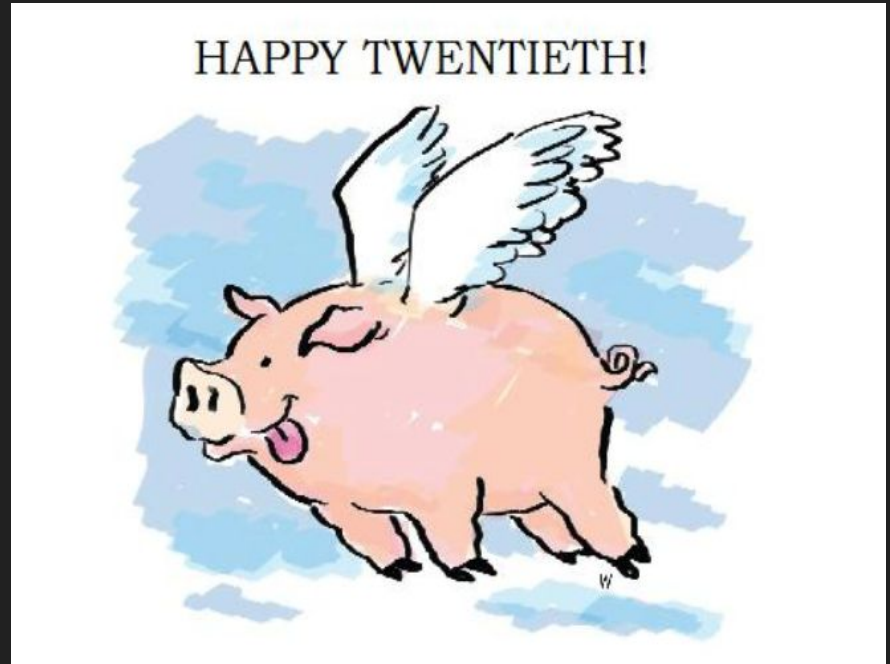
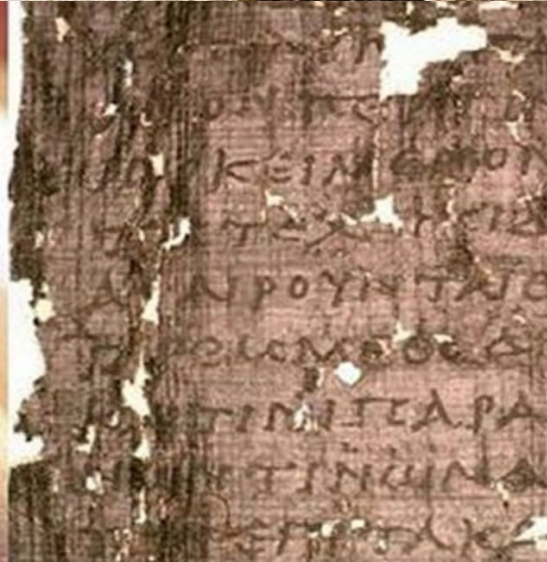
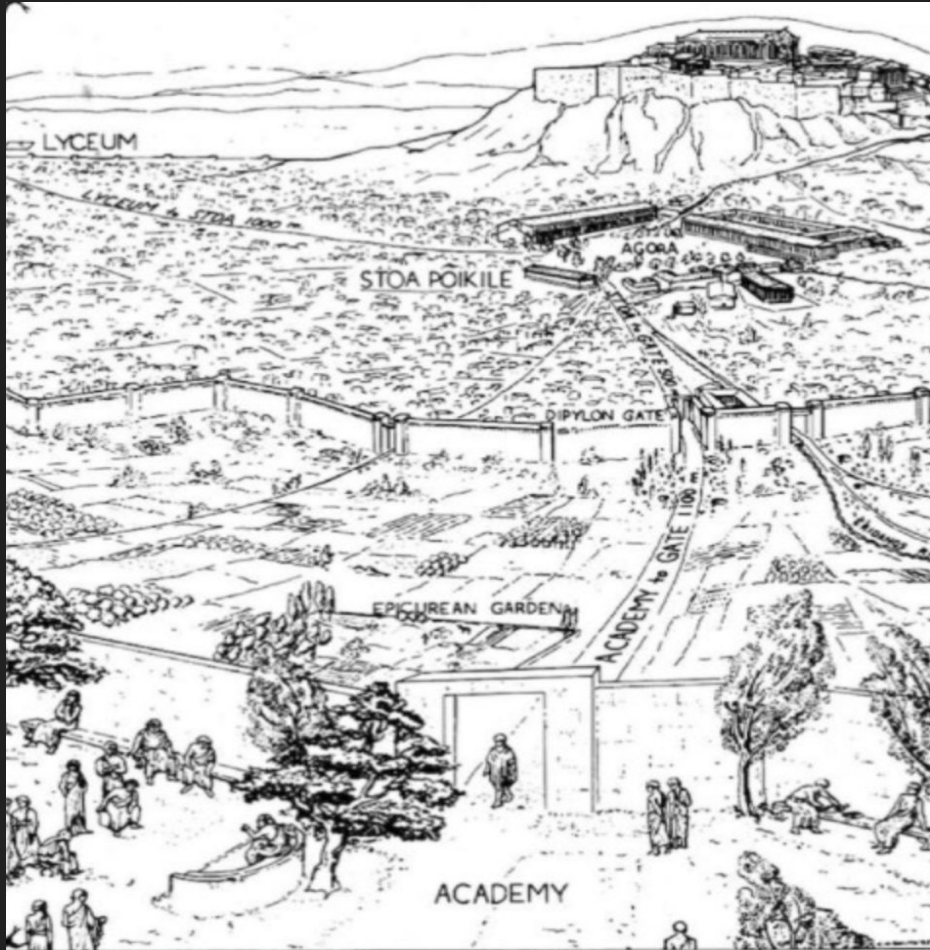


“Guest, here you will spend your time well; here the highest good is pleasure”





The Epicurean Garden



Leontion and Mys...

Women and Enslaved People

We may also speak here of ... his kindness to his slaves, as is plain both from his will and from the fact that they joined him in his philosophical studies—the most eminent of them was Mys, whom I have already mentioned. -Diogenes Laertius, *Life of Epicurus*

“Leontium, that hetaira who had the gall to write a riposte to Theophrastus — well, she did write elegantly in good Attic, but still, this was the licence which prevailed in the Garden of Epicurus.”

- Cicero, *DND*

Tetrapharmakos

The Four Part Cure



EPICURUS 341-270 BC



DON'T FEAR GOD



WHAT IS GOOD IS EASY TO GET

TETRAFARMAKOS
FOUR PART CURE



DON'T WORRY ABOUT DEATH



WHAT IS TERRIBLE IS EASY TO ENDURE

Three Kinds of Epicurean Desire

Natural & Necessary Desires: desire for things that are natural and necessary to stay alive and to be happy. We should limit ourselves to these desires if we want to be happy. **Examples:** simple food, water, shelter, sex, and friendship

Natural & Unnecessary Desires: desire for things that are natural for human beings but not necessary for staying alive or being happy. These things won't make us happy, and in excess will make us unhappy, but in moderation they provide harmless variations on Natural & Necessary Desires. **Examples:** wine, fish, erotic love

Unnatural & Unnecessary Desires: Desires that are unnatural for human beings, despite what culture says. These are destructive of our own and others' happiness. **Examples:** desire for money, power, status, political office, war

Death, the Gods, and Ataraxia

“Pleasure reaches its upper limit in the removal of all pain.”

“All desires that do not lead to pain when they remain unsatisfied are unnecessary.”

“Unhappiness is caused by fears, or by endless and empty desires; but he who is able to rein these in creates for himself a blissful understanding.”

“Die as if you had never lived.”

Lucretius

Venus represents the pleasure that pervades the natural world.

She is the flow and mixing of atoms in the universe.

Peace of living within the limits of nature instead of the capitalist empirical machine (war, politics, and ambition).

Venus is the joy, pleasure, and the ecology that governs nature.



The Sacrifice of Iphigenia



“As when at Aulis the altar of our Lady of the Crossroads (i.e. Diana/Artemis) was foully defiled by the blood of Iphianassa (i.e. Iphigenia), shed by the chosen leaders of the Greeks, the top men. As soon as the ribbon that had bound her maiden tresses fell in equal lengths down her cheeks, as soon as she sensed her father standing grimly before the altar, and by his side the priests hiding the knife, and the people shedding tears at the sight of her, mute with fear she sank to the ground on her knees, all so that a fair and fortunate wind might be given to the fleet. So powerful was religion to persuade evil.”

“Nature is finally free from her proud masters; she does all things by herself of her own accord, and she has nothing to do with the gods.” —Lucretius, *DRN* 2.1090-2



When you want to smile,
visit me: I'm a hog, sleek,
fat, and well cared-for, one
of Epicurus' herd.

-Horace, *Satire* 4

1) Do you agree with Epicurus and Lucretius that you could actually be happy fulfilling only natural and necessary desires? Is he right to say that the maximally happy life is simply the one free from all fear and pain? Or is something more necessary for a life to be happy? i.e. Should we all be Epicureans?

2) Epicureanism assumes that the greatest threat to happiness is the fear of death. Do you agree? Why should death be the greatest threat to happiness, rather than other candidates like injustice, inequality, sexism, racism, etc.?

3. Consider anthropologist Marshall Sahlins' argument: that paleolithic, hunter-gatherer societies were not "poor" (as is often said), but rather were the "Original Affluent Society." They are only poor by contemporary assumption of that unlimited desires are "natural." What are the possible connections between Sahlins' idea of the "original affluent society," Lucretius' story of early human history, and Epicurus' category of desires?

Epicurean Physics

Reality is made up of atoms and void; both are infinite.

There are infinite worlds (bc atoms and void are infinite).

Atoms = smallest unit of reality; infinite in number, not shape.

Atoms are finite in shape, so there is regularity in nature.

Gods, our thoughts, souls, worlds, time: everything = atoms.

Atoms “fall” eternally through the infinite void, collide by chance, hook together, and form worlds.