

Compassion in Epicurean Philosophy

Post by "Don" of February 7, 2022 at 11:50 PM

[Quote from Scott](#)

His focus was more on pleasure, not on escaping pain, right?

That's certainly my take.

You bring up a good point, [Scott](#) . We technically dealing with 3 different things that sometimes get conflated:

- compassion
- sympathy
- empathy

Common language sometimes sees those as synonyms, but you're right to focus on the distinctions.

I found it interesting that the LSJ specifically reference the philosophy of Epicurus in its definition of sympatheia:

[Henry George Liddell, Robert Scott, A Greek-English Lexicon, συμπάθη-εια](#)

"in the Philosophy of Epicurus, corresponding 'affection' or quality, affinity, Ep.1p.11U. (pl.), al."

I'm not sure what that citation to Epicurus means 😞

I seem to remember reading somewhere (a while ago!) that the predominant ethos in ancient Greece was to do everything you could for your friends and associates and do everything you could to crush your enemies. The world was divided into friends/enemies.

That being said, Diogenes of Oenoanda's inscription was specifically designed to spread the "good news" of Epicurus to all who came in contact with it:

καὶ νῦν .καὶ ἀεὶ πᾶσιν Ἑλλήσι κ[αὶ] βαρβάροις "both now and always for all Greeks and barbarians (non-Greeks)"