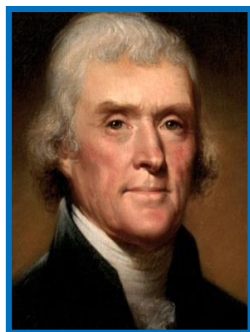
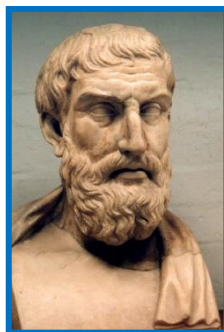


HAWC

||||

HELLENIC AMERICAN
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ANNIVERSARY OF
AMERICAN
INDEPENDENCE

EPICUREAN PHILOSOPHY
and its influence on
THOMAS JEFFERSON

WITH TWO
OUTSTANDING SPEAKERS

Mr. Panagiotis
Panagiotopoulos

Dr. Christos
Yapijakis

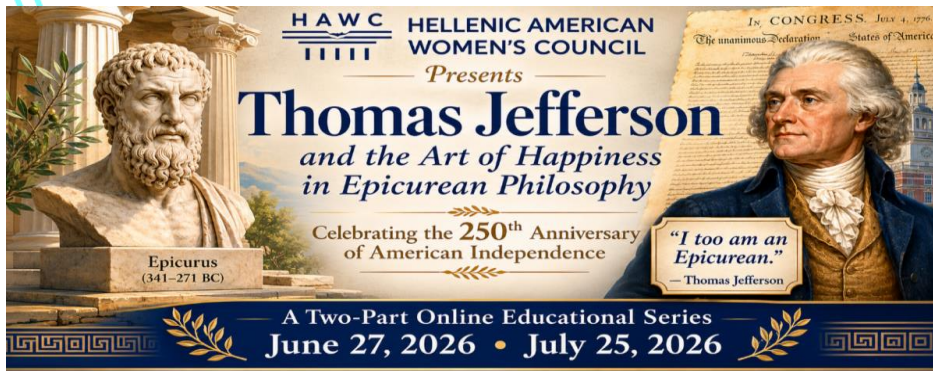
Co-Founders of the
Society of Epicurus – Kepos of Athens

SECOND SESSION TOPIC
“The pursuit of happiness in the
Declaration of Independence and
Epicurean Philosophy”
“I TOO AM AN EPICUREAN” by Christos Yapijakis

SATURDAY, JULY 25, 2026
10:00 a.m. | 6:00 p.m.
CENTRAL TIME | GREEK TIME
ONLINE PROGRAM

REGISTER TODAY!
tinyurl.com/2-Jefferson-Epicurus

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National and Kapodistrian
University of Athens



The Pursuit of Happiness in the Declaration of Independence & Epicurean Philosophy

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

- **Associate Professor of Genetics**

School of Medicine, National Kapodistrian University of Athens

- **Vice President - Head of Bioethics Committee**

Greek Institute of Child Health

- **Founding Member**

Friends of Epicurean Philosophy "Garden of Athens"

- **Advisory Board Member**

Research Laboratory of Applied Philosophy
National Kapodistrian University of Athens



Ινστιτούτο Υγείας Του Παιδιού

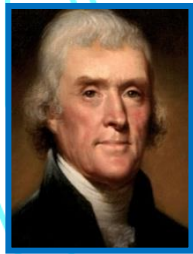
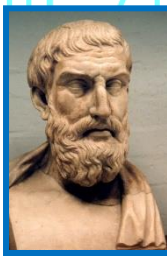
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ΑΘΗΝΑΙΟΣ ΤΩΝ
ΔΗΜΩΝ ΓΑΡΓΗΤΤΙΟΣ



ΚΗΠΟΣ
ΑΘΗΝΩΝ



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The Pursuit of Happiness in the Declaration of Independence & Epicurean Philosophy

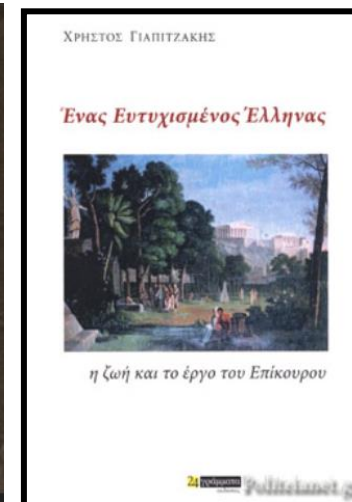
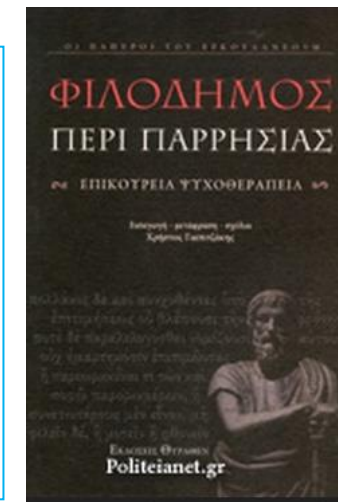
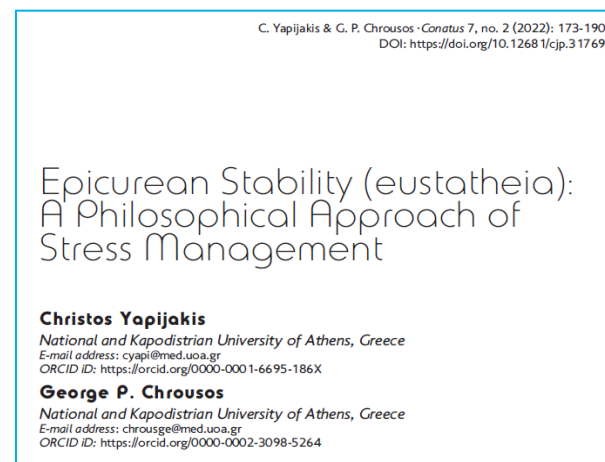
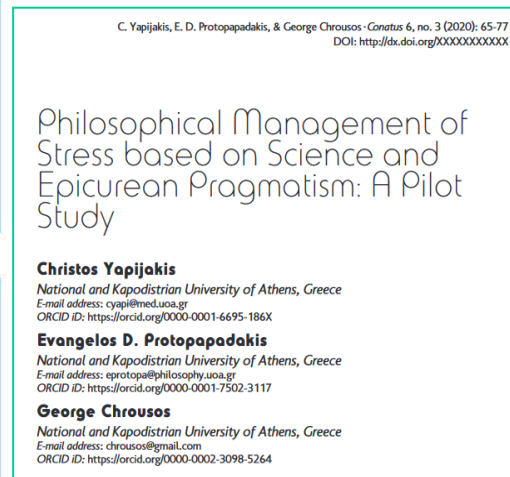
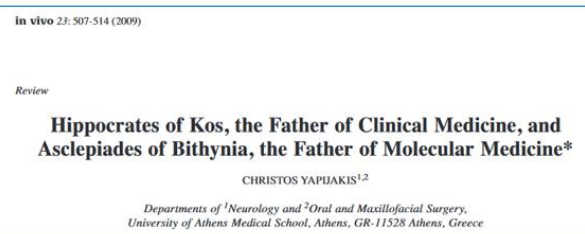
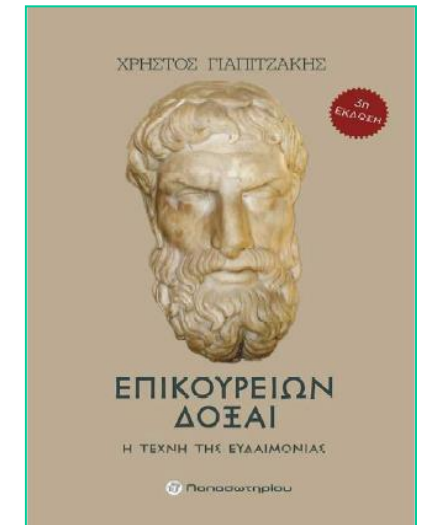
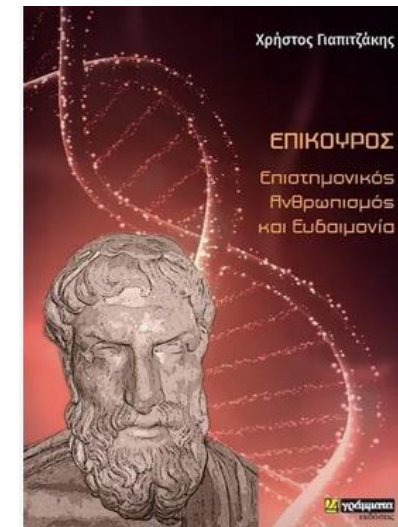
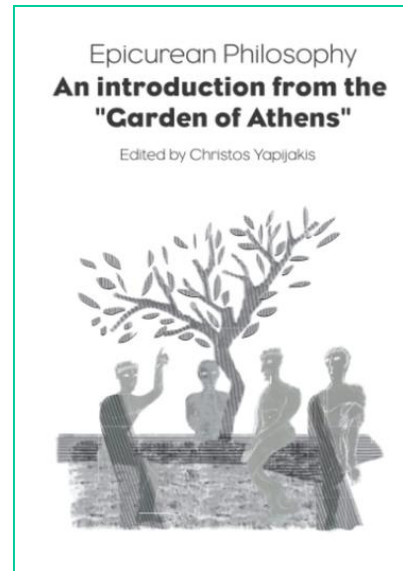
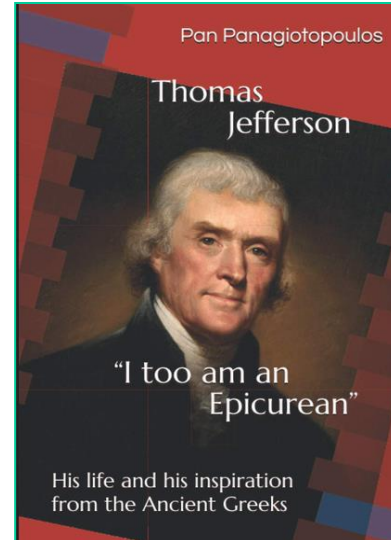
Prof. Dr. Christos Yapijakis, DMD,BS,MS,PhD



DECLARATION

No conflict of interest
to declare

REFERENCES



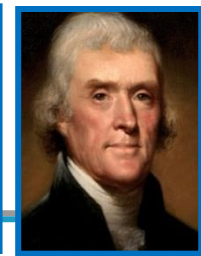
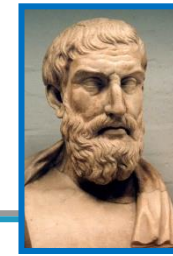
Ancestral Concepts of Human Genetics and Molecular Medicine in Epicurean Philosophy

Christos Yapijakis

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H.J. Petermann et al. (eds.), *History of Human Genetics*,
DOI 10.1007/978-3-319-51783-4_3



The Pursuit of Happiness: A universal, timeless value



First legal text establishing it as an inalienable human right

U.S. Declaration of Independence



All men are created equal and
have the right to life, liberty, and
the pursuit of happiness.

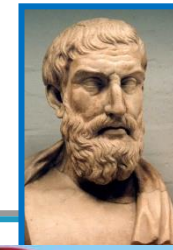
~ Thomas Jefferson

“We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are **Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness.**”

«Θεωρούμε ότι αυτές οι αλήθειες είναι αυτονόητες, ότι όλοι οι άνθρωποι έχουν δημιουργηθεί ίσοι, ότι είναι προικισμένοι από τον Δημιουργό τους με ορισμένα αναπαλλοτρίωτα Δικαιώματα, μεταξύ αυτών είναι η Ζωή, η Ελευθερία και η επιδίωξη της Ευδαιμονίας».



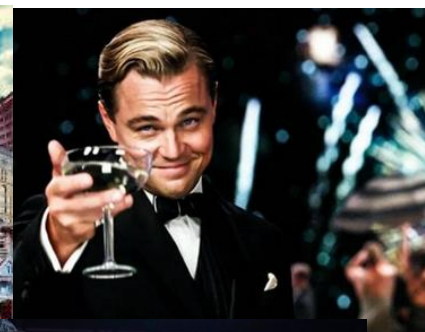
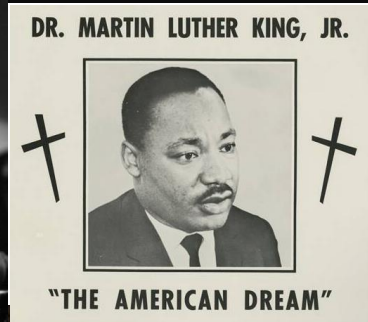
The Pursuit of Happiness: A universal, timeless value



American Dream

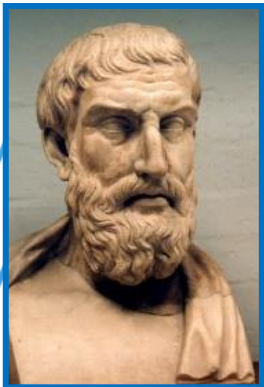
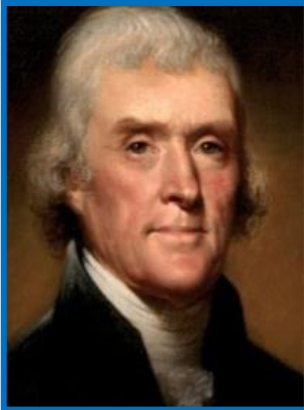
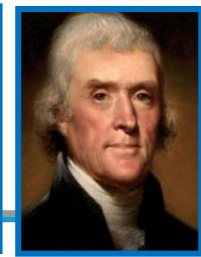
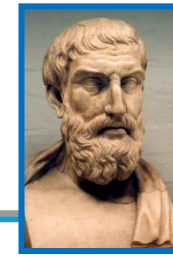
[ə-'mer-ə-kən 'drēm]

The belief that anyone, regardless of where they were born or what class they were born into, can attain their own version of success in a society in which upward mobility is possible for everyone.





The Pursuit of Happiness: A universal, timeless value



United Nations 2012 (2010/C 83/02):

- Happiness is a fundamental human right and goal
- International Day of Happiness on 20th of March

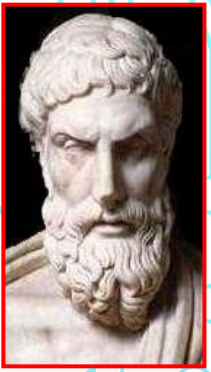
Thomas Jefferson (1743-1826)

- U.S. Declaration of Independence (1776)

As you say of yourself, I too am an Epicurean. I consider the genuine (not the imputed) doctrines of Epicurus as containing every thing rational in moral philosophy which Greece & Rome have left us.

Epicurus of Athens (341-270 BC)

- Happiness is the goal of every prudent human being



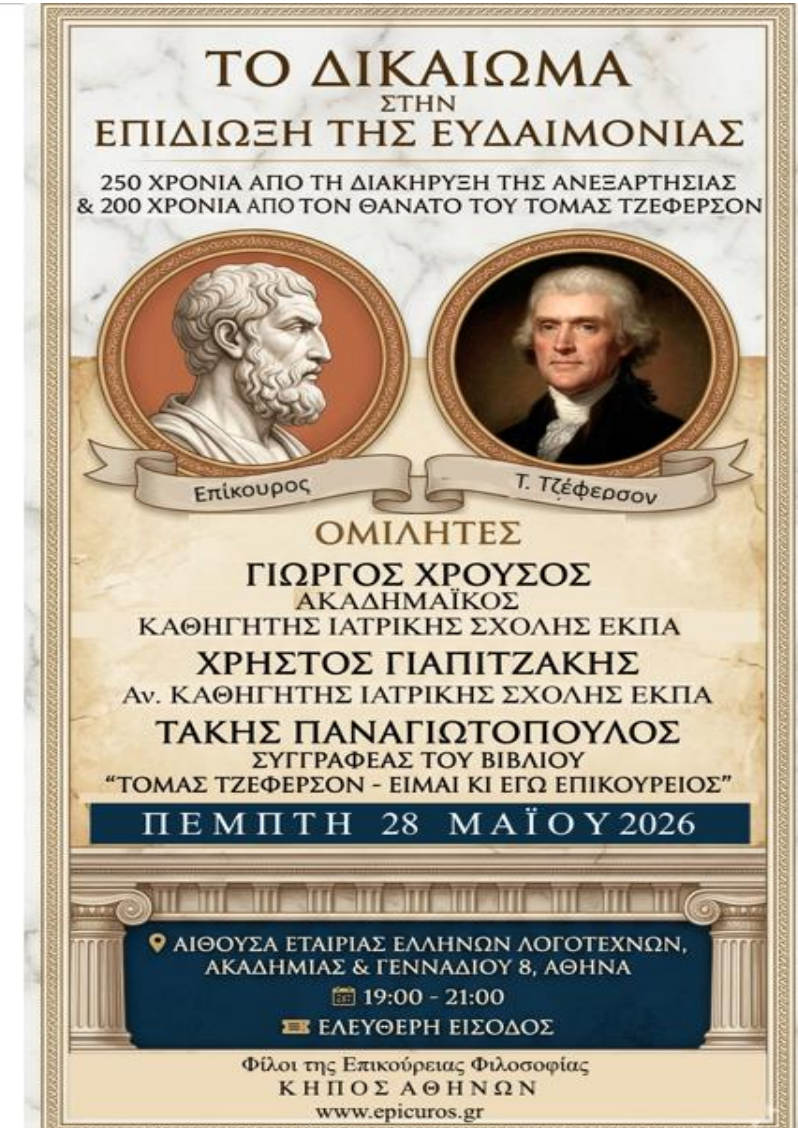
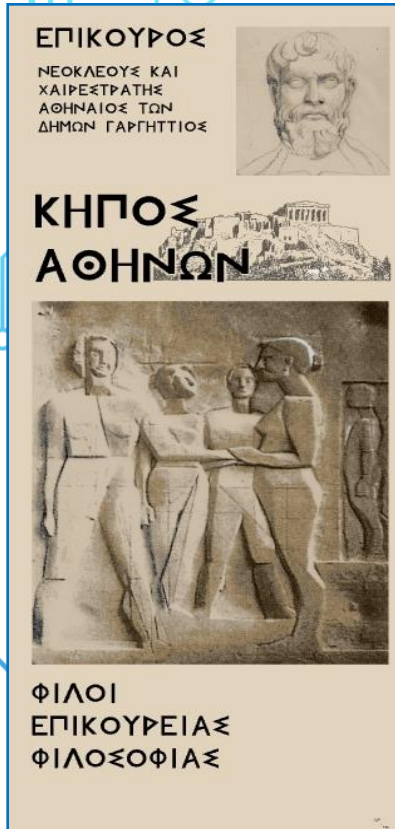
Epicurus of Athens (341-270 BC) First Humanist and Enlightener philosopher Garden of Athens (306 BC-267 AD?)

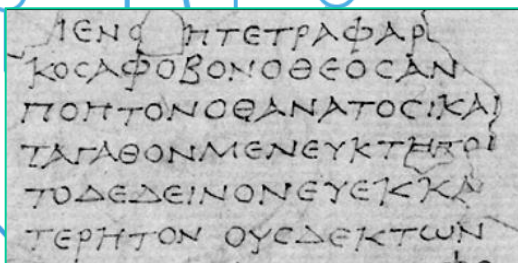
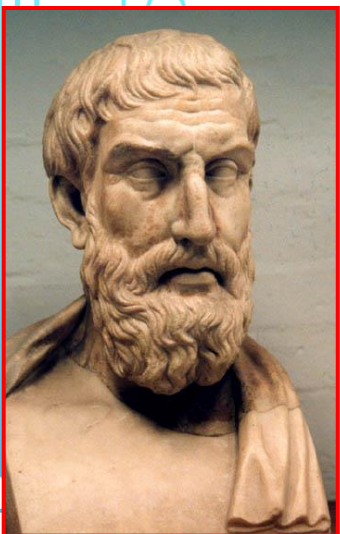
Modern Garden of Athens (2009-2026)
founded by Friends of Epicurean Philosophy
in January 2009



Purpose:
the moral and physical defense of the right
to **life**, to **liberty**, and ultimately to **happiness**,
through the study, restoration, promotion,
dissemination, and experiencing of the
teachings of the Athenian philosopher
Epicurus in the modern era.

The banner of the Garden of Athens is a creation of its member and
award-winning sculptor **Aspasia Papadoperaki (1942-2026)**





Epicurus the Athenian (341-270 BCE)

Proto-Enlightenment philosopher

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

atoms and void, atomic weight, atomic nature of senses, emerging chemical properties based on atomic structure, molecular basis of disease, necessity and chance, free will, evolution of species based on natural selection, multitudes of worlds in the universe, justice as a social contract, progress of civilization, happiness as a human goal etc.

- *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 the empirical study of nature (naturalistic science) and resulting prudence (practical wisdom, φρόνησις), virtue (αρετή) and friendship (φιλία) to every human being
prudence - self-control - bravery - justice

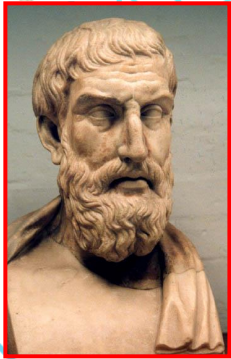
"It is not possible to be free from fears about the most important issues for someone who does not know the nature of the universe, but believes in what myths say. Consequently, it is not possible to fully enjoy pleasures without the scientific knowledge of Nature" (Epicurus, PS XII)



The Epicurean Philosophy (300 BCE-400 CE)

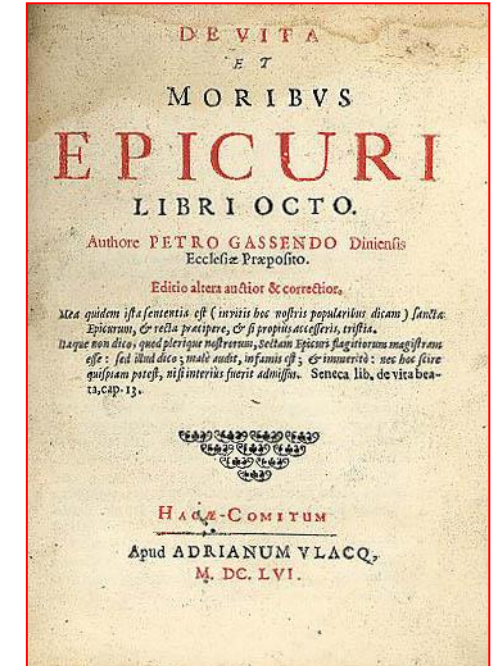
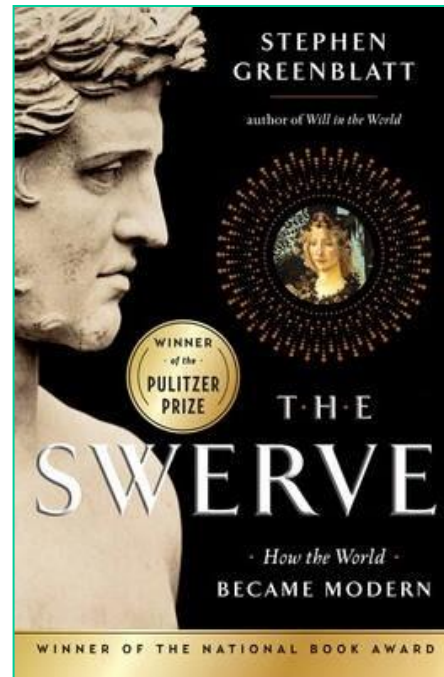
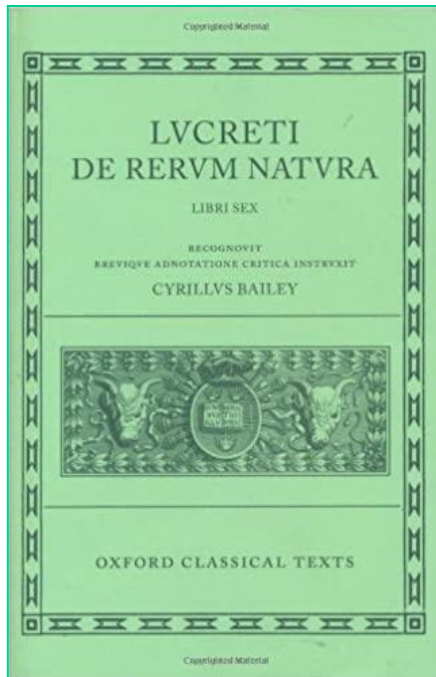
was the first international, multilingual, humanistic movement that influenced thousands of people (Greeks, Romans, Syrians, Jews, Celts etc) in three continents during seven centuries in the Hellenistic and Roman eras.





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 Gassendi (astronomer, philosopher, and Christian priest)

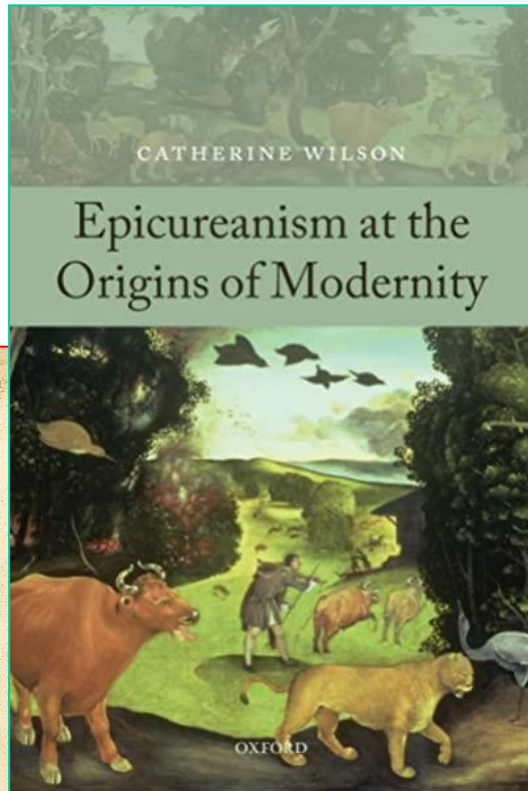
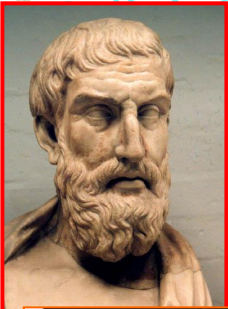




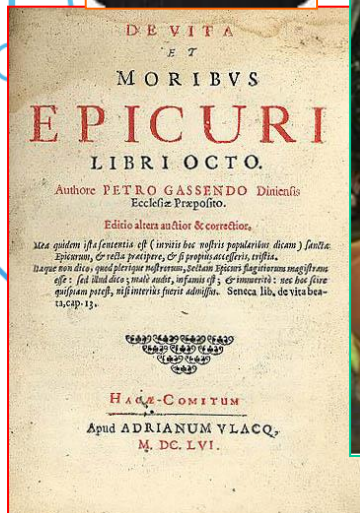
The Epicurean origin of Modernity (1650-1800)

The revival of Epicurean philosophy (1650) by Gassendi

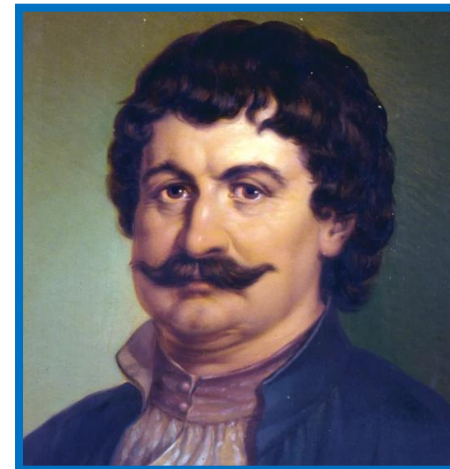
- led to Empiricism, Enlightenment, Science
- inspired people involved in the American, French and Greek revolutions



Thomas
Jefferson



Rigas
Velestinlis



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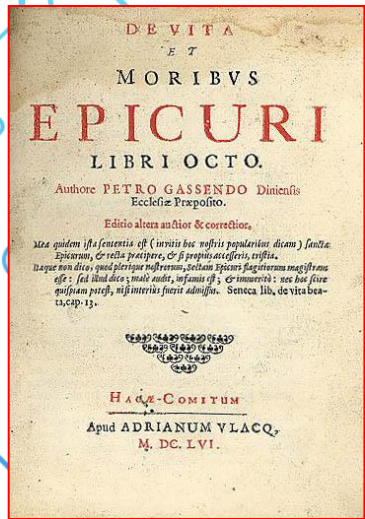
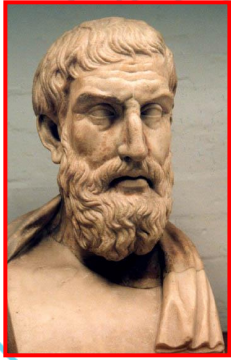
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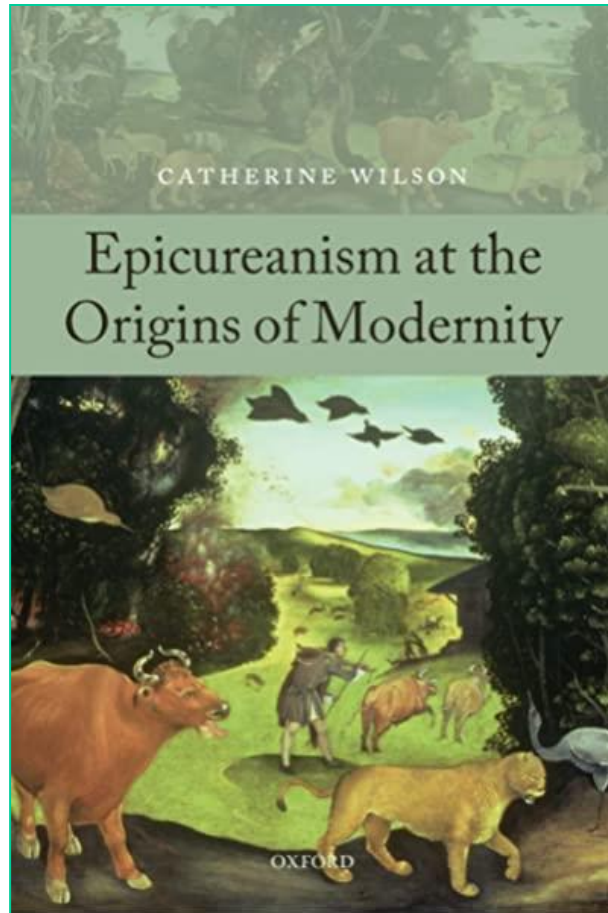
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Πληροφορίες για τον σύνδεσμο παρακολούθησης στο
www.epicuros.gr



The Epicurean origin of Modernity (1650-2000)

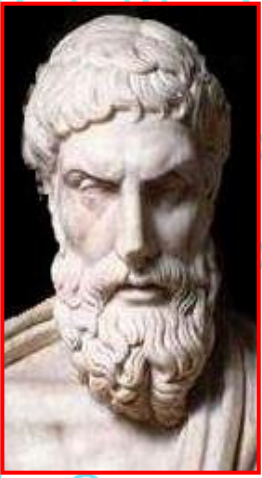
- The Epicurean revival by Gassendi led to Empiricism, Enlightenment, Science, Modernity



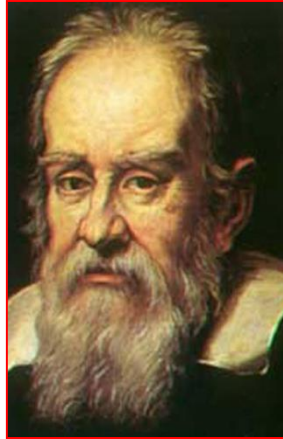
Scientific Humanism

(features shared with Epicurean philosophy)

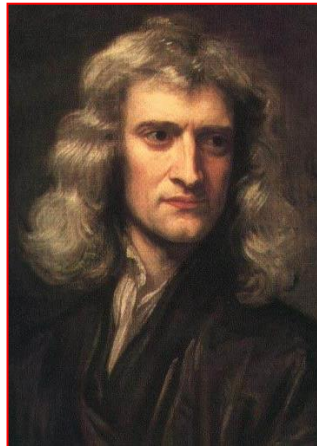
- Naturalism
- Philanthropy (human value)
- Biological ethics (Bioethics)
- Freedom of choice (of religion too)
- Justice as Social Contract
- Aiming at Quality of Life
- Right to pursue Happiness



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



Galileo
Planets with satellites (1630)



Newton
Gravity (1687)

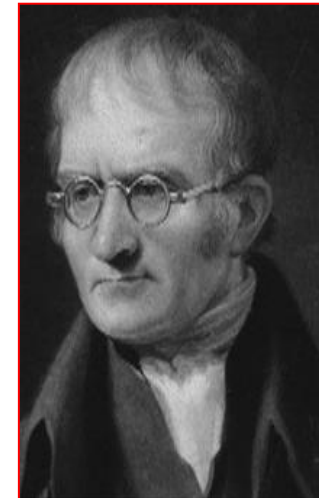


Boyle
Early Chemistry (1661)

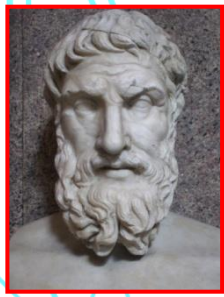
Ancestral Concepts of Human Genetics
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Christos Yapijakis

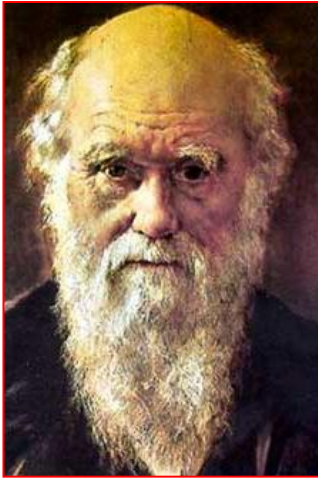
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H.J. Petermann et al. (eds.), *History of Human Genetics*,
DOI 10.1007/978-3-319-51783-4_3



Dalton
Atomic weight (1803)



Life scientists and physicians that discovered biological mechanisms proposed by Epicureans

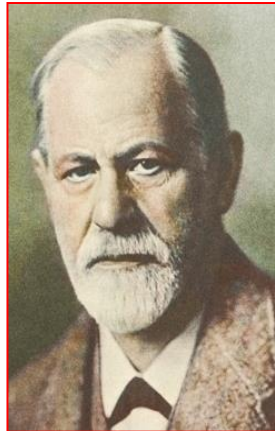
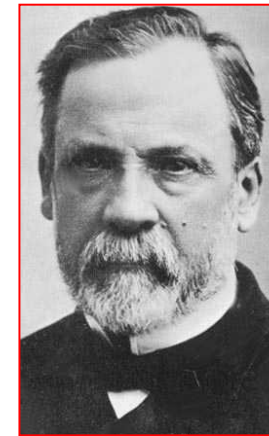


Darwin

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

Pasteur

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

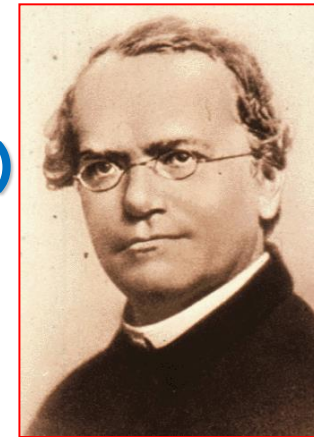


Freud

**Psychotherapy
(1899)**

Mendel

Laws of Genetics (1866)



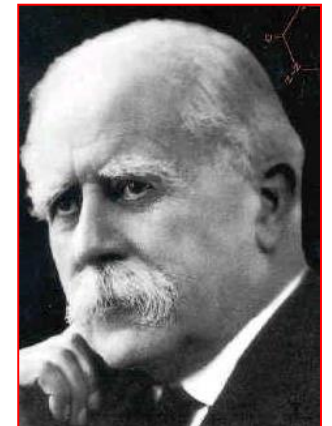
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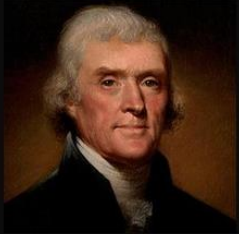
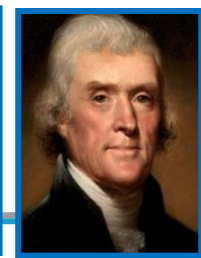
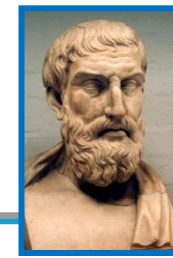
Garrod

Molecular basis of disease (1902)





The Pursuit of Happiness: A universal, timeless value



All men are created equal and have the right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

~ Thomas Jefferson



Scientific Humanism

(based on Epicurean philosophy)

Morality prudence - self-control - bravery - justice

Thomas Jefferson

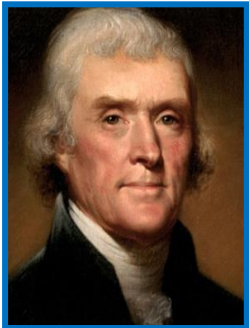
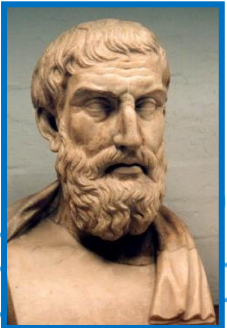
- Established **freedom of religion** (separation of Church and State) -1786 **Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom**

"The greatest of all the Reformers of the depraved religion of his own country, was **Jesus of Nazareth**... **Epicurus** gave us laws for governing ourselves, **Jesus** a supplement of the duties and charities we owe to others". Thomas Jefferson, Letter to to William Short, 1819.
- Proposed state-funded **public education for all** (male/female) children -1779 **Virginia Bill**
- Established first **public secular University** in the US -1819 **University of Virginia**
- Peaceful expansion of US -1803 **Purchase of Louisiana** (doubling the size of USA) -1804–1806 **Lewis and Clark Expedition** (exploration of the West until the Pacific Ocean)
- Used innovative scientific thinking - invention of **swivel wheelchair**, revolving bookstand etc.
- Had an immense collection of books in many languages -1815 **Library of Congress**



BUT

**“Can the principles of Ancient Greek
Philosophy serve as
guidance to answer to our concerns today?”**



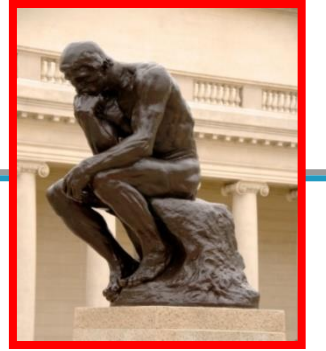
As **Thomas Jefferson** understood
and before him **Epicurus** observed and established
for as long as the human nature remains the same

**Objective Observation of Nature and Humans
(Science)**

is our **best** philosophical approach

Scientific Humanism

Humanism



After the barbarity of World War II, **Humanism** became the secular theory on which the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was philosophically based upon the founding of the United Nations in 1948.





Humanism



Science - Pragmatism

The principles of **Humanism** are supported by joint statements from 20 religious leaders representing the most widespread religions worldwide.





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".

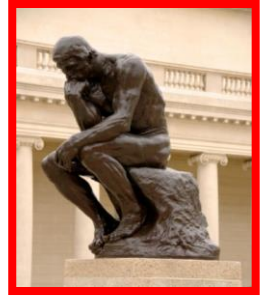
Thomas Jefferson

Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom (1786)

"HUMAN KNOWLEDGE"

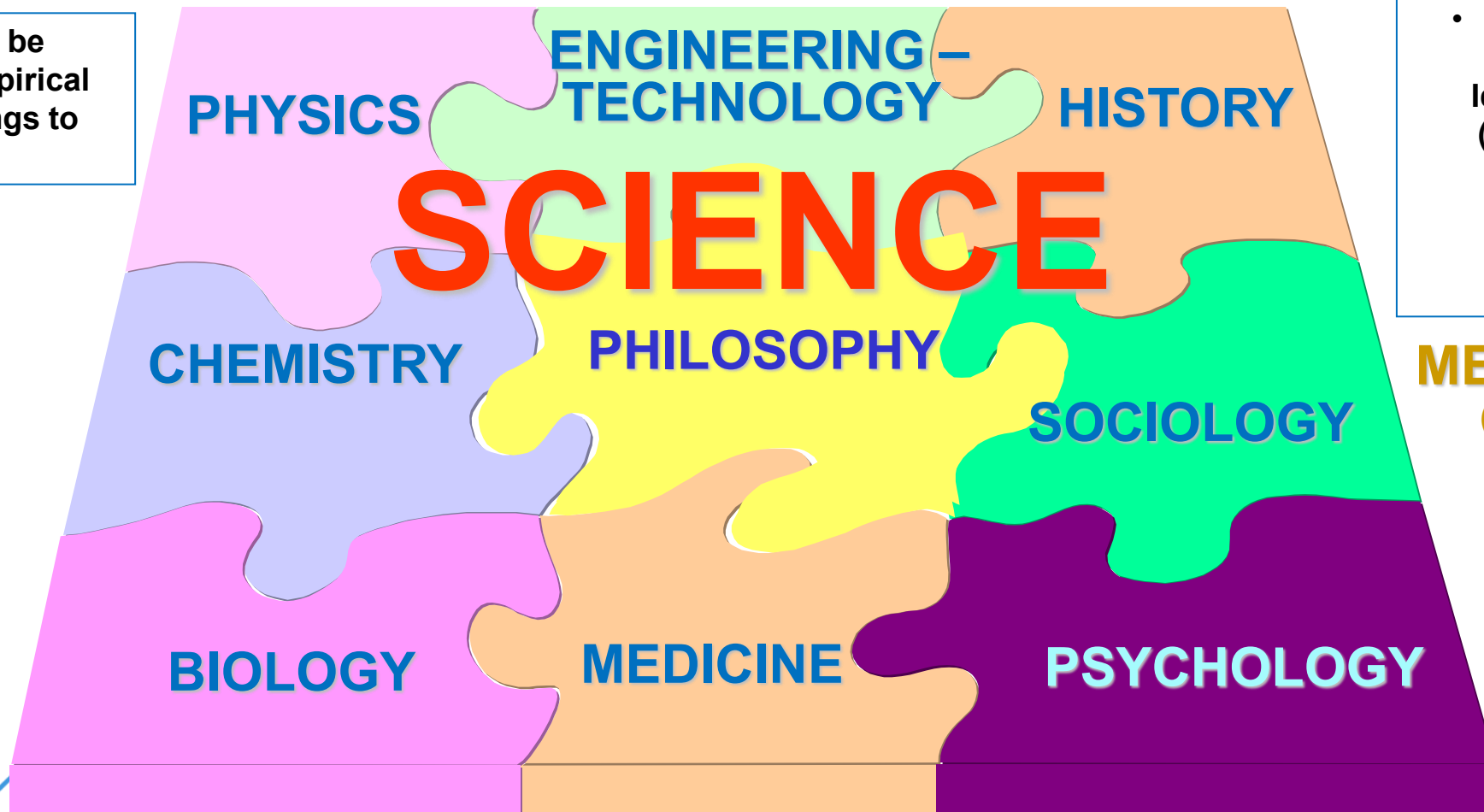
"NATURAL SCIENCES" - "HUMANITIES"
(INHUMANITIES?) (UNNATURAL?)

THIS DIVISION IS NOT VALID!



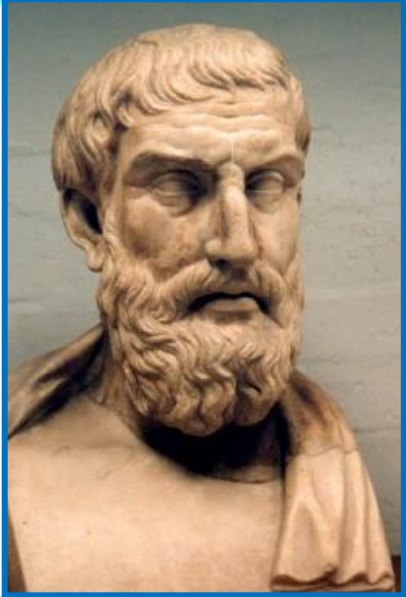
- If a question can be answered by empirical research it belongs to Science

- What we cannot know empirically, Idealistic Philosophy (Metaphysics) deals with poetic, intuitional, belief, opinions and arguments.



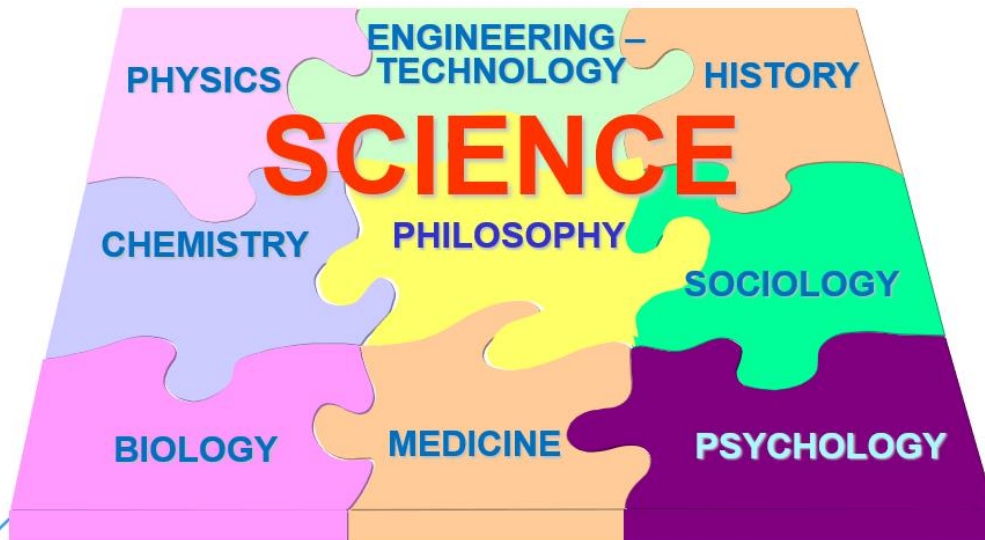
METAPHYSICS
(Art of Speech)

Epicurus the Athenian (341-270 BCE)



Μέμνησο ὅτι θνητὸς ὢν τῇ φύσει καὶ λαβὼν χρόνον
ὠρισμένον ἀνέβης τοῖς περὶ φύσεως διαλογισμοῖς ἐπὶ τὴν
ἀπειρίαν καὶ τὸν αἰῶνα καὶ κατεῖδες τὸ τ' ἔοντα τὰ τ'
ἐσσόμενα πρὸ τὰ ἔοντα. *[Ancient Greek]*

Remember that you are mortal and have a limited time to
live and have devoted yourself to discussions on nature for
all time and eternity and have seen “things that are now
and are to me come and have been. *[English]*



Stephen Hawking (1942-2018)

Stephen Hawking
January 8, 1942–March 14, 2018

“

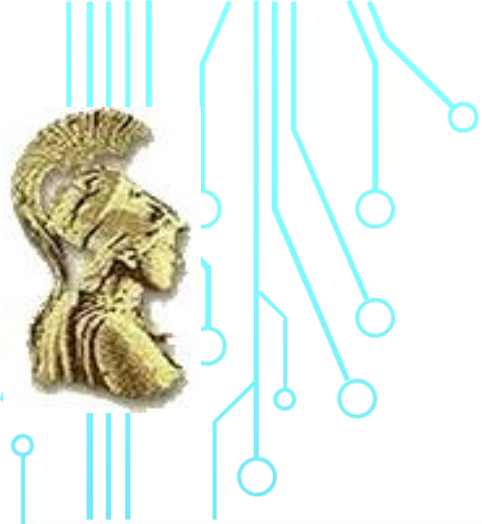
We are just an
advanced breed of
monkeys on a
minor planet of a
very average
star. But we can
understand the
Universe. That
makes us something
very special.

”

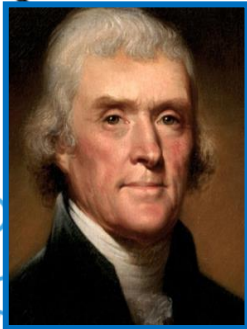
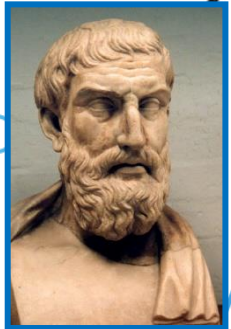
—STEPHEN
HAWKING



World
Science
Festival



As Thomas Jefferson understood
as long as the human nature remains the same
The Scientific Humanism of Epicurus
can serve as guidance to answer to our current concerns



- 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)

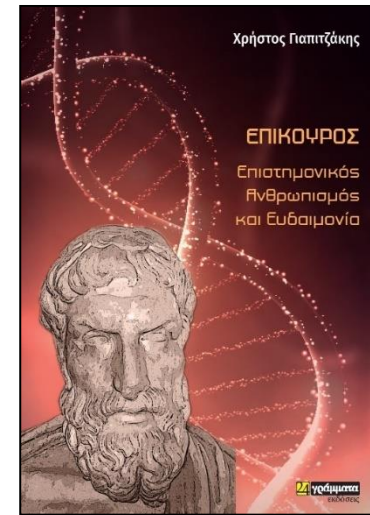
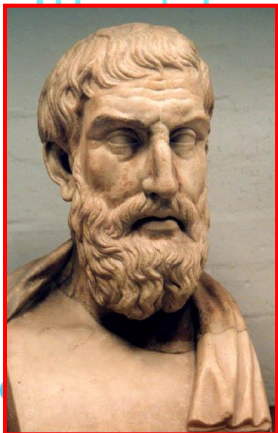


Epicurean Scientific Humanism

Epicurus the Athenian (341-270 BCE)

First Enlightenment philosopher

- **Humanist** (Taught men-women of all classes)
- **Empiricist** (Sensationalist, Pragmatist)
- **Naturalist** (Objective, Scientific)
- His philosophy aimed at **Happiness/Mental Peace**
- Early Cognitive Psychotherapy (Stress Management)
- The first globalized philosophy
(Greeks, Romans, Celts, Jews, Syrians, Egyptians, etc.)



"It is not possible to be free from fears about the most important issues for someone who does not know the nature of the universe, but believes in what myths say. Consequently, it is not possible to fully enjoy pleasures without the scientific knowledge of Nature" (Epicurus, Principal Saying XII)



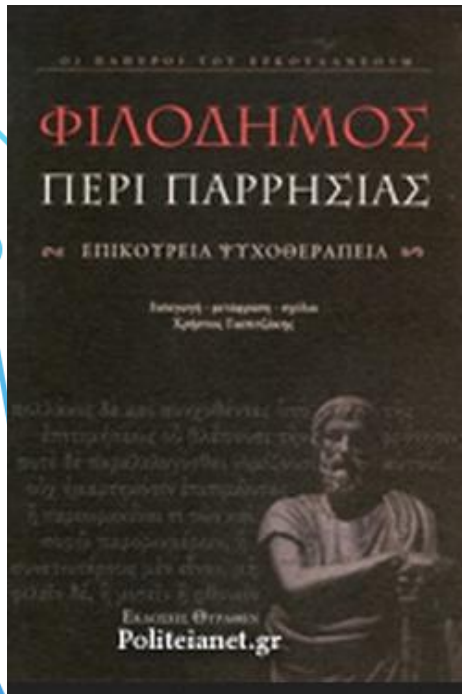
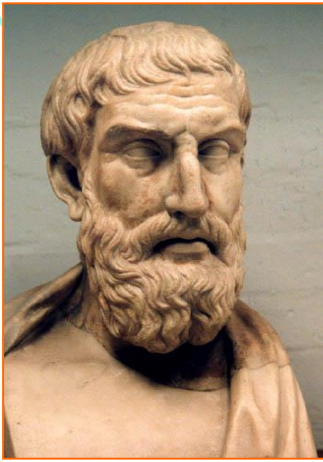
Psychotherapeutic teaching in the Garden

The Epicurean School (Garden) was a society of friends that included men and women of all ages and classes, free and slaves

- The work "**On Frank Criticism**" by the Epicurean Philodemus records the Epicurean teaching method, which included **psychoeducational counseling** through friendly criticism aimed at the healing of the soul («**την της ψυχής θεραπείαν**», **psychotherapy**) and the knowledge of maintaining mental health.

The medical analogy of philosophy not only denies the view that morality is subjective, but on the contrary emphasizes that **moral truth is related to the real needs, desires, weaknesses and capabilities of people.**

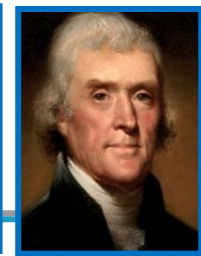
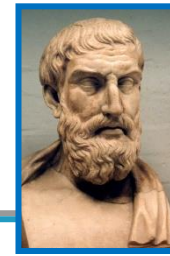
Only empirical observation of human nature can provide the basis for the healing of the soul, as Epicurus rightly perceived.



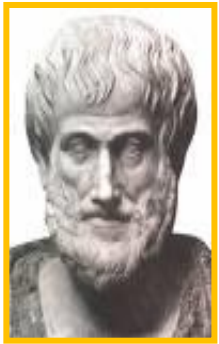
Φιλόδημος "Περὶ Παρρησίας"
Μεταφρ. Χρ. Γιαπιτζάκης

Philosophical views on Happiness

The Pursuit of Happiness: A universal, timeless value

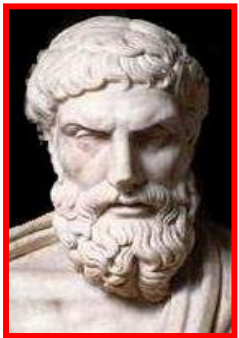


Both Aristotelian and Epicurean Philosophy
have been characterized
as philosophical approaches to **Eudaimonism** (Biological Ethics)



Aristotle: Happiness is... action according to virtue
(Goal is Happiness-collective Happiness through political thought)

ΑΡΙΣΤΟΤΕΛΗΣ

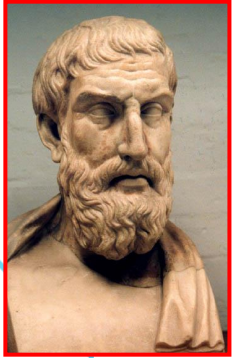


Epicurus: Happiness is... the pleasurable state
of absence of physical suffering and mental agitation
(Goal is Happiness-individual Happiness through scientific thought)

ΕΠΙΚΟΥΡΟΣ



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.

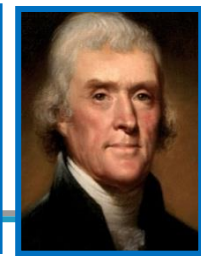
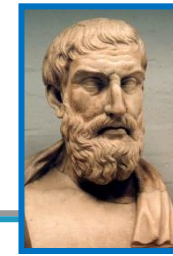
World Health Organization (W.H.O)

Happiness (true well-being) is not momentary pleasure, nor consumer satisfaction, nor the ceaseless pursuit of hedonistic delights. It is a state of profound balance between the individual and themselves, others, and nature.





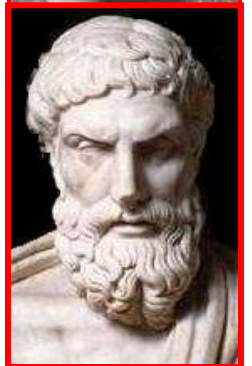
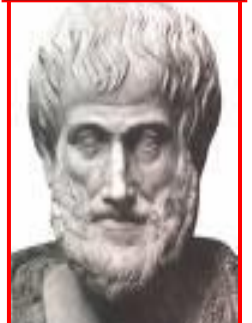
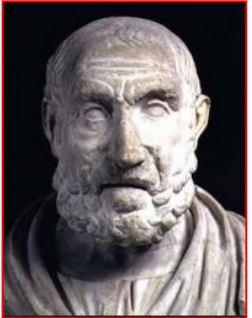
Bioethics and Medical Ethics



- Biological Ethics is derived genealogically from the teachings of **Hippocrates**, **Aristotle** and **Epicurus**
- Bioethics-Medical Ethics is **Biological Ethics** that treats man as a biological being with self-worth
- The modern **bio-psycho-social model of Medicine** considers that humans suffer as a whole and not just as one of their organs
- **Scientific Humanism** is the basis of modern **Bioethics** and modern **Medical Ethics**

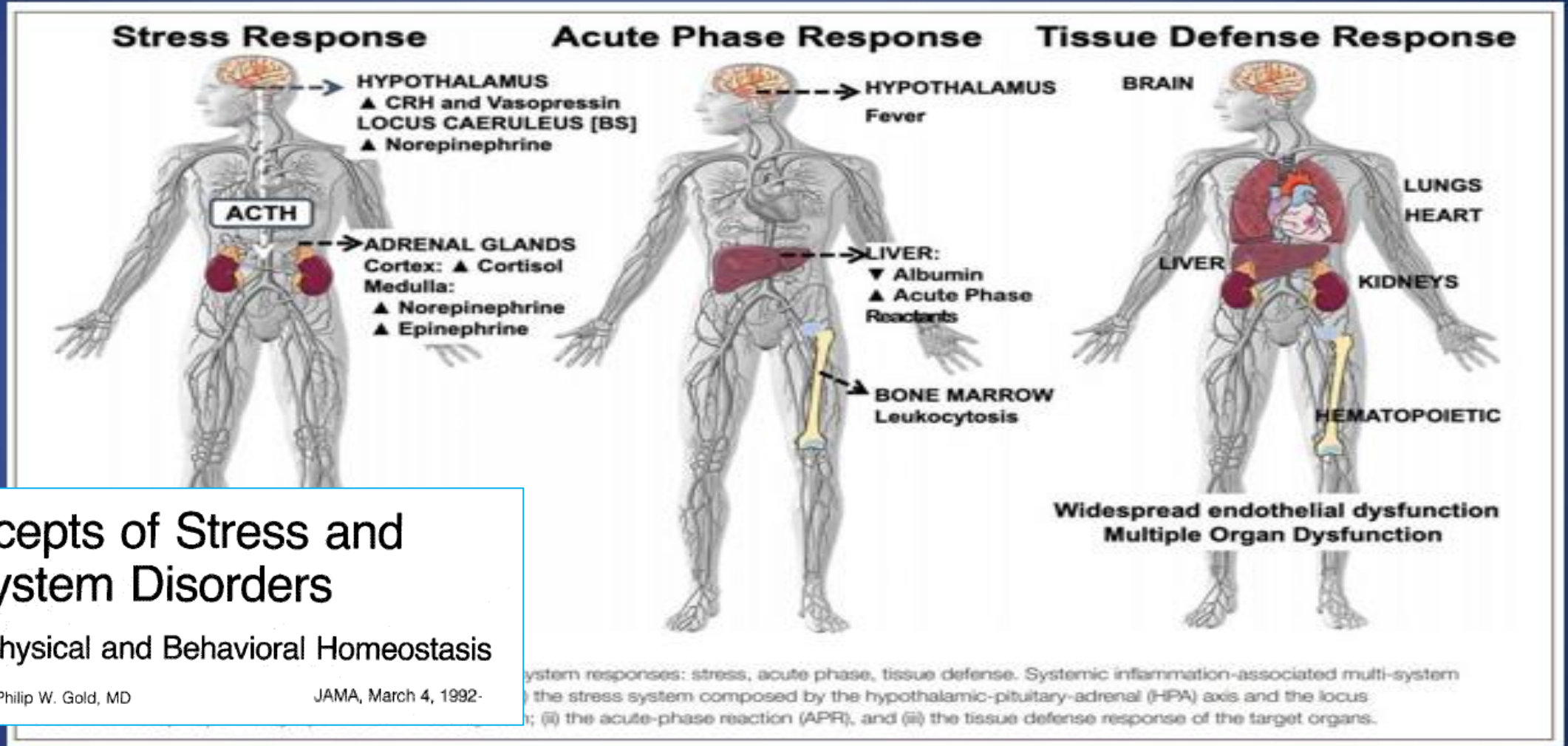


Yapijakis C. Hippocrates of Kos, the father of clinical medicine, and Asclepiades of Bithynia, the father of molecular medicine. *In Vivo* 2009





Stress is the biochemical or psychological disturbance of homeostasis (psychosomatic balance)



The Concepts of Stress and Stress System Disorders

Overview of Physical and Behavioral Homeostasis

George P. Chrousos, MD, Philip W. Gold, MD

JAMA, March 4, 1992.

long lasting stress reduction method

Change of Mentality

STRESS REDUCTION METHODS



- **Cognitive Behavioral Psychotherapy**
- **Epicurean Philosophical Approach**

A PRACTITIONER'S
GUIDE TO
RATIONAL EMOTIVE
BEHAVIOR THERAPY

THIRD EDITION

RAYMOND A. DIGIUSEPPE
KRISTENE A. DOYLE

C. Yapijakis & G. P. Chrousos · *Conatus* 7, no. 2 (2022): 173-190
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.12681/cjp.31769>

Epicurean Stability (eustatheia): A Philosophical Approach of Stress Management

Christos Yapijakis

National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, Greece

E-mail address: cyapi@med.uoa.gr

ORCID iD: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6695-186X>

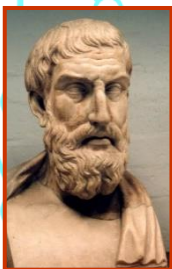
George P. Chrousos

National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, Greece

E-mail address: chrousge@med.uoa.gr

ORCID iD: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-3098-5264>

τὸ τῆς σαρκὸς καὶ ψυχῆς εὐσταθὲς κατὰσθημα = ὁμοιόστασις



Successful Pilot Fast-Track Program “Philosophical Stress Management” during the coronavirus pandemic (2020-2021)

Did you learn
new knowledge?



■ ΑΠΟΛΥΤΑ ■ ΠΟΛΥ ■ ΜΕΤΡΙΑ ■ ΛΙΓΟ

75.4% (P=0.003)

Did you learn
how to manage
your stress?



Absolutely/Greatly 52.5%
Moderately 37.7%
(P=0.008)

Did you learn
how to consult others
to manage their
stress?



Absolutely/Greatly 45.9%
Moderately 44.3%
(P=0.02)



Φιλοσοφική Διαχείριση Στρες
Σύγχρονη και ασύγχρονη εκπαίδευση Φιλοσοφικής Διαχείρισης Στρες

ΝΟΕΜΒΡΙΟΣ - ΔΕΚΕΜΒΡΙΟΣ 2020 - ΙΑΝΟΥΑΡΙΟΣ 2021



Φιλοσοφική Διαχείριση του Στρες

Περιφέρεια Αττικής
Εργαστήριο Εφαρμοσμένης Φιλοσοφίας ΕΚΠΑ

Το Πρόγραμμα ▾ Εκπαίδευση ▾ Log In



Υπεύθυνος Προγράμματος
Ευάγγελος Πρωτοπαπαδάκης
Διευθυντής Εργαστηρίου Εφαρμοσμένης Φιλοσοφίας, Αναπληρωτής Καθηγητής Τμήμα Φιλοσοφίας, Πανεπιστήμιο Αθηνών, Αθήνα

Συντονιστής Προγράμματος
Χρήστος Γιατζτζακής
Αναπληρωτής Καθηγητής Τμήμα Φιλοσοφίας, Πανεπιστήμιο Αθηνών, Αθήνα



Επιστημονικός Σύμβουλος Προγράμματος
Γιώργος Χρούσος
Επίτιμος Καθηγητής, Τμήμα Φιλοσοφίας, Πανεπιστήμιο Αθηνών, Αθήνα

C. Yapijakis, E. D. Protopapadakis, & George Chrousos · *Conatus* 6, no. 3 (2020): 65-77
DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/XXXXXXXXXXXX>

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

Christos Yapijakis

National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, Greece

E-mail address: cyapi@med.uoa.gr

ORCID iD: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6695-186X>

Evangelos D. Protopapadakis

National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, Greece

E-mail address: eprotopa@philosophy.uoa.gr

ORCID iD: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7502-3117>

George Chrousos

National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, Greece

E-mail address: chrousos@gmail.com

ORCID iD: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-3098-5264>



Past – Present - Future

Epicurus: **Prudence**

Present

Emotions

2. Brain of Mammals

Epicurus: **Pleasurable Emotions – Affinity for human nature – Criterion of Truth**

Present

Desires

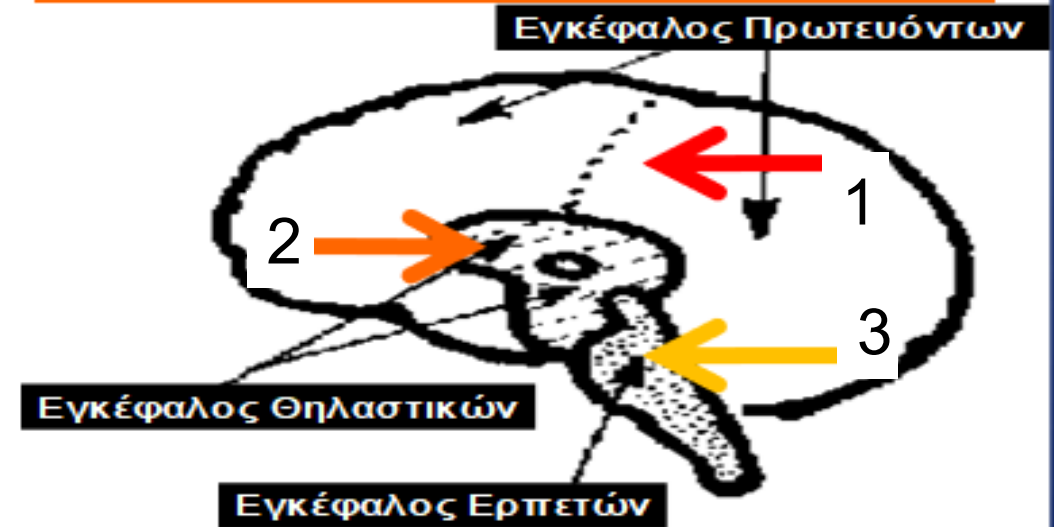
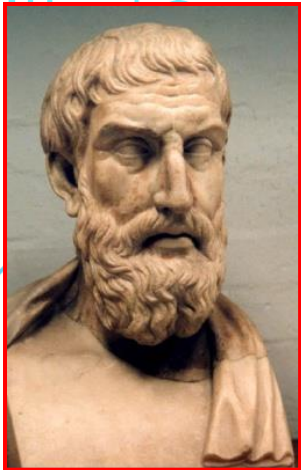
3. Brain of Reptiles

Epicurus: **Natural and Necessary Desires**

Cognition

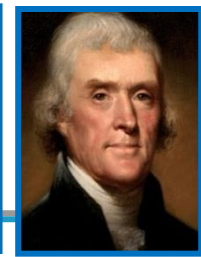
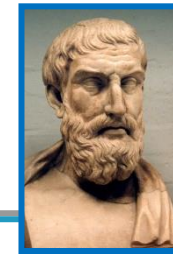
1. Brain of Primates

For management of stress
Knowledge of Nature
and **Prudence** are necessary





The Pursuit of Happiness: A universal, timeless value



Last letter of Thomas Jefferson. June 24, 1826

on the US Declaration of Independence as a Universal Paradigm

“May it be to the world what I believe it will be, (to some parts sooner, to others later, but finally to all) the **Signal of arousing men to burst the chains**, under which Monkish ignorance and superstition had persuaded them to bind themselves, and to assume the blessings and security of **self government**. The form which we have substituted restores **the free right** to the unbounded **exercise of reason** and **freedom of opinion**.

“All eyes are opened or opening to the **rights of man**. The general spread of the **light of science** has already laid open to every view the palpable truth that **the mass of mankind has not been born with saddles on their backs** nor a favored few booted and spurred, ready to ride them legitimately by the grace of God. These are grounds of hope for others. for ourselves **let the annual return of this day, for ever refresh our recollections of these rights and an undiminished devotion to them.**”



All men are created equal and have the right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

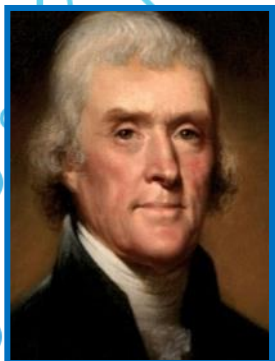
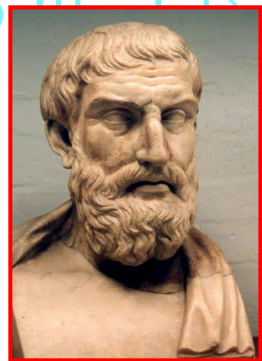
~ Thomas Jefferson

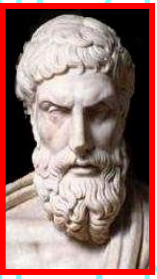


Conclusion

Among ancient Greek philosophies, **Epicurean philosophy**:

- Inspired Thomas Jefferson to lay **the foundations of USA** of the people, by the people, for the people on the universal, timeless value of the **Pursuit of Happiness**
- 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 behavioral 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 current turbulent times the **best guidance** is **Scientific Humanism** based on **Epicurus' philosophy**



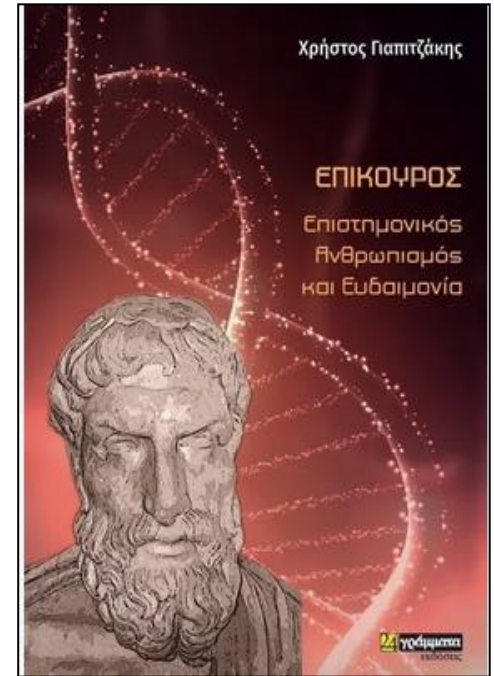


It is foolish to wait for the universe to be perfect in order to be mentally healthy and happy.

Few things are needed for happiness. Some water, some food, a piece of clothing, practical wisdom and friends.

We can improve the world by improving ourselves and share happiness with others!

(Yapijakis C. Epicurus: Scientific Humanism and Happiness. 24 Grammata Publications, Athens, 2020)



Thank you for your attention!

More information:

<https://epicuros.gr>

<https://societyofepicurus.com>

