



Εθνικό και Καποδιστριακό
Πανεπιστήμιο Αθηνών

National and Kapodistrian
University of Athens



ΕΡΓΑΣΤΗΡΙΟ
ΕΦΑΡΜΟΣΜΕΝΗΣ
ΦΙΛΟΣΟΦΙΑΣ

ΕΚΠΑ

ΕΠΙΚΟΥΡΟΣ

ΝΕΟΚΛΕΟΥΣ ΚΑΙ
ΧΑΙΡΕΣΤΡΑΤΗΣ
ΑΘΗΝΑΙΟΣ ΤΩΝ
ΔΗΜΩΝ ΓΑΡΓΗΤΤΙΟΣ



ΚΗΠΟΣ
ΑΘΗΝΩΝ



ΦΙΛΟΙ
ΕΠΙΚΟΥΡΕΙΑΣ
ΦΙΛΟΣΟΦΙΑΣ

Epicurean Ethics

The Scientific Humanism of Epicurus

Dr. Christos Yapijakis, DMD,BS,MS,PhD

Associate Professor of Genetics

Member of Bioethics Committee

School of Medicine

National Kapodistrian University of Athens

Advisory Board Member

Applied Philosophy Research Laboratory

School of Philosophy

National Kapodistrian University of Athens

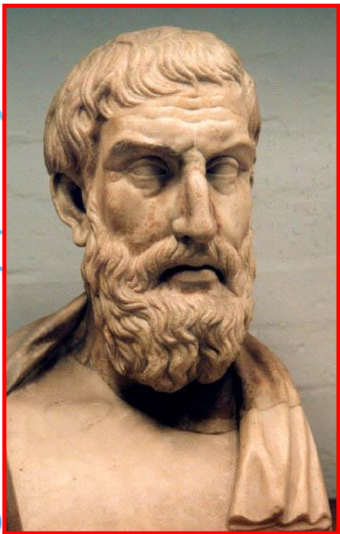
Founding Member

"Garden of Athens" Friends of Epicurean Philosophy

Can the principles of Ancient Greek Philosophy serve as guidance to answer to our concerns of the post-COVID era? (>30% universal increase of stress, anxiety, psychopathology)

The Scientific Humanism of Epicurus

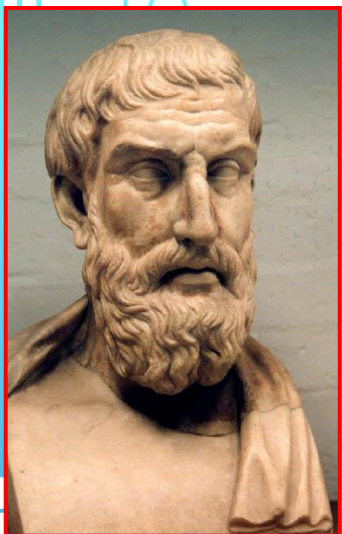
- The best philosophical guidance is **Scientific Humanism** (Επιστημονικός Ανθρωπισμός)
- **Combination of Science (objective, empirical knowledge) with Bioethics (based on human nature) for social utility and individual happiness** (ευδαιμονία)
- In fact as expressed with clarity and consistency by the ancient Athenian philosopher Epicurus (Επίκουρος)



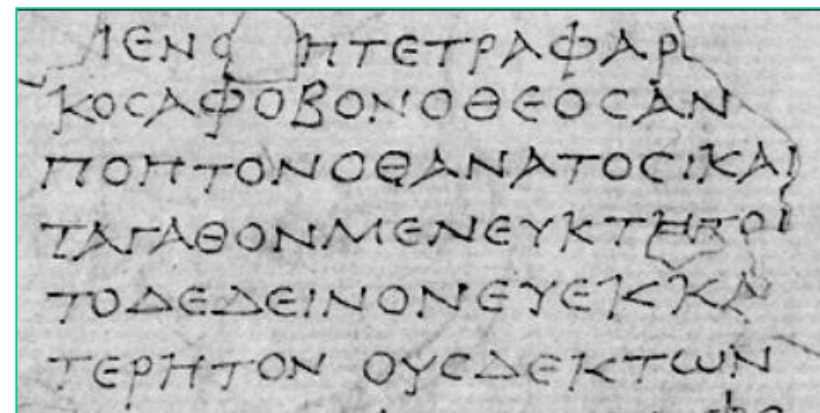


Epicurus the Athenian (341-270 BCE)

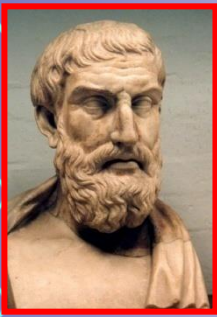
Proto-Enlightenment philosopher



- **Empiricist**
- **Naturalist**
- **Humanist**



- Canon/Criteria of truth:
Senses, Emotions, Collective Perceptions
- Aiming in happiness (ευδαιμονία) i.e. mental tranquility (αταραξία) and absence of physical pain (απονία)
- By means
- of naturalistic science, prudence, virtue and friendship



For this purpose, Epicurus introduced **Canon (Κανών)**, an empirical methodology of inquiry consisting of observation by the senses and drawing inferences for the unknown based on analogies with the observed.

This approach made Epicurean philosophy very comprehensive and among all ancient philosophies by far the most compatible with modern scientific findings.

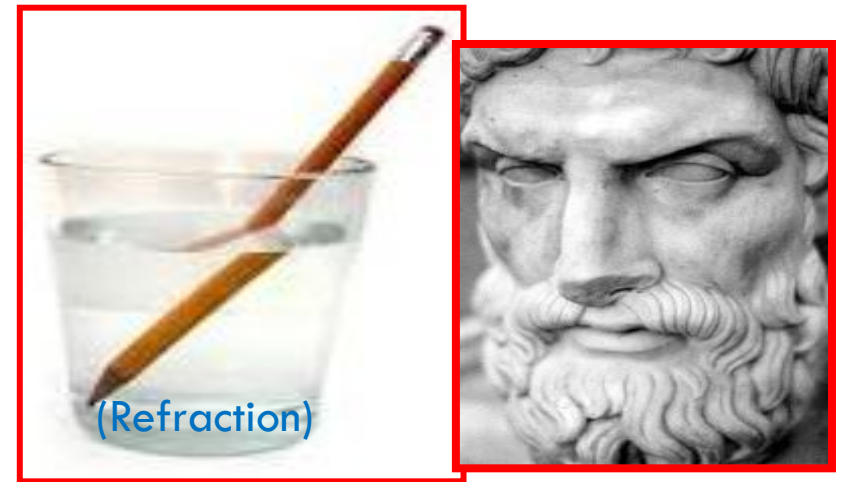
Neurology 77(10):1000-1004, 2011

**Depiction of the neuroscientific principles of human motion
2 millennia ago by Lucretius**

Jonathan A. Hyam, David J. Paterson, Tipo Z. Aziz, Alexander L. Green

Criteria of Truth

1. Senses



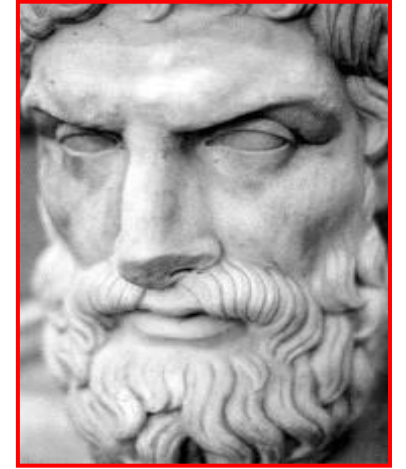
They perceive external material stimuli, which correspond to atoms that fall on our sensory organs.

Each sensation is irrational, it is not influenced by similar previous or dissimilar simultaneous sensations and consequently it is always true. On the contrary, the mental processing of sensations can be wrong.

Certain knowledge should be based on the testimony of the senses:
“If you fight against all the senses, you will not be able to judge anything since you claim that they are false” (*Principal Saying XXIII*).

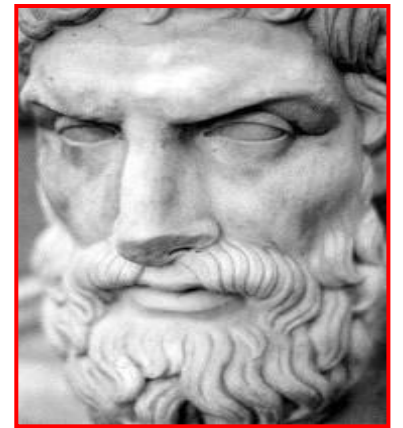
Criteria of Truth

2. Concepts (preconceptions)



- The concepts stored in the mind derive from the senses.
- These concepts are based on repeated sensory experiences and do not require verbal proof, since they are obvious to everyone ("universal understanding") and constitute a criterion of correct belief.
- For example, it is common to all people who have seen a rose to have the "clear concept of the rose," that is, the clear meaning based on observation of this material object.

Criteria of Truth



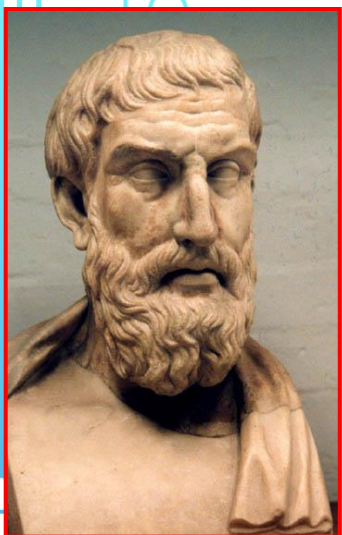
3. *Emotions (passions) of pleasure-pain*

- **Emotional** criterion for approaching the natural environment, recognizing that what pleases us is good for our nature and what hurts us is hostile to our nature.
- The emotions of pleasure and pain constitute a safe criterion of truth, but also a criterion of action for choosing the right action and avoiding the wrong action with the aim of a blissful life.
- Sometimes a prudent person will choose to avoid a pleasure if he/she predicts that it will lead to greater pain, or he/she will choose a pain if he/she predicts that it will lead to greater pleasure.

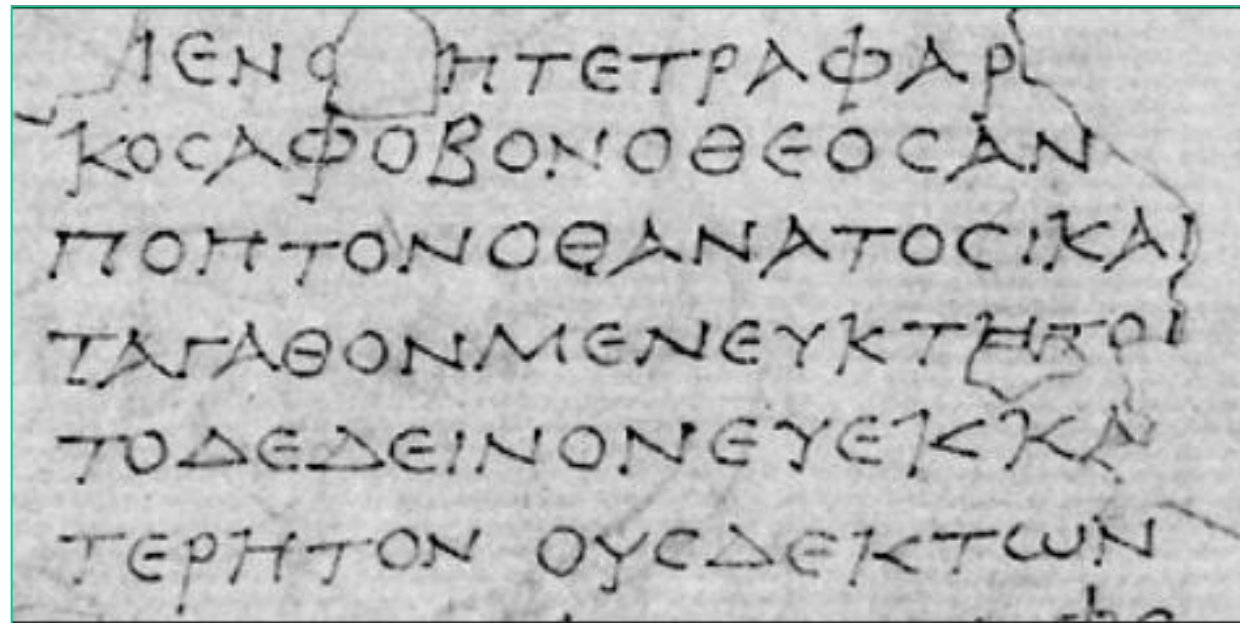


Epicurus the Athenian (341-270 BCE)

Proto-Enlightenment philosopher



- **Empiricist**
- **Naturalist**
- **Humanist**
- **Tetrapharmakos (Four medicines)**



God is not fearful

Example of happiness

Death is not sensed

Death is nothing to us

Good is easy to obtain

Easy to obtain pleasure (alleviate pain)

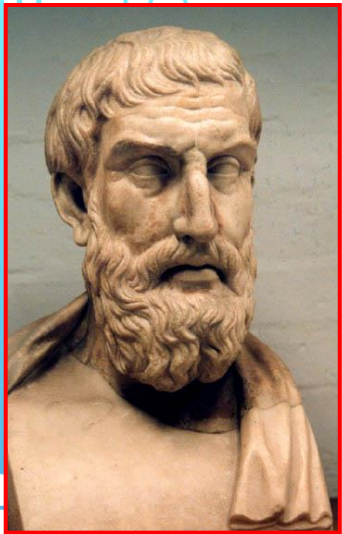
Bad is easy to endure

Easy to avoid anxiety or endure pain



Epicurus the Athenian (341-270 BCE)

Proto-Enlightenment philosopher



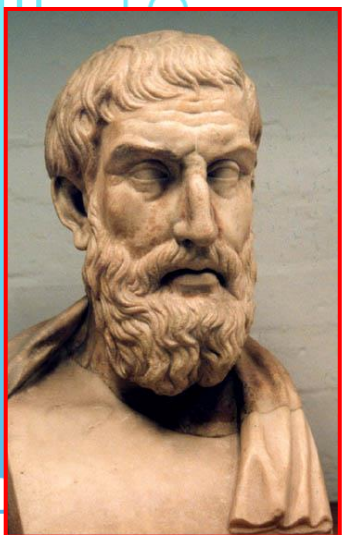
- **Empiricist**
- **Naturalist**
- **Humanist**
- **Fears** (elimination of fear for gods, death, unknown)
- **Desires**

Natural and Necessary	water, bread
Natural and Not Necessary	champagne, lobster
Unnatural and Not Necessary	vanity, excessive riches

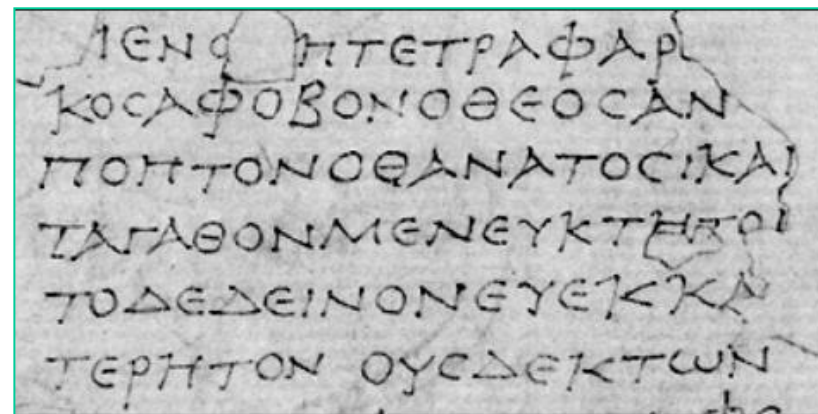


Epicurus the Athenian (341-270 BCE)

Proto-Enlightenment philosopher

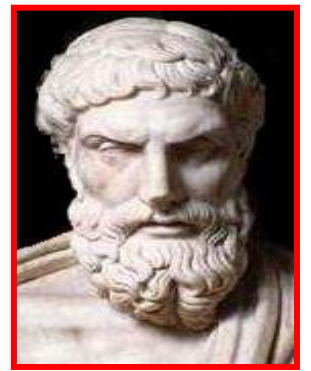


- **Empiricist**
- **Naturalist**
- **Humanist**
- Canon/Criteria of truth:
Senses, Emotions, Collective Perceptions
- Aiming in happiness (ευδαιμονία) i.e. mental tranquility (αταραξία) and absence of physical pain (απονία)
- **By means**
- of naturalistic science, prudence, virtue and friendship





EPICURUS (341-270 bC)



Approach to the truth

- He was the **first empiricist philosopher**, who accepted as true only what may be observed with the senses.
- He considered the study of nature as means for human happiness (**Enlightenment Scientist**)
- He accepted the atomic theory as the only one compatible with the observation of the phenomena and formulated the view of modern Chemistry that **specific organization of atoms** in aggregates (**molecules**) create **new qualities that individual atoms do not have**.
- He suggested that the infinite molecules create **many worlds in the universe** (including Earth), that there is **evolution** of the living organisms due to **natural selection**

Molecules

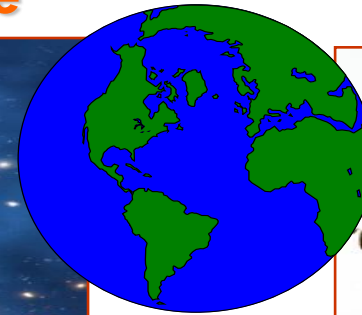


Atoms

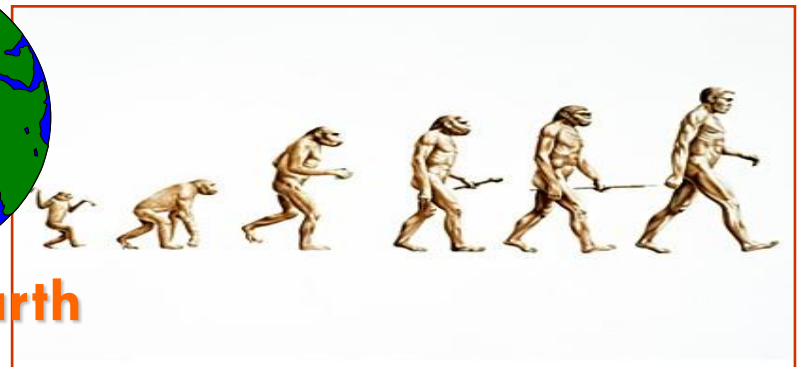
Many worlds in the Universe



Spherical Earth



Evolution of species





The Epicurean Philosophy (300 BCE-400 CE)

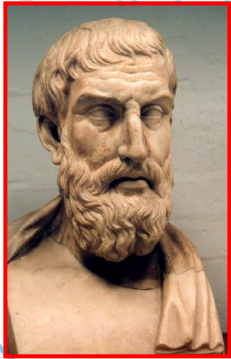
was the first international, multilingual, humanistic movement that influenced thousands of people (Greeks, Romans, Syrians, Jews, Celts etc) in three continents (Europe, Asia, Africa) during 7 centuries in the Hellenistic and Roman eras.



The Dark Ages

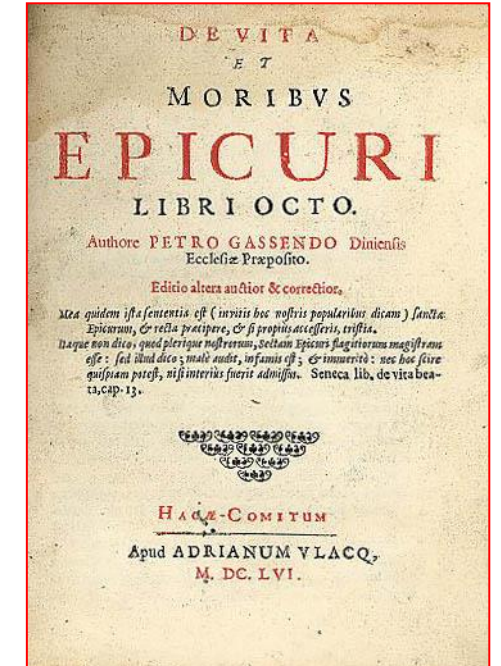
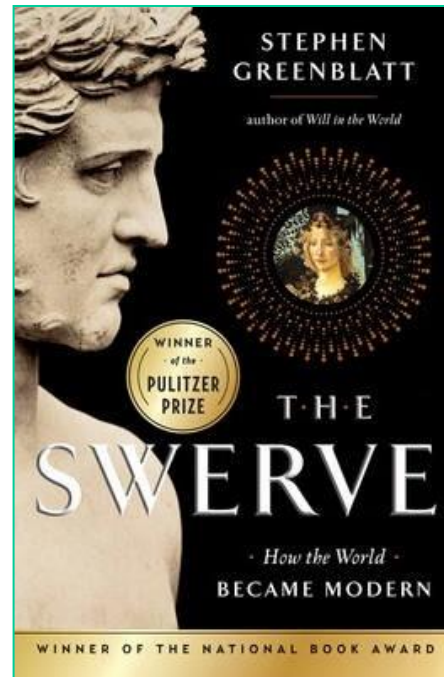
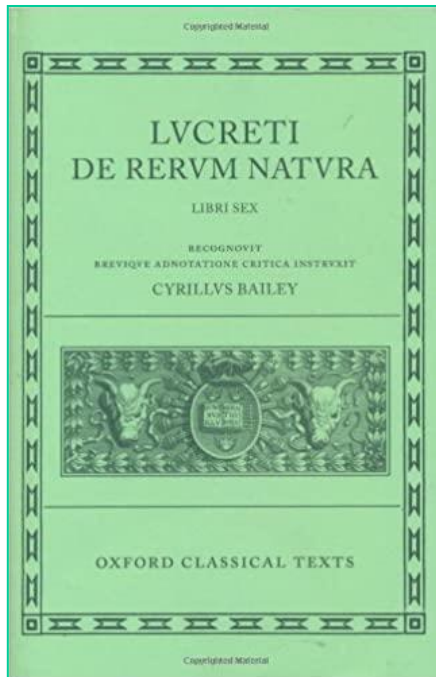
During the Middle Ages (400 - 1400)
Epicurus' teachings were distorted and forgotten





The Epicurean revival (1417-1650)

- The discovery of Lucretius' *De rerum natura* (1417) in Renaissance led to the revival of Epicurean philosophy (1650) by Galileo's friend Piere Gassendi (astronomer, philosopher, and Christian priest)

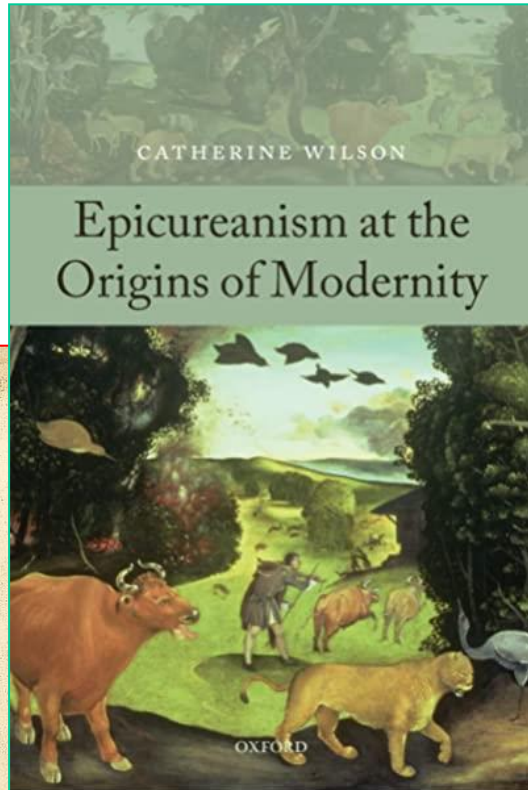
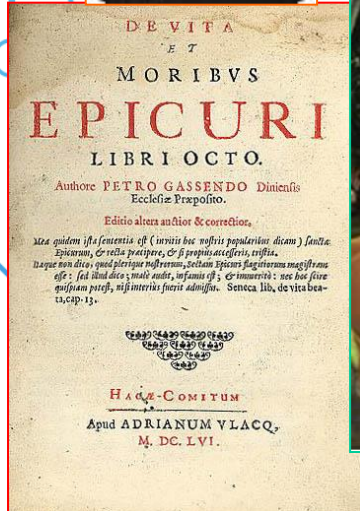
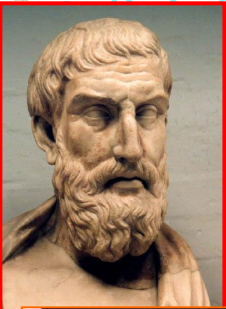




The Epicurean origin of Modernity (1650-1800)

The revival of Epicurean philosophy (1650) by Gassendi

- led to Empiricism, Enlightenment, Science
- inspired people involved in the American, French and Greek revolutions



Thomas
Jefferson



Rigas
Velestinlis

ΥΠΟ ΤΗΝ ΑΙΓΙΔΑ ΤΗΣ ΠΕΡΙΦΕΡΕΙΑΣ ΑΤΤΙΚΗΣ • ΣΥΝΔΙΟΡΓΑΝΩΣΗ ΤΟΥ ΔΗΜΟΥ ΠΑΛΛΗΝΗΣ

11^ο ΠΑΝΕΛΛΗΝΙΟ ΣΥΜΠΟΣΙΟ
ΕΠΙΚΟΥΡΕΙΑΣ ΦΙΛΟΣΟΦΙΑΣ

ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΗ ΔΗΜΟΚΡΑΤΙΑ
ΠΕΡΙΦΕΡΕΙΑ ΑΤΤΙΚΗΣ

ΦΙΛΟΙ ΕΠΙΚΟΥΡΕΙΑΣ ΦΙΛΟΣΟΦΙΑΣ ΚΗΠΟΙ ΑΘΗΝΩΝ - ΘΕΣΣΑΛΟΝΙΚΗΣ

1821 2021

ΣΑΒΒΑΤΟ
20
ΦΕΒΡΟΥΑΡΙΟΥ / 2021

ΑΦΙΕΡΩΜΑ ΣΤΑ 200 ΧΡΟΝΙΑ
ΤΗΣ ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΗΣ ΕΠΑΝΑΣΤΑΣΗΣ

ΕΠΙΚΟΥΡΕΙΕΣ ΕΠΙΔΡΑΣΕΙΣ
• ΣΤΟΝ ΠΡΟΕΠΑΝΑΣΤΑΤΙΚΟ
ΝΕΟΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΟ ΔΙΑΦΩΤΙΣΜΟ
• ΣΤΗΝ ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΗ ΕΠΑΝΑΣΤΑΣΗ
• ΣΤΗ ΜΕΤΕΠΑΝΑΣΤΑΤΙΚΗ ΕΛΛΑΔΑ

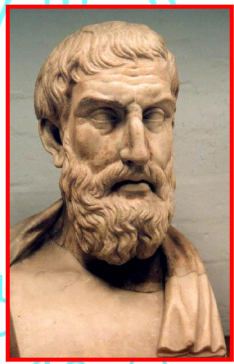
ΚΥΡΙΑΚΗ
21
ΦΕΒΡΟΥΑΡΙΟΥ / 2021

ΑΠΟ ΤΗΝ ΑΡΧΑΙΟΤΗΤΑ
ΕΩΣ ΣΗΜΕΡΑ

Η ΕΠΙΚΟΥΡΕΙΑ ΦΙΛΟΣΟΦΙΑ ΚΑΙ ΟΙ ΑΛΛΕΣ
ΦΙΛΟΣΟΦΙΚΕΣ ΣΧΟΛΕΣ ΤΗΣ
ΑΡΧΑΙΟΤΗΤΑΣ

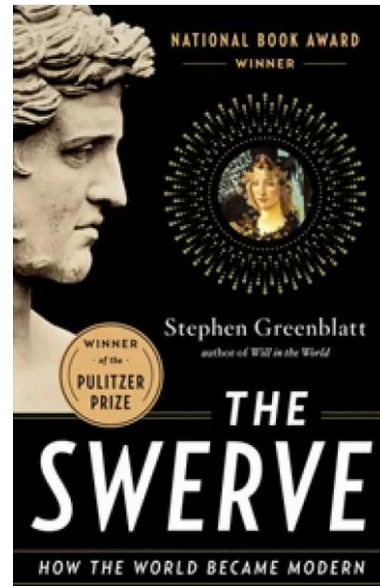
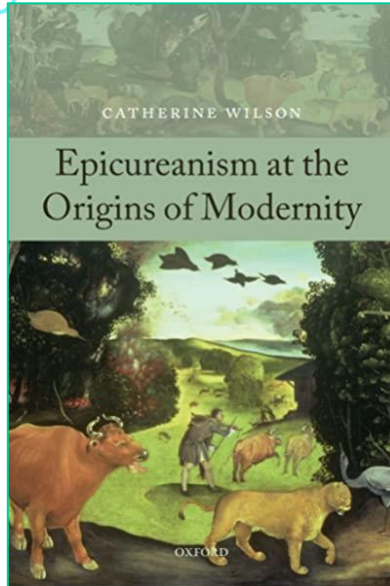
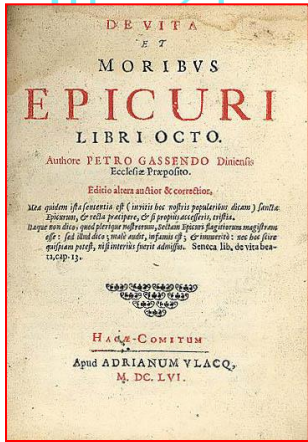
ΕΠΙΚΟΥΡΕΙΑ ΠΡΟΣΕΓΓΙΣΗ ΚΑΙ
ΣΥΓΧΡΟΝΟΙ ΠΡΟΒΛΗΜΑΤΙΣΜΟΙ

Το 11^ο Πανελλήνιο Συμπόσιο Επικούρειας Φιλοσοφίας
θα διεξαχθεί στις 20 και 21 Φεβρουαρίου ΔΙΑΔΙΚΤΥΑΚΑ
Πληροφορίες για τον σύνδεσμο παρακολούθησης στο
www.epicuros.gr



The Epicurean origin of Modernity (1650-2000)

- The Epicurean revival by Gassendi led to Empiricism, Enlightenment, Science, Modernity



Scientific Humanism

(features shared with Epicurean philosophy)

- Naturalism
- Philanthropy (human value)
- Biological ethics (Bioethics)
- Freedom of choice (of religion too)
- Justice as Social Contract
- Aiming at Quality of Life
- Right to pursue Happiness

Immanuel Kant «Critique of Pure Reason» 1781

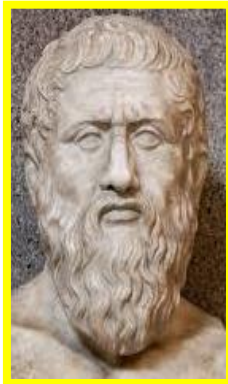
Two main philosophical lines

Intellectualism

“Εν αρχή ην ο λόγος”

Plato

Descartes, Leibnitz)

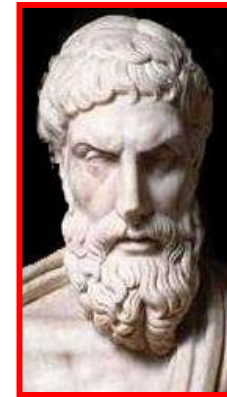
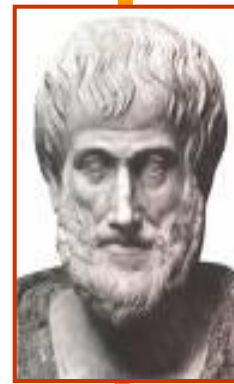


Sensualism

“Εν αρχή ην η αίσθησις”

Epicurus

Gassendi, Locke



Methods

Dialectic, Myth

Logic

Naturalism, Empiricism

1803 John Dalton Observational evidence supporting **atomic physics**

1803-today Science = Naturalism

Post-modernism

Thomas Kuhn

Modernism

Karl Popper



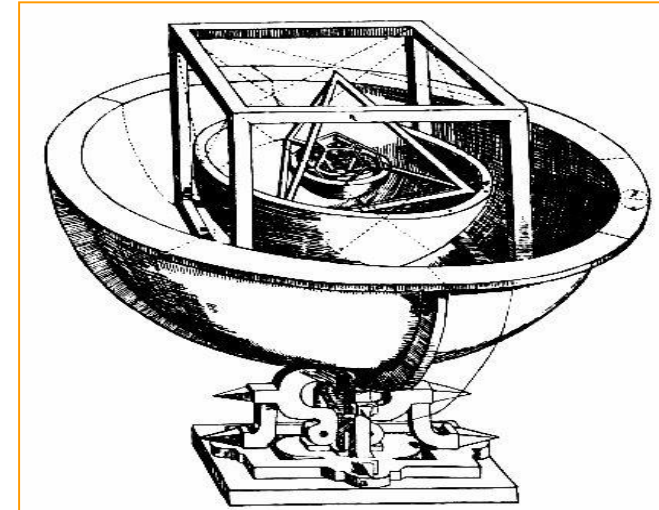
The adoption of the idealistic method
or the scientific method
is of immense importance for a human being

The example of Johannes Kepler (the same person with two methodologies)

Mythical Unsubstantiated Model (Idealistic-Platonic Method)

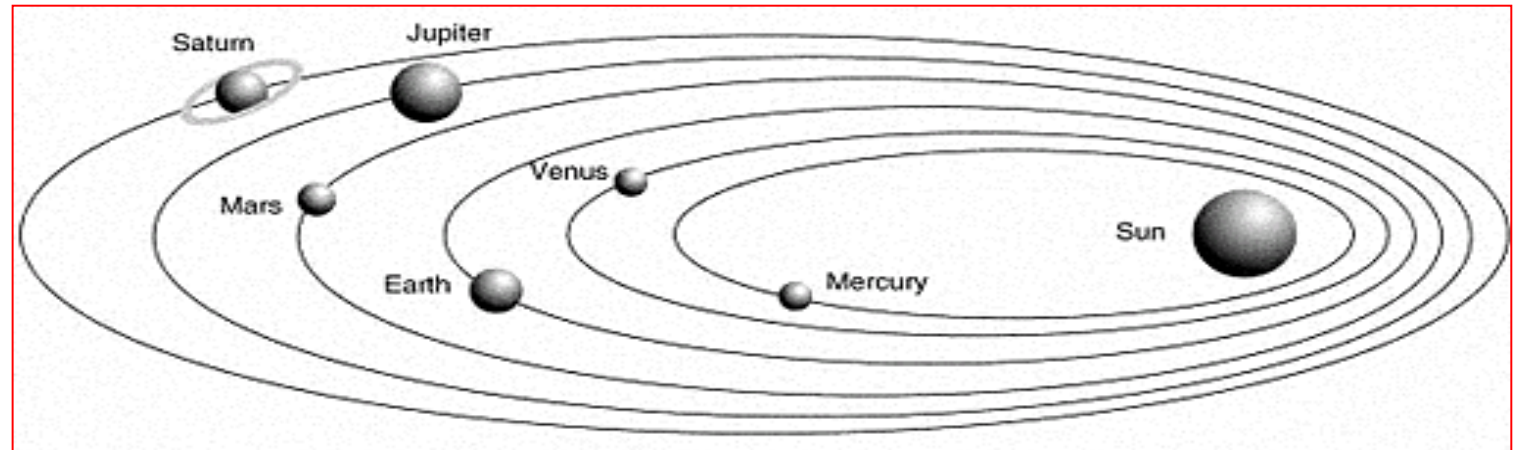


The imaginary model
of the solar system
according to Plato's
theories (1596)
"Mysterium Cosmographicum"

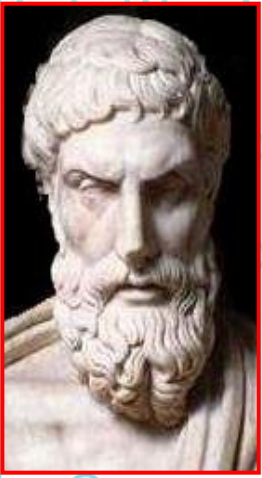


Scientific Model accepted even today (Empirical-Epicurean Method)

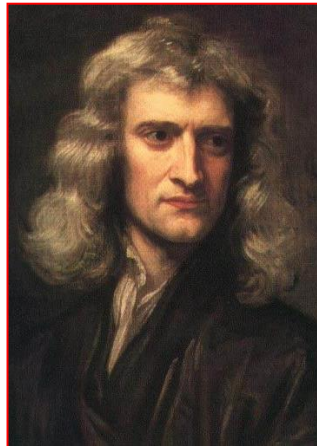
The descriptive model of
the solar system
according to astronomical
observations (1609)
"Astronomia nova"



Scientists that recognized the influence of Epicurus' ideas in their work



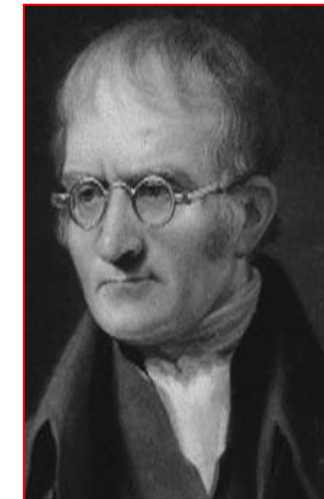
Galileo
Planets with satellites (1630)



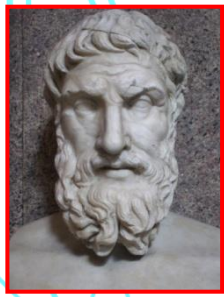
Newton
Gravity (1687)



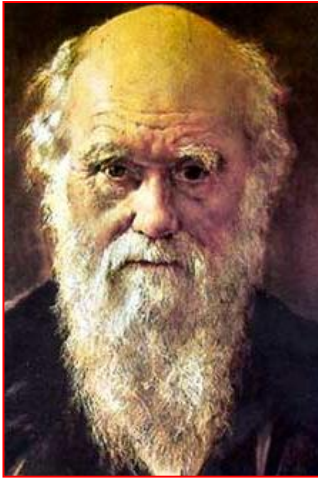
Boyle
Early Chemistry (1661)



Dalton
Atomic weight (1803)

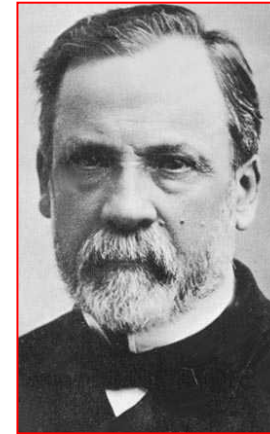


Life scientists and physicians that discovered biological mechanisms proposed by Epicureans



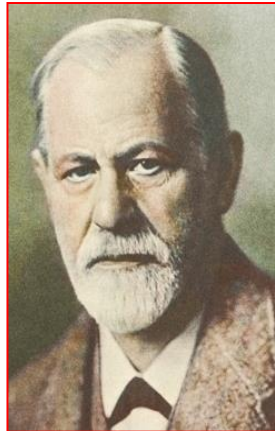
Darwin

**Evolution of species
by natural selection (1852)**



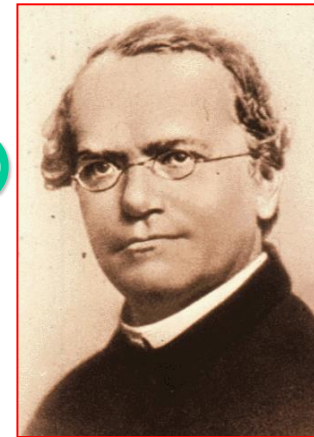
Pasteur

**Life from life
Microbes and disease (1864)**



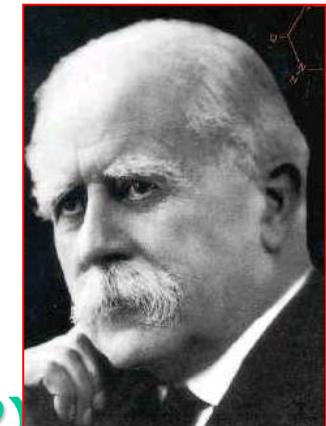
Freud

**Psychotherapy
(1899)**



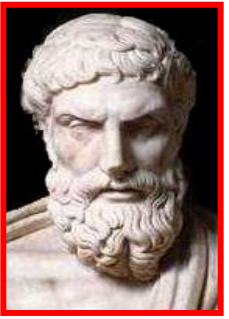
Mendel

Laws of Genetics (1866)



Garrod

Molecular basis of disease (1902)



INFLUENCE OF EPICURUS (341-270 BCE)

Epicurus' empirical philosophy Influenced

- First Scientists (Galileo, Gassendi, Boyle, Newton)
- English Empiricists (Hobbes, Locke) - Social contract
- Enlightenment philosophers (French Encyclopedists)
- Enlightenment political philosophers (Thomas Jefferson: right of pursuit of happiness, religious freedom)
- Utilitarians (Jeremy Bentham, John Stuart Mill)
- Other philosophers: Liberals, Marx, Nietzsche, Santayana
- Secular Humanism

Utility (increase of happiness)

Consequential Ethics – Informed consent

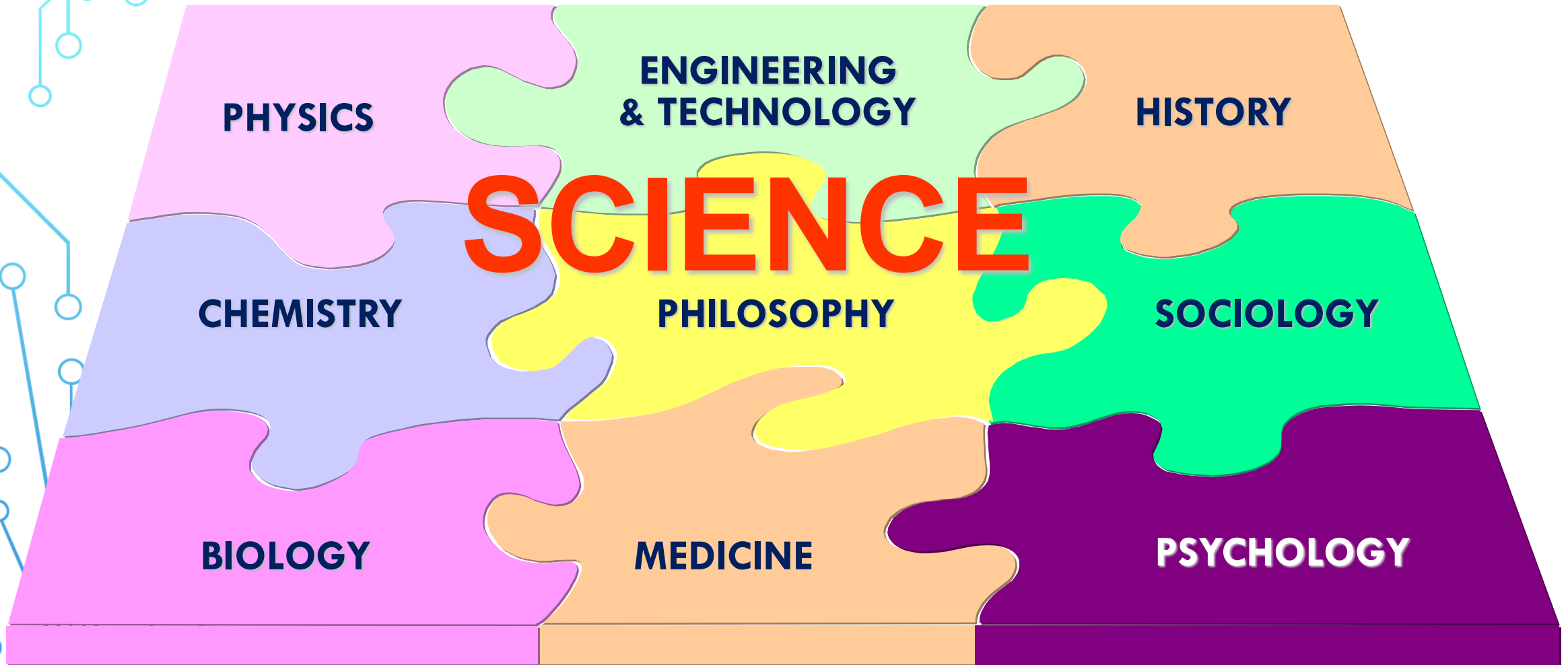
Vs

Duty (Kantian categorical imperative)

Deontological Ethics – Paternalism

«SCIENCES»

«NATURAL» versus «HUMANISTIC»
IS THERE REALLY SUCH A SEPARATION?

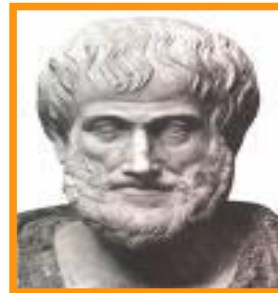




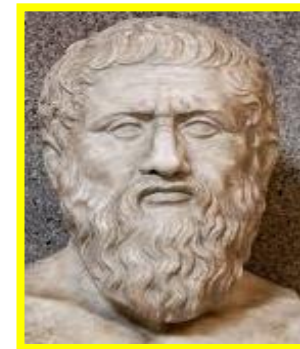
BIOETHICS AND ANCIENT GREEK PHILOSOPHERS

Bioethics:

- resulted because of rapid advances of Science
- emerged as a need for an ethical approach to new scientific knowledge and technologies in Biology and Medicine
- “the term Bio-ethics signifies which ethics is really important” (C.Yapijakis 2017)



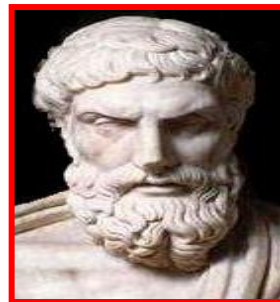
Ethics is a study of death



Humanism

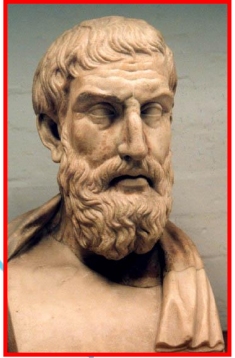
Biological Ethics

Accepted by 20
religious leaders in 2016





Epicurus' *Happiness* is equivalent to *Health* according to W.H.O.

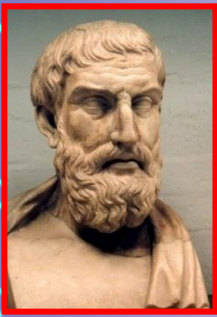


Epicurus description of Happiness (ευδαιμονία)
mental tranquility and absence of physical pain

Health is a state of complete physical, mental
and social well-being and not merely the
absence of disease or infirmity.

World Health Organization (W.H.O)

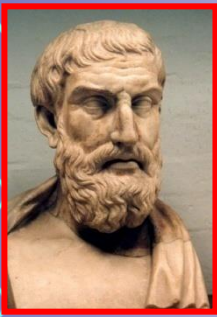




In the last fifty years scientific research has confirmed the Epicurean view of the molecular basis of life and disease. This presentation will discuss in brief the current knowledge regarding the human brain and compare it with Epicurus' understanding of human nature.

Evolutionary origins of the human brain

The human brain, which regulates all mental, emotional, sensory and motor functions, is the product of a long process of evolution that has been unraveled for millions of years. All living organisms on Earth originate from a common ancestor and all current biological structures derive from alteration or improvement of ancestral biological structures.



The human brain actually consists of three different interconnected brains that arose during evolution:

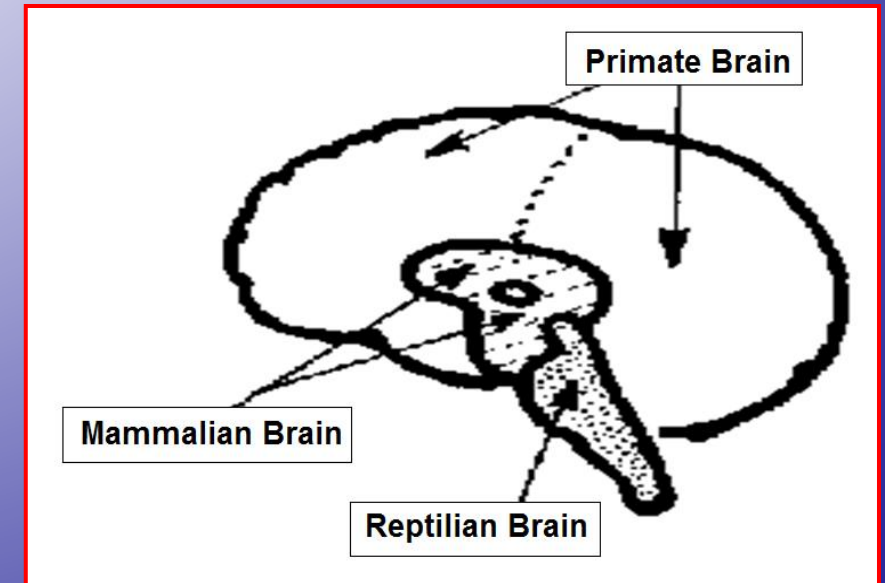
a) the "*reptilian brain*" which appeared about 300 million years ago,

b) the "*mammalian brain*" which appeared about 100 million years ago,

c) the "*brain of primates*"

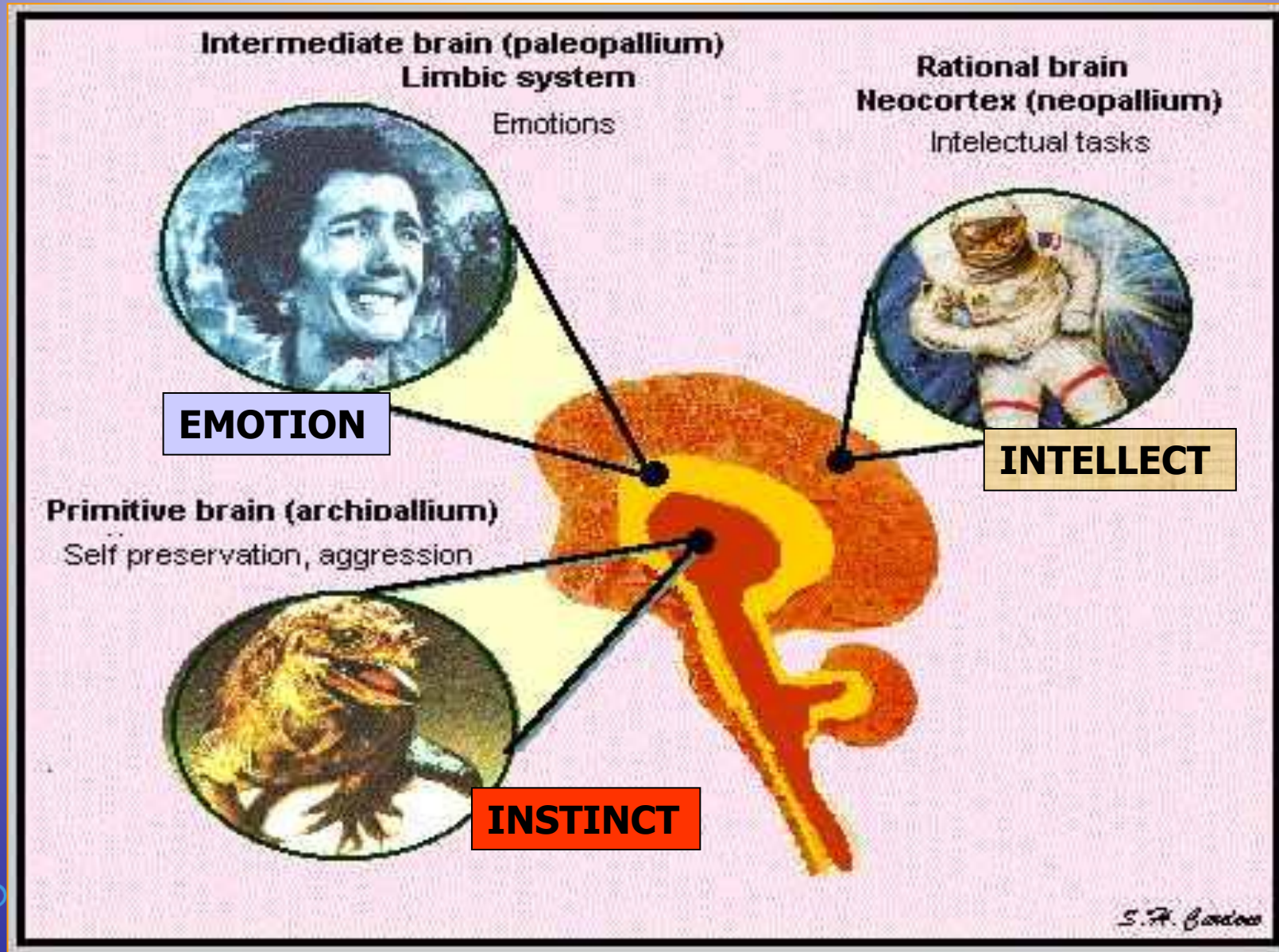
(a group of higher mammals that includes apes and humans),

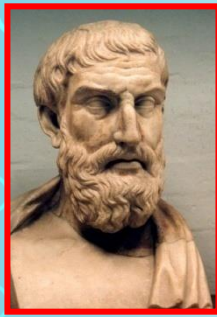
which appeared about 35 million years ago.



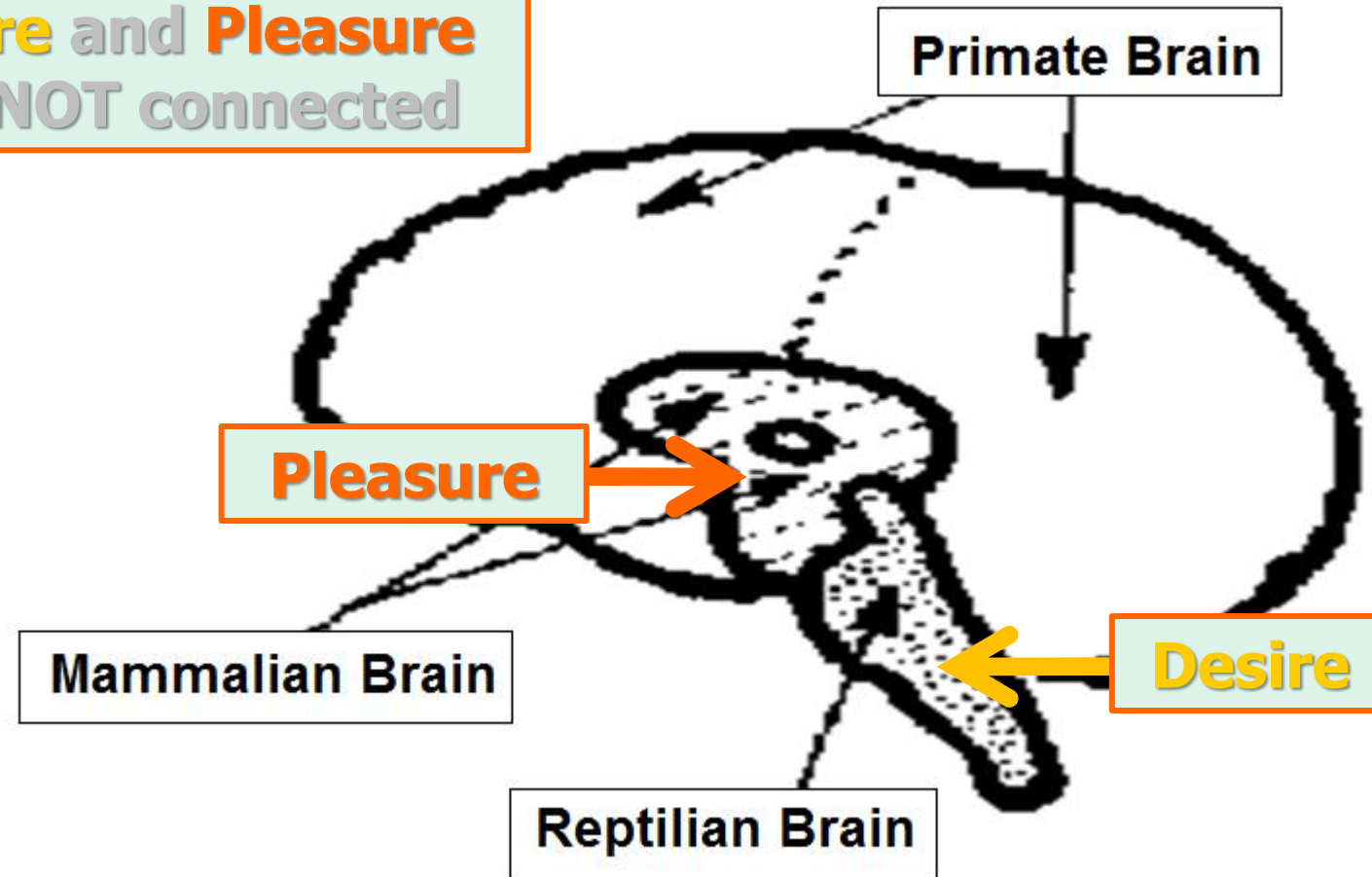
Human Brain

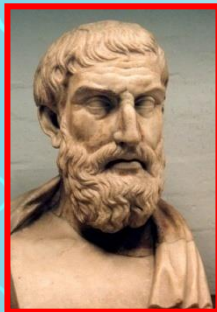
Product of Evolution



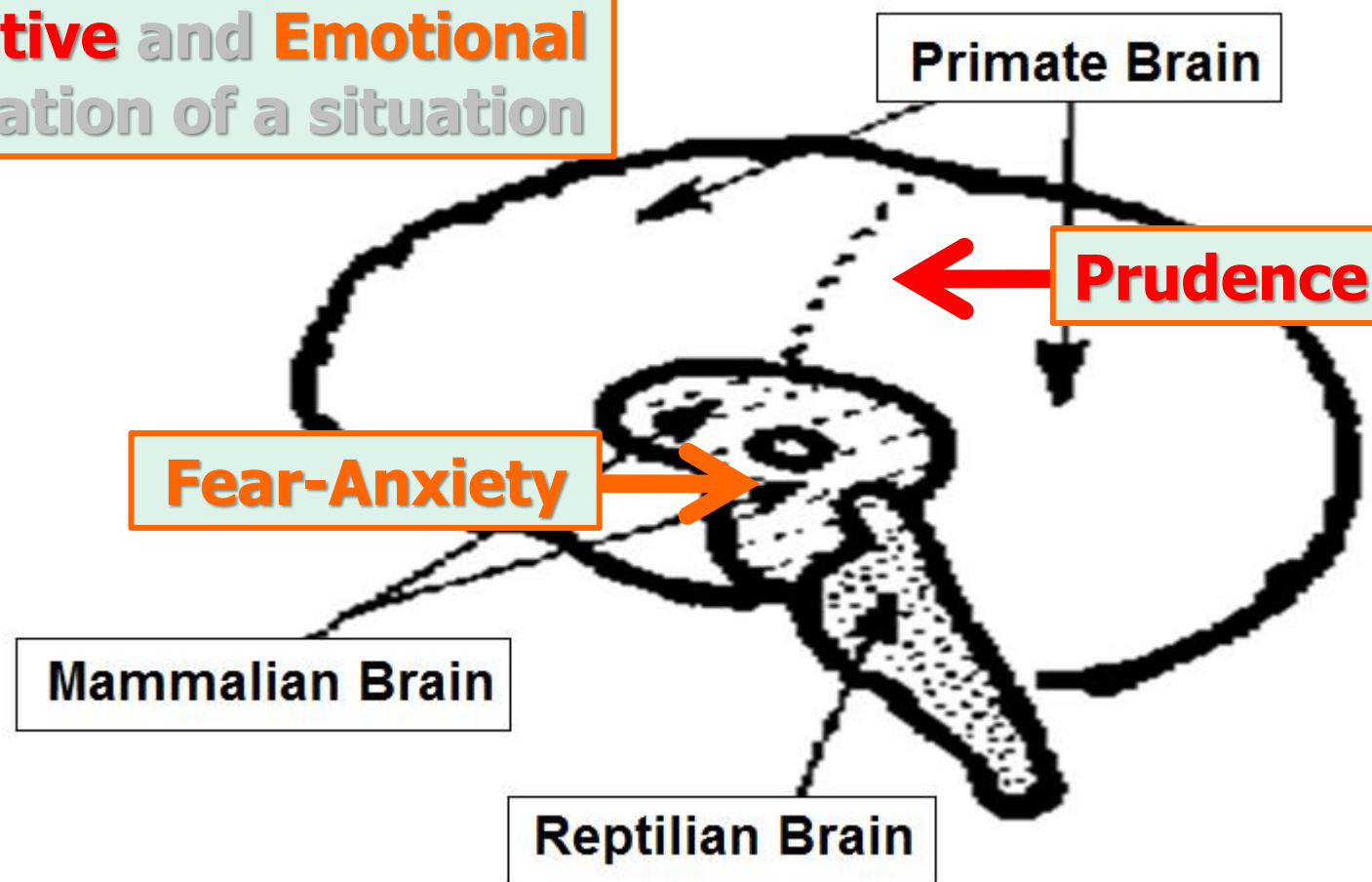


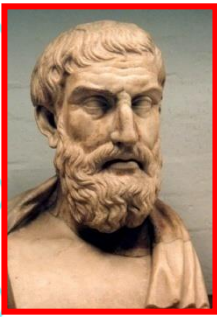
Desire and **Pleasure**
are NOT connected





Cognitive and **Emotional**
evaluation of a situation

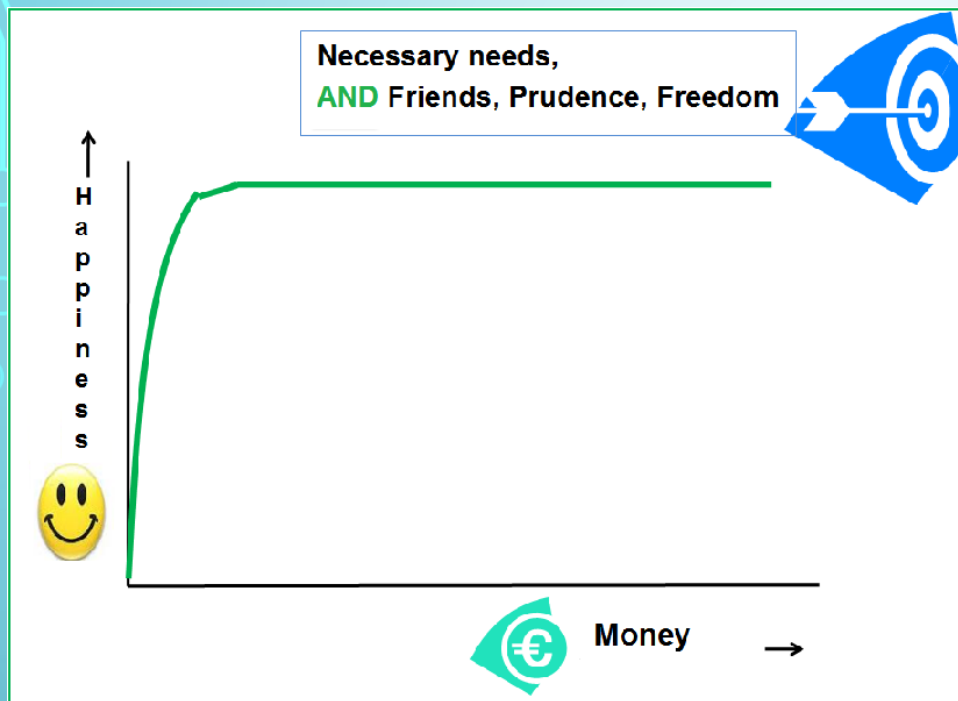
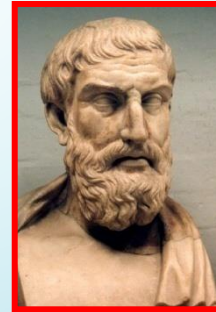




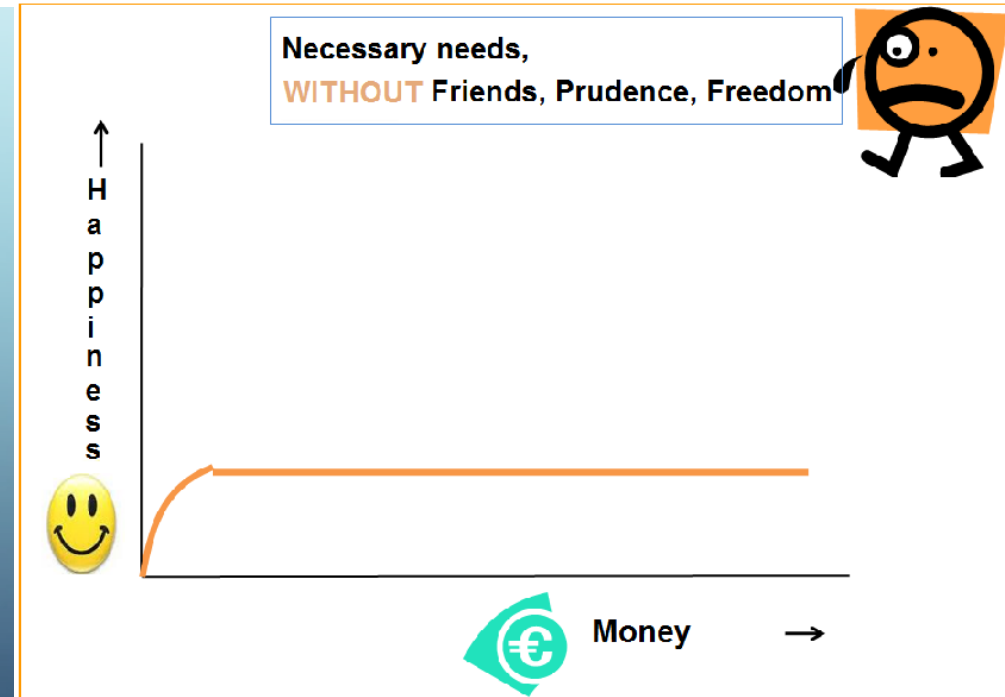
Similarly, modern cognitive and behavioral psychotherapy, which seems to be more effective than other approaches, focuses on the identification of one's specific fears and negative thoughts revealing their absurd character and then proposes a systematic engagement with pleasurable activities.

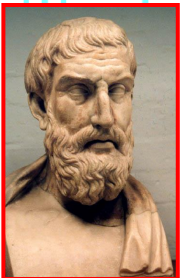
Numerous recent studies have shown that people feel happier when they satisfy their basic needs and have meaningful relationships with relatives and friends regardless of economic or social status.

Recent Psychology findings support Epicurus' teachings on happiness



Some people still debate about these issues...





Epicurus' philosophy aiming at Happiness is Philosophical Management of Stress

C. Yapijakis, E. D. Protopapadakis & G. P. Chrousos - Cortex 7, no. 2 (2022): 229-242
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.12681/cp.28077>

Philosophical Management of Stress based on Science and Epicurean Pragmatism: A Pilot Study

Christos Yapijakis

National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, Greece
Email address: cyapi@med.uoa.gr
ORCID ID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6695-186X>

Evangelos D. Protopapadakis

National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, Greece
Email address: eprotopa@philosophy.uoa.gr
ORCID ID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7502-3117>

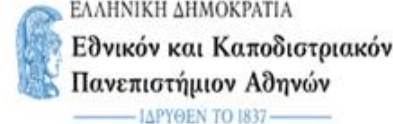
George P. Chrousos

National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, Greece
Email address: chrousos@med.uoa.gr
ORCID ID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-3098-5264>

Abstract

In the first months of the COVID-19 pandemic, we created and implemented from November 2020 to February 2021 a monthly educational pilot program of philosophical management of stress based on Science, Humanism and Epicurean Pragmatism, which was offered to employees of 26 municipalities in the Prefecture of Attica, Greece. The program named "Philosophical Distress Management Operation System" (PhiloDUM.O.S.) is novel and unique in its kind, as it combines certain Greek philosophical tradition (Epicurus) that concurs with modern scientific knowledge. The program was designed to be implemented in a period of crisis; therefore, it used a fast-paced, easy to learn and practice philosophical approach to stress management, based on cognitive psychotherapy. The philosophical approach to stress management has the advantage that it can be offered to most people, regardless of age and educational level. The pilot program was effective in achieving its objectives, shown by statistical comparisons of the trainees' responses to anonymous questionnaires before and after the month-long training. The successful PhiloDUM.O.S. program, thus, based on a solid scientific and philosophical base, offers a paradigm of stress management during crises and could be useful in Greece and internationally.

Keywords: stress management; applied philosophy; science; brain function; biological psychology; Epicurus; Epicurean philosophy; pursuit of happiness; meaning of life; scientific humanism



Φιλοσοφική Διαχείριση Στρες

Σύγχρονη και ασύγχρονη εκπαίδευση Φιλοσοφικής Διαχείρισης Στρες

Το Πρόγραμμα ▾ Εκπαίδευση ▾ Log In



Υπεύθυνος Προγράμματος

Ευάγγελος
Πρωτοπαπαδάκης

Διευθυντής Εργαστηρίου Εφαρμοσμένης Φιλοσοφίας, Αναπληρωτής Καθηγητής στο Τμήμα Φιλοσοφίας της Φιλοσοφικής Σχολής του Εθνικού και Καποδιστριακού Πανεπιστημίου Αθηνών.



Συντονιστής Προγράμματος

Χρήστος Γιαπιτζάκης

Αναπληρωτής Καθηγητής Γενικής στην Ιατρική Σχολή του Εθνικού και Καποδιστριακού Πανεπιστημίου Αθηνών και Μέλος της Συμβουλευτικής Επιτροπής του Εργαστηρίου Εφαρμοσμένης Φιλοσοφίας του ΕΚΠΑ. Μέλος της Διοικούσας Επιτροπής του Μεταπτυχιακού "Πτυχίου του Στρες και Προσωπική Υγείας" της Ιατρικής Σχολής του ΕΚΠΑ στο οποίο διδάσκει την τελευταία βετία "Φιλοσοφική Διαχείριση του Στρες".



Επιστημονικός Σύμβουλος Προγράμματος

Γιώργος Χρούσος

Ομότιμος Καθηγητής της Ιατρικής Σχολής του Εθνικού και Καποδιστριακού Πανεπιστημίου Αθηνών και Καθηγητής Παιδιατρικής, Φυσιολογίας και Φαρμακικής στην Ιατρική Σχολή του Πανεπιστημίου Τζώρτζετσον (JHUP). Ιδρυτής και Διευθυντής του Μεταπτυχιακού "Πτυχίου του Στρες και Προσωπική Υγείας" στην Ιατρική Σχολή του ΕΚΠΑ επί μια 30ετία.

Είναι μεταξύ των 250 πλέον καταξιωμένων κλινικών ερευνητών του κόσμου και ανακηρύχθηκε "Top Stress" για τις πρωτοποριακές του ανακαλύψεις των νευροβιολογικών και ενδοκρινολογικών μηχανισμών του στρες.



Innovative unique and successful program (since November 2020)
based mainly on Science and Epicurean philosophy

Objective "friendly" discussion with the aim of **learning**

Epicurean approach with prudence



“As far as other activities are concerned, the result comes as soon as they are completed, while for philosophy the pleasure is simultaneous with knowledge. Because pleasure does not come after learning, but at the same time with learning there is enjoyment”.

Vatican Saying 27



“Truth is great and will prevail if left to herself, that she is the proper and sufficient antagonist to error, and has nothing to fear from the conflict, unless by human interposition disarmed of her natural weapons, free argument and debate; errors ceasing to be dangerous when it is permitted freely to contradict them”.

Thomas Jefferson

Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom (1786)



Epicurean Ethics

The Scientific Humanism of Epicurus

CONCLUSIONS – Philosophy

- The major Greek philosophers followed different approaches, either intellectual (dialectical, logical), or empirical (observation), reaching different conclusions.
- The erroneous views on several matters of Plato and Aristotle survived for ideological reasons after the Middle Ages and Enlightenment (e.g. Nazi racism and eugenics).
- Epicurus observed empirically what scientific research has discovered over the last two centuries – Best philosophical basis for Ethics (Bioethics)





Epicurean Ethics

The Scientific Humanism of Epicurus



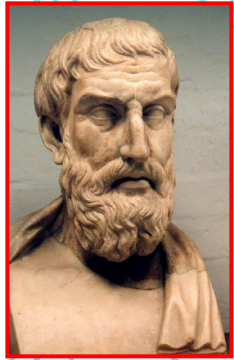
CONCLUSIONS – Lessons from History

- Those who use Science/Philosophy and Humans for myopic selfish purposes (career, power, money) become tyrants or advisors of tyrants - **misery for themselves and others.**
- Those who love Science/Philosophy but not Humans sooner or later will evolve into Mengele types - **misery for themselves and others.**
- Those who love Humans but not Science/Philosophy sooner or later will be led to the Middle Ages - **misery for themselves and others.**
- Those who love Science/Philosophy and Humans should also know History so that they can improve society by starting with themselves – **their reward is happiness for all.**

Conclusion

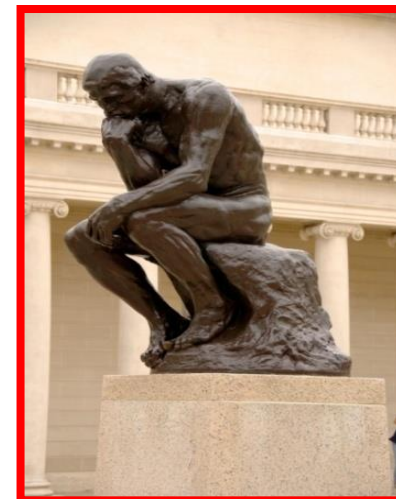
Among ancient Greek philosophies, **Epicurean philosophy**

- Is the most compatible with **Science** and **Naturalism**
- Is the most compatible with **Humanism**
- Is the most compatible with **Social Contract** and **Human Rights, Animal Rights** and **Environmental** Issues
- Is the most compatible with **Cognitive psychotherapy**
- It has **proven its worth** during **Renaissance, Enlightenment** and early **Modern Era**
- It is both **Greek** and **Universal**
- It promotes utility and **happiness** of all people
- Therefore, in the post-COVID era the **best guidance** is **Scientific Humanism** based on **Epicurus' philosophy**





Thank you for your attention!



References

Yapijakis C., ed. **Epicurean Philosophy. An Introduction from the “Garden of Athens”**. Stavrodromi Publications, Athens, 2022

Yapijakis C. **Ethical teachings of Epicurus based on human nature in the light of Biological Psychology**. Proceedings of the XXIII World Congress of Philosophy, Athens, 2013

Γιαπιτζάκης Χ. **Επίκουρος: Επιστημονικός Ανθρωπισμός και Ευδαιμονία (Epicurus: Scientific Humanism and Happiness)**. Εκδόσεις 24 Γράμματα, Αθήνα, 2020

