

Epicureanism and cult-like mentality?

Post by “Joshua” of January 8, 2022 at 7:33 PM

Quote

In contrast to that, the Stoics were right in the centre of the social life, inviting everyone to attend these events.

That's easily done, when one is celebrating virtue and proclaiming their attainment of it; when the civil authorities are on your side; when the prevailing culture has been pre-conditioned to accept what you're saying.

By the time Epicurus had emerged in Athens with his garden, he had already been driven out of Mytilene---a city that was once the crown jewel of Greek thought---and had settled for a time in Lampsacus.

By the time he got to Athens he had learned a few hard truths. There could be no question of teaching in the Gymnasia or the Agora, he had learned that by experience. Athens was a city of philosophers, true enough; but it was the city that condemned Socrates to death.

So he opted for an alternative. He would discourse in the relative privacy of the Garden, not in the city square. But how to reach people outside the garden?

He wrote. He wrote scroll after scroll, laying down thoughts so subversive that even his opponents would circulate them.

Diogenes Laertius calls him the most prolific writer of his age. He was, as DeWitt calls him, a pamphleteer; and three hundred years later men were still burning his books. It would not have been safe for him or for his students, to teach in public.