



# The Discourses of Epictetus: With the Encheiridion - A Selection

*Epictetus*

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Translated by George Long

The Discourses of Epictetus are a series of extracts of the teachings of the Stoic philosopher Epictetus written down by Arrian c. 108 AD. There were originally eight books, but only four now remain in their entirety, along with a few fragments of the others. In a preface attached to the Discourses, Arrian explains how he came to write them:

I neither wrote these Discourses of Epictetus in the way in which a man might write such things; nor did I make them public myself, inasmuch as I declare that I did not even write them. But whatever I heard him say, the same I attempted to write down in his own words as nearly as possible, for the purpose of preserving them as memorials to myself afterwards of the thoughts and the freedom of speech of Epictetus.

The Discourses are unlikely to be word-for-word transcriptions and are probably written-up versions of Arrian's lecture notes. The books did not have a formal title in ancient times.

The earliest manuscript of the Discourses is a twelfth-century manuscript kept at the Bodleian Library, Oxford. In the Bodleian manuscript, a blot or stain has fallen onto one of the pages, and has made a series of words illegible; in all the other known manuscripts these words (or sometimes the entire passage) are omitted, thus all the other manuscripts are derived from this one archetype.

The Discourses were first printed (in Greek) by Vettore Trincavelli, at Venice in 1535.

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