



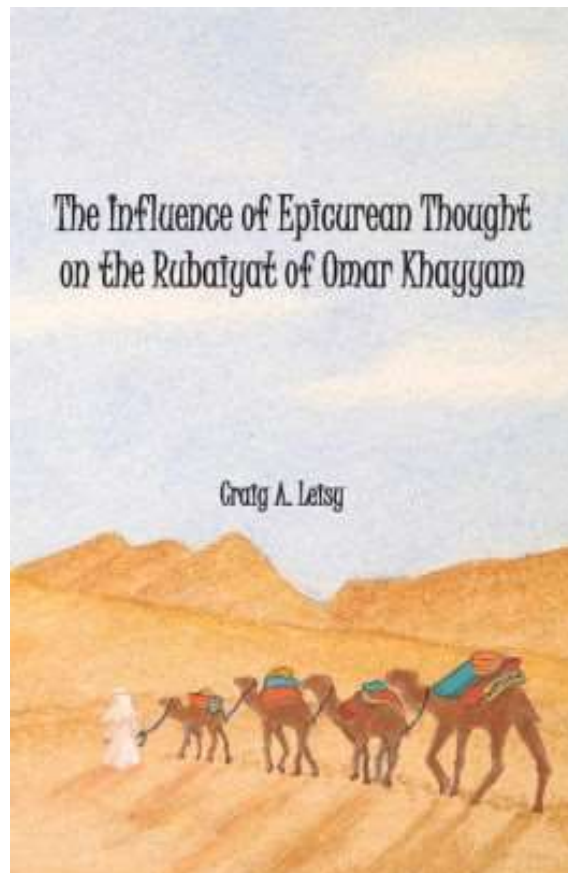
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TITLE: *The Influence of Epicurean Thought on the Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam*
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OVERVIEW

The rubaiyat (quatrains) of the Persian poet Omar Khayyam (1048-1131 CE), familiar to us in five English translations by Edward FitzGerald (1st ed., 1859) is often regarded as among the finest verses in the English language. T. S. Eliot, generally acclaimed as the greatest poet of the Twentieth Century, said that he decided to become a poet after reading FitzGerald's *Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam* as an adolescent. There are echoes of some of the themes from the *Rubaiyat* in Eliot's first celebrated poem, "The



Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock,” and some imitation of the *Rubaiyat’s* distinctive rhyme scheme (aaba). FitzGerald was much in agreement with Omar Khayyam on the numerous themes contained in the *Rubaiyat* including: the meaning of life and death, the existence and nature of God, free will and predestination, and the problem of the existence of evil. The *Rubaiyat* covers a lot of the same ground as the materialist philosophy of the Greek philosopher Epicurus (341-271 BCE). The thesis of this book is that Omar Khayyam’s thinking, as reflected in his anonymous rubaiyat, is indebted to a philosophical tradition whose beginnings can be traced to the ancient Greek atomists Democritus and Leucippus (c. 5th cent. BCE) through Epicurus and other materialists such as the Roman poet Lucretius (c. 1st cent. BCE). From thence, this secular philosophy and the Greek sciences followed the conquests of Alexander to the Near East. Various Arab and Persian thinkers embraced the Epicurean philosophy in the medieval Islamic world including: al-Shahrastani (6th cent. CE), al-Rawandi (9th cent. CE), ar-Razi (9th cent. CE) and al-Maarri (11th cent. CE). Much of the discussion in this book is devoted to the striking similarities in the themes and poetics of al-Maarri (Syria) and Omar Khayyam (Persia) who lived in the next generation. In Khayyam’s lifetime, under the influence of al—Ghazzali and his students, Islam became increasingly intolerant of Greek philosophy. As a result, Omar Khayyam was compelled to write his rubaiyat anonymously. This book explains the origins of what can be considered the world’s first secular philosophy and follows its influence over time and around the world to Omar Khayyam in eleventh century Persia. In Khayyam’s time, the Seljuq dynasty (Turks) had conquered all of the lands from Persia to the Mediterranean and was threatening the Byzantine Empire just before the start of the Crusades. The modern secular West is arguably tied to this thread in the history of philosophy through Epicureanism and FitzGerald’s *Rubaiyat*. But that is another story.

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MARKET

The target market for this biography is the general reader with an interest in philosophy, ancient Greek history, medieval history of the Near East, early Islamic religion, the rise of secularism and some of the best poetry ever written. The book has more than 450 annotated footnotes that provide additional detail for readers who wish to follow up on some aspect of this curious history. The book is suitable for a wide audience including students in secondary school and college. It would be a great resource for school and public libraries.

There are few books, and they are dated, that explain the philosophical foundations and historical roots of the rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam but none that trace these influences to Epicureanism and ancient Greece. FitzGerald's *Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam* is a magnificent poem of great power and lasting consequence that discusses, from a secular perspective, nearly every aspect of human life and thought.

I have a web site (www.craigleisy.com) and a blog (www.craigleisy.blog). Both are under development at this time.

AUTHOR

I have had a lifelong interest in FitzGerald's *Rubaiyat* both for the beauty of the poetry and the power of its ideas. Epicureanism has figured in several of my previous books.

I have written six other books that are available by print-on-demand on Amazon and other internet booksellers. My most recent book is under contract with a traditional publisher with an estimated release date of mid-2019. The books are very diverse: history, biography, history of philosophy, poetry and an economic history. I have also started work on a novel.

Year	Title	ISBN	Publisher
2019	<i>Transportation Network Companies and Taxis: The Case of Seattle</i> , 551 pp. (Genre: history, economics, current affairs)	Under contract. Estimated publication is mid- 2019	Routledge Taylor and Francis 2 Park Square Milton Park Abingdon Oxfordshire OX14 4RN UK
2017	<i>On Trial for Blasphemy: The State of New Jersey v. Charles B. Reynolds</i> , 67 pp. (Genre: theatrical/screen play, history)	978-60571-384-7 \$13.95 Soft cover	Shires Press 4869 Main Street P.O. Box 2200 Manchester Center, VT 05255 www.northshire.com
2017	<i>Sergeant Phillip McHugh, U.S. Cavalry: Indian Fighter</i> , 165 pp. (Genre: biography)	978-1-60571-354-0 \$27.95 Soft cover	Shires Press 4869 Main Street P.O. Box 2200 Manchester Center, VT 05255 www.northshire.com
2016	<i>Rain's only wet if you're in it</i> , 117 pp. (Genre: poetry collection, literary essays)	978-1-60571-321-2 \$15.95 Soft cover 978-1-60571-375-5 \$39.95 Hard bound	Shires Press 4869 Main Street P.O. Box 2200 Manchester Center, VT 05255 www.northshire.com
2015	<i>The Influence of Epicurean Thought on the Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam</i> 265 pp. (Genre: history of philosophy, biography)	978-1-60571-277-2 \$19.95 Soft cover	Shires Press 4869 Main Street P.O. Box 2200 Manchester Center, VT 05255 www.northshire.com
2012	<i>The Origins of the Conflict between Science and Religion in Ancient Greece</i> , 159 pp. (Genre: history of philosophy, history of science)	978-1-60571-132-4 \$24.95 Soft cover	Shires Press 4869 Main Street P.O. Box 2200 Manchester Center, VT 05255 www.northshire.com
2011	<i>The Blasphemy Trial of Charles B. Reynolds: Morristown, New Jersey, May 19-20, 1887</i> , 107 pp. (Genre: history, biography)	978-1-60571-115-7 \$19.95 Soft cover	Shires Press 4869 Main Street P.O. Box 2200 Manchester Center, VT 05255 www.northshire.com

I was a service dependent – my father was an aviator in the U. S. Coast Guard for 23 years and a veteran of WWII and my mother was a nurse in the U.S. Navy during WWII. We were stationed on Kodiak, Alaska (when Alaska was still a U.S. Territory) and Guam, Mariana Islands (U.S.

possession) as well as Florida, New York, California and Louisiana. I graduated from the U.S. Coast Guard Academy in New London, CT (1972) and completed a 23-year career in the U.S. Coast Guard: deck watch officer on a 180-foot seagoing buoy tender in Homer, AK (1972-1974); commanding officer of a Loran A Station on Eniwetok Atoll, Marshall Islands (U.N. Trust Territory) (1974-1975); commercial vessel safety inspector at Seattle, WA (1975-1978); commercial vessel safety inspector at Morgan City, LA (offshore oil industry) (1978-1981); instructor in the department of economics and management at the U.S. Coast Guard Academy in New London, CT (1981-1984); graduate student in Institute for Marine Studies at the University of Washington, Seattle, WA (1984-1985); chief of commercial vessel safety inspection department in Seattle, WA (1985-1989); branch chief of training for marine safety program at U.S. Coast Guard Headquarters, Washington, D.C. (1989-1993); regional manager (Gulf of Mexico) National Pollution Fund Center, Arlington, VA (1993-1995). I earned two postgraduate degrees: Master of Business Administration (MBA) at University of Puget Sound (1978) and Master of Marine Affairs (MMA) at the University of Washington (1988). I retired from the U.S. Coast Guard in 1995.

My second career was as a manager in charge of the Consumer Affairs Unit for the City of Seattle where I was responsible for regulating: the taxicab industry, limousine industry, transportation network company (TNC) industry (e.g., Uber, Lyft), the towing industry and weights and measures. I was a board member of the International Association of Transportation Regulators and a member of the National Conference on Weights and Measures. I presented professional papers at both. I retired from the City of Seattle after 22 years in 2017.

Currently, I am dedicating most of my time to writing. I just completed *Transportation Network Companies and Taxis: The Case of Seattle* (estimated release mid-2019) and it is under contract to a major publisher. I have started work on a novel. I am married and have two grown children.

[Rev. December 22, 2018]