

# Report on the 10th Panhellenic Symposium of Epicurean Philosophy, February 8-9, 2020, Cultural Center of Pallini, Athens, Greece (By Christos Yapijakis)

Post by "Cassius" of February 21, 2020 at 8:09 AM

Since I posted this thread, I'd like to add how impressed and appreciative I am of all the work and success of this project. There need to be more of these, and more often, and in more places and languages. The Athens group has done tremendous work for many years now to put on these regular seminars and organize regular activity to discuss Epicurus.

At the same time, I should note that I am think the emphasis of the final paragraph is misplaced. It always bothers me to see summaries about Epicurus that do not use the word "pleasure," and I think this summary misses the mark fairly widely about what the message of Epicurus really stands for. The first sentence here is A-OK. The second sentence, however, identifies Epicurean philosophy with "humanism," which as discussed in many places on this website I believe to be incorrect. Part of the problem is that "happy life" is a term that can mean so many different things to different people, and failing to place "happiness" in the context of "pleasure" is a sure way to increase rather than reduce confusion about the unique aspects of Epicurean philosophy. Further, and most unfortunately, the final sentence would lead someone to believe that the ultimate enemy of Epicurus is "prosperity."

## Quote

The 10th Panhellenic Symposium of Epicurean Philosophy has offered to hundreds of Greeks with a need for learning and a desire for a better world to experience the timeless utility of the Epicurean philosophy, which offers a mental shield to putative individual and social deadlocks. The scientific, humanistic and psychotherapeutic message of Epicurus on one hand expresses the simplest and most profound way of approaching a happy life with friendship and solidarity, even in difficult times, and on the other hand it differs fundamentally from the fashionable superficial message of "prosperity" propagated in Greece and internationally.

Surely the ultimate enemy of Epicurus is not "prosperity," for multitudes of reasons, but I don't intend this post to turn into a major statement on the subject. For now I'll just quote the following:

*VS63: Frugality too has a limit, and the man who disregards it is like him who errs through excess.*

Letter to Menoeceus: *"And again independence of desire we think a great good — **not that we may at all times enjoy but a few things**, but that, if we do not possess many, we may enjoy the few in the genuine persuasion that those have the sweetest enjoy luxury pleasure in luxury who least need it, and that all that is natural is easy to be obtained, but that which is superfluous is hard."*

Ultimately I suspect that this final paragraph was written with the thought of appealing to an audience that might attend a seminar that has "practical" implications, rather than just academic discussion, and I can understand and appreciate that motivation. But it seems to me that the issues involved in truly understanding Epicurus require that we see the philosophy outside the box of modern political terminology, and keeping it attached to those conventional boxes does not seem to me to be the best way to achieve that goal. Discussing Epicurus in terms of political goals will be of interest to those who are primarily concerned with political goals, but the deepest message of Epicurus far transcends temporary economic and political issues.