

On Ice Cream And Epicurean Philosophy

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Here the translation of:

<http://epicuro.org/una-settimana-epicurea/>

An epicurean week

In the book "Lezioni di felicità" (Lessons of Happiness) Ilaria Gaspari tells firsthand how to rebuild her life thanks to classical philosophy.

The protagonist of the story has just been left by the partner with whom she had lived for a long time. Unfortunately the rent of their apartment, now that she is alone, is too expensive and she is forced to move. A double blow leaves her on her knees. To start again, a week at a time, the protagonist will follow the teachings of a different Greek philosophical school. Including Epicureanism.

This book has the indisputable merit of presenting the thought of Pythagoras, Parmenides, Zeno, Pirrone, Epicurus and Diogenes as a living thought and not as a distant object of study covered by the dust of centuries.

In this Epicurus is distinctly distinguished from other philosophers. The protagonist does not need to interpret and adapt Epicurean's advice for a happy life, as it is necessary to do for all the other schools. It is no coincidence that the book opens with a quotation from Epicurus: "The discourse of that philosopher who does not cure any evil of the human soul is in vain."

Ilaria Gaspari's interpretation of Epicurus is lucid and fascinating.

"Epicurus is one of those philosophers whose ideas have been so free, so different from those of all their contemporaries - and therefore so foolish, with less outdated eyes - that they give him the reputation of being depraved, vicious, disheartened or whatever you want. "

At first the protagonist focuses on the teaching of Epicurus regarding desires: natural and necessary, natural but not necessary and unnecessary. *"The fact is that we are not used to cultivating moderation: I realize, with a certain surprise, when unexpectedly my epicurean life turns into a long chase of frugality."* And also: *"I want to decide what I want, and also what I don't want. The problem, however, is that this activity ends up absorbing all my time, it's a spiral from which it seems impossible to get out. "*

But then, understanding the message of Epicurus better, he finds serenity again: "*I understand that being a good Epicurean does not mean either being dissolute or monastic in the severity towards myself, but letting myself live with subtle fatalism, without falling prey to anguish.*" Center! Despite the term fatalism I do not think it is particularly suitable, because for Epicurus the contingencies of fate have a very limited power over our happiness.

Finally the author underlines the importance that friendship and generosity have for Epicurean happiness.

However brief, only one chapter of the book is dedicated to Epicurus, the epicurean experience of Ilaria Gaspari is decidedly effective and original. And if the author prefers to learn happiness from dogs rather than "*compete in happiness with Zeus himself*" well, everyone makes their choices.