

From The "Golden Mean" to the "Summum Bonum" - Useful or Deceptive Frames of Reference?

Post by "Scott" of February 18, 2022 at 7:17 PM

[Quote from Nate](#)

we have found that Epicurus uses a variety of cases, tenses, and inflections of ΑΓΑΘΟΣ (or "good") to describe pleasant things, instrumental actions, a noble standard, a category of virtues, and an expression of pleasure. The abundance of this term leads to a cultural and linguistic displacement of "the Good" from its Platonic throne. It becomes reduced to a frank, non-technical meaning, usually indicating either as "a pleasant thing", "that which is pleasant", or "pleasantness".

I don't know as much as you do about this, @Nate (and [Don](#) ...and many others in this forum!) but I would hope the above is correct regarding Epicurus. Trying to lock down a term like "Summum Bonum" / "Greatest Good" or "The Most Important Thing" etc is something that doesn't resonate with what I "feel" from Epicurus and EP. Even the term pleasure is referencing something with variation and nuance beyond what that word can capture. It is possible to focus too much on terminology. I mean I realize one has to be clear, but one can also spend too much time on it. At the end of the day, it seems to me the EP life should be measured by its practical results in a person, not in the beauty or consistency of its philosophical terminology or even its rationality .