

Did Epicurus Commit Suicide Due To His Disease? (Merger of Two Threads On When Voluntary Death Makes Sense)

Post by "Bryan" of July 5, 2025 at 9:08 PM

I think this is the most instructive clue I have found, (Laertius 4.44):

"[Arcesilaus] died in a fit of madness, as Hermippus says, after drinking a good deal of unmixed wine, he had by then reached the age of seventy-five, and no man was more highly regarded by the Athenians."

That alone is only suggestive (*just like the example with Epicurus*), however the very next line, Diogenes says:

"My own verses about him run as follows: Why, Arcesilaus, did you draw unmixed wine *so unsparingly as to take leave of your sense?* I pity you not so much for your death..."

As a side note about Arcesilaus being "highly regarded," Plutarch says "The reputation of Arcesilaus seems to immoderately distress Epicurus -- given that [*Arcesilaus*] was especially admired among the philosophers in those times" Plutarch (fl. 80 CE), *Against Colotes*, 26, 1121 E fin.

Arcesilaus was a pupil of both Theophrastus and Pyrrho, yet he ended up leading the Academy a few years after Epicurus died.