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# Some thoughts on Epicurus.

## Abstract

Laertius with his *Lives of Eminent Philosophers* is perhaps the most important source of information that we have on Epicurus, though this information has been implemented by the Herculaneum papyri and in general by other writers and commentators of the Hellenistic era. By not entering in a vivid and contemporary discussion on the Epicurean philosophical system, this article has the aim of exploiting the source of Laertius in order to present and interpret Epicurus's philosophical system as presented in it, thus to unite in a reciprocal way Physics, Ethics and the Canon. Its objective is a clarification of his system by hoping that it can give a precise and simple image of its essence.



Diogenes Laertius<sup>1</sup> presents the division of Epicurus' philosophy<sup>2</sup> in three parts, the canon (κανονικόν), physics and ethics and his explanation is particularly enlightening. In his text the canon is presented as a kind of introduction<sup>3</sup>, physics examine the whole theory on nature and ethics examine what "one prefers and avoids"<sup>4</sup>. This last branch of his philosophy is included in the books *Περὶ βίων*, in the letters as well as in the book *Περὶ τέλους*<sup>5</sup>. Indeed, according to Laertius, the Canon constitutes an autonomous branch. I must note that the three divisions given by Laertius are of different nature: one on method, and the others on perception and on selection.

According to another outline, the main branches of Epicurus's philosophical system are two, physics and ethics, with the Canon being the methodological tool for approaching the above divisions. As such, it does not constitute a separate branch in itself. De Witt proposes the Canon as a methodological *sine qua non*, in an order that considers ethical questions as derived from physical ones and both subjects to the application of the Canon. May I be permitted to interpret it in his own words as "the only contact between man and reality"<sup>6</sup>. Therefore, the Canon does not create a content, does not constitute a division, but the tool with which "one can test" the two main branches<sup>7</sup>. It is therefore a kind of operational methodology with which the criterion of truth that will be applied to each discipline can be established. The word *τέλος* in Greek, as in several languages, means the end as an ending, but also as a purpose. The Suda lexicon defines *τέλος* as "there, where there is no more"<sup>8</sup>. I would like to take these three branches inversely to analyze their consequence.

Thus the branch on ethics deals with what we want or should not do or avoid (τὰ περὶ αἰρέσεως καὶ φυγῆς) in relation to a purpose (Περὶ τέλους), this purpose is associated with life (Περὶ βίων). Summarizing the operation globally, we can say that it is a kind of a possible act of selection, carried out in a variety of conditions. In this interpretation, Laertius does not propose to us what we should want or avoid, nor what is the finality, but only that our actions (our choices) must be (or already are) subordinated to a finality that can allow us to live our lives (at this point ἀταραξία is not yet mentioned). But in order to make an actual choice or selection (περὶ αἰρέσεως), we need to know the value of those we can choose or avoid, and for this we need a thorough examination of what surrounds us so that we can choose. This last part is dedicated to the branch of physics (Περὶ φύσεως βίβλοις). But with which tools can we judge and choose what we want or not? The answer is, with the Canon.

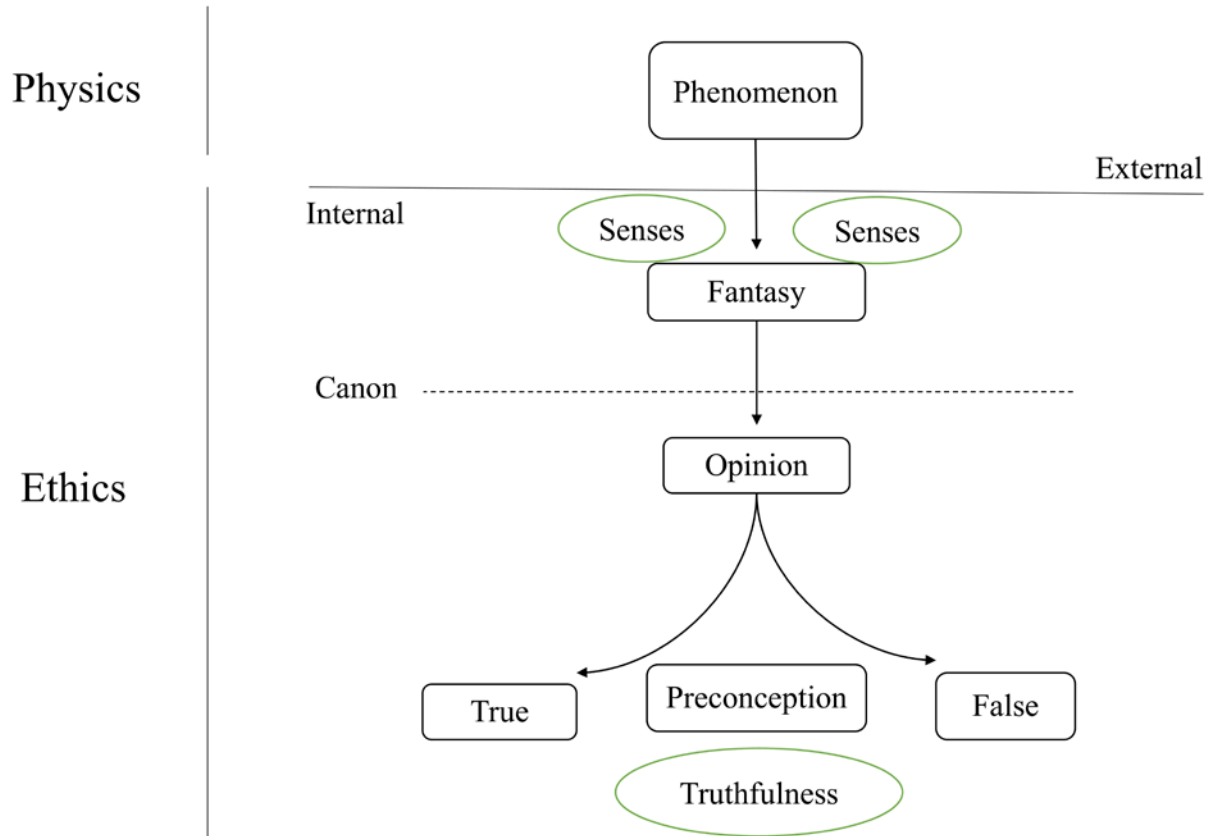
The system therefore presents a complete examination of what surrounds us, so we can recognize and qualify objects (in a broad sense). The Canon helps us to make certain choices and avoid others by having a purpose that leads us to live in happiness (ἀταραξία). This system is further complicated by the fact that several parameters are introduced into the Canon, such as sensations (αἰσθήσεις), feelings (πάθη), mind (διάνοια), preconceptions (πρόληψις) and necessity (ανάγκη). These are the key words of Epicurean philosophy.

This problem constitutes one of the cornerstones of modern bibliography, because through this examination the core of Epicurus's philosophy is highlighted. It is thus possible to examine the method as a criterion, the use of language (in the literal sense) and all the interactivity between the preceding parameters. On the other hand, these elements constitute the mechanism that allows us to evaluate and reflect on issues around true and false, as proposed by Epicurus and which are still relevant today<sup>9</sup>.

The concept of the criterion of judgment (the application of the Canon) has given rise to a series of writings over time. This is because even if the usefulness of the analysis of the natural environment and its consequent appreciation (through ethics) can be apprehended, it is difficult to establish the objectivity of the (judgment) criteria that will allow us to choose and avoid effectively. Anthony A. Long presents a very detailed analysis which, in my opinion, stands out from the others for its clarity. Concerning the Canon, the question that arises is: what tool can distinguish a false from a correct affirmation? As Long also mentions, it is necessary to point out that the Epicureans considered dialectics to be superfluous<sup>10</sup>, because as Laertius informs us, it does not use the canonical terms of words<sup>11</sup>. From this point of view, the creation of the criterion of judgment is not based on dialectical aphorisms or reason. I may suggest, it is based on a natural mechanism of perception. The major source of information, related to this issue, we find it today in the letter to Herodotus, which is also implemented by the extract from book 28 on nature, found in Ercolano<sup>12</sup>.

In a synoptic way (Figure 1) and by interpreting Long's sayings, the perception of a phenomenon is carried out with the αἰσθησις, but what is captured by the senses does not necessarily correspond to the object that transmits this image, it is not precise (for other causes). The εἶδωλο is transmitted to the human, who captures it by creating a fantasy (φαντασία) of this image. This perception is neither coordinated nor provoked by reason. Therefore, the fantasy is real (true) because it exists, but it does not correspond to the image. If a fantasy is true or false, this will be decided with the addition of a judgment criterion that will grant truthfulness (ἐνάργεια) to this fantasy. Thus, it will become a δόξα (an opinion), that is, with a tool that will confirm that the object is what it says it is or the opposite. Without this operation, any object remains in a

waiting list for confirmation (προσμένον). So far, according to Epicurus the creation of the image is an externally induced operation (physical) and the creation of the fantasy and its judgment is an internal operation (ethical). By this point of view, he asserts that we are able to confirm the perception of something (mere report or experience of images according to Long<sup>13</sup>) outside of us, but we cannot qualify it (true or false). The δόξα corresponds to taking a position (judgment) and can be true or false.



**Figure 1. Application of the Canon.**

In order for a δόξα to be considered true or false, it must be compared to an experience established in the past and which is considered true at the moment of judgement, it is *εναργής*<sup>14</sup>. This comparison is made possible because the pre-established experience is already catalogued and has already undergone the test of truthfulness (it is *εναργής*), though the process of creation in regard to the *εναργείς* preconceptions is not clearly stated in the sources. The concept of a pre-established idea or image is the *πρόληψις*<sup>15</sup> (preconception). These preconceptions are created through the repetition of confirmation on images under truthfulness<sup>16</sup>. Again, these preconceptions are characterized as *εναργείς*, that is they are true. Therefore, the control operation arrives at the moment when we compare a new fantasy (which requires verification) with a database (already confirmed as true). In this case we can decide if a fantasy is true or false by comparing it to a preconception.

In this operation, Epicurus does not give a clear explanation for the preconception of objects that never had the possibility of being confirmed, such as, for example, gods. That is,

through this interpretation we can never acquire an opinion (confirmed as true or false) about a mental object, because we have not had the possibility (in the past) of confirming it through a catalogued and verified preconception (through experience). David Hume, who has taken up Epicurus' examination, will solve this problem by explaining that preconceptions are not innate<sup>17</sup>, but are created as we experience them. For this reason, a πρόληψις can never exist unless what it registers is already proven and experienced. In this sense, nothing can be judged if a similar judgment has not already taken place (so that the comparison can be made). Man is thus empty of preconceptions by birth. In this case, metaphysics cannot be judged, because we do not have criteria for judging them, and according to empiricists we will never have. For Epicurus, nature's phenomena can be judged by comparing each of them with a preconception, by similarity. This judgment does not notify its necessary truthfulness, but simply an opinion (whether something is true or false), which may also be false. But since this opinion is established in order to serve the subject who formulated it, it is considered ethically true<sup>18</sup>.

Epicurus's operation as interpreted by Long is very interesting, because it creates an opening onto two typologies of existence: the autonomous truth of perception as such (without judgment) and the truth of the confirmation of its content (what it is, i.e. true or false). It can also be applied to the division of Epicurus' philosophy into Physics, Ethics, with the tool of the Canon as proposed by several commentators.

A peculiarity of this theory, which was not elaborated either by Epicurus or by his commentators, is the definition and qualification of the word Είδωλον (image) in the process of perception by the senses. Although Epicurus makes no distinction between the different tools of perception (αίσθησις), the representation of the captured object as an image presupposes a relative supremacy of the human sight as the best witness compared to the other senses. Because if we apply the above-mentioned theory to a sound signal, in this case the object that emits its image (είδωλον) cannot be an image, so we cannot talk about εἶδωλον<sup>19</sup>.

Again, Laertius, when explaining the word πρόληψις (preconception<sup>20</sup>), uses the example of the word άνθρωπος, which according to him is pre-acquired<sup>21</sup>, implying that with this clear (true) image (ἐναργής) of the concept that is pre-acquired (according to the contribution of the senses, προηγουμένων τῶν αἰσθήσεων), the criterion of truth (the comparison) can be applied to another image, with the input of the senses. Additionally, he admits that this first pre-acquired image is real axiomatically, παντὶ οὖν ὀνόματι τὸ πρῶτως ὑποτεταγμένον ἐναργές ἐστι<sup>22</sup>. In this theory, Epicurus (through Laertius) does not explain the transformation of a true concept (ἐναργές) into words (άνθρωπος) nor how this preconception was acquired. This constitutes, in my own opinion, a difficulty in understanding the theory of the creation of preconceptions.

“If we have to decide if this is a horse or a cow<sup>23</sup>”, we will compare the information apprehended by the senses with a preconception of horse or cow already acquired. Following the comparison, we will be able to confirm it. This presupposes that we have already had the opportunity to know what a horse or a cow is, that is why we possess the preconception. But when we are in front of a new object for which we do not have an already associated preconception? Epicurus in this case proposes a comparison *by similarity*, but without adequately explaining what the criteria for this comparison by similarity are. Moreover, Laertius, in mentioning the existence of a baggage of pre-acquired universal preconceptions (προηγουμένων τῶν αἰσθήσεων) that were created without the contribution of the senses, does not explain their transformation into words. That is, how a preconception (ἐναργές) was transformed into words linguistically since the senses had no information about it (I would add with the canonical term of word, as Epicurus proposed).

How can we associate a preconception for which we do not have a word associated with a new image? Therefore, if we accept the condition of preconception, how is it possible to associate them linguistically with a new object, since the senses have not had the chance to compare it before. It would seem that for Epicurus the comparison is not dialectically made, but the preconceptions are compared with each other on a different level of language or reason. This comparison does not take place dialectically.

### The Epicurean philosophy.

We must accept the fact that Epicurus's philosophical system is an autonomous one with premeditated analytical phases: the analyzed subject (matter), the method and the desired result. Its system is divided primarily into two settings: external-physical and the internal-ethical. The external represents nature, all the things that exist. The origin of this external setting (thus the origin of the world), in which man also is located, is elaborated in his theory of atoms and void. Thus, the origin of the world can be considered as a parallel goal of his entire theory together with the research for happiness (the characteristics and regulations of the latter are exploited in the Canon and in the ethical theory in general). For it is these natural characteristics and rules that compel man to act in one way or another. By these means, the regulation between atoms in the void does not constitute a physical theory so that it can simply be studied, but its fundamentals will also regulate the relationship that man will have towards it. It is for this reason that in the literature of commentators, sometimes the Epicurean nature is associated with God.

The enormous difference between nature and God is based on the Epicurean conviction that natural regulation has no predetermined origin. That is to say, it is opposed to the belief that a form, an entity, a force or a god lies behind and actuates a premeditated plan. In this regard, Laertius gives a clear definition of god (as commonly understood according to Epicurus) by explaining that the misinterpretation is due not to a *πρόληψις*, i.e. to a common preconception concerning god, but to a *ὑπολήψις*, i.e. to a misunderstanding that we have of god<sup>24</sup>. According to Epicurus, it is then a misunderstanding of nature and its phenomena. Thus his theory denies metaphysics, denies the human relation with the divine and focuses pragmatically on understanding the rules of phenomena<sup>25</sup>.

According to Epicurus, man is obliged (*ανάγκη*) to educate himself and understand nature. This idea is clearly explained by Laertius when he says that man was obliged in many ways by the events of nature (I suggest to study it too)<sup>26</sup>. This confirms that the physical part of Epicurean philosophy exists by obligation and not as a discipline in itself. Man was obliged to study the rules of nature in order to live safely<sup>27</sup>. This fact is also related to Epicurus' renunciation of dialectics (and sophists), probably considering it as a science for science's sake, and thus without any direction of pragmatic concretization. According to Laertius, Epicurus called dialectics multi-corruptors<sup>28</sup> (*πολυφθόρους*). His major opposition to them was the fact that they (the dialectics) did not use the words in their canonical way (in the sense of natural), to express things<sup>29</sup>.

Laertius contextualizes precisely the relationship of the Epicurean school with its antagonists in chapters 7 and 8 of *Lives*. He thus presents Epicurus' negative opinion of philosophers such as Nausiphanes, Protagoras, Plato, Aristotle, Democritus, Heraclitus, Antidore, Pyrrhon, the Cynics and the Dialectics. With the adjectives used to qualify these philosophers and their schools, it is possible to sometimes glimpse the cause of a subjacent philosophical order. Thus, through the opposites, we can determine some of Epicurus' convictions. He denied the

“sophist prestige” that leads one to become illiterate, fraudulent and prostituted<sup>30</sup>, thus insinuating the dishonest purpose of dialectic as such. He regarded Plato as flattering Dionysus, probably associating his theory of ideas to a transliteration of Dionysian ecstatic-transcendental, since it dealt with a hypothetical afterlife.

For Epicurus, knowledge (τὸ μακάριον τῆς γνώσεως / the bliss of knowledge) is the only way to remove fear<sup>31</sup>. It is the only way to ward off “the fear that nourishes the spirit” (διάνοια), in regard to death and pain. This affirmation can be found in several passages in the Epicurean texts, of which I present a detailed list<sup>32</sup>. Thus, in order for man not to live in fear, he is obliged to study what surrounds him, namely nature. This is the explanation that gives birth to the physical branch of his philosophy. From here begins the whole theorization of the natural examination which is based on what already exists with its consequent denomination as an empirical system. For according to Epicurus, one cannot be afraid of something that does not exist. The danger must be real. Therefore, physics is not a discipline in itself, but an obligation as a necessary step to reach the state of happiness (απονία, αταραξία).

At the same time, this examination is conceived because man must be able to act and not only pronounce himself with a dialectical sophism (σοφιστεία), that is to say, he must produce an action that will bring him to happiness through the absence of any ταραχος (agitation). He is free not to do so (to study nature), but in this case he will live in fear and pain, because he will not be able to find a solution to specific and given problems.

The constitution of these rules that coordinate human actions with respect to natural regulation (which is not pre-meditated by a major entity<sup>33</sup>) is the ethical part of his philosophy. Ethics thus include all those (human) operations that will allow man first to become aware of nature in order to study it and second to be able to establish an action towards it.

The ethical part thus examines the internal (human) setting and is divided into two categories. The first includes the tools of perception and the second the tools of choice (selection). In order for man to be able to decide what his action will be, concerning a natural phenomenon that is opposed to him (previously studied), he will have to apply a criterion of truth (on this phenomenon) which is established by the Canon. This is a method of examination that applies to the products of perception. The product of the perception of a phenomenon, with the Canon, is analyzed and qualified, thus permitting one to have a correct answer/action that will allow him to live in happiness and without fear. Thus the Canon examines all the possibilities of perception, given to man, in order to establish the best action concerning a phenomenon. A permanence in life without suffering is the ultimate goal of these actions.

It is difficult to historically establish the course of Epicurean philosophy. Two are the most important causes; the total absence of original texts and the opposition that its doctrine received throughout the Christian era, from the end of the first Roman imperial period to the present day. The first cause is related to the second and raises a question; for we know from Laertius that Epicurus was an extremely prolific writer who surpassed all his contemporaries.

He thus offers us some details by informing us that he did not use texts and references from other authors in his writing (as Aristotle or Zenon did), thus adding a higher degree of quality (but also of quantity) to his texts<sup>34</sup>. What Epicurus wrote was his own text which he produced in great quantity. According to Laertius, Epicurus's writings exceeded 300 scrolls<sup>35</sup>. It is therefore surprising to realize that every single of Epicurus's original texts (the copies) have been lost over time. It is also surprising to know that the only surviving texts (and some of them presumed

original<sup>36</sup>) are those by Laertius, which have survived because Laertius simultaneously dealt with several philosophers as well and not only with Epicurus.

The discovery of excerpts from Epicurus' physical treatise in Ercolano testifies that his text was able to endure for 2000 years, not by premeditated human action (as was the case with Laertius' text), but natural. The catastrophic eruption of Vesuvius in 79 sealed over time archaeological treasures of all kinds and thus the Epicurean texts. It is my opinion that had it not been for this event related to Vesuvius, we would not have received these extracts today.

Similarly, the Oinoanda inscription, which does not deal with the original Epicurean texts (for this reason it can be considered a secondary source from antiquity), may have survived because of its large size and the support on which it was engraved; the stone. It would have taken great determination to intentionally destroy this inscription because of the message it carried. In this case, the support on which it was engraved made its contents last over time. It is my opinion that if Diogenes had written on papyrus, we would never have received his text.

From Lucretius to Ioannis Stobaeus (Ἰωάννης ὁ Στοβαῖος)<sup>37</sup>, that is from the 1<sup>st</sup> century B.C to the 5<sup>th</sup> A.D., we only have the texts of Epicurus' commentators that have survived because of their concrete application in specific social contexts, but also because of the importance of the personalities who pronounced them. They were always, directly or indirectly, people connected to power. After Gassendi<sup>38</sup> a new era of analysis and examination of Epicurus began, but already his texts were lost.

The Garden of Epicurus is the only philosophical school of Antiquity that has been able to survive and exist for more than 2300 years. As de Witt notes throughout these centuries, no man was more incessantly insulted<sup>39</sup>, against him were the Platonists, the Stoics and finally the Christians.





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<sup>1</sup> Information about Diogenes Laertius is very limited. We cannot have any certainty for his real name or the date he operated. The edition of Isaac Casaubon, *Isaaci Hortiboni Notae Ad Diogenis Laertij libros de vitis, dictis & decretis principum Philosophorum*, in Morgiis [Morges] of 1583, although now historical, probably remains very relevant as regards indications of the date in which Laertius operated. Casaubon mentions that, Laertius in treating Plutarch and Sextus Empiricus inevitably operates after the second century. An information on Laertius we find it through Στέφανος ο Βυζαντινός (5<sup>th</sup> century) which presents him as an ancient writer in relation to him. For this reason, it is logical to consider his presence between the 1<sup>st</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> centuries AD. Λαέρτιος Διογένης, *ΒΙΟΙ ΚΑΙ ΤΩΝ ΕΝ ΦΙΛΟΣΟΦΙΑ ΕΥΔΟΚΙΜΗΣΑΝΤΩΝ* (Πάπυρος, Αθήνα 1975), pp. 5-8. A rather detailed reference is also given by Michel Bitzikelis in, Bitzikelis, Michel. "Les premiers imitateurs de Diogène Laërce au XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle : la tradition des sept Sages, source d'inspiration des collections d'apophtegmes" (*Littératures classiques*, vol. 84, no. 2, 2014), pp. 49-61.

<sup>2</sup> *Lives of Eminent Philosophers*. Diogenes Laertius. R.D. Hicks. (Cambridge. Harvard University Press., 1972 [1925]), Book X, 29, τῆς διαίρεσεως κατ' αὐτόν.

<sup>3</sup> Laertius, Diogenes. *Lives*, Book X, 30, ἐφόδους ἐπὶ τὴν πραγματείαν ἔχει.

<sup>4</sup> Laertius. *Lives*, Book X, 30, τὰ περὶ αἰρέσεως.

<sup>5</sup> Unfortunately, today we are not in possession of the above mentioned books.

<sup>6</sup> De Witt, Wentworth, Norman. *Epicurus and His Philosophy*, University of Minnesota Press, 1954, p. 122.

<sup>7</sup> De Witt. *Epicurus*, p. 121.

<sup>8</sup> *Βυζαντινό Λεξικό ΣΟΥΙΛΑ*, Θύραθεν, Θεσσαλονίκη, 2002, p. 1094.

<sup>9</sup> Regarding this issue, Norman W. De Witt, Anthony A. Long specifically on questions of language, René Lefebvre, Voula Tsouna, David K. Glidden and others have expressed themselves in a significant way. Glidden, David K. Epicurus on Self-Perception, (*American Philosophical Quarterly*, Vol. 16, No. 4, 1979), pp. 297-306. Lefebvre, René. RÈGLE ET CRITÈRE CHEZ ÉPICURE, (*Revue des Études Grecques*, Vol. 117, No. 1, 2004), pp. 82-103. Long A. Anthony. Chance and Natural Law in Epicureanism, (*Phronesis*, Vol. 22, No. 1, 1977), pp. 63-88. Long A. Anthony. AISTHESIS, PROLEPSIS AND LINGUISTIC THEORY IN EPICURUS, (*Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies*, No. 18, 1971), pp. 114-133. O'Keefe, Tim. The Reductionist and Compatibilist Argument of Epicurus' "On Nature", Book 25, (*Phronesis*, Vol. 47, No. 2, 2002), pp. 153-186. Tsouna, Voula. Epicurean Preconceptions, (*Phronesis*, Vol. 61, No. 2, 2016), pp. 160-221.

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<sup>10</sup> Laertius. *Lives*, X, 31, Τὴν διαλεκτικὴν ὡς παρέλκουσαν ἀποδοκιμάζουσιν.

<sup>11</sup> Laertius. *Lives*, X, 31, ἀρκεῖν γὰρ τοὺς φυσικοὺς κατὰ τοὺς χωρεῖν φθόγγους. ἐν πραγμάτων τῷ.

<sup>12</sup> *Catalogo dei papiri ercolanesi*. Centro Internazionale per lo Studio dei Papiri Ercolanesi, Gigante, Marcello, Napoli, Bibliopolis, 1979. Dorandi, Tiziano. Supplemento ai Supplementi al Catalogo dei Papiri Ercolanesi, (*Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik*, Bd. 135, 2001), pp. 45-49. Lasserre, François, Les papyrus d'Herculaneum et le XVIIe Congrès international de papyrologie, (*Museum Helveticum*, Vol. 43, No. 3, 1986), pp. 199-202. Sider, Sandra. Herculaneum's Library in 79 A.D.: The Villa of the Papyri, (*Libraries & Culture*, Vol. 25, No. 4, 1990), pp. 534-542.

<sup>13</sup> Long, Anthony, A. AISTHESIS, PROLEPSIS AND LINGUISTIC THEORY IN EPICURUS, (*Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies*, No. 18, 1971), p. 118.

<sup>14</sup> Laertius. *Lives*, X, 33, καὶ τὸ δοξαστὸν προτέρου τινὸς ἐναργοῦς ἤρτηται.

<sup>15</sup> Laertius. *Lives*, X, 33, δόξαν ὀρθὴν ἢ καθολικὴν νόησιν ἐναποκειμένην.

<sup>16</sup> Laertius. *Lives*, X, 31, μνήμην τοῦ πολλάκις ἔξωθεν φανέντος.

<sup>17</sup> Epicure does not clearly propose innate preconceptions, but he does not specify. Laertius on the other hand specifies that some true (ἐναργεῖς) preconceptions exist "before the [operation of] senses" (προηγουμένων τῶν αἰσθήσεων), i.e. before the process of comparison. In this case, even if not explicitly mentioned, we must accept the fact that Epicurus insinuates pre-existing preconceptions.

<sup>18</sup> In order to exploit the example of Socrates mentioned by Epicurus, when I see a person from afar, at the first moment I can't confirm whether it is Socrates or not (because he is far away). To decide and create my opinion, I must be able to compare it with the concept of Socrates that I already have (because I already know Socrates). After verification, following the comparison, I will be able to tell if the person is Socrates or not. If the person in question continues to stay away and I cannot establish the comparison (lack of information), but I still have to establish an opinion. Then this opinion at the moment I utter it (even if not judged because not compared) must be considered as true. Because I will not be able to believe that the person is Socrates (even if I am not sure) if I know that he is not Socrates. Therefore, at the moment that the opinion is created, it represents the true one.

<sup>19</sup> If in the previous example concerning Socrates we replace the examination of a figure far away from a person by the examination on his voice the word εἶδωλο will not be able to take place. Because εἶδωλο is addressed to something visual.

<sup>20</sup> Laertius. *Lives*, X, 33.

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<sup>21</sup> Laertius. *Lives*, X, 33, Εὐθὺς κατὰ πρόληψιν καὶ ὁ τύπος νοεῖται προηγουμένων τῶν αἰσθήσεων.

<sup>22</sup> Laertius. *Lives*, X, 33.

<sup>23</sup> Laertius. *Lives*, X, 33 end.

<sup>24</sup> Laertius. *Lives*, X, Lettre to Menoeceus, 124, οὐ γὰρ προλήψεις εἰσίν, ἀλλ' ὑπολήψεις ψευδεῖς αἱ τῶν ὑπὲρ θεῶν ἀποφάσεις.

<sup>25</sup> I still insist on the importance given by the Greek philology and philosophy of antiquity to the human vision (which must be adequately examined), because from a phenomenon (φαινόμενο) the derivation of an image (εἶδωλο) is perhaps expected. This presupposes that the qualification of objects (of any kind and quality) are perceived as images. In Laertius, *Vies*, 119, Laertius argues that according to Epicure, who loses his sight should not commit suicide, πηρωθέντα τὰς ὄψεις ἐξάξειν αὐτὸν βίου.

<sup>26</sup> Laertius. *Lives*, letter to Herodotus, 75, τὴν φύσιν πολλὰ καὶ παντοῖα ὑπὸ αὐτῶν τῶν πραγμάτων διδαχθῆναί τε καὶ ἀναγκασθῆναι.

<sup>27</sup> Hobbes in *Leviathan* will examine the properties of the concept of friendship as found in Epicurus and will move away from Aristotelian bliss also based in part on friendship. For Hobbes, friendship will be defined as a necessity that leads to security. Paganini, Gianni. IL PIACERE DELL'AMICIZIA. HOBBS, GASSENDI E IL CIRCOLO NEO-EPICUREO DELL'ACCADEMIA DI MONTMOR, *Rivista di Storia della Filosofia*, (1984), Vol. 66, No. 1 (2011), p. 4.

<sup>28</sup> Laertius. *Lives*, X, 8.

<sup>29</sup> Laertius. *Lives*, X, 31, ἀρκεῖν γὰρ τοὺς φυσικοὺς κατὰ τοὺς τῶν χωρεῖν φθόγγους.

<sup>30</sup> Laertius. *Lives*, X, 7 and 8, Τοῦ στόματος καύχησιν τὴν σοφιστικὴν, [...] πλεῦμόν τε αὐτὸν ἐκάλει καὶ ἀγράμματον καὶ ἀπατεῶνα καὶ πόρνην, in regard to Nausiphanès, 31.

<sup>31</sup> Laertius. *Lives*, X, letter to Herodotus, 79, μηθὲν ἔτι πρὸς τὸ μακάριον τὰς ὁμοίως τοὺς φόβους ἔχειν τοὺς ταῦτα κατειδόμενος.

<sup>32</sup> In this list I present all of Epicure's aphorisms concerning fear in the source of Laertius. Letter to Menoeceus, 131, καὶ πρὸς τὴν τύχην ἀφόβους παρασκευάζει. 133, καὶ περὶ θανάτου διὰ παντὸς ἔχοντος τὸ τῆς φύσεως ἐπιλελογισμένου τέλος. 94, μὴ φοβούμενος τὰς ἀνδραποδώδεις ἀστρολόγων ἀφόβως. 122, τῷ τεχνιτείας ὅπως νέος [...] διὰ τὴν ἀφοβίαν τῶν μελλόντων. 126, δ' δὲ σοφὸς οὔτε οὔτε φοβεῖται. Letter to Herodotus, 66 Dorandi, (Hicks 67) the existence of fear as such. 76, fear as the result of an eventful life. 77 the fear of not understanding weather phenomena. 81, τῷ

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τεθνάναι φοβουμένους. 82, ἂν γὰρ τούτοις προσέχωμεν [ἕκαστον τῶν κριτηρίων ἐναργεῖα], τὸ ὄθεν ὁ τάραχος καὶ ὁ φόβος ἐξαιτιολογήσομεν ὀρθῶς καὶ ἀπολύσομεν. Notably in the capital maxims, X, φόβους τῆς διανοίας τούς περὶ μετεώρων θανάτου ἀλγηδόνων. XII, Οὐκ ἦν τὸ φοβούμενον λύειν τῶν κυριωτάτων μὴ κατειδόμενα ἢ τοῦ σύμπαντος φύσις. The maxim XVIII. The maxim XX, τοὺς ὑπὲρ τοῦ αἰῶνος φόβους. In Maxim XXXIV he talks about the fear of the unjust person, who is always afraid of not being discovered.

<sup>33</sup> It is about his convictions about the non-existence of a god.

<sup>34</sup> Laertius. *Lives*, X, 26 et 27, notably, Γέγονε δὲ πολυγραφώτατος ὁ Ἐπίκουρος, πάντας ὑπερβαλλόμενος πλήθει βιβλίων: κύλινδροι μὲν γὰρ πρὸς τοὺς τριακοσίους εἰσὶ.

<sup>35</sup> A scroll could contain more than one theme.

<sup>36</sup> In this volume dedicated to Epicurus, apart from personal assertions about the philosopher on the part of Laertius, he has inserted a testament, three Epicurean correspondences that summarize globally three main directions of his philosophy. Physics, astronomy (meteorology) and ethics. The first letter to Herodotus encompasses elements of his physical philosophy, the second to Menoeceus of his ethical philosophy, and the third to Pythocles, which includes convictions on astronomy and meteorology. Laërcé also gives an exhaustive list of Epicure's philosophical works accompanied by biographical information as well as a list of Epicurean maxims (δόξαι), consisting of excerpts from his own texts and additions from his students and other Epicureans. To this series of information is added a will of dubious provenance.

<sup>37</sup> I can suggest, the letters of Ambrosius, *Εὐαγγελικὴ προπαρασκευὴ* of Eusebius, *Confessions* and *De utilitate credenda* of Augustine of Hippo, Porfirius and others.

<sup>38</sup> Gassendi, Pierre. (*Animadversiones*, 1649) and (*Syntagma philosophicum*, 1658).

<sup>39</sup> De Witt. (*Epicurus*), p. 3.

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