

Epicurus' Birthdate

Post by “Eikadistes” of July 8, 2022 at 1:45 PM

"Sloppy commentary" is exactly right. I think this is what happens when secondary sources cite each other over source material. It seems to me that Epicurus' birthday may have been posthumously celebrated (after centuries) on the 20th as an extension of the monthly Eikas celebration. That, however, does not mean that he was born on the 20th of Gamelion, only that his birthday was celebrated in accordance with the monthly Eikas festival.

I am comfortable ruling out the 20th as a reflection of his historical birthdate. I think it is a symbolic custom. Who started that custom is also of interest, as they may not have had access to Epicurus' Last Will.

As to the differences between the 7th versus the 10th, Epicurus, himself, refers to the "**customary celebration of my birthday on the tenth day of Gamelion in each year**", whereas ancient authors like Diogenes agree that he was born on "**seventh day of the month of Gamelion**". I tend to think that one may have favored a historical birthdate as opposed to a celebration that has been tweaked to accommodate an occasion (like celebrating your birthday on the weekend).

My question, now, is this: is the usage of "customary" in Epicurus' *Will* a reflection of a symbolic celebration, moved in accordance to some other occasion? Or is this a technical description of his actual birthdate?