

Welcome Mousikos!

Post by “Cassius” of May 14, 2019 at 9:05 AM

Welcome [Mousikos](#) ! When you get a chance, please introduce yourself and tell us a little about your background in Epicurus!

Post by “Mousikos” of May 14, 2019 at 9:21 AM

Thanks! I've been a member of the Epicurean Philosophy Facebook group for a while, but I feel I need to familiarize myself more in-depth with Epicurus' philosophy. So here I am.

I have a background in Christianity, initially Evangelical, and later Greek-Orthodox. As such I spent a number of years in Greece getting a degree in Theology. By the end of that tho, I had left the Church and started a personal journey, which ended in me eventually becoming an atheist upon reading Richard Dawkins' book The God Delusion several years later. It did leave me with a passing knowledge of Greek and the basics of philosophy, which I hope may be useful here.

Now I am a primary school teacher by day, and an amateur musician in my free time (hence the nickname).

Post by “Cassius” of May 14, 2019 at 9:24 AM

Great! Glad to have you Mousikos!

Post by “Martin” of May 17, 2019 at 3:46 PM

Welcome here, too, Mousikos!

Post by “Elli” of May 17, 2019 at 5:32 PM

[Mousikos](#) Welcome here, and I'm glad to hear that you're a Greek teacher and musician. But the most important that I am glad is that all your intellectual "adventures" led you to the right place for sharing with us Epicuru's philosophy. 😊

Post by “Mousikos” of May 17, 2019 at 10:29 PM

I'm glad to be here. And yes, all the experiences I've had, good and bad, have shaped who I am today.

I don't claim to be Greek tho. I'm actually Dutch, tho I spent six years in the beautiful city of Thessaloniki. When I was there, I used to live near Moni Vlatadon, and I have fond memories of walking downhill from Ano Poli to the university or the city center. Especially on clear days when you can see Mount Olympus. And the food, and the music... I haven't been there in many years, but I would love to visit again.

I also spent some years in Finland and England. But now I'm living in China, teaching English since 2010.

So after all that, I consider myself more of a "global citizen".

Post by “Cassius” of May 18, 2019 at 12:18 AM

I am sure Elli will be glad to hear that part about Thessaloniki!!!

Post by “Elli” of May 18, 2019 at 4:55 AM

[Mousikos](#) I'm glad to hear that you were in Thessaloniki for your studies in Theology. If there would be a case to visit again the city of Thessaloniki, I'll be glad to introduce you to the friends of epicurean philosophy in the Garden. But I would like to warn you for something : words as

"global", "globalism" or "cosmopolitan", "cosmopolitanism" are not such kind of words that they like too much. They prefer to say words as "ecumenical" or "humanistic" or "international". Let's examine why ?

"Philopatrea (= the love for one's country) - an epicurean virtue", by George Metaxas

I would like to cause some of your thoughts on the issue of "philopatrea".

First, let's do not get into the trouble of definitions.

If we would apply the Platonic method (method of any systematic philosophy) we have to search for the definition of "country". Then, for the definition of "friendship". Then we would be wondered of what concept may this includes into the composite for the definition of "philopatrea"? We would discuss for many hours, and if we end up somewhere, this would be so general and vague, whether there would be a case to be useful too. Epicurus, does not practice us in systematic fastidiousness. He is not interested for concepts "in themselves", but how these concepts, through the experience, are intervene in our lives. His way is characteristic of how he handles with some other higher concepts (i.e.. dreams, soul, gods, etc.). He is merely says that our knowledge for all these abstracts concepts is "obvious" (This is the triumph of sensations!).

He gives a rough, always natural materialistic, explanation of their nature and this is enough for him to begin his calculations and measurements. Because his purpose is to dispel the illusions and the phobic prejudices that these abstract ideas are based on. But we said many as a prologue. Let's follow the way of our Teacher and let's go to our main subject.

Epicurus shows philopatrea as a virtue. The need that is to be satisfied is the sociability, and it's a physical need. Because, according to Epicurus, and throughout the Hellenic Cosmotheasis, the human is the man who is living in relationship with his social environment. Mysticism, oracles, occult, isolationism, asceticism are foreign in the Greek thought, and the Epicurean teachings. Thus, the satisfaction of the human's need for living with the likes is the satisfaction of the need to come into contact with familiar people, places, behaviors and the relevant ones. And the satisfaction of this need brings pleasurable feelings indeed. Thus, with the perspective "philopatrea" is worthy as an epicurean virtue and a mean that leads to pleasure.

But philopatrea presupposes some other things. We read in Lucius Torquatus : "The same account will be found to hold good of Courage. The performance of labors, the undergoing of pains, are not in themselves attractive, nor are endurance, industry, watchfulness, nor yet that much lauded virtue, perseverance, nor even courage; but we aim at these virtues in order to live without anxiety and fear and so far as possible to be free from pain of mind and body. The fear of death plays havoc with the calm and even tenor of life, and to bow the head to pain and bear it abjectly and feebly is a pitiable thing; such weakness has caused many men to betray their parents or their friends, some their country, and very many utterly to ruin themselves. So

on the other hand a strong and proud spirit is entirely free from anxiety and sorrow”.

The first that is "cowardice", is rejected as it brings pain. The latter that is "courage" is desirable, because brings pleasure.

From all these we can make a conclusion: The Epicurean man is international and humanistic, but he is not without country and a cosmopolitan.

Over the years the dominant ideologies (of -isms), have attempted to nullify the concept of homeland. Both economical they examine the man, as a unit either the consumer herd or to be in a struggle among classes.

And both they fought the concept of homeland. "Money has no motherland, one says and the other says that the proletarians have no country. Philopatrea is marked as primitive by the former and petty prejudices of the latter. As it concerns the modern "nation-nihilistic" teachings, that tinned our head, they have shown us their ugly face. The wars that had been spread in the Balkans and in the East, the racial and religious hatred that are cultivated for their economic, exploitative interests, showing the empire of barbarism that build when they propagandize the Globalization.

Some clarifications: "Philopatris"(patriot) is someone who loves and defends his homeland in a great danger, but without despising and humiliate the homelands of the others. Patriot is one who loves his ancestral habits, the culture of his homeland, but not the monomaniac who does not recognize foreign habits and foreign cultures and the many well worth that are including. And these are self explanatory, if you think that philopatrea as a virtue cannot be in contradiction with other qualities (in this case with the wisdom and justice).

Before we finish with these thoughts let us answer two questions :

And where does fit the ecumenical friendship?

But, obviously, the friendship of people who have fulfill their personality, and are such kind of persons, that are emotionally deprived from the pleasure of friendship from the familiar places, things, people, that in parallel they imply and deepen it, to the friends and from other the countries. Instead, the epicureans extend the friendship to their relatives and the friendship to the homeland, for expanding and multiple their emotions. **If you are not familiar with the nearby how would you feel about the distant by?** That is to say that the Epicurean philosophy does not come to maim the human being, but making him to be emotionally richer.

The next question is : What do we do now in Hellas?

On each occasion, we express our feelings of philopatrea. We are looking to find within the financial crisis its justice. We resist to the insults and threats with bravery and courage. We fight for the laws with prudence. No matter how much effort and as much agitation sometimes this would bring, we are pleased because we focus to the pleasure as described by our friend

Lucius Torquatus: "...a strong and proud spirit is entirely free from anxiety and sorrow".

This speech was in the 4th meeting of the epicurean friends of the Gardens in Athens and Thessaloniki that was held in the event of "Promethea" 2011.

Post by "Cassius" of May 18, 2019 at 5:04 AM

Elli that is a great article and I am not sure I have read it before (?) That needs to be formatted and placed where it can be found, in the Articles section maybe? I wonder if it is possible that George Metaxas has a photo online somewhere we could add to it? And maybe we can add some other graphics to it as well. At any rate, let's get this one into an area where it can be found.

I would like to repost it at NewEpicurean.com too, and when we find one or more homes for it we can post link to it at other locations.

Post by "Mousikos" of May 21, 2019 at 7:05 AM

To me, being a cosmopolitan and a humanist does not mean I deny the value of homeland or cultural traditions, or view people through a narrow lens of economics. To me it means that my perspective is more focused on the whole of humanity, rather than on tribal divisions. It means I can feel at home *anywhere* I meet like-minded people. It means I evaluate all cultures, including those of my homeland, and sift the good from the bad.

I understand the Greek need for patriotism, as they have a long history of being besieged by foreign forces. But in my view we really need to widen our perspective and strive to work together with all peoples on Earth, if we want to successfully deal with the current problems such as the climate crisis and mega-corporations trampling on human rights and concerns.

And yes, that cosmopolitan perspective needs to get embodied in local initiatives. I think we need to integrate these two poles, rather than view them as either/or.

Does that make sense?

Post by "Cassius" of May 21, 2019 at 8:47 AM

I think this is the key:

[Quote from Mousikos](#)

anywhere I meet like-minded people

But I would probably extend that to "anywhere I have FRIENDS."

And the difficult question is "What makes someone a like-minded person?" and "What makes someone a friend?"

Those questions don't have a single answer, but to me, I do not consider someone to be like-minded or a friend just because we have similar tastes in food or in other things that I think most people would consider to be superficial.

A "like-minded friend" - I think - is going to share common foundational viewpoints about the way the world works, and the way we see our goals, and the way we see each other, and we are going to be bound to each other in common concern for our mutually-shared view of the future.

And in many cases, but certainly not all, those people who fit that category are going to share many common background characteristics. By no means is it necessary in every instance to speak the same language, or be of the same race, or the same age, or the same sex, or the same occupation, or to share the same views of politics, or of religion. But all of those factors, and more, are going to be statistically relevant in predicting who is likely to be a "like-minded friend" and who is not.

I think the controversial but true foundation here is that there is no contradiction between observing the statistical norms and also considering individual variance from the norms. Both are factors in real life, and both have to be considered. Ignoring either one is perilous for accurately predicting how things will turn out.

Post by "Cassius" of May 21, 2019 at 11:50 AM

These are definitely difficult questions, and they are controversial and easy to get "emotional" about. That's one of the things that I hope we can do on this forum is to identify what part of our reaction to these questions is "personal viewpoint," what points are "philosophical." I think it is very likely that given that there is "no absolute justice" and the implications of [PD30-40](#), Epicurus would probably say that different people come to different conclusions depending on

their circumstances. So there is an aspect of "What factors should be considered under Epicurean Philosophy?" and then a separate analysis of "What conclusion should Epicurean XX reach under his or her own personal circumstances."