DIOGENES LAERTIUS

# THE LIVES AND THEORIES OF EMINENT PHILOSOPHERS

**Diogenes Laertius**

# The Lives and Theories of Eminent Philosophers

**Enriched edition.**

*Introduction, Studies and Commentaries by Erin Holloway*

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# Introduction

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This book turns on the unsettled question of whether a philosopher’s life can explain a philosopher’s thought, setting vivid anecdotes beside distilled teachings so that readers must decide if character illuminates doctrine or merely distracts, and it stages, across centuries of material, the enduring friction between the desire to know how thinkers lived and the obligation to understand what they taught, inviting us to weigh wit against reasoning, reputation against record, and the irresistible drama of lives against the demanding clarity of ideas as the stakes of memory, authority, and philosophical practice come into sharp relief.

Diogenes Laertius’s The Lives and Theories of Eminent Philosophers is a biographical and doxographical compendium written in Greek, generally dated to the early third century CE within the Roman Empire. Across ten books, it gathers accounts of major Greek philosophical figures and schools, from early sages through Hellenistic traditions. The work belongs to a tradition of collecting testimonies about teachers, pupils, and doctrines, preserving lore alongside summaries of positions. In modern scholarship and translations it is also known as Lives and Opinions or Lives and Doctrines of Eminent Philosophers, titles that reflect its twin concern with persons and ideas.

Rather than a continuous narrative, the book presents a sequence of dossiers arranged largely by schools, pairing biographical sketches with outlines of teachings and

occasional verses, catalogues, and epigrams. Diogenes writes as an industrious collector: his voice is spare, connective, sometimes credulous, often evenhanded, more archivist than judge. The reading experience alternates between brisk synopses and memorable vignettes, with abrupt changes of pace that mirror the variety of his sources. One moves from succession lists to moral maxims, from rumored habits to terse definitions, always with the sense of a library opened and reassembled for a curious, patient reader.

Running through the collection are linked themes: the rapport between character and doctrine, the formation of philosophical lineages, and the fragile mechanisms by which authority is transmitted. Diogenes repeatedly situates ideas within communities—teachers, rivals, heirs—showing how schools cohere through habits of life as much as through technical argument. The succession notices and anecdotes together trace a genealogy of influence that is social as well as intellectual. Equally present is the tension between rational demonstration and exemplary conduct, where a biting epigram or a notorious gesture can shape reputations as powerfully as any axiom, theorem, or carefully framed definition.

For contemporary readers, the book matters both as an indispensable source and as a lesson in reading traditions critically. Much of what later ages know about certain thinkers and movements survives because it was excerpted or summarized here, alongside material of uneven reliability. The volume therefore models a double attention: to precious preservation and to the filters that preservation imposes. It also enlarges our sense of philosophy’s practice, revealing argument embedded in friendship, controversy, habit, and public performance. In an era negotiating expertise and

persona, the work’s insistence on viewing ideas through their makers remains provocatively instructive.

Approached on its own terms, the compilation rewards browsing and comparison rather than doctrinal finality. Diogenes juxtaposes variants, reproduces conflicting reports, and rarely adjudicates conclusively, which invites readers to notice how traditions accrete and diverge. The style is accessible, the pacing uneven by design, and the tone hospitable to curiosity. Specialists consult it for testimonies; newcomers can use it as a map whose contours prompt further exploration. The book thus serves as both gateway and archive, placing side by side the minimal gist of a teaching and the social memory that kept that teaching alive long after its first formulation.

Read today, The Lives and Theories of Eminent Philosophers offers a disciplined encounter with a civilization’s attempt to remember its thinkers: sober in method, colorful in detail, and quietly reflective about the conditions that make knowledge transmissible. It does not replace primary arguments; it frames them within human circumstances that clarify stakes and distortions alike. The result is a capacious portrait of philosophy as an activity—taught, imitated, disputed, inherited. Accepting its limits while savoring its abundance, readers can follow the arc of schools and the texture of reputations, and consider how our own culture narrates the bond between life and thought.

# Synopsis

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Diogenes Laertius' Lives and Opinions of Eminent Philosophers is a ten-book compendium that assembles biographies, doctrinal summaries, and lists of writings for Greek thinkers from early sages to Hellenistic schools. Organized broadly by schools and lines of succession, it balances anecdote with doxography, presenting how teachings were transmitted through teachers and pupils. The author collects epigrams, wills, and catalogues along with terse accounts of doctrines, refraining from polemic and letting rival positions appear side by side. The work aims less at argument than documentation, offering a panoramic survey of philosophical lives and the ideas associated with their names.

Opening with legendary and early historical figures, the compendium sketches the Seven Sages and early inquirers into nature, setting out aphoristic wisdom, civic reputations, and circulating maxims. It reports competing claims about first principles and cosmology, noting disagreements over the origins of the cosmos and the elements. Diogenes distinguishes broad "successions," often named Ionian and Italian, to map overlapping genealogies of teachers. In these chapters the emphasis falls on attribution: who founded a school, what doctrines were said to be theirs, and what writings or sayings were ascribed to them, while acknowledging alternative accounts preserved in different authorities.

Attention then turns to Socrates and the divergent lines that traced themselves to his practice. Diogenes recounts Socrates' character and influence before following pupils into distinct traditions centered on virtue, knowledge, and conduct. Profiles of Cynic severity, Cyrenaic hedonism, and Megarian dialectic situate ethical disagreement within shared Socratic ancestry. The entries mix brief narratives of teachers' habits and encounters with succinct statements of doctrines, conveying how variations in daily life were seen to embody principles. Debates over pleasure, self-sufficiency, and the uses of argument are noted without adjudication, marking the plural legacy of the Socratic movement.

The Platonic tradition receives extended treatment through lives that outline the founding of the Academy, its internal successions, and a catalogue of writings attributed to Plato. Diogenes summarizes typical Platonic themes as they were received, then tracks successors who revised emphases and methods. Aristotle's life follows with attention to his education, associations, and the breadth of his corpus. Lists of works and schematic descriptions of logical, physical, and ethical inquiries introduce the Peripatetic school and its later heads. Throughout, the catalogue format underscores institutional continuity while registering disputes about authorship, authenticity, and doctrinal interpretation found in his sources.

Later books survey the major Hellenistic systems alongside notable independent figures. The Stoics are presented through a succession of teachers, with doctrines of logic, physics, and ethics arranged as concise propositions and exemplified by personal anecdotes. Skeptics appear with emphasis on methods of inquiry and suspension of judgment. The Epicureans receive particularly full documentation, including preserved letters and maxims that

articulate their physics and ethics. Across these accounts, Diogenes juxtaposes rival conceptions of the goal of life, the nature of knowledge, and the order of the cosmos, leaving each school's central tenets visible against a backdrop of biographical detail.

Diogenes' method reflects a collector's ethos. He cites earlier doxographers, historians, and poets, preserves epigrams, and sometimes inserts satirical verses, yet seldom evaluates the reliability of reports. The result combines institutional histories, catalogues of books, and incidents from daily life, from austere discipline to comic excess. Sectarian rivalries, charges of plagiarism, and disputed attributions recur, indicating how philosophical identity was negotiated through lineage and polemic. Although the mixture can be uneven, the work records variant traditions side by side, enabling readers to see how biography, anecdote, and doctrine interacted in shaping the public images of philosophers and their schools.

As a sourcebook, Lives and Opinions endures for preserving material otherwise lost, especially documents attached to particular schools. Its synoptic arrangement offers a map of Greek philosophy as ancient readers might have encountered it: through names, successions, and emblematic teachings. The work invites questions about authorship, authenticity, and the transmission of ideas, while encouraging care in weighing conflicting testimonies. By presenting competing doctrines without decisive verdicts, it outlines the diversity of ancient inquiry and the social practices around it. Subsequent scholarship continues to mine its reports while balancing them against other evidence, a testament to its lasting documentary significance.

# Historical Context

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Diogenes Laertius composed The Lives and Opinions of Eminent Philosophers in Greek, most likely in the first half of the third century CE, within the Roman Empire's eastern provinces. Little is known of his life, but his citations of earlier authors and his style place him among the antiquarian compilers active during the Second Sophistic. Greek paideia, sustained in cities such as Athens, Alexandria, and Smyrna, furnished institutions, libraries, and teachers that preserved philosophical traditions. Under Roman rule, Greek remained the language of higher learning, and philosophical schools continued as civic fixtures, attracting students from across the Mediterranean.

By Diogenes' day, philosophy was taught in structured settings with long lineages. Athens retained prestige, and Marcus Aurelius endowed four imperial chairs there—Platonic, Aristotelian, Stoic, and Epicurean—around 176–177 CE, ensuring official support for key schools. The book trade and public libraries, heirs to Hellenistic scholarship from Alexandria and Pergamum, enabled access to compilations, catalogues, and biographies. Teachers traveled among cities like Rhodes, Tarsus, and Antioch, networking patrons and pupils. Such institutions fostered a culture of quotation and excerpting, encouraging reference works that summarized doctrines, listed writings, and recorded successions of scholarchs, the very framework Diogenes adopts and extends.

Diogenes worked within a robust biographical and doxographical tradition that stretched back to the Hellenistic era. He quotes or cites authors such as Sotion of Alexandria, Diocles of Magnesia, Hermippus of Smyrna, Demetrius of Magnesia, Apollodorus of Athens, Favorinus of Arelate, and the satirist Timon of Phlius. These predecessors compiled successions of teachers, catalogues of writings, and anecdotes illustrating character. The circulation of competing lists and attributions made citation a necessary practice, and Diogenes frequently reports variant accounts rather than adjudicating them. His method preserves layers of earlier scholarship, allowing later readers to glimpse how Hellenistic and early imperial scholars organized philosophical memory.

Greek philosophy had diversified into recognizable schools over the centuries Diogenes surveys: the Socratic lineages (Platonic Academy and Cynic offshoots), the Peripatetics of Aristotle’s Lyceum, the Stoics centered on the Stoa Poikile, the Epicureans of the Garden, and various Skeptics. Earlier figures from Ionia and Magna Graecia supplied origin stories and doctrines that the schools debated and adapted. By the Roman imperial period, these traditions persisted as curricula, often defined by founding texts and chains of leadership. Diogenes’ arrangement by schools and successions mirrors this institutional continuity, making doctrinal positions legible through teacher-student inheritance and city-based identities.

The cultural climate of the Second Sophistic prized classical Greek models, rhetorical display, and the collection of chreiai—brief illustrative anecdotes about notable figures. Biographical writing flourished, from Plutarch’s Parallel Lives to compendia of poets, orators, and sages. Such works served education and moral reflection, providing exempla for imitation or warning. Diogenes’ compilation participates

in this trend by pairing doctrinal summaries with stories about conduct, teachers, and communities. His occasional inclusion of epigrams likewise echoes contemporary taste for learned ornament. The result aligns with a pedagogical culture that valued concise sayings, memorable incidents, and ancestry as vehicles for philosophical instruction.

Roman hegemony shaped the careers of philosophers and the transmission of their works. Imperial patronage fostered schools and endowed teachers, while periodic tensions—such as expulsions of philosophers from Rome under certain emperors—reminded communities of political limits. Cosmopolitan networks connected Alexandria, Athens, Asia Minor, and Rome through travel, correspondence, and book circulation. Inscriptions and literary testimonia depict philosophers as civic figures, advising cities, representing them abroad, or teaching foreign elites. Diogenes' focus on lineages and libraries, teacher migrations, and the public reputations of sages reflects this interconnected world, where philosophical identities were maintained across provinces under a common imperial framework.

Ancient scholarship grappled with textual authenticity and attribution, problems intensified by a vibrant book market and the prestige of famous names. From the Hellenistic age onward, librarians and scholars compiled catalogues—exemplified by Callimachus' Pinakes—to sort genuine from spurious works. Diogenes inherits this concern: he often records titles, competing bibliographies, and notes on forgeries or mistaken attributions. His lists preserve the contours of lost libraries and editorial debates surrounding authors from Plato to Epicurus. The attention to cataloguing situates his book within a philological enterprise that sought to stabilize philosophical canons even as manuscripts circulated widely and unevenly.

Composed in an era that celebrated Greek cultural heritage under Roman sovereignty, Diogenes' book embodies the encyclopedic, preservative aims of late antique scholarship. By collating competing accounts without forcing a single orthodoxy, it registers the plurality of Greek philosophical traditions as they were taught and remembered in his time. The mixture of doctrine, biography, epigram, and testament reflects educational priorities and the enduring civic presence of schools. Its reliance on earlier authorities acknowledges the cumulative nature of philosophical historiography. In presenting venerable lineages to a broad imperial readership, the work both mirrors and safeguards the learned memory of the Greco-Roman world.

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# PREFACE.

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Diogenes, the author of the following work, was a native (as is generally believed) of Laërte, in Cilicia, from which circumstance he derived the cognomen of Laërtius. Little is known of him personally, nor is even the age in which he lived very clearly ascertained. But as Plutarch, Sextus Empiricus, and Saturninus are among the writers whom he quotes, he is generally believed to have lived near the end of the second century of our era: although some place him in the time of Alexander Severus, and others as late as Constantine. His work consists of ten books, variously called: The Lives of Philosophers, A History of Philosophy, and The Lives of Sophists. From internal evidence (iii. 47, 29), we learn that he wrote it for a noble lady (according to some, Arria; according to others, Julia, the Empress of Severus), who occupied herself with the study of philosophy, and especially of Plato.

Diogenes Laërtius divides the philosophy of the Greeks into the Ionic, beginning with Anaximander, and ending with Theophrastus (in which class, he includes the Socratic philosophy and all its various ramifications); and the Italian, beginning with Pythagoras, and ending with Epicurus, in which he includes the Eleatics, as also Heraclitus and the Sceptics. From the minute consideration which he devotes to Epicurus and his system, it has been supposed that he himself belonged to that school.

His work is the chief source of information we possess concerning the history of Greek philosophy, and is the foundation of nearly all the modern treatises on that subject; some of the most important of which are little more

than translations or amplifications of it. It is valuable, as containing a copious collection of anecdotes illustrative of the life and manners of the Greeks; but he has not always been very careful in his selection, and in some parts there is a confusion in his statements that makes them scarcely intelligible. These faults have led some critics to consider the work as it now exists merely a mutilated abridgment of the original. Breslæus, who in the thirteenth century, wrote a Treatise on the Lives and Manners of the Philosophers, quotes many anecdotes and sayings, which seem to be derived from Diogenes, but which are not to be found in our present text; whence Schneider concludes that he had a very different and far more complete copy than has come down to us.

The text used in the following translation is chiefly that of Huebner, as published at Leipsic, A.D. 1828.

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# LIVES AND OPINIONS OF EMINENT PHILOSOPHERS.

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# BOOK I.

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## INTRODUCTION.

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I. Some say that the study of philosophy originated with the barbarians. In that among the Persians there existed the Magi[2],[1] and among the Babylonians or Assyrians the Chaldæi,[2] among the Indians the Gymnosophistæ[1],[3] and among the Celts and Gauls men who were called Druids[4] and Semnothei, as Aristotle relates in his book on Magic, and Sotion in the twenty-third book of his Succession of Philosophers. Besides those men there were the Phœnician Ochus, the Thracian Zamolxis,[5] and the Libyan Atlas. For the Egyptians say that Vulcan was the son of Nilus, and that he was the author of philosophy, in which those who were especially eminent were called his priests and prophets.

II. From his age to that of Alexander, king of the Macedonians were forty-eight thousand eight hundred and sixty-three years, and during this time there were three hundred and seventy-three eclipses of the sun, and eight hundred and thirty-two eclipses of the moon.

Again, from the time of the Magi, the first of whom was Zoroaster the Persian, to that of the fall of Troy, Hermodorus the Platonic philosopher, in his treatise on Mathematics, calculates that fifteen thousand years elapsed. But Xanthus the Lydian says that the passage of the Hellespont by Xerxes took place six thousand years after the time of

Zoroaster,[6] and that after him there was a regular succession of Magi under the names of Ostanes and Astrampsychos and Gobryas and Pazatas, until the destruction of the Persian empire by Alexander.

III. But those who say this, ignorantly impute to the barbarians the merits of the Greeks, from whom not only all philosophy, but even the whole human race in reality originated. For Musæus was born among the Athenians, and Linus among the Thebans; and they say that the former, who was the son of Eumolpus, was the first person who taught the system of the genealogy of the gods, and who invented the spheres; and that he taught that all things originated in one thing, and when dissolved returned to that same thing; and that he died at Phalerum, and that this epitaph was inscribed on his tomb:—

Phalerum’s soil beneath this tomb contains
Musæus dead, Eumolpus’ darling son.

And it is from the father of Musæus that the family called Eumolpidæ among the Athenians derive their name. They say too that Linus was the son of Mercury and the Muse Urania; and that he invented a system of Cosmogony, and of the motions of the sun and moon, and of the generation of animals and fruits; and the following is the beginning of his poem,

There was a time when all the present world
Uprose at once.

From which Anaxagoras derived his theory, when he said that all things had been produced at the same time, and that then intellect had come and arranged them all in order.

They say, moreover, that Linus died in Eubœa, having been shot with an arrow by Apollo, and that this epitaph was

set over him:—

The Theban Linus sleeps beneath this ground,
Urania’s son with fairest garlands crown’d.

IV. And thus did philosophy arise among the Greeks, and indeed its very name shows that it has no connection with the barbarians. But those who attribute its origin to them, introduce Orpheus the Thracian, and say that he was a philosopher, and the most ancient one of all. But if one ought to call a man who has said such things about the gods as he has said, a philosopher, I do not know what name one ought to give to him who has not scrupled to attribute all sorts of human feelings to the gods, and even such discreditable actions as are but rarely spoken of among men; and tradition relates that he was murdered by women; [7] but there is an inscription at Dium in Macedonia, saying that he was killed by lightning, and it runs thus:—

Here the bard buried by the Muses lies,
The Thracian Orpheus of the golden lyre;
Whom mighty Jove, the Sovereign of the skies,
Removed from earth by his dread lightn’ng’s fire.

V. But they who say that philosophy had its rise among the barbarians, give also an account of the different systems prevailing among the various tribes. And they say that the Gymnosophists and the Druids philosophize, delivering their apophthegms in enigmatical language, bidding men worship the gods and do no evil, and practise manly virtue.

VI. Accordingly Clitarchus, in his twelfth book, says that the Gymnosophists despise death, and that the Chaldæans study astronomy and the science of soothsaying—that the Magi occupy themselves about the service to be paid to the gods, and about sacrifices and prayers, as if they were the

only people to whom the deities listen: and that they deliver accounts of the existence and generation of the gods, saying that they are fire, and earth, and water; and they condemn the use of images, and above all things do they condemn those who say that the gods are male and female; they speak much of justice, and think it impious to destroy the bodies of the dead by fire; they allow men to marry their mothers or their daughters, as Sotion tells us in his twenty-third book; they study the arts of soothsaying and divination, and assert that the gods reveal their will to them by those sciences. They teach also that the air is full of phantoms, which, by emanation and a sort of evaporation, glide into the sight of those who have a clear perception; they forbid any extravagance of ornament, and the use of gold; their garments are white, their beds are made of leaves, and vegetables are their food, with cheese and coarse bread; they use a rush for a staff, the top of which they run into the cheese, and so taking up a piece of it they eat it. Of all kinds of magical divination they are ignorant, as Aristotle asserts in his book on Magic, and Dinon in the fifth book of his Histories. And this writer says, that the name of Zoroaster being interpreted means, a sacrifice to the stars; and Hermodorus makes the same statement. But Aristotle, in the first book of his Treatise on Philosophy, says, that the Magi are more ancient than the Egyptians; and that according to them there are two principles, a good demon and an evil demon, and that the name of the one is Jupiter or Oromasdes, and that of the other Pluto or Arimanius. And Hermippus gives the same account in the first book of his History of the Magi; and so does Eudoxus in his Period; and so does Theopompus in the eighth book of his History of the Affairs of Philip; and this last writer tells us also, that according to the Magi men will have a resurrection and be immortal, and that what exists now will exist hereafter under its own present name; and Eudemus of Rhodes coincides in this statement. But Hecatæus says, that

according to their doctrines the gods also are beings who have been born. But Clearchus the Solensian, in his Treatise on Education says, that the Gymnosophists are descendants of the Magi; and some say that the Jews also are derived from them. Moreover, those who have written on the subject of the Magi condemn Herodotus; for they say that Xerxes would never have shot arrows against the sun, or have put fetters on the sea, as both sun and sea have been handed down by the Magi as gods, but that it was quite consistent for Xerxes to destroy the images of the gods.

VII. The following is the account that authors give of the philosophy of the Egyptians, as bearing on the gods and on justice. They say that the first principle is matter; then that the four elements were formed out of matter and divided, and that some animals were created, and that the sun and moon are gods, of whom the former is called Osiris and the latter Isis, and they are symbolised under the names of beetles and dragons, and hawks, and other animals, as Manetho tells us in his abridged account of Natural Philosophy, and Hecatæus confirms the statement in the first book of his History of the Philosophy of the Egyptians. They also make images of the gods, and assign them temples because they do not know the form of God. They consider that the world had a beginning and will have an end, and that it is a sphere; they think that the stars are fire, and that it is by a combination of them that the things on earth are generated; that the moon is eclipsed when it falls into the shadow of the earth; that the soul is eternal and migratory; that rain is caused by the changes of the atmosphere; and they enter into other speculations on points of natural history, as Hecatæus and Aristagoras inform us.

They also have made laws about justice, which they attribute to Mercury, and they consider those animals which are useful to be gods. They claim to themselves the merit of

various Hellenistic schools ascribe to them different sympathetic or providential roles.

65 Cynosarges was an ancient gymnasium and sanctuary in Athens, historically associated with non-citizens and with philosophical teaching (notably Cynic and related gatherings), where some philosophers are said to have held discussions.

66 This phrase describes metempsychosis (reincarnation), the Pythagorean claim that the soul repeatedly passes into different bodies over time, a doctrine attributed to Pythagorean tradition and some ancient sources.

67 A personal name given here as the father of Epicharmus of Cos; Epicharmus is an early comic poet and dramatist associated with Sicily and the Greek world of the 6th–5th centuries BCE.

68 An early Pythagorean thinker mentioned by ancient authors; some sources credit him with mathematical work and attribute certain spurious or polemical writings to him rather than to Pythagoras.

69 Identified in some ancient reports as a priestess at Delphi whom Aristoxenus and others said influenced Pythagoras’ ethical teachings; her historicity and exact role are uncertain in surviving evidence.

70 A ritual Greek sacrifice traditionally involving a hundred cattle or oxen; used in literature to denote a very large or solemn religious offering.

71 A group from Greek myth thought to live beyond the north wind (Boreas) and closely associated with Apollo; references imply a legendary, remote, and divine origin rather than a historically attested people.

72 An ancient geographical/cosmological term for peoples living on the opposite side of the earth (literally ‘opposite feet’); classical writers used it to express the idea that regions below us are ‘above’ them.

73 Acragas is the ancient Greek name for the city on Sicily now called Agrigento, a major classical polis noted for its wealth and temples in the 6th–5th centuries BCE.

74 κωλυσανέμας is a Greek epithet rendered in the text as “wind-forbidder,” a nickname given to someone said to have the power to stop or restrain winds.

75 Proserpine is the Roman name for the goddess Persephone, who in Greek and Roman mythology is queen of the underworld; ‘infernal realms’ refers to that underworld domain.

76 A Delphian garland is a wreath associated with Delphi (the sanctuary of Apollo), traditionally awarded or worn as a religious or honorific emblem in ancient Greece.

77 Refers to Darius I (Darius the Great), son of Hystaspes, the Achaemenid Persian king who ruled roughly 522–486 BCE; in classical writings such headings often introduce a reported or literary letter rather than a verified historical encounter.

78 The Magi were a priestly caste in ancient Persia and the Chaldaeans were Babylonian priest-astronomers; classical authors frequently portray both groups (first millennium BCE) as custodians of religious learning and astronomical knowledge.

79 An ancient Greek religious festival held in honor of the goddesses Demeter and Persephone, traditionally observed

over three days and connected with fertility and agricultural rites, attested from the Archaic through the Classical period.

80 Here 'atoms' denotes the atomist doctrine (associated with Leucippus and Democritus) that matter is composed of indivisible particles (Greek 'atomos'), an early philosophical hypothesis developed in the 5th–4th centuries BCE.

81 A mid-4th century BCE Greek philosopher who is traditionally reported to have accompanied Alexander the Great; ancient accounts portray him as a calm, admonishing figure and an influence on later sceptical writers.

82 A Greek term literally meaning ‘naked philosophers,’ used by ancient writers for Indian ascetic sages encountered by Hellenistic travellers; modern scholars typically identify them with various Indian renouncer traditions (e.g. early Jain or Hindu ascetics), though exact identifications vary.

83 The Roman name for the goddess Persephone, queen of the underworld in Greco-Roman myth, commonly invoked in literature to signify death, the afterlife, or judgment after death.

84 A Classical Greek term meaning ‘suspension’ or ‘refrainment’ (here rendered as ‘suspending of their judgment’); it denotes the central Pyrrhonean practice of withholding assent to non-evident or dogmatic propositions.

85 In classical Greece (mainly 5th–4th centuries BCE) the Sophists were itinerant teachers and intellectuals who taught rhetoric, argumentation, and practical skills; many ancient authors criticized them for charging fees and for relativistic or rhetorical methods.

86 A one-eyed giant from Greek mythology; in this text the name is used as a nickname indicating the person literally had only one eye.

87 Refers to the ancient poet-philosopher Timon, commonly identified with Timon of Phlius, a satirist associated with Pyrrhonian scepticism (active roughly around the 4th–3rd centuries BCE) known for his hostile or mocking verses about other thinkers.

88 Arcesilaus of Pitane (active c. 316–241 BCE) was head of the Platonic Academy and is credited with introducing a sceptical method into the Academy, emphasizing questioning and suspension of assent.

89 Latinized form of the Greek 'Silloi'—a genre of satirical poems (notably those of Timon) that attacked or ridiculed philosophers and philosophical schools; the originals survive only in fragments and references.

90 A philosopher named Ptolemy from Cyrene mentioned here as having re-established the school in question; he should not be conflated with the Ptolemaic rulers of Egypt, and precise dates or further biographical details are uncertain.

91 Here an addressee to whom Epicurus’ abridgment is addressed; the name matches the famous 5th-century BC historian but in this context likely denotes a contemporary correspondent or student rather than necessarily the historian (identification is uncertain).

92 The recipient of Epicurus’ letter on the heavenly phenomena in this chapter; Pythocles is presented as a friend or follower to whom Epicurus sends a concise summary of his natural-philosophical views.