

Suavity - General Discussion

Post by "Cassius" of June 4, 2026 at 10:26 AM

Since suavity appears to be more Latin than Greek we probably need to look more to the Latin use of it.

[Quote from Don](#)

I freely admit I have no grasp on what "suavity" means,

I suspect that this is a very bad thing for the culture if even Don finds the word to be highly suspicious (as I do myself).

Certainly the times have changed and calling someone "gentlemanly" has lost all of its earlier appeal, at least in many circles. Must all gentlemen be back-slapping good-old-boys? Was that always considered to be the case? I suspect not.

And I completely agree that "Smooth" in terms of character has many more negative connotations than bad ones.

But I am old enough to suspect that this wasn't always the case, I would think courtesy and grace (especially but not always under pressure) and gentlemanliness had strong positive means that are separate and apart from "gratitude" in the sense of a transactional appreciation for what someone has done for us.

The discussion so far indicates to me that it would be well worth while separating out the "good aspects" from the "bad aspects" of what is being referenced here. The pendulum seems to have swung way too far to the side of insincerity on something that should not be lost. And it does look like there were significant attacks against Epicurus (wording as to Colotes etc) that need to be understood in terms of a proper appreciation of good qualities, rather than insincere flattery. Must all flattery be "insincere"? Can't we praise someone or something without being guilty of manipulation?

This looks to be another area where it is going to be necessary to look to the Roman sources for better preserved discussion of what is going on. The quotes from Cicero and Augustine and about Atticus seem particularly promising if the words being used are forms of suavitas.

Certainly foods can be oversweet, but sweetness is often and even generally (?) desirable. And it wouldn't in general conversation be normal to call a man "sweet."

Latin definition for: suavitas, suavitatis

suavitas, suavitatis

noun

- declension: 3rd declension
- gender: feminine

Definitions:

1. charm, attractiveness
 2. sweetness
- **Age:** In use throughout the ages/unknown
 - **Area:** All or none
 - **Geography:** All or none
 - **Frequency:** Frequent, top 2000+ words
 - **Source:** General, unknown or too common to say