ μάλιστα συνθεωρούμενα ῥᾳδίως τὰς περὶ τῶν κατὰ μέρος αἰτίας συνορᾶν ποιήσει. οἱ δὲ ταῦτα μὴ καταγαπήσαντες ᾖ μάλιστα οὔτε ‹ἂν› αὐτὰ ταῦτα καλῶς συνθεωρήσαιεν οὔτε οὗ ἕνεκεν δεῖ θεωρεῖν ταῦτα περιεποιήσαντο.

Yonge, 1853

Nor can such folly as this occur to any being who is even moderately comfortable, much less to one which is possessed of perfect happiness. Imprint all these precepts in your memory, O Pythocles, and so you will easily escape fables, and it will be easy for you to discover other truths analogous to these. Above all, apply yourself to the study of general principles, of the infinite, and of questions of this kind, and to the investigation of the different criteria and of the passions, and to the study of the chief good, with a view to which we prosecute all our researches. When these questions are once resolved, all particular difficulties will be made plain to you. As to those who will not apply themselves to these principles, they will neither be able to give a good explanation of these same questions, nor to reach that end to which all our researches tend.

Hicks, 1925

For such folly as this would not possess the most ordinary being if ever so little enlightened, much less one who enjoys perfect felicity. All this, Pythocles, you should keep in mind; for then you will escape a long way from myth, and you will be able to view in their connexion the instances which are similar to these. But above all give yourself up to the study of first principles and of infinity and of kindred subjects, and further of the standards and of the feelings and of the end for which we choose between them. For to study these subjects together will easily enable you to understand the causes of the particular phenomena. And those who have not fully accepted this, in proportion as they have not done so, will be ill acquainted with these very subjects, nor have they secured the end for which they ought to be studied.

Bailey, 1926

For not even the lowest animal, although ‘a small thing gives the greater pleasure,’ would be seized by such foolishness, much less one who was possessed of perfect happiness. All these things, Pythocles, you must bear in mind; for thus you will escape in most things from superstition and will be enabled to understand what is akin to them. And most of all give yourself up to the study of the beginnings and of infinity and of the things akin to them, and also of the criteria of truth and of the feelings, and of the purpose for which we reason out these things. For these points when they are thoroughly studied will most easily enable you to understand the causes of the details. But those who have not thoroughly taken these things to heart could not rightly study them in themselves, nor have they made their own the reason for observing them.

Epicurean Wise Man |117|

Laërtius, c. 222-235

Ταῦτα αὐτῷ καὶ περὶ τῶν μετεώρων δοκεῖ.

Περὶ δὲ τῶν βιωτικῶν καὶ ὅπως χρὴ τὰ μὲν ἡμᾶς αἱρεῖσθαι, τὰ δ’ ἐκφεύγειν, οὑτωσὶ γράφει. πρότερον δὲ διέλθωμεν ἅ τε αὐτῷ δοκεῖ περὶ τοῦ σοφοῦ καὶ τοῖς ἀπ’ αὐτοῦ.

Βλάβας ἐξ ἀνθρώπων ἢ διὰ μῖσος ἢ διὰ φθόνον ἢ διὰ καταφρόνησιν γίνεσθαι, ὧν τὸν σοφὸν λογισμῷ περιγίνεσθαι. ἀλλὰ καὶ τὸν ἅπαξ γενόμενον σοφὸν μηκέτι τὴν ἐναντίαν λαμβάνειν διάθεσιν μηδὲ πλάττειν ἑκόντα· πάθεσι μᾶλλον συσχεθήσεσθαι· οὐκ ἂν ἐμποδίσαι πρὸς τὴν σοφίαν. οὐδὲ μὴν ἐκ πάσης σώματος ἕξεως σοφὸν γενέσθαι ἂν οὐδ’ ἐν παντὶ ἔθνει.

Yonge, 1853

Such are his sentiments on the heavenly phenomena.

But concerning the rules of life, and how we ought to choose some things, and avoid others, he writes thus. But first of all, let us go through the opinions which he held, and his disciples held about the wise man.

He said that injuries existed among men, either in consequence of hatred, or of envy, or of contempt, all which the wise man overcomes by Reason. Also, that a man who has once been wise can never receive the contrary dispositions, nor can he of his own accord invent such a state of things as that he should be subjected to the dominion of the passions; nor can he hinder himself in his progress towards wisdom. That the wise man, however, cannot exist in every state of body, nor in every nation.

Hicks, 1925

Such are his views on celestial phenomena.

But as to the conduct of life, what we ought to avoid and what to choose, he writes as follows. Before quoting his words, however, let me go into the views of Epicurus himself and his school concerning the wise man.

There are three motives to injurious acts among men – hatred, envy, and contempt; and these the wise man overcomes by reason. Moreover, he who has once become wise never more assumes the opposite habit, not even in semblance, if he can help it. He will be more susceptible of emotion than other men: that will be no hindrance to his wisdom. However, not every bodily constitution nor every nationality would permit a man to become wise.

Bailey, 1926

Such was his teaching on things celestial.

As regards the principles of living and the grounds on which we ought to choose some things and avoid others, he writes the following letter. But before considering it let us explain what he and his followers think about the wise man.

Injuries are done by men either through hate or through envy or through contempt, all of which the wise man overcomes by reasoning. When once a man has attained wisdom, he no longer has any tendency contrary to it or willingly pretends that he has. He will be more deeply moved by feelings, but this will not prove an obstacle to wisdom. A man cannot become wise with every kind of physical constitution, nor in every nation.

Epicurean Wise Man |118|

Laërtius, c. 222-235

κἂν στρεβλωθῇ δ’ ὁ σοφός, εἶναι αὐτὸν εὐδαίμονα. μόνον τε χάριν ἕξειν τὸν σοφόν, καὶ ἐπὶ φίλοις καὶ παροῦσι καὶ ἀποῦσιν ὁμοίως διατε εὐλογοῦντα. ὅτε μέντοι στρεβλοῦται, ἔνθα καὶ μύζει καὶ οἰμώζει. γυναικί τ’ οὐ μιγήσεσθαι τὸν σοφὸν ᾗ οἱ νόμοι ἀπαγορεύουσιν, ὥς φησι Διογένης ἐν τῇ Ἐπιτομῇ τῶν Ἐπικούρου ἠθικῶν δογμάτων. οὐδὲ κολάσειν οἰκέτας, ἐλεήσειν μέντοι καὶ συγγνώμην τινὶ ἕξειν τῶν σπουδαίων. ἐρασθήσεσθαι τὸν σοφὸν οὐ δοκεῖ αὐτοῖς· οὐδὲ ταφῆς φροντιεῖν· οὐδὲ θεόπεμπτον εἶναι τὸν ἔρωτα, ὡς ὁ Διογένης ἐν τῷ <…>. οὐδὲ ῥητορεύσειν καλῶς. συνουσίη δέ, φασίν, ὤνησε μὲν οὐδέποτε, ἀγαπητὸν δὲ εἰ μὴ καὶ ἔβλαψε.

Yonge, 1853

That even if the wise man were to be put to the torture, he would still be happy. That the wise man will only feel gratitude to his friends, but to them equally whether they are present or absent. Nor will he groan and howl when he is put to the torture. Nor will he marry a wife whom the laws forbid, as Diogenes says, in his epitome of the Ethical Maxims of Epicurus. He will punish his servants, but also pity them, and show indulgence to any that are virtuous. They do not think that the wise man will ever be in love, nor that he will be anxious about his burial, nor that love is a passion inspired by the gods, as Diogenes says in his twelfth book. They also assert that he will be indifferent to the study of oratory. Intercourse, say they, is never any good to a man, and we must be quite content if it does no harm;

Hicks, 1925

Even on the rack the wise man is happy. He alone will feel gratitude towards friends, present and absent alike, and show it by word and deed. When on the rack, however, he will give vent to cries and groans. As regards women he will submit to the restrictions imposed by the law, as Diogenes says in his epitome of Epicurus’ ethical doctrines. Nor will he punish his servants; rather he will pity them and make allowance on occasion for those who are of good character. The Epicureans do not suffer the wise man to fall in love; nor will he trouble himself about funeral rites; according to them love does not come by divine inspiration: so Diogenes in his twelfth book. The wise man will not make fine speeches. No one was ever the better for sexual indulgence, and it is well if he be not the worse.

Bailey, 1926

And even if the wise man be put on the rack, he is happy. Only the wise man will show gratitude, and will constantly speak well of his friends alike in their presence and their absence. Yet when he is on the rack, then he will cry out and lament. The wise man will not have intercourse with any woman with whom the law forbids it, as Diogenes says in his summary of Epicurus’ moral teaching. Nor will he punish his slaves, but will rather pity them and forgive any that are deserving. They do not think that the wise man will fall in love, or care about his burial. They hold that love is not sent from heaven, as Diogenes says in his … book, nor should the wise man make elegant speeches. Sexual intercourse, they say, has never done a man good, and he is lucky if it has not harmed him.

Epicurean Wise Man |119|

Laërtius, c. 222-235

Καὶ μὴν καὶ γαμήσειν καὶ τεκνοποιήσειν τὸν σοφόν, ὡς Ἐπίκουρος ἐν ταῖς Διαπορίαις καὶ ἐν ταῖς Περὶ φύσεως. κατὰ περίστασιν δέ ποτε βίου γαμήσειν. καὶ διατραπήσεσθαί τινας. οὐδὲ μὴν ληρήσειν ἐν μέθῃ φησὶν ὁ Ἐπίκουρος ἐν τῷ Συμποσίῳ. οὐδὲ πολιτεύσεται, ὡς ἐν τῇ πρώτῃ Περὶ βίων· οὐδὲ τυραννεύσειν· οὐδὲ κυνιεῖν, ὡς ἐν τῇ δευτέρᾳ Περὶ βίων· οὐδὲ πτωχεύσειν. ἀλλὰ καὶ πηρωθέντα τὰς ὄψεις μεθέξειν αὐτὸν τοῦ βίου, ὡς ἐν τῇ αὐτῇ φησι. καὶ λυπήσεσθαι δὲ τὸν σοφόν, ὡς Διογένης ἐν τῇ πέμπτῃ τῶν Ἐπιλέκτων· καὶ δικάσεσθαι· καὶ συγγράμματα καταλείψειν· οὐ πανηγυριεῖν δέ·

Yonge, 1853

and the wise man will never marry or beget children, as Epicurus himself lays it down, in his Problems and in his treaties on Nature. Still, under certain circumstances of life, he will forsake these rules and marry. Nor will he ever indulge in drunkenness, says Epicurus, in his Banquet, nor will he entangle himself in affairs of state (as he says in his first book on Lives). Nor will he become a tyrant. Nor will he become a Cynic (as he says in his second book about Lives), nor a beggar. And even, though he should lose his eyes, he will still partake of life (as he says in the same book). The wise man will not be subject to grief, as Diogenes says, in the fifth book of his Select Opinions;

Hicks, 1925

Nor, again, will the wise man marry and rear a family: so Epicurus says in the Problems and in the De Natura. Occasionally he may marry owing to special circumstances in his life. Some too will turn aside from their purpose. Nor will he drivel, when drunken: so Epicurus says in the Symposium. Nor will he take part in politics, as is stated in the first book On Life; nor will he make himself a tyrant; nor will he turn Cynic (so the second book On Life tells us); nor will he be a mendicant. But even when he has lost his sight, he will not withdraw himself from life: this is stated in the same book. The wise man will also feel grief, according to Diogenes in the fifth book of his Epilecta.

Bailey, 1926

Moreover, the wise man will marry and have children, as Epicurus says in the Problems and in the work On Nature. But he will marry according to the circumstances of his life. He will feel shame in the presence of some persons, and certainly will not insult them in his cups, so Epicurus says in the Symposium. Nor will he take part in public life, as he says in the first book On Lives. Nor will he act the tyrant, or live like the Cynics, as he writes in the second book On Lives. Nor will he beg. Moreover, even if he is deprived of his eyesight, he will not end his whole life, as he says in the same work. Also, the wise man will feel grief, as Diogenes says in the fifth book of the Miscellanies.

Epicurean Wise Man |120a|

Laërtius, c. 222-235

καὶ κτήσεως προνοήσεσθαι καὶ τοῦ μέλλοντος. φιλαγρήσειν. τύχῃ τ’ ἀντιτάξεσθαι, φίλον τε οὐδένα προήσεσθαι. εὐδοξίας ἐπὶ τοσοῦτον προνοήσεσθαι, ἐφ’ ὅσον μὴ καταφρονήσεσθαι. μᾶλλον τε εὐφρανθήσεσθαι τῶν ἄλλων ἐν ταῖς θεωρίαις.

Yonge, 1853

he will also not object to go to law. He will leave books and memorials of himself behind him, but he will not be fond of frequenting assemblies. He will take care of his property, and provide for the future. He will like being in the country, he will resist fortune, and will grieve none of his friends. He will show a regard for a fair reputation to such an extent as to avoid being despised; and he will find more pleasure than other men in speculations.

Hicks, 1925

And he will take a suit into court. He will leave written words behind him, but will not compose panegyric. He will have regard to his property and to the future. He will be fond of the country. He will be armed against fortune and will never give up a friend. He will pay just so much regard to his reputation as not to be looked down upon. He will take more delight than other men in state festivals.

Bailey, 1926

He will engage in lawsuits and will leave writings behind him, but will not deliver speeches on public occasions. He will be careful of his possessions and will provide for the future. He will be fond of the country. He will face fortune and never desert a friend. He will be careful of his reputation in so far as to prevent himself from being despised. He will care more than other men for public spectacles.

Epicurean Wise Man |121b|

Laërtius, c. 222-235

Εἰκόνας τε ἀναθήσειν. εἰ ἔχοι, ἀδιαφόρως ἂν σχοίη. μόνον τε τὸν σοφὸν ὀρθῶς ἂν περί τε μουσικῆς καὶ ποιητικῆς διαλέξασθαι· ποιήματά τε ἐνεργείᾳ οὐκ ἂν ποιῆσαι. οὐκ εἶναί τε ἕτερον ἑτέρου σοφώτερον. χρηματίσεσθαί τε, ἀλλ' ἀπὸ μόνης σοφίας, ἀπορήσαντα. καὶ μόναρχον ἐν καιρῷ θεραπεύσειν. καὶ ἐπιχαρήσεσθαί τινι ἐπὶ τῷ διορθώματι· καὶ σχολὴν κατασκευάσειν, ἀλλ' οὐχ ὥστ' ὀχλαγωγῆσαι· καὶ ἀναγνώσεσθαι ἐν πλήθει, ἀλλ' οὐχ ἑκόντα· δογματιεῖν τε καὶ οὐκ ἀπορήσειν· καὶ καθ' ὕπνους δὲ ὅμοιον ἔσεσθαι· καὶ ὑπὲρ φίλου ποτὲ τεθνήξεσθαι.

Yonge, 1853

The wise man may raise statues if it suits his inclination, if it does not then it does not matter. The wise man is the only person who can converse correctly about music and poetry, but he will not actively compose poems. It is possible for one wise man to be wiser than another. The wise man will also, if he is in need, earn money, but only by his wisdom; he will appease an absolute ruler when occasion requires, and will humour him for the sake of correcting his habits; he will have a school, but not on such a system as to draw a crowd about him; he will also recite in a multitude, but that will be against his inclination; he will pronounce dogmas, and will express no doubts; he will be the same man asleep and awake; and he will be willing even to die for a friend.

Hicks, 1925

The wise man will set up votive images. Whether he is well off or not will be matter of indifference to him. Only the wise man will be able to converse correctly about music and poetry, without however actually writing poems himself. One wise man does not move more wisely than another. And he will make money, but only by his wisdom, if he should be in poverty, and he will pay court to a king, if need be. He will be grateful to anyone when he is corrected. He will found a school, but not in such a manner as to draw the crowd after him; and will give readings in public, but only by request. He will be a dogmatist but not a mere sceptic; and he will be like himself even when asleep. And he will on occasion die for a friend.

Bailey, 1926

He will erect statues of others, but whether he had one himself or not, he would be indifferent. Only the Wise man could discourse rightly on music and poetry, but in practice he would not compose poems. One wise man is not wiser than another. He will be ready to make money, but only when he is in straits and by means of his philosophy. He will pay court to a king, if occasion demands. He will rejoice at another's misfortunes, but only for his correction. And he will gather together a school, but never so as to become a popular leader. He will give lectures in public, but never unless asked; he will give definite teaching and not profess doubt. In his sleep he will be as he is awake, and on occasion he will even die for a friend.

Epicurean Wise Man |120b|

Laërtius, c. 222-235

[Τὸ ἑξῆς] δοκεῖ δ’ αὐτοῖς ἁμαρτήματα ἄνισα εἶναι. καὶ τὴν ὑγίειαν τισὶ μὲν ἀγαθόν, τισὶ δὲ ἀδιάφορον. τὴν δὲ ἀνδρείαν φύσει μὴ γίνεσθαι, λογισμῷ δὲ τοῦ συμφέροντος· καὶ τὴν φιλίαν διὰ τὰς χρείας· δεῖν μέντοι προκατάρχεσθαι (καὶ γὰρ τὴν γῆν σπείρομεν), συνίστασθαι δὲ αὐτὴν κατὰ κοινωνίαν ἐν τοῖς ταῖς ἡδοναῖς ἐκπεπληρωμ.

Yonge, 1853

All faults are not equal. Health is good for some people, but a matter of indifference to others. Courage is a quality which does not exist by nature, but which is engendered by a consideration of what is suitable. Friendship is caused by one’s wants; but it must be begun on our side. For we sow the earth; and friendship arises from a community of, and participation in, pleasures.

Hicks, 1925

The school holds that sins are not all equal; that health is in some cases a good, in others a thing indifferent; that courage is not a natural gift but comes from calculation of expediency; and that friendship is prompted by our needs. One of the friends, however, must make the first advances (just as we have to cast seed into the earth), but it is maintained by a partnership in the enjoyment of life’s pleasures.

Bailey, 1926

They hold that faults are not all of equal gravity, that health is a blessing to some, but indifferent to others, that courage does not come by nature, but by a calculation of advantage. That friendship too has practical needs as its motive: one must indeed lay its foundations (for we sow the ground too for the sake of crops), but it is formed and maintained by means of community of life among those who have reached the fullness of pleasure.

Epicurean Wise Man |121a|

Laërtius, c. 222-235

Τὴν εὐδαιμονίαν διχῆ νοεῖσθαι, τήν τε ἀκροτάτην, οἵα ἐστὶ περὶ τὸν θεόν, ἐπίτασιν οὐκ ἔχουσαν· καὶ τὴν <κατὰ τὴν> προσθήκην καὶ ἀφαίρεσιν ἡδονῶν.

Μετιτέον δ’ ἐπὶ τὴν ἐπιστολήν·

“Ἐπίκουρος Μενοικεῖ χαίρειν.

Yonge, 1853

Happiness must be understood in two senses; the highest happiness, such as is that of a god, which admits of no increase; and another kind, which admits of the addition or abstraction of pleasures.

We must now proceed to his letter:

Epicurus to Menoeceus, Greeting.

Hicks, 1925

Two sorts of happiness can be conceived, the one the highest possible, such as the gods enjoy, which cannot be augmented, the other admitting addition and subtraction of pleasures.

We must now proceed to his letter.

“Epicurus to Menoeceus, greeting.

Bailey, 1926

They say also that there are two ideas of happiness, complete happiness, such as belongs to a god, which admits of no increase, and the happiness which is concerned with the addition and subtraction of pleasures.

Now we must proceed to the letter.

Letter to Menoeceus |122|

Epicurus, c. 300 BCE

Μήτε νέος τις ὢν μελλέτω φιλοσοφεῖν, μήτε γέρων ὑπάρχων κοπιάτω φιλοσοφῶν. οὔτε γὰρ ἄωρος οὐδείς ἐστιν οὔτε πάρωρος πρὸς τὸ κατὰ ψυχὴν ὑγιαῖνον. ὁ δὲ λέγων ἢ μήπω τοῦ φιλοσοφεῖν ὑπάρχειν ὥραν ἢ παρεληλυθέναι τὴν ὥραν, ὅμοιός ἐστιν τῷ λέγοντι πρὸς εὐδαιμονίαν ἢ μὴ παρεῖναι τὴν ὥραν ἢ μηκέτι εἶναι. ὥστε φιλοσοφητέον καὶ νέῳ καὶ γέροντι, τῷ μὲν ὅπως γηράσκων νεάζῃ τοῖς ἀγαθοῖς διὰ τὴν χάριν τῶν γεγονότων, τῷ δὲ ὅπως νέος ἅμα καὶ παλαιὸς ᾖ διὰ τὴν ἀφοβίαν τῶν μελλόντων· μελετᾶν οὖν χρὴ τὰ ποιοῦντα τὴν εὐδαιμονίαν, εἴπερ παρούσης μὲν αὐτῆς πάντα ἔχομεν, ἀπούσης δὲ πάντα πράττομεν εἰς τὸ ταύτην ἔχειν.

Yonge, 1853

Let no one delay to study philosophy while he is young, and when he is old let him not become weary of the study; for no man can ever find the time unsuitable or too late to study the health of his soul. And he who asserts either that it is not yet time to philosophise, or that the hour is passed, is like a man who should say that the time is not yet come to be happy, or that it is too late. So that both young and old should study philosophy, the one in order that, when he is old, he many be young in good things through the pleasing recollection of the past, and the other in order that he may be at the same time both young and old, in consequence of his absence of fear for the future. It is right then for a man to consider the things which produce happiness, since, if happiness is present, we have everything, and when it is absent, we do everything with a view to possess it.

Hicks, 1925

Let no one be slow to seek wisdom when he is young nor weary in the search thereof when he is grown old. For no age is too early or too late for the health of the soul. And to say that the season for studying philosophy has not yet come, or that it is past and gone, is like saying that the season for happiness is not yet or that it is now no more. Therefore, both old and young ought to seek wisdom, the former in order that, as age comes over him, he may be young in good things because of the grace of what has been, and the latter in order that, while he is young, he may at the same time be old, because he has no fear of the things which are to come. So we must exercise ourselves in the things which bring happiness, since, if that be present, we have everything, and, if that be absent, all our actions are directed toward attaining it.

Bailey, 1926

Let no one when young delay to study philosophy, nor when he is old grow weary of his study. For no one can come too early or too late to secure the health of his soul. And the man who says that the age for philosophy has either not yet come or has gone by is like the man who says that the age for happiness is not yet come to him, or has passed away. Wherefore both when young and old a man must study philosophy, that as he grows old he may be young in blessings through the grateful recollection of what has been, and that in youth he may be old as well, since he will know no fear of what is to come. We must then meditate on the things that make our happiness, seeing that when that is with us we have all, but when it is absent we do all to win it.

Letter to Menoeceus |123|

Epicurus, c. 300 BCE

Ἃ δέ σοι συνεχῶς παρήγγελλον, ταῦτα καὶ πρᾶττε καὶ μελέτα, στοιχεῖα τοῦ καλῶς ζῆν ταῦτ’ εἶναι διαλαμβάνων. Πρῶτον μὲν τὸν θεὸν ζῷον ἄφθαρτον καὶ μακάριον νομίζων, ὡς ἡ κοινὴ τοῦ θεοῦ νόησις ὑπεγράφη, μηθὲν μήτε τῆς ἀφθαρσίας ἀλλότριον μήτε τῆς μακαριότητος ἀνοίκειον αὐτῷ πρόσαπτε· πᾶν δὲ τὸ φυλάττειν αὐτοῦ δυνάμενον τὴν μετὰ ἀφθαρσίας μακαριότητα περὶ αὐτὸν δόξαζε. θεοὶ μὲν γὰρ εἰσίν· ἐναργὴς γὰρ αὐτῶν ἐστιν ἡ γνῶσις· οἵους δ’ αὐτοὺς ‹οἱ› πολλοὶ νομίζουσιν, οὐκ εἰσίν· οὐ γὰρ φυλάττουσιν αὐτοὺς οἵους νοοῦσιν. ἀσεβὴς δὲ οὐχ ὁ τοὺς τῶν πολλῶν θεοὺς ἀναιρῶν, ἀλλ’ ὁ τὰς τῶν πολλῶν δόξας θεοῖς προσάπτων.

Yonge, 1853

Now, what I have constantly recommended to you, these things I would have you do and practice, considering them to be the elements of living well. First of all, believe that a god is an incorruptible and happy being, as the common opinion of the world dictates; and attach to your theology nothing which is inconsistent with incorruptibility or with happiness; and think that a deity is invested with everything which is able to preserve this happiness, in conjunction with incorruptibility. For there are gods; for our knowledge of them is distinct. But they are not of the character which people in general attribute to them; for they do not pay a respect to them which accords with the ideas that they entertain of them. And that man is not impious who discards the gods believed in by the many, but he who applies to the gods the opinions entertained of them by the many.

Hicks, 1925

Those things which without ceasing I have declared unto thee, those do, and exercise thyself therein, holding them to be the elements of right life. First believe that God is a living being immortal and blessed, according to the notion of a god indicated by the common sense of mankind; and so believing, thou shalt not affirm of him aught that is foreign to his immortality or that agrees not with blessedness, but shalt believe about him whatever may uphold both his blessedness and his immortality. For verily there are gods, and the knowledge of them is manifest; but they are not such as the multitude believe, seeing that men do not steadfastly maintain the notions they form respecting them. Not the man who denies the gods worshipped by the multitude, but he who affirms of the gods what the multitude believes about them is truly impious.

Bailey, 1926

The things which I used unceasingly to commend to you, these do and practice, considering them to be the first principles of the good life. First of all believe that god is a being immortal and blessed, even as the common idea of a god is engraved on men’s minds, and do not assign to him anything alien to his immortality or ill-suited to his blessedness: but believe about him everything that can uphold his blessedness and immortality. For gods there are, since the knowledge of them is by clear vision. But they are not such as the many believe them to be: for indeed they do not consistently represent them as they believe them to be. And the impious man is not he who popularly denies the gods of the many, but he who attaches to the gods the beliefs of the many.

Letter to Menoeceus |124|

Epicurus, c. 300 BCE

οὐ γὰρ προλήψεις εἰσὶν ἀλλ’ ὑπολήψεις ψευδεῖς αἱ τῶν πολλῶν ὑπὲρ θεῶν ἀποφάσεις. ἔνθεν αἱ μέγισται βλάβαι [αἴτιαι τοῖς κακοῖς] ἐκ θεῶν ἐπάγονται καὶ ὠφέλειαι. ταῖς γὰρ ἰδίαις οἰκειούμενοι διὰ παντὸς ἀρεταῖς τοὺς ὁμοίους ἀποδέχονται, πᾶν τὸ μὴ τοιοῦτον ὡς ἀλλότριον νομίζοντες. Συνέθιζε δὲ ἐν τῷ νομίζειν μηδὲν πρὸς ἡμᾶς εἶναι τὸν θάνατον· ἐπεὶ πᾶν ἀγαθὸν καὶ κακὸν ἐν αἰσθήσει· στέρησις δέ ἐστιν αἰσθήσεως ὁ θάνατος. ὅθεν γνῶσις ὀρθὴ τοῦ μηθὲν εἶναι πρὸς ἡμᾶς τὸν θάνατον ἀπολαυστὸν ποιεῖ τὸ τῆς ζωῆς θνητόν, οὐκ ἄπειρον προστιθεῖσα χρόνον, ἀλλὰ τὸν τῆς ἀθανασίας ἀφελομένη πόθον.

Yonge, 1853

For the assertions of the many about the gods are not anticipations, but false opinions. And in consequence of these, the greatest evils which befall wicked men, and the benefits which are conferred on the good, are all attributed to the gods; for they connect all their ideas of them with a comparison of human virtues, and everything which is different from human qualities, they regard as incompatible with the divine nature. Accustom yourself also to think death a matter with which we are not at all concerned, since all good and all evil is in sensation, and since death is only the privation of sensation. On which account, the correct knowledge of the fact that death is no concern of ours, makes the mortality of life pleasant to us, inasmuch as it sets forth no illimitable time, but relieves us for the longing for immortality.

Hicks, 1925

For the utterances of the multitude about the gods are not true preconceptions but false assumptions; hence it is that the greatest evils happen to the wicked and the greatest blessings happen to the good from the hand of the gods, seeing that they are always favourable to their own good qualities and take pleasure in men like unto themselves, but reject as alien whatever is not of their kind. Accustom thyself to believe that death is nothing to us, for good and evil imply sentience, and death is the privation of all sentience; therefore a right understanding that death is nothing to us makes the mortality of life enjoyable, not by adding to life an illimitable time, but by taking away the yearning after immortality.

Bailey, 1926

For the statements of the many about the gods are not conceptions derived from sensation, but false suppositions, according to which the greatest misfortunes befall the wicked and the greatest blessings (the good) by the gift of the gods. For men being accustomed always to their own virtues welcome those like themselves, but regard all that is not of their nature as alien. Become accustomed to the belief that death is nothing to us. For all good and evil consists in sensation, but death is deprivation of sensation. And therefore a right understanding that death is nothing to us makes the mortality of life enjoyable, not because it adds to it an infinite span of time, but because it takes away the craving for immortality.

Letter to Menoeceus |125|

Epicurus, c. 300 BCE

οὐθὲν γάρ ἐστιν ἐν τῷ ζῆν δεινὸν τῷ κατειληφότι γνησίως τὸ μηδὲν ὑπάρχειν ἐν τῷ μὴ ζῆν δεινόν. ὥστε μάταιος ὁ λέγων δεδιέναι τὸν θάνατον οὐχ ὅτι λυπήσει παρών, ἀλλ’ ὅτι λυπεῖ μέλλων. ὃ γὰρ παρὸν οὐκ ἐνοχλεῖ, προσδοκώμενον κενῶς λυπεῖ. τὸ φρικωδέστατον οὖν τῶν κακῶν ὁ θάνατος οὐθὲν πρὸς ἡμᾶς, ἐπειδήπερ ὅταν μὲν ἡμεῖς ὦμεν, ὁ θάνατος οὐ πάρεστιν, ὅταν δὲ ὁ θάνατος παρῇ, τόθ’ ἡμεῖς οὐκ ἐσμέν. οὔτε οὖν πρὸς τοὺς ζῶντάς ἐστιν οὔτε πρὸς τοὺς τετελευτηκότας, ἐπειδήπερ περὶ οὓς μὲν οὐκ ἔστιν, οἳ δ’ οὐκέτι εἰσίν. Ἀλλ’ οἱ πολλοὶ τὸν θάνατον ὁτὲ μὲν ὡς μέγιστον τῶν κακῶν φεύγουσιν, ὁτὲ δὲ ὡς ἀνάπαυσιν τῶν ἐν τῷ ζῆν ‹κακῶν αἱροῦνται.

Yonge, 1853

For there is nothing terrible in living to a man who rightly comprehends that there is nothing terrible in ceasing to live; so that he was a silly man who said that he feared death, not because it would grieve him when it was present, but because it did grieve him while it was future. For it is very absurd that that which does not distress a man when it is present, should afflict him only when expected. Therefore, the most formidable of evils, death, is nothing to us, since, when we exist, death is not present to us; and when death is present, then we have no existence. It is no concern then either of the living or of the dead; since to the one it has no existence, and the other class has no existence itself. But people in general, at times flee from death as the greatest of evils, and at times wish for it as a rest from the evils in life.

Hicks, 1925

For life has no terrors for him who has thoroughly apprehended that there are no terrors for him in ceasing to live. Foolish, therefore, is the man who says that he fears death, not because it will pain when it comes, but because it pains in the prospect. Whatsoever causes no annoyance when it is present, causes only a groundless pain in the expectation. Death, therefore, the most awful of evils, is nothing to us, seeing that, when we are, death is not come, and, when death is come, we are not. It is nothing, then, either to the living or to the dead, for with the living it is not and the dead exist no longer. But in the world, at one time men shun death as the greatest of all evils, and at another time choose it as a respite from the evils in life.

Bailey, 1926

For there is nothing terrible in life for the man who has truly comprehended that there is nothing terrible in not living. So that the man speaks but idly who says that he fears death not because it will be painful when it comes, but because it is painful in anticipation. For that which gives no trouble when it comes is but an empty pain in anticipation. So death, the most terrifying of ills, is nothing to us, since so long as we exist, death is not with us; but when death comes, then we do not exist. It does not then concern either the living or the dead, since for the former it is not, and the latter are no more. But the many at one moment shun death as the greatest of evils, at another (yearn for it) as a respite from the (evils) in life.

Epicurus, c. 300 BCE

ὁ δὲ σοφὸς οὔτε παραιτεῖται τὸ ζῆν› οὔτε φοβεῖται τὸ μὴ ζῆν· οὔτε γὰρ αὐτῷ προσίσταται τὸ ζῆν οὔτε δοξάζεται κακόν εἶναί τι τὸ μὴ ζῆν. ὥσπερ δὲ τὸ σιτίον οὐ τὸ πλεῖστον πάντως ἀλλὰ τὸ ἥδιστον αἱρεῖται, οὕτω καὶ χρόνον οὐ τὸν μήκιστον ἀλλὰ τὸν ἥδιστον καρπίζεται. Ὁ δὲ παραγγέλλων τὸν μὲν νέον καλῶς ζῆν, τὸν δὲ γέροντα καλῶς καταστρέφειν, εὐήθης ἐστὶν οὐ μόνον διὰ τὸ τῆς ζωῆς ἀσπαστόν, ἀλλὰ καὶ διὰ τὸ τὴν αὐτὴν εἶναι μελέτην τοῦ καλῶς ζῆν καὶ τοῦ καλῶς ἀποθνῄσκειν. πολὺ δὲ χείρων καὶ ὁ λέγων· καλὸν μὴ φῦναι, φύντα δ’ ὅπως ὤκιστα πύλας Ἅίδαο περῆσαι.

Yonge, 1853

[The wise man neither rejects life] nor is he afraid of not-living, since living is not connected with it: nor does he think not-living an evil; but, just as he chooses food, not preferring that which is most abundant, but that which is nicest; so too, he enjoys time, not measuring it as to whether it is of the greatest length, but as to whether it is most agreeable. And, they say, he who enjoins a young man to live well, and an old man to die well, is a simpleton, not only because of the constantly delightful nature of life, but also because the care to live well is identical with the care to die well. And he was still more wrong who said: Tis well to taste life, and then when born | To pass with quickness to the gates of Hades.

Hicks, 1925

The wise man does not deprecate life nor does he fear the cessation of life. The thought of life is no offence to him, nor is the cessation of life regarded as an evil. And even as men choose of food not merely and simply the larger portion, but the more pleasant, so the wise seek to enjoy the time which is most pleasant and not merely that which is longest. And he who admonishes the young to live well and the old to make a good end speaks foolishly, not merely because of the desirableness of life, but because the same exercise at once teaches to live well and to die well. Much worse is he who says that it were good not to be born, but when once one is born to pass with all speed through the gates of Hades.

Bailey, 1926

(But the wise man neither seeks to escape life) nor fears the cessation of life, for neither does life offend him nor does the absence of life seem to be any evil. And just as with food he does not seek simply the larger share and nothing else, but rather the most pleasant, so he seeks to enjoy not the longest period of time, but the most pleasant. And he who counsels the young man to live well, but the old man to make a good end, is foolish, not merely because of the desirability of life, but also because it is the same training which teaches to live well and to die well. Yet much worse still is the man who says it is good not to be born but ‘once born make haste to pass the gates of Death’.

Epicurus, c. 300 BCE

εἰ μὲν γὰρ πεποιθὼς τοῦτό φησιν, πῶς οὐκ ἀπέρχεται ἐκ τοῦ ζῆν; ἐν ἑτοίμῳ γὰρ αὐτῷ τοῦτ᾽ ἐστίν, εἴπερ ἦν βεβουλευμένον αὐτῷ βεβαίως· εἰ δὲ μωκώμενος, μάταιος ἐν τοῖς οὐκ ἐπιδεχομένοις. Μνημονευτέον δὲ ὡς τὸ μέλλον οὔτε πάντως ἡμέτερον οὔτε πάντως οὐχ ἡμέτερον, ἵνα μήτε πάντως προσμένωμεν ὡς ἐσόμενον μήτε ἀπελπίζωμεν ὡς πάντως οὐκ ἐσόμενον. Ἀναλογιστέον δὲ ὡς τῶν ἐπιθυμιῶν αἱ μέν εἰσι φυσικαί, αἱ δὲ κεναί, καὶ τῶν φυσικῶν αἱ μὲν ἀναγκαῖαι, αἱ δὲ φυσικαὶ μόνον· τῶν δὲ ἀναγκαίων αἱ μὲν πρὸς εὐδαιμονίαν εἰσὶν ἀναγκαῖαι, αἱ δὲ πρὸς τὴν τοῦ σώματος ἀοχλησίαν, αἱ δὲ πρὸς αὐτὸ τὸ ζῆν.

Yonge, 1853

For if this really was his opinion, why did he not quit life? For it was easily in his power to do so, if it really was his belief. But if he was joking, then he was talking foolishly in a case where it ought not to be allowed; and, we must recollect, that the future is not our own, nor, on the other hand, is it wholly not our own, I mean so that we can never altogether await it with a feeling of certainty that it will be, nor altogether despair of it as what will never be. And we must consider that some of the passions are natural, and some empty; and of the natural ones some are necessary, and some merely natural. And of the necessary ones, some are necessary to happiness, and others, with regard to the exemption of the body from trouble; and others with respect to living itself;

Hicks, 1925

For if he truly believes this, why does he not depart from life? It were easy for him to do so, if once he were firmly convinced. If he speaks only in mockery, his words are foolishness, for those who hear believe him not. We must remember that the future is neither wholly ours nor wholly not ours, so that neither must we count upon it as quite certain to come nor despair of it as quite certain not to come. We must also reflect that of desires some are natural, others are groundless; and that of the natural some are necessary as well as natural, and some natural only. And of the necessary desires some are necessary if we are to be happy, some if the body is to be rid of uneasiness, some if we are even to live.

Bailey, 1926

For if he says this from conviction why does he not pass away out of life? For it is open to him to do so, if he had firmly made up his mind to this. But if he speaks in jest, his words are idle among men who cannot receive them. We must then bear in mind that the future is neither ours, nor yet wholly not ours, so that we may not altogether expect it as sure to come, nor abandon hope of it, as if it will certainly not come. We must consider that of desires some are natural, others vain, and of the natural some are necessary and others merely natural; and of the necessary some are necessary for happiness, others for the repose of the body, and others for very life.

Letter to Menoeceus |128|

Epicurus, c. 300 BCE

τούτων γὰρ ἁπλανὴς θεωρία πᾶσαν αἵρεσιν καὶ φυγὴν ἐπανάγειν οἶδεν ἐπὶ τὴν τοῦ σώματος ὑγίειαν καὶ τὴν τῆς ψυχῆς ἀταραξίαν, ἐπεὶ τοῦτο τοῦ μακαρίως ζῆν ἐστι τέλος. τούτου γὰρ χάριν πάντα πράττομεν, ὅπως μήτε ἀλγῶμεν μήτε ταρβῶμεν. ὅταν δὲ ἅπαξ τοῦτο περὶ ἡμᾶς γένηται, λύεται πᾶς ὁ τῆς ψυχῆς χειμών, οὐκ ἔχοντος τοῦ ζῴου βαδίζειν ὡς πρὸς ἐνδέον τι καὶ ζητεῖν ἕτερον ᾧ τὸ τῆς ψυχῆς καὶ τοῦ σώματος ἀγαθὸν συμπληρώσεται. τότε γὰρ ἡδονῆς χρείαν ἔχομεν, ὅταν ἐκ τοῦ μὴ παρεῖναι τὴν ἡδονὴν ἀλγῶμεν· ‹ὅταν δὲ μὴ ἀλγῶμεν› οὐκέτι τῆς ἡδονῆς δεόμεθα. Καὶ διὰ τοῦτο τὴν ἡδονὴν ἀρχὴν καὶ τέλος λέγομεν εἶναι τοῦ μακαρίως ζῆν.

Yonge, 1853

for a correct theory, with regard to these things, can refer all choice and avoidance to the health of the body and the freedom from disquietude of the soul. Since this is the aim of living happily; for it is for the sake of this that we do everything, wishing to avoid grief and fear; and when once this is the case, with respect to us, then the storm of the soul is, as I may say, put an end to; since the animal is unable to go as if to something deficient, and to seek something different from that by which the good of the soul and body will be perfected. For then we have need of pleasure when we grieve, because pleasure is not present; but when we do not grieve, then we have no need of pleasure; and on this account, we affirm, that pleasure is the beginning and end of living happily; for we have recognized this as the first good, being innate in us;

Hicks, 1925

He who has a clear and certain understanding of these things will direct every preference and aversion toward securing health of body and tranquillity of mind, seeing that this is the sum and end of a blessed life. For the end of all our actions is to be free from pain and fear, and, when once we have attained all this, the tempest of the soul is laid; seeing that the living creature has no need to go in search of something that is lacking, nor to look for anything else by which the good of the soul and of the body will be fulfilled. When we are pained because of the absence of pleasure, then, and then only, do we feel the need of pleasure. Wherefore we call pleasure the alpha and omega of a blessed life. Pleasure is our first and kindred good.

Bailey, 1926

The right understanding of these facts enables us to refer all choice and avoidance to the health of the body and (the soul's) freedom from disturbance, since this is the aim of the life of blessedness. For it is to obtain this end that we always act, namely, to avoid pain and fear. And when this is once secured for us, all the tempest of the soul is dispersed, since the living creature has not to wander as though in search of something that is missing, and to look for some other thing by which he can fulfill the good of the soul and the good of the body. For it is then that we have need of pleasure, when we feel pain owing to the absence of pleasure; (but when we do not feel pain), we no longer need pleasure. And for this cause we call pleasure the beginning and end of the blessed life. For we recognize pleasure as the first good innate in us,

Epicurus, c. 300 BCE

ταύτην γὰρ ἀγαθὸν πρῶτον καὶ συγγενικὸν ἔγνωμεν, καὶ ἀπὸ ταύτης καταρχόμεθα πάσης αἱρέσεως καὶ φυγῆς, καὶ ἐπὶ ταύτην καταντῶμεν ὡς κανόνι τῷ πάθει πᾶν ἀγαθὸν κρίνοντες. Καὶ ἐπεὶ πρῶτον ἀγαθὸν τοῦτο καὶ σύμφυτον, διὰ τοῦτο καὶ οὐ πᾶσαν ἡδονὴν αἱρούμεθα, ἀλλ' ἔστιν ὅτε πολλὰς ἡδονὰς ὑπερβαίνομεν, ὅταν πλεῖον ἡμῖν τὸ δυσχερὲς ἐκ τούτων ἕπηται· καὶ πολλὰς ἀλγηδόνας ἡδονῶν κρείττους νομίζομεν, ἐπειδὰν μείζων ἡμῖν ἡδονὴ παρακολουθῇ πολὺν χρόνον ὑπομείνασι τὰς ἀλγηδόνας. πᾶσα οὖν ἡδονὴ διὰ τὸ φύσιν ἔχειν οἰκείαν ἀγαθόν, οὐ πᾶσα μέντοι αἱρετή· καθάπερ καὶ ἀλγηδὼν πᾶσα κακόν, οὐ πᾶσα δὲ ἀεὶ φευκτὴ πεφυκυῖα.

Yonge, 1853

and with reference to it, we begin every choice and avoidance; and to this we come as if we judged of all good by passion as the standard; and, since this is the first good and innate in us, on this account we do not choose every pleasure, but at times we pass over many pleasures when any difficulty is likely to ensue from them; and we think many pains better than pleasures, when a greater pleasure follows them, if we endure the pain for time. Every pleasure is therefore a good on account of its own nature, but it does not follow that every pleasure is worthy of being chosen; just as every pain is an evil, and yet every pain must not be avoided.

Hicks, 1925

It is the starting-point of every choice and of every aversion, and to it we come back, inasmuch as we make feeling the rule by which to judge of every good thing. And since pleasure is our first and native good, for that reason we do not choose every pleasure whatsoever, but ofttimes pass over many pleasures when a greater annoyance ensues from them. And ofttimes we consider pains superior to pleasures when submission to the pains for a long time brings us as a consequence a greater pleasure. While therefore all pleasure because it is naturally akin to us is good, not all pleasure is choiceworthy, just as all pain is an evil and yet not all pain is to be shunned.

Bailey, 1926

and from pleasure we begin every act of choice and avoidance, and to pleasure we return again, using the feeling as the standard by which we judge every good. And since pleasure is the first good and natural to us, for this very reason we do not choose every pleasure, but sometimes we pass over many pleasures, when greater discomfort accrues to us as the result of them: and similarly we think many pains better than pleasures, since a greater pleasure comes to us when we have endured pains for a long time. Every pleasure then because of its natural kinship to us is good, yet not every pleasure is to be chosen: even as every pain also is an evil, yet not all are always of a nature to be avoided.

Epicurus, c. 300 BCE

τῇ μέντοι συμμετρήσει καὶ συμφερόντων καὶ ἀσυμφόρων βλέψει ταῦτα πάντα κρίνειν καθήκει. χρώμεθα γὰρ τῷ μὲν ἀγαθῷ κατά τινας χρόνους ὡς κακῷ, τῷ δὲ κακῷ τοὔμπαλιν ὡς ἀγαθῷ. Καὶ τὴν αὐτάρκειαν δὲ ἀγαθὸν μέγα νομίζομεν, οὐχ ἵνα πάντως τοῖς ὀλίγοις χρώμεθα, ἀλλ' ὅπως, ἐὰν μὴ ἔχωμεν τὰ πολλά, τοῖς ὀλίγοις ἀρκώμεθα, πεπεισμένοι γνησίως ὅτι ἥδιστα πολυτελείας ἀπολαύουσιν οἱ ἥκιστα ταύτης δεόμενοι, καὶ ὅτι τὸ μὲν φυσικὸν πᾶν εὐπόριστόν ἐστι, τὸ δὲ κενὸν δυσπόριστον, οἵ τε λιτοὶ χυλοὶ ἴσην πολυτελεῖ διαίτῃ τὴν ἡδονὴν ἐπιφέρουσιν, ὅταν ἅπαν τὸ ἀλγοῦν κατ' ἔνδειαν ἐξαιρεθῇ,

Yonge, 1853

But it is right to estimate all these things by the measurement and view of what is suitable and unsuitable; for at times we may feel the good as an evil, and at times, on the contrary, we may feel the evil as good. And, we think contentment a great good, not in order that we may never have but a little, but in order that, if we have not much, we may make use of a little, being genuinely persuaded that those men enjoy luxury most completely who are the best able to do without it; and that everything which is natural is easily provided, and what is useless is not easily procured. And simple flavours give as much pleasure as costly fare, when everything that can give pain, and every feeling of want, is removed;

Hicks, 1925

It is, however, by measuring one against another, and by looking at the conveniences and inconveniences, that all these matters must be judged. Sometimes we treat the good as an evil, and the evil, on the contrary, as a good. Again, we regard independence of outward things as a great good, not so as in all cases to use little, but so as to be contented with little if we have not much, being honestly persuaded that they have the sweetest enjoyment of luxury who stand least in need of it, and that whatever is natural is easily procured and only the vain and worthless hard to win. Plain fare gives as much pleasure as a costly diet, when once the pain of want has been removed,

Bailey, 1926

Yet by a scale of comparison and by the consideration of advantages and disadvantages we must form our judgment on all these matters. For the good on certain occasions we treat as bad, and conversely the bad as good. And again independence of desire we think a great good — not that we may at all times enjoy but a few things, but that, if we do not possess many, we may enjoy the few in the genuine persuasion that those have the sweetest pleasure in luxury who least need it, and that all that is natural is easy to be obtained, but that which is superfluous is hard. And so plain savours bring us a pleasure equal to a luxurious diet, when all the pain due to want is removed;

Epicurus, c. 300 BCE

καὶ μᾶζα καὶ ὕδωρ τὴν ἀκροτάτην ἀποδίδωσιν ἡδονήν, ἐπειδὰν ἐνδέων τις αὐτὰ προσενέγκηται. τὸ συνεθίζειν οὖν ἐν ταῖς ἁπλαῖς καὶ οὐ πολυτελέσι διαίταις καὶ ὑγιείας ἐστὶ συμπληρωτικὸν καὶ πρὸς τὰς ἀναγκαίας τοῦ βίου χρήσεις ἄοκνον ποιεῖ τὸν ἄνθρωπον καὶ τοῖς πολυτελέσιν ἐκ διαλειμμάτων προσερχομένοις κρεῖττον ἡμᾶς διατίθησι καὶ πρὸς τὴν τύχην ἀφόβους παρασκευάζει. Ὅταν οὖν λέγωμεν ἡδονὴν τέλος ὑπάρχειν, οὐ τὰς τῶν ἀσώτων ἡδονὰς καὶ τὰς ἐν ἀπολαύσει κειμένας λέγομεν, ὥς τινες ἀγνοοῦντες καὶ οὐχ ὁμολογοῦντες ἢ κακῶς ἐκδεχόμενοι νομίζουσιν, ἀλλὰ τὸ μήτε ἀλγεῖν κατὰ σῶμα μήτε ταράττεσθαι κατὰ ψυχήν.

Yonge, 1853

and bread and water give the most extreme pleasure when any one in need eats them. To accustom one’s self, therefore, to simple and inexpensive habits is a great ingredient in the perfecting of health, and makes a man free from hesitation with respect to the necessary uses of life. And when we, on certain occasions, fall in with more sumptuous fare, it makes us in a better disposition towards it, and renders us fearless with respect to fortune. When, therefore, we say that pleasure is a chief good, we are not speaking of the pleasures of the debauched man, or those which lie in sensual enjoyment, as some think who are ignorant, and who do not entertain our opinions, or else interpret them perversely; but we mean the freedom of the body from pain, and the soul from confusion.

Hicks, 1925

while bread and water confer the highest possible pleasure when they are brought to hungry lips. To habituate one’s self, therefore, to simple and inexpensive diet supplies all that is needful for health, and enables a man to meet the necessary requirements of life without shrinking, and it places us in a better condition when we approach at intervals a costly fare and renders us fearless of fortune. When we say, then, that pleasure is the end and aim, we do not mean the pleasures of the prodigal or the pleasures of sensuality, as we are understood to do by some through ignorance, prejudice, or wilful misrepresentation. By pleasure we mean the absence of pain in the body and of trouble in the soul.

Bailey, 1926

and bread and water produce the highest pleasure, when one who needs them puts them to his lips. To grow accustomed therefore to simple and not luxurious diet gives us health to the full, and makes a man alert for the needful employments of life, and when after long intervals we approach luxuries disposes us better towards them, and fits us to be fearless of fortune. When, therefore, we maintain that pleasure is the end, we do not mean the pleasures of profligates and those that consist in sensuality, as is supposed by some who are either ignorant or disagree with us or do not understand, but freedom from pain in the body and from trouble in the mind.

Letter to Menoeceus |132|

Epicurus, c. 300 BCE

οὐ γὰρ πότοι καὶ κῶμοι συνείροντες οὐδ’ ἀπολαύσεις παίδων καὶ γυναικῶν οὐδ’ ἰχθύων καὶ τῶν ἄλλων ὅσα φέρει πολυτελὴς τράπεζα, τὸν ἡδὺν γεννᾷ βίον, ἀλλὰ νήφων λογισμὸς καὶ τὰς αἰτίας ἐξερευνῶν πάσης αἱρέσεως καὶ φυγῆς καὶ τὰς δόξας ἐξελαύνων, ἐξ ὧν πλεῖστος τὰς ψυχὰς καταλαμβάνει θόρυβος. Τούτων δὲ πάντων ἀρχὴ καὶ τὸ μέγιστον ἀγαθὸν φρόνησις. διὸ καὶ φιλοσοφίας τιμιώτερον ὑπάρχει φρόνησις, ἐξ ἧς αἱ λοιπαὶ πᾶσαι πεφύκασιν ἀρεταί, διδάσκουσα ὡς οὐκ ἔστιν ἡδέως ζῆν ἄνευ τοῦ φρονίμως καὶ καλῶς καὶ δικαίως, ‹οὐδὲ φρονίμως καὶ καλῶς καὶ δικαίως› ἄνευ τοῦ ἡδέως. συμπεφύκασι γὰρ αἱ ἀρεταὶ τῷ ζῆν ἡδέως καὶ τὸ ζῆν ἡδέως τούτων ἐστὶν ἀχώριστον.

Yonge, 1853

For it is not continued drinking and revelling, or intercourse with boys and women, or feasts of fish and other such things, as a costly table supplies, that make life pleasant, but sober contemplation, which examines into the reasons for all choice and avoidance, and which puts to flight the vain opinions from which the greater part of the confusion arises which troubles the soul. Now, the beginning and the greatest good of all these things is prudence, on which account prudence is something more valuable than even philosophy, inasmuch as all the other virtues spring from it, teaching us that it is not possible to live pleasantly unless one also lives prudently, and honourably, and justly; and that one cannot live prudently, and honestly, and justly, without living pleasantly; for the virtues are allied to living agreeably, and living agreeably is inseparable from the virtues.

Hicks, 1925

It is not an unbroken succession of drinking-bouts and of revelry, not sexual love, not the enjoyment of the fish and other delicacies of a luxurious table, which produce a pleasant life; it is sober reasoning, searching out the grounds of every choice and avoidance, and banishing those beliefs through which the greatest tumults take possession of the soul. Of all this the beginning and the greatest good is prudence. Wherefore prudence is a more precious thing even than philosophy; from it spring all the other virtues, for it teaches that we cannot lead a life of pleasure which is not also a life of prudence, honour, and justice; nor lead a life of prudence, honour, and justice, which is not also a life of pleasure. For the virtues have grown into one with a pleasant life, and a pleasant life is inseparable from them.

Bailey, 1926

For it is not continuous drinkings and revelings, nor the satisfaction of lusts, nor the enjoyment of fish and other luxuries of the wealthy table, which produce a pleasant life, but sober reasoning, searching out the motives for all choice and avoidance, and banishing mere opinions, to which are due the greatest disturbance of the spirit. Of all this the beginning and the greatest good is prudence. Wherefore prudence is a more precious thing even than philosophy: for from prudence are sprung all the other virtues, and it teaches us that it is not possible to live pleasantly without living prudently and honorably and justly, (nor, again, to live a life of prudence, honor, and justice) without living pleasantly. For the virtues are by nature bound up with the pleasant life, and the pleasant life is inseparable from them.

Letter to Menoeceus |133|

Epicurus, c. 300 BCE

Ἐπεὶ τίνα νομίζεις εἶναι κρείττονα τοῦ καὶ περὶ θεῶν ὅσια δοξάζοντος καὶ περὶ θανάτου διὰ παντὸς ἀφόβως ἔχοντος καὶ τὸ τῆς φύσεως ἐπιλελογισμένου τέλος καὶ τὸ μὲν τῶν ἀγαθῶν πέρας ὡς ἔστιν εὐσυμπλήρωτόν τε καὶ εὐπόριστον διαλαμβάνοντος, τὸ δὲ τῶν κακῶν ὡς ἢ χρόνους ἢ πόνους ἔχει βραχεῖς; τὴν δὲ ὑπό τινων δεσπότιν εἰσαγομένην πάντων ἀγγέλλοντος ….. ‹ὧν ἃ μὲν κατ’ ἀνάγκην ἐστίν,› ἃ δὲ ἀπὸ τύχης, ἃ δὲ παρ’ ἡμᾶς, διὰ τὸ τὴν μὲν ἀνάγκην ἀνυπεύθυνον εἶναι, τὴν δὲ τύχην ἄστατον ὁρᾶν, τὸ δὲ παρ’ ἡμᾶς ἀδέσποτον, ᾧ καὶ τὸ μεμπτὸν καὶ τὸ ἐναντίον παρακολουθεῖν πέφυκεν.

Yonge, 1853

Since, who can you think better than that man who has holy opinions respecting the gods, and who is utterly fearless with respect to death, and who has properly contemplated the purpose of nature, and who comprehends that the chief good is easily perfected and easily provided; and the greatest evil lasts but a short period, and causes but brief pain. He has no belief in necessity, which is set up by some as the mistress of all things, but he refers some things to fortune, some to ourselves, because necessity is an irresponsible power, and because he sees that fortune is unstable, while our own will is free; and this freedom constitutes, in our case, a responsibility which makes us encounter blame and praise.

Hicks, 1925

Who, then, is superior in thy judgement to such a man? He holds a holy belief concerning the gods, and is altogether free from the fear of death. He has diligently considered the end fixed by nature, and understands how easily the limit of good things can be reached and attained, and how either the duration or the intensity of evils is but slight. Destiny, which some introduce as sovereign over all things, he laughs to scorn, affirming rather that some things happen of necessity, others by chance, others through our own agency. For he sees that necessity destroys responsibility and that chance or fortune is inconstant; whereas our own actions are free, and it is to them that praise and blame naturally attach.

Bailey, 1926

For indeed who, think you, is a better man than he who holds reverent opinions concerning the gods, and is at all times free from fear of death, and has reasoned out the end ordained by nature? He understands that the limit of good things is easy to fulfill and easy to attain, whereas the course of ills is either short in time or slight in pain; he laughs at (destiny), whom some have introduced as the mistress of all things. (He thinks that with us lies the chief power in determining events, some of which happen by necessity) and some by chance, and some are within our control; for while necessity cannot be called to account, he sees that chance is inconstant, but that which is in our control is subject to no master, and to it are naturally attached praise and blame.

Letter to Menoeceus |134|

Epicurus, c. 300 BCE

ἐπεὶ κρεῖττον ἦν τῷ περὶ θεῶν μύθῳ κατακολουθεῖν ἢ τῇ τῶν φυσικῶν εἱμαρμένῃ δουλεύειν· ὁ μὲν γὰρ ἐλπίδα παραιτήσεως ὑπογράφει θεῶν διὰ τιμῆς, ἡ δὲ ἀπαραίτητον ἔχει τὴν ἀνάγκην. τὴν δὲ τύχην οὔτε θεόν, ὡς οἱ πολλοὶ νομίζουσιν, ὑπολαμβάνων, - οὐθὲν γὰρ ἀτάκτως θεῷ πράττεται - οὔτε ἀβέβαιον αἰτίαν, ‹οὐκ› οἴεται μὲν γὰρ ἀγαθὸν ἢ κακὸν ἐκ ταύτης πρὸς τὸ μακαρίως ζῆν ἀνθρώποις δίδοσθαι, ἀρχὰς μέντοι μεγάλων ἀγαθῶν ἢ κακῶν ὑπὸ ταύτης χορηγεῖσθαι·

Yonge, 1853

Since it would be better to follow the fables about the gods than to be a slave to the fate of the natural philosopher; for the fables which are told give us a sketch, as if we could avert the wrath of god by paying him honour; but the other presents us with an inexorable necessity. And he does not consider fortune a goddess, as most men esteem her (for nothing is done at random by a god), nor a cause which no man can rely on, for he thinks that good or evil is not given by her to men so as to make them live happily, but that the principles of great goods, or great evils are supplied by her;

Hicks, 1925

It were better, indeed, to accept the legends of the gods than to bow beneath that yoke of destiny which the natural philosophers have imposed. The one holds out some faint hope that we may escape if we honour the gods, while the necessity of the naturalists is deaf to all entreaties. Nor does he hold chance to be a god, as the world in general does, for in the acts of a god there is no disorder; nor to be a cause, though an uncertain one, for he believes that no good or evil is dispensed by chance to men so as to make life blessed, though it supplies the starting-point of great good and great evil.

Bailey, 1926

For, indeed, it were better to follow the myths about the gods than to become a slave to the destiny of the natural philosophers: for the former suggests a hope of placating the gods by worship, whereas the latter involves a necessity which knows no placation. As to chance, he does not regard it as a god as most men do (for in a god’s acts there is no disorder), nor as an uncertain cause (of all things) for he does not believe that good and evil are given by chance to man for the framing of a blessed life, but that opportunities for great good and great evil are afforded by it.

Letter to Menoeceus |135|

Epicurus, c. 300 BCE

κρεῖττον εἶναι νομίζει εὐλογίστως ἀτυχεῖν ἢ ἀλογίστως εὐτυχεῖν· βέλτιον γὰρ ἐν ταῖς πράξεσι τὸ καλῶς κριθὲν ‹μὴ ὀρθωθῆναι ἢ τὸ μὴ καλῶς κριθὲν› ὀρθωθῆναι διὰ ταύτην. Ταῦτα οὖν καὶ τὰ τούτοις συγγενῆ μελέτα πρὸς σεαυτὸν ἡμέρας καὶ νυκτὸς ‹καὶ› πρὸς τὸν ὅμοιον σεαυτῷ, καὶ οὐδέποτε οὔθ’ ὕπαρ οὔτ’ ὄναρ διαταραχθήσῃ, ζήσῃ δὲ ὡς θεὸς ἐν ἀνθρώποις. οὐθὲν γὰρ ἔοικε θνητῷ ζῷῳ ζῶν ἄνθρωπος ἐν ἀθανάτοις ἀγαθοῖς.

Μαντικὴν δ’ ἅπασαν ἐν ἄλλοις ἀναιρεῖ, ὡς καὶ ἐν τῇ Μικρᾷ ἐπιτομῇ. καί φησι· “μαντικὴ οὖσα ἀνύπαρκτος, εἰ καὶ ὑπαρκτή, οὐθὲν παρ’ ἡμᾶς ἡγητέα τὰ γινόμενα.”

Τοσαῦτα καὶ περὶ τῶν βιωτικῶν· καὶ ἐπὶ πλείω διείλεκται ἀλλαχόθι.

Yonge, 1853

thinking it better to be unfortunate in accordance with reason, than to be fortunate irrationally; for that those actions which are judged to be the best, are rightly done in consequence of reason. Do you then study these precepts, and those which are akin to them, by all means day and night, pondering on them by yourself, and discussing them with any one like yourself, and then you will never be disturbed by either sleeping or waking fancies, but you will live like a god among men; for a man living amid immortal gods, is in no respect like a mortal being.

[In other works, he discards divination; and also in his Little Epitome. And he says divination has no existence; but, if it has any, still we should think that what happens according to it is nothing to us.]

[These are his sentiments about the things which concern the life of man, and he has discussed them at greater length elsewhere.]

Hicks, 1925

He believes that the misfortune of the wise is better than the prosperity of the fool. It is better, in short, that what is well judged in action should not owe its successful issue to the aid of chance. Exercise thyself in these and kindred precepts day and night, both by thyself and with him who is like unto thee; then never, either in waking or in dream, wilt thou be disturbed, but wilt live as a god among men. For man loses all semblance of mortality by living in the midst of immortal blessings.

[Elsewhere he rejects the whole of divination, as in the short epitome, and says, “No means of predicting the future really exists, and if it did, we must regard what happens according to it as nothing to us.”]

[Such are his views on life and conduct; and he has discoursed upon them at greater length elsewhere.]

Bailey, 1926

He therefore thinks it better to be unfortunate in reasonable action than to prosper in unreason. For it is better in a man’s actions that what is well chosen (should fail, rather than that what is ill chosen) should be successful owing to chance. Meditate therefore on these things and things akin to them night and day by yourself; and with a companion like to yourself, and never shall you be disturbed waking or asleep, but you shall live like a god among men. For a man who lives among immortal blessings is not like a mortal being.

[In several works he rejects all kinds of prophecy, and specially in the Shorter Summary. He says, “Prophecy does not exist, and even if it did exist, things that come to pass must be counted nothing to us”.]

[So much for his theory of morals, which he has discussed more fully elsewhere.]

On Pleasure and Pain |136|

Laërtius, c. 222-235

Διαφέρεται δὲ πρὸς τοὺς Κυρηναϊκοὺς περὶ τῆς ἡδονῆς· οἱ μὲν γὰρ τὴν καταστηματικὴν οὐκ ἐγκρίνουσι, μόνην δὲ τὴν ἐν κινήσει· ὁ δὲ ἀμφότερα <τὰ γένη> ψυχῆς καὶ σώματος, ὥς φησιν ἐν τῷ Περὶ αἱρέσεως καὶ φυγῆς καὶ ἐν τῷ Περὶ τέλους καὶ ἐν τῷ πρώτῳ Περὶ βίων καὶ ἐν τῇ πρὸς τοὺς ἐν Μυτιλήνῃ φίλους ἐπιστολῇ. ὁμοίως δὲ καὶ Διογένης ἐν τῇ ἑπτακαιδεκάτῃ τῶν Ἐπιλέκτων καὶ Μητρόδωρος ἐν τῷ Τιμοκράτει λέγουσιν οὕτω· νοουμένης δὲ ἡδονῆς τῆς τε κατὰ κίνησιν καὶ τῆς καταστηματικῆς. ὁ δ’ Ἐπίκουρος ἐν τῷ Περὶ αἱρέσεων οὕτω λέγει· “ἡ μὲν γὰρ ἀταραξία καὶ ἀπονία καταστηματικαί εἰσιν ἡδοναί· ἡ δὲ χαρὰ καὶ ἡ εὐφροσύνη κατὰ κίνησιν ἐνεργείᾳ βλέπονται.”

Yonge, 1853

Now, he differs from the Cyrenaics about pleasure. For they do not admit that to pleasure can exist as a state, but place it wholly in motion. He, however, admits both kinds to be pleasure, namely, that of the soul, and that of the body, as he says in his treatise on Choice and Avoidance; and also in his work on the Chief Good; and in the first book of his treatise on Lives, and in his Letter against the Mytilenian Philosophers. And in the same spirit, Diogenes, in the seventeenth book of his Select Discourses, and Metrodorus, in his Timocrates, speak thus. “But when pleasure is understood, I mean both that which exists in motion, and that which is a state ….” And Epicurus, in his treatise on Choice, speaks thus: “Now, freedom from disquietude, and freedom from pain, are states of pleasure; but joy and cheerfulness are beheld in motion and energy.”

Hicks, 1925

He differs from the Cyrenaics with regard to pleasure. They do not include under the term the pleasure which is a state of rest, but only that which consists in motion. Epicurus admits both; also pleasure of mind as well as of body, as he states in his work On Choice and Avoidance and in that On the Ethical End, and in the first book of his work On Human Life and in the epistle to his philosopher friends in Mytilene. So also Diogenes in the seventeenth book of his Epilecta, and Metrodorus in his Timocrates, whose actual words are: “Thus pleasure being conceived both as that species which consists in motion and that which is a state of rest.” The words of Epicurus in his work On Choice are: “Peace of mind and freedom from pain are pleasures which imply a state of rest; joy and delight are seen to consist in motion and activity.”

Bailey, 1926

Epicurus differs from the Cyrenaics about pleasure. For they do not admit static pleasure, but only that which consists in motion. But Epicurus admits both kinds both in the soul and in the body, as he says in the work on Choice and Avoidance and in the book on The Ends of Life and in the first book On Lives and in the letter to his friends in Mytilene. Similarly, Diogenes in the 17th book of Miscellanies and Metrodorus in the Timocrates speak thus: “Pleasure can be thought of both as consisting in motion and as static.” And Epicurus in the work on Choice speaks as follows: “Freedom from trouble in the mind and from pain in the body are static pleasures, but Joy and exultation are considered as active pleasures involving motion.”

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Laërtius, c. 222-235

Ἔτι πρὸς τοὺς Κυρηναϊκούς· οἱ μὲν γὰρ χείρους τὰς σωματικὰς ἀλγηδόνας τῶν ψυχικῶν, κολάζεσθαι γοῦν τοὺς ἁμαρτάνοντας σώματι· ὁ δὲ τὰς ψυχικάς. τὴν γοῦν σάρκα τὸ παρὸν μόνον χειμάζειν, τὴν δὲ ψυχὴν καὶ τὸ παρελθὸν καὶ τὸ παρὸν καὶ τὸ μέλλον. οὕτως οὖν καὶ μείζονας ἡδονὰς εἶναι τῆς ψυχῆς. ἀποδείξει δὲ χρῆται τοῦ τέλος εἶναι τὴν ἡδονὴν τῷ τὰ ζῷα ἅμα τῷ γεννηθῆναι τῇ μὲν εὐαρεστεῖσθαι, τῷ δὲ πόνῳ προσκρούειν φυσικῶς καὶ χωρὶς λόγου. αὐτοπαθῶς οὖν φεύγομεν τὴν ἀλγηδόνα· ἵνα καὶ ὁ Ἡρακλῆς καταβιβρωσκόμενος ὑπὸ τοῦ χιτῶνος βοᾷ,

δάκνων ἰύζων· ἀμφὶ δ’ ἔστενον πέτραι Λοκρῶν τ’ ὄρειοι πρῶνες Εὐβοίας τ’ ἄκραι.

Yonge, 1853

For the Cyrenaics make out the pains of the body to be worse than those of the mind; accordingly, those who do wrong, are punished in the body. But he considers the pains of the soul the worst; for that the flesh is only sensible to present affliction, but the soul feels the past, the present, and the future. Therefore, in the same manner, he contends that the pleasure of the soul are greater than those of the body; and he uses as proof that pleasure is the chief good, the fact that all animals from the moment of their birth are delighted with pleasure, and are offended with pain by their natural instinct, and without the employment of Reason. Therefore, too we, of our own inclinations, flee from pain; so that Heracles, when devoured by his poisoned tunic cries out:

Shouting and groaning, and the rocks around | Re-echoed his sad wails, the mountain heights | Of Locrian lands, and sad Euboea’s hills.

Hicks, 1925

He further disagrees with the Cyrenaics in that they hold that pains of body are worse than mental pains; at all events evil-doers are made to suffer bodily punishment; whereas Epicurus holds the pains of the mind to be the worse; at any rate the flesh endures the storms of the present alone, the mind those of the past and future as well as the present. In this way also he holds mental pleasures to be greater than those of the body. And as proof that pleasure is the end he adduces the fact that living things, so soon as they are born, are well content with pleasure and are at enmity with pain, by the prompting of nature and apart from reason. Left to our own feelings, then, we shun pain; as when even Heracles, devoured by the poisoned robe, cries aloud

And bites and yells, and rock to rock resounds | Headlands of Locris and Euboean cliffs.

Bailey, 1926

A further difference from the Cyrenaics: they thought that bodily pains were worse than those of the soul, and pointed out that offenses are visited by bodily punishment. But Epicurus held that the pains of the soul are worse, for the flesh is only troubled for the moment, but the soul for past, present, and future. In the same way the pleasures of the soul are greater. As proof that pleasure is the end, he points out that all living creatures as soon as they are born take delight in pleasure, but resist pain by a natural impulse apart from reason. Therefore we avoid pain by instinct, just as Heracles, when he is being devoured by the shirt of Nessus, cries aloud

With tears and groans: the rocks re-echoed far | From Locris’ mountain peaks, Euboea’s hills.

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Laërtius, c. 222-235

Διὰ δὲ τὴν ἡδονὴν καὶ τὰς ἀρετὰς αἱρεῖσθαι, οὐ δι’ αὐτάς, ὥσπερ τὴν ἰατρικὴν διὰ τὴν ὑγίειαν, καθά φησι καὶ Διογένης ἐν τῇ εἰκοστῇ τῶν Ἐπιλέκτων, ὃς καὶ διαγωγὴν λέγει τὴν ἀγωγήν. ὁ δ’ Ἐπίκουρος καὶ ἀχώριστόν φησι τῆς ἡδονῆς τὴν ἀρετὴν μόνην· τὰ δ’ ἄλλα χωρίζεσθαι, οἷον βρωτά.

Καὶ φέρε οὖν δὴ νῦν τὸν κολοφῶνα (ὡς ἂν εἴποι τις) ἐπιθῶμεν καὶ τοῦ παντὸς συγγράμματος καὶ τοῦ βίου τοῦ φιλοσόφου, τὰς Κυρίας αὐτοῦ δόξας παραθέμενοι καὶ ταύταις τὸ πᾶν σύγγραμμα κατακλείσαντες, τέλει χρησάμενοι τῇ τῆς εὐδαιμονίας ἀρχῇ.

Yonge, 1853

And we choose the virtues for the sake of pleasure, and not on their own account; just as we seek the skill of the physician for the sake of health, as Diogenes says, in the twentieth book of his Select Discourses, where he also calls virtue alone is inseparable from pleasure, but that every thing else may be separated from it as mortal.

Let us, however, now add the finishing stroke, as one may say, to this whole treatise, and to the life of the philosopher; giving some of his fundamental maxims, and closing the whole work with them, taking that for our end which is the beginning of happiness.

Hicks, 1925

And we choose the virtues too on account of pleasure and not for their own sake, as we take medicine for the sake of health. So too in the twentieth book of his Epilecta says Diogenes, who also calls education ἀγωγή recreation διαγωγή. Epicurus describes virtue as the sine qua non of pleasure, i.e. the one thing without which pleasure cannot be, everything else, food, for instance, being separable, i.e. not indispensable to pleasure.

Come, then, let me set the seal, so to say, on my entire work as well as on this philosopher’s life by citing his Sovran Maxims, therewith bringing the whole work to a close and making the end of it to coincide with the beginning of happiness.

Bailey, 1926

He says that virtue is preferred for the sake of pleasure, and not for its own sake, just as the doctor’s art is employed for the sake of health. So Diogenes says too in the 20th book of Miscellanies, and he adds that education is a “way of life.” Epicurus says also that virtue alone is inseparable from pleasure, but that other things may be separated, such as things to eat.

Come, then, let us put the crown, as it were, to the whole work and to the life of our philosopher, in setting out his Principal Doctrines, and closing the whole work with them, thus using as our conclusion the starting-point of happiness.

Epicurus

I. Τὸ μακάριον καὶ ἄφθαρτον οὔτε αὐτὸ πράγματα ἔχει οὔτε ἄλλῳ παρέχει· ὥστε οὔτε ὀργαῖς οὔτε χάρισι συνέχεται· ἐν ἀσθενεῖ γὰρ πᾶν τὸ τοιοῦτον. (ἐν ἄλλοις δέ φησι τοὺς θεοὺς λόγῳ θεωρητούς, οὓς μὲν κατ' ἀριθμόν ὑφεστῶτας, οὓς δὲ κατὰ ὁμοείδειαν, ἐκ τῆς συνεχοῦς ἐπιρρύσεως τῶν ὁμοίων εἰδώλων ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτὸ ἀποτετελεσμένων, ἀνθρωποειδεῖς.)
II. Ὁ θάνατος οὐδὲν πρὸς ἡμᾶς· τὸ γὰρ διαλυθὲν ἀναισθητεῖ, τὸ δ' ἀναισθητοῦν οὐδὲν πρὸς ἡμᾶς.
III. Ὅρος τοῦ μεγέθους τῶν ἡδονῶν ἡ παντὸς τοῦ ἀλγοῦντος ὑπεξαίρεσις. ὅπου δ' ἂν τὸ ἡδόμενον ἐνῇ, καθ' ὃν ἂν χρόνον ᾖ, οὐκ ἔστι τὸ ἀλγοῦν ἢ λυπούμενον ἢ τὸ συναμφότερον.

Yonge, 1853

I. That which is happy and imperishable, neither has trouble itself, nor does it cause it to anything; so that it is not subject to feelings of either anger or gratitude; for these feelings only exist in what is weak. *[In other passages he says that the gods are speculated on by reason, some existing according to number, and others according to some similarity of form, arising from the continual flowing on of similar images, perfected for this very purpose in human form.]*
II. Death is nothing to us; for that which is dissolved is devoid of sensation, and that which is devoid of sensation is nothing to us.
III. The limit of great pleasures is the removal of everything which can give pain. And where pleasure is, as long as it lasts, that which gives pain, or that which feels pain, or both of them, are absent.

Hicks, 1925

I. A blessed and eternal being has no trouble himself and brings no trouble upon any other being; hence he is exempt from movements of anger and partiality, for every such movement implies weakness. *[Elsewhere he says that the gods are discernible by reason alone, some being numerically distinct, while others result uniformly from the continuous influx of similar images directed to the same spot and in human form.]*
II. Death is nothing to us; for the body, when it has been resolved into its elements, has no feeling, and that which has no feeling is nothing to us.
III. The magnitude of pleasure reaches its limit in the removal of all pain. When pleasure is present, so long as it is uninterrupted, there is no pain either of body or of mind or of both together.

Bailey, 1926

I. The blessed and immortal nature knows no trouble itself, nor causes trouble to any other, so that it is never constrained by anger or favor. For all such things exist only in the weak.
II. Death is nothing to us, for that which is dissolved is without sensation; and that which lacks sensation is nothing to us.
III. The limit of quantity in pleasures is the removal of all that is painful. Wherever pleasure is present, as long as it is there, there is neither pain of body, nor of mind, nor of both at once.

Epicurus

IV. Οὐ χρονίζει τὸ ἀλγοῦν συνεχῶς ἐν τῇ σαρκί, ἀλλὰ τὸ μὲν ἄκρον τὸν ἐλάχιστον χρόνον πάρεστι, τὸ δὲ μόνον ὑπερτεῖνον τὸ ἡδόμενον κατὰ σάρκα οὐ πολλὰς ἡμέρας συμβαίνει· αἱ δὲ πολυχρόνιοι τῶν ἀρρωστιῶν πλεονάζον ἔχουσι τὸ ἡδόμενον ἐν τῇ σαρκὶ ἤπερ τὸ ἀλγοῦν.
V. Οὐκ ἔστιν ἡδέως ζῆν ἄνευ τοῦ φρονίμως καὶ καλῶς καὶ δικαίως ‹οὐδὲ φρονίμως καὶ καλῶς καὶ δικαίως› ἄνευ τοῦ ἡδέως· ὅτῳ δὲ τοῦτο μὴ ὑπάρχει, οὐκ ἔστι τοῦτον ἡδέως ζῆν.
VI. Ἕνεκα τοῦ θαρρεῖν ἐξ ἀνθρώπων ἦν κατὰ φύσιν ἀρχῆς καὶ βασιλείας ἀγαθόν, ἐξ ὧν ἄν ποτε τοῦτο οἷός τ’ ἦ παρασκευάζεσθαι.

Yonge, 1853

IV. Pain does not abide continuously in the flesh, but in its extremity it is present only a very short time. That pain which only just exceeds the pleasure in the flesh, does not last many days. But long diseases have in them more that is pleasant than painful to the flesh.
V. It is not possible to live pleasantly without living prudently, and honourably, and justly; nor to live prudently, and honourably, and justly, without living pleasantly. But to whom it does not happen to live prudently, honourably, and justly cannot possibly live pleasantly.
VI. For the sake of feeling confidence and security with regard to men, anything in nature is good, if it provides the means to achieve this.

Hicks, 1925

IV. Continuous pain does not last long in the flesh; on the contrary, pain, if extreme, is present a very short time, and even that degree of pain which barely outweighs pleasure in the flesh does not last for many days together. Illnesses of long duration even permit of an excess of pleasure over pain in the flesh.
V. It is impossible to live a pleasant life without living wisely and well and justly, and it is impossible to live wisely and well and justly without living pleasantly. Whenever any one of these is lacking, when, for instance, the man is not able to live wisely, though he lives well and justly, it is impossible for him to live a pleasant life.
VI. In order to obtain security from other men any means whatsoever of procuring this was a natural good.

Bailey, 1926

IV. Pain does not last continuously in the flesh, but the acutest pain is there for a very short time, and even that which just exceeds the pleasure in the flesh does not continue for many days at once. But chronic illnesses permit a predominance of pleasure over pain in the flesh.
V. It is not possible to live pleasantly without living prudently, honorably, and justly, [nor again to live a life of prudence, honor, and justice] without living pleasantly. And the man who does not possess the pleasant life is not living prudently, honorably, and justly, [and the man who does not possess the virtuous life] cannot possibly live pleasantly.
VI. To secure protection from men anything is a natural good by which you may be able to attain this end.

Epicurus

VII. Ἔνδοξοι καὶ περίβλεπτοί τινες ἐβουλήθησαν γενέσθαι, τὴν ἐξ ἀνθρώπων ἀσφάλειαν οὕτω νομίζοντες περιποιήσεσθαι ὥστε, εἰ μὲν ἀσφαλὴς ὁ τῶν τοιούτων βίος, ἀπέλαβον τὸ τῆς φύσεως ἀγαθόν· εἰ δὲ μὴ ἀσφαλής, οὐκ ἔχουσιν οὗ ἕνεκα ἐξ ἀρχῆς κατὰ τὸ τῆς φύσεως οἰκεῖον ὠρέχθησαν.
VIII. Οὐδεμία ἡδονὴ καθ’ ἑαυτὴν κακόν· ἀλλὰ τὰ τινῶν ἡδονῶν ποιητικὰ πολλαπλασίους ἐπιφέρει τὰς ὀχλήσεις τῶν ἡδονῶν.

Yonge, 1853

VII. Some men have wished to be eminent and powerful, thinking that so they would secure safety as far as men are concerned. So that if the life of such men is safe, they have attained to the nature of good; but if it is not safe, then they have failed in obtaining that for the sake of which they originally desired power according to the order of nature.
VIII. No pleasure is intrinsically bad: but the effective causes of some pleasures bring with them a great many perturbations of pleasure.

Hicks, 1925

VII. Some men have sought to become famous and renowned, thinking that thus they would make themselves secure against their fellow-men. If, then, the life of such persons really was secure, they attained natural good; if, however, it was insecure, they have not attained the end which by nature’s own prompting they originally sought.
VIII. No pleasure is in itself evil, but the things which produce certain pleasures entail annoyances many times greater than the pleasures themselves.

Bailey, 1926

VII. Some men wished to become famous and conspicuous, thinking that they would thus win for themselves safety from other men. Wherefore if the life of such men is safe, they have obtained the good which nature craves; but if it is not safe, they do not possess that for which they strove at first by the instinct of nature.
VIII. No pleasure is a bad thing in itself; but the means which produce some pleasures bring with them disturbances many times greater than the pleasures.

Epicurus

IX. Εἰ κατεπυκνοῦτο πᾶσα ἡδονὴ τ‹όπ›ῳ καὶ χρόνῳ καὶ περὶ ὅλον τὸ ἄθροισμα ὑπῆρχεν ἢ τὰ κυριώτατα μέρη τῆς φύσεως, οὐκ ἄν ποτε διέφερον ἀλλήλων αἱ ἡδοναί.
X. Εἰ τὰ ποιητικὰ τῶν περὶ τοὺς ἀσώτους ἡδονῶν ἔλυε τοὺς φόβους τῆς διανοίας τούς τε περὶ μετεώρων καὶ θανάτου καὶ ἀλγηδόνων, ἔτι τε τὸ πέρας τῶν ἐπιθυμιῶν ‹καὶ τῶν ἀλγηδόνων› ἐδίδασκεν, οὐκ ἄν ποτε εἴχομεν ὅ τι μεμψαίμεθα αὐτοῖς πανταχόθεν ἐκπληρουμένοις τῶν ἡδονῶν καὶ οὐδαμόθεν οὔτε τὸ ἀλγοῦν οὔτε τὸ λυπούμενον ἔχουσιν, ὅπερ ἐστὶ τὸ κακόν.
XI. Εἰ μηθὲν ἡμᾶς αἱ τῶν μετεώρων ὑποψίαι ἠνώχλουν καὶ αἱ περὶ θανάτου, μήποτε πρὸς ἡμᾶς ᾖ τι, ἔτι τε τὸ μὴ κατανοεῖν τοὺς ὅρους τῶν ἀλγηδόνων καὶ τῶν ἐπιθυμιῶν, οὐκ ἂν προσεδεόμεθα φυσιολογίας.

Yonge, 1853

IX. If every pleasure were condensed, if one may so say, and if each lasted long, and affected the whole body, or the essential parts of it, then there would be no difference between one pleasure and another.
X. If those things which make the pleasures of debauched men, put an end to the fears of the mind, and to those which arise about the heavenly bodies, and death, and pain; and if they taught us what ought to be the limit of our desires, we should have no pretence for blaming those who wholly devote themselves to pleasure, and who never feel any pain or grief (which is the chief evil) from any quarter.
XI. If apprehensions relating to the heavenly bodies did not disturb us, and if the terrors of death have no concern with us, and if we had the courage to contemplate the boundaries of pain and of the desires, we should have no need of physiological studies.

Hicks, 1925

IX. If all pleasure had been capable of accumulation, – if this had gone on not only by recurrence in time, but all over the frame or, at any rate, over the principal parts of man’s nature, there would never have been any difference between one pleasure and another, as in fact there is.
X. If the objects which are productive of pleasures to profligate persons really freed them from fears of the mind, – the fears, I mean, inspired by celestial and atmospheric phenomena, the fear of death, the fear of pain; if, further, they taught them to limit their desires, we should never have any fault to find with such persons, for they would then be filled with pleasures to overflowing on all sides and would be exempt from all pain, whether of body or mind, that is, from all evil.
XI. If we had never been molested by alarms at celestial and atmospheric phenomena, nor by the misgiving that death somehow affects us, nor by neglect of the proper limits of pains and desires, we should have had no need to study natural science.

Bailey, 1926

IX. If every pleasure could be intensified so that it lasted, and influenced the whole organism or the most essential parts of our nature, pleasures would never differ from one another.
X. If the things that produce the pleasures of profligates could dispel the fears of the mind about the phenomena of the sky, and death, and its pains, and also teach the limits of desires (and of pains), we should never have cause to blame them: for they would be filling themselves full, with pleasures from every source, and never have pain of body or mind, which is the evil of life.
XI. If we were not troubled by our suspicions of the phenomena of the sky, and about death, fearing that it concerns us, and also by our failure to grasp the limits of pains and desires, we should have no need of natural science.

Epicurus

XII. Οὐκ ἦν τὸ φοβούμενον λύειν ὑπὲρ τῶν κυριωτάτων μὴ κατειδότα τίς ἡ τοῦ σύμπαντος φύσις, ἀλλ' ὑποπτεύοντά τι τῶν κατὰ τοὺς μύθους· ὥστε οὐκ ἦν ἄνευ φυσιολογίας ἀκεραίους τὰς ἡδονὰς ἀπολαμβάνειν.
XIII. Οὐθὲν ὄφελος ἦν τὴν κατὰ ἀνθρώπους ἀσφάλειαν παρασκευάζεσθαι τῶν ἄνωθεν ὑπόπτων καθεστώτων καὶ τῶν ὑπὸ γῆς καὶ ἁπλῶς τῶν ἐν τῷ ἀπείρῳ.
XIV. Τῆς ἀσφαλείας τῆς ἐξ ἀνθρώπων γενομένης μέχρι τινὸς δυνάμει τε ἐξερειστικῇ καὶ εὐπορίᾳ, εἰλικρινεστάτη γίνεται ἡ ἐκ τῆς ἡσυχίας καὶ ἐκχωρήσεως τῶν πολλῶν ἀσφάλεια.

Yonge, 1853

XII. It would not be possible for a person to banish all fear about those things which are called most essential, unless he knew what is the nature of the universe, or if he had any idea that the fables told about it could be true; and therefore a person cannot enjoy unmixed pleasure without physiological knowledge.
XIII. It would be no good for a man to secure himself safety as far as men are concerned, while in a state of apprehension as to all the heavenly bodies, and those under the earth, and in short, all those in the infinite.
XIV. Irresistible power and great wealth may, up to a certain point, give us security as far as men are concerned; but the security of men in general depends upon the tranquillity of their souls, and their freedom from ambition.

Hicks, 1925

XII. It would be impossible to banish fear on matters of the highest importance, if a man did not know the nature of the whole universe, but lived in dread of what the legends tell us. Hence without the study of nature there was no enjoyment of unmixed pleasures.
XIII. There would be no advantage in providing security against our fellow-men, so long as we were alarmed by occurrences over our heads or beneath the earth or in general by whatever happens in the boundless universe.
XIV. When tolerable security against our fellow-men is attained, then on a basis of power sufficient to afford support and of material prosperity arises in most genuine form the security of a quiet private life withdrawn from the multitude.

Bailey, 1926

XII. A man cannot dispel his fear about the most important matters if he does not know what is the nature of the universe, but suspects the truth of some mythical story. So that, without natural science, it is not possible to attain our pleasures unalloyed.
XIII. There is no profit in securing protection in relation to men, if things above, and things beneath the earth, and indeed all in the boundless universe, remain matters of suspicion.
XIV. The most unalloyed source of protection from men, which is secured to some extent by a certain force of expulsion, is in fact the immunity which results from a quiet life, and retirement from the world.

Epicurus

XV. Ὁ τῆς φύσεως πλοῦτος καὶ ὥρισται καὶ εὐπόριστός ἐστιν, ὁ δὲ τῶν κενῶν δοξῶν εἰς ἄπειρον ἐκπίπτει.
XVI. Βραχέα σοφῷ τύχη παρεμπίπτει, τὰ δὲ μέγιστα καὶ κυριώτατα ὁ λογισμὸς διῴκηκε καὶ κατὰ τὸν συνεχῆ χρόνον τοῦ βίου διοικεῖ καὶ διοικήσει.
XVII. Ὁ δίκαιος ἀταρακτότατος, ὁ δ' ἄδικος πλείστης ταραχῆς γέμων.
XVIII. Οὐκ ἐπαύξεται ἐν τῇ σαρκὶ ἡ ἡδονή, ἐπειδὰν ἅπαξ τὸ κατ' ἔνδειαν ἀλγοῦν ἐξαιρεθῇ, ἀλλὰ μόνον ποικίλλεται. τῆς δὲ διανοίας τὸ πέρας τὸ κατὰ τὴν ἡδονὴν ἀπεγέννησεν ἥ τε τούτων αὐτῶν ἐκλόγισις καὶ τῶν ὁμογενῶν τούτοις, ὅσα τοὺς μεγίστους φόβους παρεσκεύαζε τῇ διανοίᾳ.

Yonge, 1853

XV. The riches of nature are defined and easily procurable; but vain desires are insatiable.
XVI. The wise man is but little favoured by fortune; but his reason procures him the greatest and most valuable goods, and these he does enjoy, and will enjoy the whole of his life.
XVII. The just man is the freest of all men from disquietude; but the unjust man is a perpetual prey to it.
XVIII. Pleasure in the flesh is not increased, when once the pain arising from want is removed; it is only diversified. The most perfect happiness of the soul depends on these reflections, and on opinions of a similar character on all those questions which cause the greatest alarm to the mind.

Hicks, 1925

XV. Nature's wealth at once has its bounds and is easy to procure; but the wealth of vain fancies recedes to an infinite distance.
XVI. Fortune but seldom interferes with the wise man; his greatest and highest interests have been, are, and will be, directed by reason throughout the course of his life.
XVII. The just man enjoys the greatest peace of mind, while the unjust is full of the utmost disquietude.
XVIII. Pleasure in the flesh admits no increase when once the pain of want has been removed; after that it only admits of variation. The limit of pleasure in the mind, however, is reached when we reflect on the things themselves and their congeners which cause the mind the greatest alarms.

Bailey, 1926

XV. The wealth demanded by nature is both limited and easily procured; that demanded by idle imaginings stretches on to infinity.
XVI. In but few things chance hinders a wise man, but the greatest and most important matters, reason has ordained, and throughout the whole period of life does and will ordain.
XVII. The just man is most free from trouble; the unjust most full of trouble.
XVIII. The pleasure in the flesh is not increased when once the pain due to want is removed, but is only varied: and the limit as regards pleasure in the mind is begotten by the reasoned understanding of these very pleasures, and of the emotions akin to them, which used to cause the greatest fear to the mind.

Epicurus

XIX. Ὁ ἄπειρος χρόνος ἴσην ἔχει τὴν ἡδονὴν καὶ ὁ πεπερασμένος, ἐάν τις αὐτῆς τὰ πέρατα καταμετρήσῃ τῷ λογισμῷ.
XX. Ἡ μὲν σὰρξ ἀπέλαβε τὰ πέρατα τῆς ἡδονῆς ἄπειρα καὶ ἄπειρος αὐτὴν χρόνος παρεσκεύασεν· ἡ δὲ διάνοια τοῦ τῆς σαρκὸς τέλους καὶ πέρατος λαβοῦσα τὸν ἐπιλογισμὸν καὶ τοὺς ὑπὲρ τοῦ αἰῶνος φόβους ἐκλύσασα τὸν παντελῆ βίον παρεσκεύασε, καὶ οὐθὲν ἔτι τοῦ ἀπείρου χρόνου προσεδεήθη· ἀλλ’ οὔτε ἔφυγε τὴν ἡδονὴν οὐδ’ ἡνίκα τὴν ἐξαγωγὴν ἐκ τοῦ ζῆν τὰ πράγματα παρεσκεύαζεν, ὡς ἐλλείπουσά τι τοῦ ἀρίστου βίου κατέστρεψεν.

Yonge, 1853

XIX. Infinite and finite time both have equal pleasure, if any one measures its limits by reason.
XX. The flesh sets no limits to pleasure, and therefore it yearns for an eternity of time. But reason, enabling us to conceive the end and dissolution of the body, and liberating us from the fears relative to eternity, procures for us all the happiness of which life is capable, so completely that we have no further occasion to include eternity in our desires. In this disposition of mind, man is happy even when his troubles engage him to quit life; and to die thus, is for him only to interrupt a life of happiness.

Hicks, 1925

XIX. Unlimited time and limited time afford an equal amount of pleasure, if we measure the limits of that pleasure by reason.
XX. The flesh receives as unlimited the limits of pleasure; and to provide it requires unlimited time. But the mind, grasping in thought what the end and limit of the flesh is, and banishing the terrors of futurity, procures a complete and perfect life, and has no longer any need of unlimited time. Nevertheless it does not shun pleasure, and even in the hour of death, when ushered out of existence by circumstances, the mind does not lack enjoyment of the best life.

Bailey, 1926

XIX. Infinite time contains no greater pleasure than limited time, if one measures, by reason, the limits of pleasure.
XX. The flesh perceives the limits of pleasure as unlimited, and unlimited time is required to supply it. But the mind, having attained a reasoned understanding of the ultimate good of the flesh and its limits, and having dissipated the fears concerning the time to come, supplies us with the complete life, and we have no further need of infinite time; but neither does the mind shun pleasure, nor, when circumstances begin to bring about the departure from life, does it approach its end as though it fell short, in any way, of the best life.

Epicurus

XXI. Ὁ τὰ πέρατα τοῦ βίου κατειδὼς οἶδεν ὡς εὐπόριστόν ἐστι τὸ ‹τὸ› ἀλγοῦν κατ’ ἔνδειαν ἐξαιροῦν καὶ τὸ τὸν ὅλον βίον παντελῆ καθιστάν· ὥστε οὐδὲν προσδεῖται πραγμάτων ἀγῶνας κεκτημένων.
XXII. Τὸ ὑφεστηκὸς δεῖ τέλος ἐπιλογίζεσθαι καὶ πᾶσαν τὴν ἐνάργειαν, ἐφ’ ἣν τὰ δοξαζόμενα ἀνάγομεν· εἰ δὲ μὴ πάντα ἀκρισίας καὶ ταραχῆς ἔσται μεστά.
XXIII. Εἰ μαχῇ πάσαις ταῖς αἰσθήσεσιν, οὐχ ἕξεις οὐδ’ ἃς ἂν φῇς αὐτῶν διεψεῦσθαι πρὸς τί ποιούμενος τὴν ἀγωγὴν κρίνῃς.

Yonge, 1853

XXI. He who is acquainted with the limits of life knows that that which removes the pain which arises from want and which makes the whole of life perfect, is easily procurable; so that he has no need of those things which can only be attained with trouble.
XXII. But as to the ultimate aim, we ought to consider it with all the clearness and evidence which we refer to whatever we think and believe; otherwise, all things will be full of confusion and uncertainty of judgment.
XXIII. If you resist all the senses, you will not even have anything left to which you can refer, or by which you may be able to judge of the falsehood of the senses which you condemn.

Hicks, 1925

XXI. He who understands the limits of life knows how easy it is to procure enough to remove the pain of want and make the whole of life complete and perfect. Hence he has no longer any need of things which are not to be won save by labour and conflict.
XXII. We must take into account as the end all that really exists and all clear evidence of sense to which we refer our opinions; for otherwise everything will be full of uncertainty and confusion.
XXIII. If you fight against all your sensations, you will have no standard to which to refer, and thus no means of judging even those judgements which you pronounce false.

Bailey, 1926

XXI. He who has learned the limits of life knows that that which removes the pain due to want, and makes the whole of life complete, is easy to obtain, so that there is no need of actions which involve competition.
XXII. We must consider both the real purpose, and all the evidence of direct perception, to which we always refer the conclusions of opinion; otherwise, all will be full of doubt and confusion.
XXIII. If you fight against all sensations, you will have no standard by which to judge even those of them which you say are false.

Epicurus

XXIV. Εἰ τιν’ ἐκβαλεῖς ἁπλῶς αἴσθησιν καὶ μὴ διαιρήσεις τὸ δοξαζόμενον καὶ τὸ προσμένον καὶ τὸ παρὸν ἤδη κατὰ τὴν αἴσθησιν καὶ τὰ πάθη καὶ πᾶσαν φανταστικὴν ἐπιβολὴν τῆς διανοίας, συνταράξεις καὶ τὰς λοιπὰς αἰσθήσεις τῇ ματαίῳ δόξῃ, ὥστε τὸ κριτήριον ἅπαν ἐκβαλεῖς· εἰ δὲ βεβαιώσεις καὶ τὸ προσμένον ἅπαν ἐν ταῖς δοξαστικαῖς ἐννοίαις καὶ τὸ μὴ τὴν ἐπιμαρτύρησιν ‹ἔχον›, οὐκ ἐκλείψεις τὸ διεψευσμένον, ὡς τετηρηκὼς ἔσῃ πᾶσαν ἀμφισβήτησιν κατὰ πᾶσαν κρίσιν τοῦ ὀρθῶς ἢ μὴ ὀρθῶς.

Yonge, 1853

XXIV. If you simply discard a sense, and do not distinguish between the different elements of the judgment, so as to know on the one hand, the opinion which goes beyond the actual sensation, or, on the other, the actual and immediate notion, the affections, and all the conceptions of the mind which arise from the observable representation; you will be imputing trouble into the other senses, and destroying in that quarter every species of criterion. But if you allow equal authority to the ideas, which being only an opinion, require to be verified, and to those which bear about them an immediate certainty, you will not escape error; for you will be confounding doubtful opinions with those which are not doubtful, and true judgments with those of a different character.

Hicks, 1925

XXIV. If you reject absolutely any single sensation without stopping to discriminate with respect to that which awaits confirmation between matter of opinion and that which is already present, whether in sensation or in feelings or in any presentative perception of the mind, you will throw into confusion even the rest of your sensations by your groundless belief and so you will be rejecting the standard of truth altogether. If in your ideas based upon opinion you hastily affirm as true all that awaits confirmation as well as that which does not, you will not escape error, as you will be maintaining complete ambiguity whenever it is a case of judging between right and wrong opinion.

Bailey, 1926

XXIV. If you reject any single sensation, and fail to distinguish between the conclusion of opinion, as to the appearance awaiting confirmation, and that which is actually given by the sensation or feeling, or each intuitive apprehension of the mind, you will confound all other sensations, as well, with the same groundless opinion, so that you will reject every standard of judgment. And if among the mental images created by your opinion you affirm both that which awaits confirmation, and that which does not, you will not escape error, since you will have preserved the whole cause of doubt in every judgment between what is right and what is wrong.

Epicurus

XXV. Εἰ μὴ παρὰ πάντα καιρὸν ἐπανοίσεις ἕκαστον τῶν πραττομένων ἐπὶ τὸ τέλος τῆς φύσεως, ἀλλὰ προκαταστρέψεις εἴτε φυγὴν εἴτε δίωξιν ποιούμενος εἰς ἄλλο τι, οὐκ ἔσονταί σοι τοῖς λόγοις αἱ πράξεις ἀκόλουθοι.
XXVI. Τῶν ἐπιθυμιῶν ὅσαι μὴ ἐπ' ἀλγοῦν ἐπανάγουσιν ἐὰν μὴ συμπληρωθῶσιν, οὐκ εἰσὶν ἀναγκαῖαι, ἀλλ' εὐδιάχυτον τὴν ὄρεξιν ἔχουσιν, ὅταν δυσπορίστων ἢ βλάβης ἀπεργαστικαὶ δόξωσιν εἶναι.
XXVII. Ὧν ἡ σοφία παρασκευάζεται εἰς τὴν τοῦ ὅλου βίου μακαριότητα πολὺ μέγιστόν ἐστιν ἡ τῆς φιλίας κτῆσις.
XXVIII. Ἡ αὐτὴ γνώμη θαρρεῖν τε ἐποίησεν ὑπὲρ τοῦ μηθὲν αἰώνιον εἶναι δεινὸν μηδὲ πολυχρόνιον καὶ τὴν ἐν αὐτοῖς τοῖς ὡρισμένοις ἀσφάλειαν φιλίας μάλιστα κατεῖδε συντελουμένην.

Yonge, 1853

XXV. If, on every occasion, we do not refer every one of our actions to the chief end of nature, if we turn aside from that to seek or avoid some other object, there will be a want of agreement between our words and our actions.
XXVI. All desires that lead to no pain when they remain ungratified are unnecessary, and the longing is easily got rid of, when the thing desired is difficult to procure or when the desires seem likely to produce harm.
XXVII. Of all the things which wisdom provides for the happiness of the whole life, by far the most important is the acquisition of friendship.
XXVIII. The same opinion encourages man to trust that no evil will be everlasting, or even of long duration; as it sees that, in the space of life allotted to us, the protection of friendship is most sure and trustworthy.

Hicks, 1925

XXV. If you do not on every separate occasion refer each of your actions to the end prescribed by nature, but instead of this in the act of choice or avoidance swerve aside to some other end, your acts will not be consistent with your theories.
XXVI. All such desires as lead to no pain when they remain ungratified are unnecessary, and the longing is easily got rid of, when the thing desired is difficult to procure or when the desires seem likely to produce harm.
XXVII. Of all the means which are procured by wisdom to ensure happiness throughout the whole of life, by far the most important is the acquisition of friends.
XXVIII. The same conviction which inspires confidence that nothing we have to fear is eternal or even of long duration, also enables us to see that even in our limited conditions of life nothing enhances our security so much as friendship.

Bailey, 1926

XXV. If on each occasion, instead of referring your actions to the end of nature, you turn to some other, nearer, standard, when you are making a choice or an avoidance, your actions will not be consistent with your principles.
XXVI. Of desires, all that do not lead to a sense of pain, if they are not satisfied, are not necessary, but involve a craving which is easily dispelled when the object is hard to procure, or they seem likely to produce harm.
XXVII. Of all the things which wisdom acquires to produce the blessedness of the complete life, far the greatest is the possession of friendship.
XXVIII. The same conviction which has given us confidence that there is nothing terrible that lasts forever, or even for long, has also seen the protection of friendship most fully completed in the limited evils of this life.

Epicurus

XXIX. Τῶν ἐπιθυμιῶν αἱ μέν εἰσι φυσικαὶ καὶ ‹ἀναγκαῖαι, αἱ δὲ φυσικαὶ καὶ› οὐκ ἀναγκαῖαι, αἱ δὲ οὔτε φυσικαὶ οὔτε ἀναγκαῖαι, ἀλλὰ παρὰ κενὴν δόξαν γινόμεναι. (φυσικὰς καὶ ἀναγκαίας ἡγεῖται ὁ Ἐπίκουρος τὰς ἀλγηδόνος ἀπολυούσας, ὡς ποτὸν ἐπὶ δίψους· φυσικὰς δὲ οὐκ ἀναγκαίας δὲ τὰς ποικιλλούσας μόνον τὴν ἡδονήν, μὴ ὑπεξαιρουμένας δὲ τὸν ἄλγημα, ὡς πολυτελῆ σιτία· οὔτε δὲ φυσικὰς οὔτε ἀναγκαίας, ὡς στεφάνους καὶ ἀνδριάντων ἀναθέσεις).
XXX. Ἐν αἷς τῶν φυσικῶν ἐπιθυμιῶν μὴ ἐπ’ ἀλγοῦν δὲ ἐπαναγουσῶν ἐὰν μὴ συντελεσθῶσιν, ὑπάρχει ἡ σπουδὴ σύντονος, παρὰ κενὴν δόξαν αὗται γίνονται, καὶ οὐ παρὰ τὴν ἑαυτῶν φύσιν οὐ διαχέονται ἀλλὰ παρὰ τὴν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου κενοδοξίαν.

Yonge, 1853

XXIX. Of the desires, some are natural and necessary, some natural, but not necessary, and some are neither natural nor necessary, but owe their existence to vain opinions. *[Epicurus thinks that those are natural and necessary which put an end to pains as drink when one is thirsty; and that those are natural but not necessary which only diversify pleasure, but do not remove pain, such as expensive food; and that these are neither natural nor necessary, which are such as crowns, or the erection of statues.]*
XXX. When those natural desires, which do not lead to pain if they are not satisfied, are violent and insistent, it is a proof that there is an admixture of vain opinion in them; for then energy does not arise from their own nature, but from the vain opinions of men.

Hicks, 1925

XXIX. Of our desires some are natural and necessary; others are natural, but not necessary; others, again, are neither natural nor necessary, but are due to illusory opinion. *[Epicurus regards as natural and necessary desires which bring relief from pain, as e.g. drink when we are thirsty; while by natural and not necessary he means those which merely diversify the pleasure without removing the pain, as e.g. costly viands; by the neither natural nor necessary he means desires for crowns and the erection of statues in one’s honour. – Schol.]*
XXX. Those natural desires which entail no pain when not gratified, though their objects are vehemently pursued, are also due to illusory opinion; and when they are not got rid of, it is not because of their own nature, but because of the man’s illusory opinion.

Bailey, 1926

XXIX. Among desires, some are natural (and necessary, some natural) but not necessary, and others neither natural nor necessary, but due to idle imagination.
XXX. Wherever, in the case of desires which are physical, but do not lead to a sense of pain if they are not fulfilled, the effort is intense, such pleasures are due to idle imagination; and it is not owing to their own nature that they fail to be dispelled, but owing to the empty imaginings of the man.

Epicurus

XXXI. Τὸ τῆς φύσεως δίκαιόν ἐστι σύμβολον τοῦ συμφέροντος εἰς τὸ μὴ βλάπτειν ἀλλήλους μηδὲ βλάπτεσθαι.
XXXII. Ὅσα τῶν ζῴων μὴ ἐδύνατο συνθήκας ποιεῖσθαι τὰς ὑπὲρ τοῦ μὴ βλάπτειν ἄλληλα μηδὲ βλάπτεσθαι, πρὸς ταῦτα οὐθὲν ἦν δίκαιον οὐδὲ ἄδικον· ὡσαύτως δὲ καὶ τῶν ἐθνῶν ὅσα μὴ ἐδύνατο ἢ μὴ ἐβούλετο τὰς συνθήκας ποιεῖσθαι τὰς ὑπὲρ τοῦ μὴ βλάπτειν μηδὲ βλάπτεσθαι.
XXXIII. Οὐκ ἦν τι καθ’ ἑαυτὸ δικαιοσύνη, ἀλλ’ ἐν ταῖς μετ’ ἀλλήλων συστροφαῖς καθ’ ὁπηλίκους δήποτε ἀεὶ τόπους συνθήκη τις ὑπὲρ τοῦ μὴ βλάπτειν ἢ βλαπτεσθαι.

Yonge, 1853

XXXI. Natural justice is a covenant of what is suitable for leading men to avoid injuring on another, and being injured.
XXXII. Those animals which are unable to enter into an argument of this nature, or to guard against doing or sustaining mutual injury, have no such thing as justice or injustice. And the case is the same with those nations, the members of which are either unwilling or unable to enter into a covenant to respect their mutual interests.
XXXIII. Justice has no independent existence; it results from mutual contracts, and establishes itself wherever there is a mutual engagement to guard against doing or sustaining mutual injury.

Hicks, 1925

XXXI. Natural justice is a symbol or expression of expediency, to prevent one man from harming or being harmed by another.
XXXII. Those animals which are incapable of making covenants with one another, to the end that they may neither inflict nor suffer harm, are without either justice or injustice. And those tribes which either could not or would not form mutual covenants to the same end are in like case.
XXXIII. There never was an absolute justice, but only an agreement made in reciprocal intercourse in whatever localities now and again from time to time, providing against the infliction or suffering of harm.

Bailey, 1926

XXXI. The justice which arises from nature is a pledge of mutual advantage, to restrain men from harming one another, and save them from being harmed.
XXXII. For all living things which have not been able to make compacts not to harm one another, or be harmed, nothing ever is either just or unjust; and likewise, too, for all tribes of men which have been unable, or unwilling, to make compacts not to harm or be harmed.
XXXIII. Justice never is anything in itself, but in the dealings of men with one another, in any place whatever, and at any time, it is a kind of compact not to harm or be harmed.

Epicurus

XXXIV. Ἡ ἀδικία οὐ καθ’ ἑαυτὴν κακόν, ἀλλ’ ἐν τῷ κατὰ τὴν ὑποψίαν φόβῳ, εἰ μὴ λήσει τοὺς ὑπὲρ τῶν τοιούτων ἐφεστηκότας κολαστάς.
XXXV. Οὐκ ἔστι τὸν λάθρα τι ποιοῦντα ὧν συνέθεντο πρὸς ἀλλήλους εἰς τὸ μὴ βλάπτειν μηδὲ βλάπτεσθαι πιστεύειν ὅτι λήσει, κἂν μυριάκις ἐπὶ τοῦ παρόντος λανθάνῃ· μέχρι γὰρ καταστροφῆς ἄδηλον εἰ καὶ λήσει.
XXXVI. Κατὰ μὲν ‹τὸ› κοινὸν πᾶσι τὸ δίκαιον τὸ αὐτό· συμφέρον γάρ τι ἦν ἐν τῇ πρὸς ἀλλήλους κοινωνίᾳ· κατὰ δὲ τὸ ἴδιον χώρας καὶ ὅσων δήποτε αἰτίων οὐ πᾶσι συνέπεται τὸ αὐτὸ δίκαιον εἶναι.

Yonge, 1853

XXXIV. Injustice is not intrinsically bad; it has this character only because there is joined with it a fear of not escaping those who are appointed to punish actions of this character.
XXXV. It is not possible for a man who secretly does anything in contravention of the agreement which men have made with one another, to guard against doing, or sustaining mutual injury, to believe that he shall always escape notice, even if he has escaped notice already ten thousand times; for till his death, it is uncertain whether he will not be detected.
XXXVI. In a general point of view, justice is the same thing to every one; for there is something advantageous in mutual society. Nevertheless, the difference of place, and diverse other circumstances, make justice vary.

Hicks, 1925

XXXIV. Injustice is not in itself an evil, but only in its consequence, viz. the terror which is excited by apprehension that those appointed to punish such offences will discover the injustice.
XXXV. It is impossible for the man who secretly violates any article of the social compact to feel confident that he will remain undiscovered, even if he has already escaped ten thousand times; for right on to the end of his life he is never sure he will not be detected.
XXXVI. Taken generally, justice is the same for all, to wit, something found expedient in mutual intercourse; but in its application to particular cases of locality or conditions of whatever kind, it varies under different circumstances.

Bailey, 1926

XXXIV. Injustice is not an evil in itself, but only in consequence of the fear which attaches to the apprehension of being unable to escape those appointed to punish such actions.
XXXV. It is not possible for one who acts in secret contravention of the terms of the compact not to harm or be harmed to be confident that he will escape detection, even if, at present, he escapes a thousand times. For up to the time of death it cannot be certain that he will indeed escape.
XXXVI. In its general aspect, justice is the same for all, for it is a kind of mutual advantage in the dealings of men with one another; but with reference to the individual peculiarities of a country, or any other circumstances, the same thing does not turn out to be just for all.

Epicurus

XXXVII. Τὸ μὲν ἐπιμαρτυρούμενον ὅτι συμφέρει ἐν ταῖς χρείαις τῆς πρὸς ἀλλήλους κοινωνίας τῶν νομισθέντων εἶναι δικαίων ἔχειν τοῦ δικαίου χώραν ‹δ›εῖ, ἐάν τε τὸ αὐτὸ πᾶσι γένηται ἐάν τε μὴ τὸ αὐτό· ἐὰν δὲ ‹νόμον› μόνον θῆταί τις, μὴ ἀποβαίνῃ δὲ κατὰ τὸ συμφέρον τῆς πρὸς ἀλλήλους κοινωνίας, οὐκέτι τοῦτο τὴν τοῦ δικαίου φύσιν ἔχει· κἂν μεταπίπτῃ τὸ κατὰ τὸ δίκαιον συμφέρον, χρόνον δέ τινα εἰς τὴν πρόληψιν ἐναρμόττῃ, οὐδὲν ἧττον ἐκεῖνον τὸν χρόνον ἦν δίκαιον τοῖς μὴ φωναῖς κεναῖς ἑαυτοὺς συνταράττουσιν ἀλλ’ εἰς τὰ πράγματα βλέπουσιν.

Yonge, 1853

XXXVII. From the moment that a thing declared just by the law is generally recognized as useful for the mutual relations of men, it becomes really just, whether it is universally regarded as such or not. But if, on the contrary, a thing established by law is not really useful for social relations, then it is not just; and if that which was just, inasmuch as it was useful, loses this character, after having been for some time considered so, it is not less true that during that time it was really just, at least for those who do not perplex themselves about vain words, but who prefer in every case, examining and judging for themselves.

Hicks, 1925

XXXVII. Among the things accounted just by conventional law, whatever in the needs of mutual intercourse is attested to be expedient, is thereby stamped as just, whether or not it be the same for all; and in case any law is made and does not prove suitable to the expediencies of mutual intercourse, then this is no longer just. And should the expediency which is expressed by the law vary and only for a time correspond with the prior conception, nevertheless for the time being it was just, so long as we do not trouble ourselves about empty words, but look simply at the facts.

Bailey, 1926

XXXVII. Among actions which are sanctioned as just by law, that which is proved, on examination, to be of advantage, in the requirements of men’s dealings with one another, has the guarantee of justice, whether it is the same for all or not. But if a man makes a law, and it does not turn out to lead to advantage in men’s dealings with each other, then it no longer has the essential nature of justice. And even if the advantage in the matter of justice shifts from one side to the other, but for a while accords with the general concept, it is nonetheless just for that period, in the eyes of those who do not confound themselves with empty sounds, but look to the actual facts.

Epicurus

XXXVIII. Ἔνθα μὴ καινῶν γενομένων τῶν περιεστώτων πραγμάτων ἀνεφάνη μὴ ἁρμόττοντα εἰς τὴν πρόληψιν τὰ νομισθέντα δίκαια ἐπ’ αὐτῶν τῶν ἔργων, οὐκ ἦν ταῦτα δίκαια· ἔνθα δὲ καινῶν γενομένων τῶν πραγμάτων οὐκέτι συνέφερε τὰ αὐτὰ δίκαια κείμενα, ἐνταῦθα δὴ τότε μὲν ἦν δίκαια ὅτε συνέφερεν εἰς τὴν πρὸς ἀλλήλους κοινωνίαν τῶν συμπολιτευομένων, ὕστερον δ’ οὐκ ἦν ἔτι δίκαια ὅτε μὴ συνέφερεν.

Yonge, 1853

XXXVIII. When, without any fresh circumstances arising a thing which has been declared just in practice does not agree with the impressions of reason, that is a proof that the thing was not really just. In the same way, when in consequence of new circumstances, a thing which has been pronounced just does not any longer appear to agree with utility, the thing which was just, inasmuch as it was useful to the social relations and intercourse of mankind, ceases to be just the moment when it ceases to be useful.

Hicks, 1925

XXXVIII. Where without any change in circumstances the conventional laws, when judged by their consequences, were seen not to correspond with the notion of justice, such laws were not really just; but wherever the laws have ceased to be expedient in consequence of a change in circumstances, in that case the laws were for the time being just when they were expedient for the mutual intercourse of the citizens, and subsequently ceased to be just when they ceased to be expedient.

Bailey, 1926

XXXVIII. Where, provided the circumstances have not been altered, actions which were considered just have been shown not to accord with the general concept, in actual practice, then they are not just. But where, when circumstances have changed, the same actions which were sanctioned as just no longer lead to advantage, they were just at the time, when they were of advantage for the dealings of fellow-citizens with one another, but subsequently they are no longer just, when no longer of advantage.

Epicurus

XXXIX. Ὁ ‹τὰ ἑαυτοῦ πρὸς› τὸ μὴ θαρροῦν ἀπὸ τῶν ἔξωθεν ἄριστα συστησάμενος, οὗτος τὰ μὲν δυνατὰ ὁμόφυλα κατεσκευάσατο, τὰ δὲ μὴ δυνατὰ οὐκ ἀλλόφυλά γε· ὅσα δὲ μηδὲ τοῦτο δυνατὸς ἦν, ἀνεπίμεικτος ἐγένετο καὶ ἐξηρείσατο ὅσα ‹πρὸς› τοῦτ’ ἐλυσιτέλει πράττειν.
XL. Ὅσοι τὴν δύναμιν ἔσχον τοῦ τὸ θαρρεῖν μάλιστα ἐκ τῶν ὁμορρούντων παρασκευάσασθαι, οὗτοι καὶ ἐβίωσαν μετ’ ἀλλήλων ἥδιστα τὸ βεβαιότατον πίστωμα ἔχοντες, καὶ πληρεστάτην οἰκειότητα ἀπολαβόντες οὐκ ὠδύραντο ὡς πρὸς ἔλεον τὴν τοῦ τελευτήσαντος προκαταστροφήν.

Yonge, 1853

XXXIX. He who desires to live tranquilly without having anything to fear from other men, ought to make himself friends; those whom he cannot make friends of, he should, at least avoid rendering enemies; and if that is not in his power, he should, as far as possible, avoid all intercourse with them, and keep them aloof, as far as it is for his interest to do so.
XL. The happiest men are they who have arrived at the point of having nothing to fear from those who surround them. Such men live with one another most agreeably, having the firmest grounds of confidence in one another, enjoying the advantages of friendship in all their fullness, and not lamenting as a pitiable circumstance, the premature death of their friends.

Hicks, 1925

XXXIX. He who best knew how to meet fear of external foes made into one family all the creatures he could; and those he could not, he at any rate did not treat as aliens; and where he found even this impossible, he avoided all intercourse, and, so far as was expedient, kept them at a distance.
XL. Those who were best able to provide themselves with the means of security against their neighbours, being thus in possession of the surest guarantee, passed the most agreeable life in each other’s society; and their enjoyment of the fullest intimacy was such that, if one of them died before his time, the survivors did not lament his death as if it called for commiseration.

Bailey, 1926

XXXIX. The man who has best ordered the element of disquiet arising from external circumstances has made those things that he could akin to himself, and the rest at least not alien; but with all to which he could not do even this, he has refrained from mixing, and has expelled from his life all which it was of advantage to treat thus.
XL. As many as possess the power to procure complete immunity from their neighbors, these also live most pleasantly with one another, since they have the most certain pledge of security, and, after they have enjoyed the fullest intimacy, they do not lament the previous departure of a dead friend, as though he were to be pitied.

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