

# SEXTUS EMPIRICUS AND THE SCIENTIFIC SCEPTICISM

STAVROS J. BALOYANNIS\*

## Summary

*Sextus Empiricus is the most eminent representative of the ancient scepticism, which is a Post-Classical, Hellenistic philosophy based on the criterion of life, the experience and the analysis of phenomena, aiming to provide a straight and practical way of life, leading to interior peace and mental tranquility, sharply opposed to a purely theoretical pursuit of dogmatic philosophy. The term "sceptic" is a derivative of the noun, skepsis (σκέψις), which means thought, examination, inquiry, consideration, meditation and investigation. The sceptical school was connected for a long period of time with the Empirical school of physicians, who based the good medical practice on the clinical experience rather than on the theoretical erudition, dedicating themselves to observation, memory and continuous clinical practice. As a matter of fact they endeavored to derive from experience what would be beneficial for the patients, believing that the medical capability consists in subjective experience. Sextus who lived in Alexandria, Athens and Rome was an empiricist who adopted scepticism as philosophical doctrine and way of life in view that the sceptical way was characterized by persistent commitment to investigate the truth, based on objective arguments and real evidence. However he was mostly known in the literature as a sceptic thinker and not as empirical physician. Although there are many skeptical elements in the works of many Greek Pre-Socratic philosophers, the term scepticism was mainly applied to members of Plato's Academy during its late period. The ancient sceptics, avoiding dogmatism, used to search for the truth, posing many dialectic questions about knowledge and beliefs, feeling that all arguments could be opposed by other strong arguments of the same persuasive force and validity, underlining the dynamics of the philosophical investigation and dialectics. Phenomena are the only things, which the sceptic thinkers do not deny, since they constitute the appearance of objects. In a parallel way, phenomena are the ordering criteria of sceptics daily life and activity. According to Diogenes Laertius, Arcesilaus was "the first to argue on both sides of a question". He insisted that for every reasoning there is an equally strong opposite reasoning, since the reality of things seems to be inaccessible and definite certitude would be impossible for the human mind. Sextus' writings are the main source of most of our knowledge of ancient scepticism and the other philosophical tendencies of the Hellenistic era. He wrote some medical dissertations, which unfortunately have been lost during the times and three*

*philosophical books, which survived, but remained for long in obscurity, been rediscovered in the late Renaissance. Two of these works on the title, "Adversus Mathematicus", include large number of strong arguments against the Logicians, the Physicists and the Ethicists. The third and most important of the books on the title "Outlines of Pyrrhonism" provides an outline of Pyrrhonian scepticism, incorporating at the same time his own philosophical doctrines. Sextus offers thoroughly a general overview of scepticism, describing and explaining the meaning of the sceptical investigation, the value of suspension of judgment and the importance of the sceptical dialectics. Sextus insists that the skepticism does not accept or reject any impression and substantially does not affirm or deny anything. Sextus claims that appearances (φαινόμενα) are the practical criteria of approaching to the truth and by the continuous investigation the thinker is prevented from mental or psychological inactivity (ἀνεργησία). The only wise way of life is to suspend judgment, regarding everything, therefore never facing the risk of being wrong in anything. The human being has the innate capacity for perception, thinking, analysis of the phenomena, ability to distinguish what is true and what is false and to meditate avoiding dogmatism. According to Sextus' doctrines, logic is based on phenomena and criteria. Sextus proposed several practical criteria and ten main ways (modes, τρόποι) that the man could follow whenever he would decide to suspend judgment on absolute truth. The main mode is the "epoché" (ἐποχή) or suspension of judgment, in order to achieve the deep interior peace and serenity of mind, since the attainment of tranquility, psychological equilibrium or imperturbability (ἀταραξία) must be the supreme target of the human life, leading to permanent well-being (εὐδαιμονία), in an attempt to be raised above the suffering, which pain and psychological distress impose. According to Sextus, science is considered as being the main source of pure knowledge, underling at the same time the relativity of the scientific data. Science, therefore, could not presume to provide the authoritative truth and all its issues must be understood from a dialectical perspective, since whatever is debatable may concern reality. The scientific methodology consists of investigation, as starting point, of equipollence, a balancing estimation of all positive and negative aspects, of suspension of judgment and of tranquility of mind and imperturbability. Always reality has to be investigated but appearance must be accepted without any debate, since it is clearly obvious. Every effort to approach the truth is feasible only by assessing the phenomena, since absolute reality could never be known. Sextus, although suspended judgment on absolute truth, he endeavored to elaborate various sceptical formulas for proceeding to a statement concerning the truth. He insists that any argument requires definite proof, precisely proven,*

\*Professor Emeritus, Aristotelian University, Thessaloniki, Greece

*otherwise it might lead to an 'infinite regression' resulting to fall into a vicious circle. The escape from infinite regression might be based on a hypothesis. Encountering disagreement, whenever several points of view and strong arguments seems to be of equal validity (ισοσθένεια), the thinker being unable to judge and decide properly and accurately, has to give up, for attaining peace of mind (αταραξία). Sextus insists that arriving to a definite conclusion is not merely a matter of high education, intellectual integrity, wisdom or experience, since it is mostly a matter of the proper nature of the problem. In the field of morality, Sextus and the other ancient sceptics deny the existence of the absolute good, but most of them admit the potentiality for a continuous amelioration of the life, based on the proper evaluation of the ongoing experiences and research. However to the sceptics nothing is in itself either good or evil, since he who considers anything as good or evil is always troubled and suffers being not at rest. Sextus' doctrines have exerted a strong influence on the course of Western philosophy, from the seventeenth century and onwards, inspiring Michel de Montaigne, Rene Descartes, David Hume, Hegel and many philosophers of our Era in their theoretical orientation. The sceptical influx is of substantial importance for the current philosophy of the science, the neurophilosophy, the scientific research, the modern schools of psychology, offering also an essential theoretical background for the evidence based medicine.*

**Key words:** Sextus Empiricus, scepticism, Hellenistic philosophy, imperturbability. Peace of mind, Psychotherapy, Medical scepticism.

## Introduction

Sextus Empiricus is the most eminent representative of the ancient scepticism in the constellation of the Greek philosophy. Although Sextus' name is Latin he is Greek according to his own clear statements<sup>1</sup> and as it is obviously realized by the gentle style of the eloquent Greeks of his writings, who remind Thucydides' and Plutarch's style.

Little is known about Sextus' life and his ancestry. In regard to the time when Sextus lived it is estimated that it may range between the second and third century. He lived for long time in Alexandria of Egypt, teaching philosophy and for some time in Athens, the city where the scepticism had its birth and later on in Rome. Sextus was physician, a disciple of Herodotus from Tarsus<sup>2</sup>, and was a member of the Empirical School<sup>3</sup>, who believed that the good medical practice should be mainly based on the experience<sup>4</sup>, since only by experience the physician could perform beneficially for his patients<sup>5</sup>. It is known that Empiricists and Pyrrhonists were closely related each other in Hellenistic Era and many physicians were members of one of the many philosophical schools at that times<sup>6</sup>.

Sextus as philosopher was sceptic<sup>7</sup>. Scepticism was a Post-Classical, Hellenistic philosophical movement, which has endeavored to avoid dogmatism in view that there are two different and opposite aspects as a rule on the same theme, sometimes being of equal force. The sceptic have to obtain the ability to find the opposites both of objects of experience and of objects of thought and whenever the opposed arguments

or conflicting reasonings have equal force (ισοσθένεια) then the philosopher has to suspend of judgment, in order to escape from disturbance and retain his interior serenity of mind (αταραξία) or tranquility of soul<sup>8</sup>. The search for the truth is very difficult and the absolute reality is always inaccessible<sup>9</sup>.

According to Sextus, scepticism is a powerful attack on constructive philosophy insisting that all arguments can be opposed by equally strong arguments and no argument exists that is incontrovertible. By the intellectual power the philosopher may place arguments in opposition to each other and phenomena in opposition to other phenomena. Many times due to equipollence (ισοσθενείαν<sup>10</sup>) in the opposed objects and arguments the sceptic should come first to suspension of judgment (εποχή)<sup>11</sup> adopting a neutral attitude towards the value of both views. That attitude leads to tranquility, peace of mind and imperturbability (αταραξίαν)<sup>12,13</sup>.

There are many reasons and many modes (tropoi) for suspending judgment. Tropos or mode is a way of thought, a manner of reasoning, a standpoint of judgment. Among the ten principal modes of Pyrrho<sup>14</sup> for epoche the most important are those, which are related to the thinker who judges<sup>15</sup> as well as to the object<sup>16</sup>, which is judged or to both of them<sup>17</sup>.

## The search for the truth

Many arguments, which try to trace the path of truth are opposing each other, been definite and indefinite, positive and negative, been in conflict and contradiction. Therefore they are unable to lead to the truth, since they could not be convincing and they induce anxiousness and confusion. On the other hand there are many intellects and it is expectable that many disagreements and disputes may arise, which is going to increase thinker's anxiousness. Those who believe also that things are good or evil by nature endeavor to possess the good ones and tremble in the probability to lose them. In the contrary, if there is no certitude for the absolute good or the absolute evil, since absolute conditions and qualities do not exist by nature, the person is not particularly anxious about them and therefore he retain the peace of mind, a psychic quietude, which in fact is the supreme target of a meaningful life<sup>18</sup> and the real source of happiness. Although the sceptics may live several times under unpleasant conditions, such as cold or warm weather, thirsty, hunger or even starvation, they do not characterize them as evil; they do not blame them and sustain them with courage, patience, discretion and mediocrity retaining their tranquility.

All the attitude of life and the concept of the truth and reality put the sceptics in opposition to dogmatic philosophers<sup>19</sup>, who believe that the search for the truth is feasible and they possess the truth by an exclusive and unique way<sup>20</sup>. It is reasonable that the sceptics are in contradiction with Aristotelians, Epicurians and Stoics, who used to think and meditate dogmatically. At the same time the sceptics are in opposition with the Academics Cletomachos<sup>21</sup> and Careades, who claimed in a dogmatic way that the truth is unapproachable, whereas sceptics have the feeling that they might approach the truth by the continuous search for it<sup>22</sup>. From the point of view of the Sceptical School for the human being is enough to live in peace, based on his experience and objective observations avoiding

dogmatism<sup>23</sup>.

### Sextus from his writings

The majority of Sextus' voluminous philosophical works survived. Unfortunately his medical works mentioned by him, entitled *Medical memories*<sup>24</sup> and *Empirical memories*<sup>25</sup>, remain unknown, since they may have been lost in antiquity, since their author is the only one who mentioned them. The main contribution by Sextus is his philosophical writings, which consist of three books entitled *Pyrrhonian Outlines (Sketches)*<sup>26</sup>. The first book is a general overview of Pyrrhonian scepticism, the second deals with the meaning of dogmatic logic, the third is a critique of dogmatic physical theory and ethics. In all his books Sextus described with a simple, gentle and evocative style, illustrated with many examples and parables the principles of the Sceptic school, as they have been exposed by Pyrron<sup>27,28</sup>. An other philosophical contribution entitled *Pros Mathematicos* or *Against the Learned* or in a Latinizing title *Adversus Mathematicos* consists of six books addressed to orators, geometrics, arithmetics, astrologists and musicians. One more contribution is entitled "To Logicians" or *Against Logicians* is divided in two books. Sextus has written two more books against the Physicists and one book against the Ethicists.

A Sextus' book "On soul" has been lost during the centuries. Sextus' writings are precious sources of knowledge of the ancient and Hellenistic philosophy and cultural atmosphere, due to numerous citations to many other authors and to analytical descriptions of ideas, customs and beliefs of his Era. Sextus in his writings discussed also epistemological matters and endeavored to conclude whether there is a definite criterion of truth and reality in a world plenty of contradictions and debates, subjecting to scrutinizing the principles and doctrines of dogmatic philosophers.

The way of life of a sceptic is an engaging in normal activities attending to what is apparent in his everyday life. Most of the phenomena are real since they are based on the pragmatism of the sensations. Phenomena perceived by sensations have an existence, not been derived from the world of ideas and theoretical subjective speculations<sup>29</sup>. The ultimate aim of the philosophical orientation is to come to a state of *ataraxia*, which may be achieved whenever the thought is based on the objective reality, not been wondered in the fields of the contradictory and conflicting ideas.

It is wise to realize that understanding the meaning of a claim, does not imply the approach of the absolute truth of the claim. For that reason the sceptics have not to avoid anything and have not to desire also anything, which is a matter either of the physical or of the intellectual world. The right path to *imperturbability (ataraxia)* is the investigation at any subject the pro and against arguments, in an attempt to find the equal strength among them (*isosthenia*). By the investigation of anything the sceptic comes to the conclusion that absolute knowledge don't exist and the search for the truth is the real meaning of the life, though the dogmatic acceptance of any idea, induces inequity and worry. This is the reason that the sceptics fight against the dogmatism of the other philosophical schools, criticizing their principles.

Things which are obvious (phenomena) are the background of reality<sup>30</sup>. The real knowledge should be based on real objects. However the phenomena are perceived by sensations and senses differ from one another, consequently it is hard to say what is the real nature of every phenomenon and it is not possible to make positive assertions even about things, which seems to be evident<sup>31</sup>, since it is not certain whether the underlying object is such as it appears. For all those reasons it is wise to suspend judgment about virtually all beliefs, since we could not affirm any belief as true. This concept by Sextus and the other sceptics is of substantial importance, proved by neurosciences and neuropsychology, which underline the marked difference in *senso-sensorial perception*, mental faculties, emotional background<sup>32</sup>, desires and perspectives<sup>33</sup> among human beings<sup>34</sup>.

The real knowledge is inaccessible, however Sextus did not deny the possibility of knowledge, suspending judgment about whether anything is knowable. The human being should search for the truth continuously with peaceful mind, serenity, mediocrity, without competition and empathy<sup>35</sup>.

The suspension of judgment (*epoche*) is supposed to be brought by *modes* or *tropoi* arranged in groups of ten<sup>36</sup>, five or two according to the sceptical period and the representative philosopher of the Sceptical School. It is important that the eighth mode concerns the fact of relativity, a concept induced by sceptics, been extensively evaluated by the current sciences, which proved to be of revolutionary and axiomatic value.

It is reasonable that in case that men might have the same opinions on everything and share the same emotions they would have unanimity and they might evaluate anything without contradictions and conflicts<sup>37</sup>.

The accuracy of the perception of the phenomena is also related to consciousness of the subject. If a person is mentally bright the horizons of his sensorial perception are transparent and enlarged.

It is also well known that there are changeable criteria on the kindness and beauty in various historical periods, among various people and civilizations, according to their aesthetic, moral and cultural background. Even the same person may modify his or her own criteria according to the degree of education, the social status, the experience, the age and the ongoing aesthetic, moral and spiritual culture. Consequently the dimensions of good and evil are not the same among people. It is impressive how the range of the values is large and sometimes different among the various schools of philosophy in antiquity, in modern times and nowadays.

The majority of thinkers, as a rule, accept any concept, which is in accordance with their personal principles and beliefs and reject or fight against the contradictory concepts. That attitude creates a real chain of debates and disputes<sup>38</sup>, which are recycled constantly and infinitively, without any escape from a "vicious circle"<sup>39</sup>.

The moderate attitude of the sceptics and their tendency to avoid dogmatism introduced the use of many "motus", such as "perhaps", "rather", "it is probable", "it is indefinite", "it is eventual", "nothing definite", "nothing stable", "nothing evident", "I determine nothing", since all things are incomprehensible<sup>40</sup>.

It is of fundamental value, that the philosopher for



avoiding contradiction, has to suspend judgment (epoche)<sup>41</sup>, whenever he is unable to distinguish the truth in a field of many arguments of equal strength, opposing each other, without any capacity to find the criterion of truth and whenever he worries that accepting one of the potential arguments may face the probability to become dogmatic<sup>42</sup>.

### Sextus and Heraclitus

Anesidamus claimed<sup>43</sup> that sceptic pathway leads to Heraclitian philosophy<sup>44</sup>, which supported the principle that on every subject there are two contradictory perspectives<sup>45</sup>.

Sextus believed that the recognition of the existence of the contradictory and opposing arguments on any matter or any thought is the conclusive remark of any thinker and any philosophical denomination. Sextus mentioned from Heraclitus that it is the opposite which is good for us<sup>46</sup> and also that if you do not expect the unexpected, you will not find it; for it is hard to be sought out and difficult<sup>47</sup>. In the contrary Sextus is opposed to dogmatic concepts of Heraclitus on the potency and domination of fire<sup>48</sup> and on the harmony of the conflicting conditions<sup>49</sup>.

The most substantial difference between Heraclitus and Sextus consists in the continuous search for the self, the proper self by Heraclitus, in association with the search for the interior truth which is the force for the moral and spiritual elevation of the human being. The psyche should be purified from passions, vices and particularly from insolence (hybris) since there is greatest need to extinguish insolence (hybris) than a blazing fire<sup>50</sup>, but we must admit that it is always difficult for humans to fight passions. An excellent man is equivalent of ten thousand. According to Heraclitus learning is not a path of wisdom<sup>51</sup>, but he who desires wisdom and seeks it needs sound intelligence. The profound knowledge based on experience and gained by enquiry in a wide spectrum of things may help in uncovering the reality and truth, which mostly lie concealed<sup>52</sup>. According to Heraclitus Logos-Truth-Nature-Eternity are the crucial existential principles for the Being and the "Wise is one thing, to be acquainted with true judgment, how all things are steered through all".

Sometimes Heraclitus expresses an obvious mysticism stating that "nature loves to hide"<sup>53</sup> and even more that "immortals are mortals, mortals are immortals, living their death, dying their life". The entire lifetime is confined by death, but life and death are a continuation and not an opposition. The beginning is also the end, like any point of the circle's circumference, where beginning and end are common<sup>54</sup>, depending on the perspectives from which it is viewed. According to Heraclitus Logos governs both the phenomena and the ideas. All human legislations and rules have one celestial source the Logos (the Word). Heraclitus implored that every human being should listen the Word and know, as real wisdom, that "all is one", but he regrets since some men lack the skill to listen and they don't know how to speak

Heraclitus has in common with Sextus the theory of relativity. Heraclitus claims that relativity dominates on every phenomenon, since everything is in flux<sup>55</sup>, like the constant flow of a river and he insists that "nobody can step twice into the

same river"<sup>56</sup>, because different waters flow perpetually. Things are whole and not whole, being brought together and been separated. Some are consonant and some dissonant.

The universe is a continuous state of dynamic equilibrium, whereas at the same time "all things are one". The immobility, even the stability is stagnation. In reality stability does not exist in nature, since everything is in motion, the universe, the cell, the atom. Motion, transformation, alteration and energy exchange are all under an universal law which dominates on everything, in relativity<sup>57</sup>. Energy is always regenerated since the sun is new again all the days<sup>58</sup>. and oversees everything. The transformations of fire means that everything may go over into everything in a steered movement<sup>59</sup>. The fire or light converts like an original element over other elements in a precise order. The fire, the light and the truth are always unchanged, since they are original and genuine in their existence.

The brightness of the sun light, like the truth, surrounds everything. Seeing is a grasping in light and spiritual seeing is a grasping in truth<sup>60</sup>. Spiritual or celestial light never extinguishes<sup>61</sup>. Eyes are more accurate witness of the reality than are the ears, however both of them are poor witnesses for men who possess uncomprehending souls. Human being is the one who can kindle fire, who understands the power of light and who is able to touch the truth and be illuminated by divine light<sup>62</sup>.

### Sceptic philosophy and Academy

Sextus distinguish Academy into three periods (a) in the ancient period or the Platonic one<sup>63</sup>, (β) in the middle period or the period of Arcesilaos and (γ) in the new period or the period of Carneades and Cletomachus. Plato the main founder of the ancient Academy is characterized as being dogmatic concerning the existence of the absolute truth and of Providence. Certainly, Plato was not a sceptic philosopher, since he strongly believed in the world of ideas and he had many theoretical elevations<sup>64</sup>. Platonic idealism and moral theory have nothing in common with the scepticism. However, the scholars of new Academy were in obvious proximity with the sceptics, since they claimed that all are invisible and incomprehensive. The influence of Pyrrhonian scepticism was mostly obvious in Arcesilaos, however the sceptical orientation of Academy was not identical with that of the sceptics. The difference consists in the dogmatic concepts on good and evil by Academy<sup>65</sup>. In addition Academian philosophy declare that some ideas are probable and some improbable (τω πιθανώ προσχρώνται), whereas sceptics claim that ideas are equal as regards worthiness and unworthiness, without any dogmatism (αδοξάστως)<sup>66</sup>.

Sceptics in spite the difference with the Academy exerted a strong influence upon the neoplatonics, particularly the philosophy of Plotinus, Olympiodoros, Ammonios, Syrianos and Philoponos<sup>67</sup>.

### Sceptic philosophy and Aristotle

Sextus mentioned Aristotle the Peripatetic and his followers quite often and noticed that Aristotelian philosophy was quite different from that of the Stoics. Sextus also mentioned

several definitions of rhetoric by Aristotle. He claimed that rhetoric is an artificial method for convincing people and parts of rhetoric must succeed with speeches that are either consistent, inconsistent, or indifferent regarding their respective ends. However, Sextus' texts give the impression sometimes he could not make a sharp distinction between Aristotelian doctrines and theoretical concepts from that of Stoics<sup>68</sup>, accepting both of them as dogmatist. He considered Aristotle<sup>69</sup> as well as Zenon and Epicurus as dogmatists and he endeavored to counteract them with the proper arguments.

Aristotle claimed that the soul is the form of the living body, the ordering principle of the sum of its functions, faculties and activities<sup>70</sup>. Every action performed by the human being is an expression of its soul, a manifestation of the orders that the soul dictates to the body. All the things are in some way coordinated, but not in the same way<sup>71</sup>. Soul is the source of the mental and spiritual power of the man. Aristotle claimed that the supreme good is health<sup>72</sup>, but Zeno and Stoics considered the virtue as being the most important of the goods<sup>73</sup> whereas Epicurus claimed that the pleasure is the main good of the human life. Aristotle emphasizes the value of three sorts of lives, underlining the worth of the lives, which are devoted to gratification, politics, and philosophical contemplation<sup>74</sup>. According to Aristotle self-sufficiency is invoked as a substantial criterion for the human well-being<sup>75</sup>, (eudaimonia)<sup>76</sup>. Sextus emphasizes the difference and the contradictions between Aristotle and the other philosophers concerning the good and the soul proving therefore the weakness of the dogmatism<sup>77</sup>. In many arguments against peripatetics. Sextus uses frequently Hellenistic doxographies<sup>78</sup> instead of the original Aristotelian texts<sup>79</sup>, in which Aristotelian philosophy is interpreted within the spirit of the broad Hellenistic philosophical atmospheres.

On the Aristotelian epistemology Sextus highlights the importance of criteria<sup>80</sup>. He poses a large number of arguments against Aristotelian criteria in the hope to counteract and annihilate them. The main criteria according Sextus are either perception or thinking (noesis) and mostly both of them. Sometimes it is important to use also imagination (phantasy), which enlarges the horizons of the scientific thought and its perspectives<sup>81</sup>.

Aristotle claims that rhetoric is the art of orator as medicine is the art of physicians. Sextus contradicting claims the rhetoric is not an art, since it is mostly based on false arguments<sup>82,83</sup>.

### Sextus and Epicurean philosophy

Sextus believed that Epicurus did not develop his own philosophical doctrines but was exclusively based on Homer<sup>84</sup>, in his ideas on death<sup>85</sup>, particularly. He thought also that Epicurus could not prove the validity of his doctrines. Many Stoics also, like Posidonius and Sotion claimed that Epicurus incorporated most of Democritean doctrines<sup>86</sup> in his philosophy.

According to Epicurus' atomic theory of the soul, sense-perception is the result of the action of bodies. It is therefore a passive procedure of senso-sensorial analysis of the environmental stimuli and the aesthetic experiences<sup>87</sup>. Although sceptics believed in the value of the phenomena, they

endeavored to realize the phenomena from every possible perspective, since they have the feeling that the subjective factor intervenes in the objective perception and interpretation of phenomena.

Epicureans believed that nature has her own hierarchical system, been distinguished in classes, each one of which is subdivided in smaller classes, which retain their interior unity. The sceptics did not share that type of classification,, accepting a flexible and plastic system in nature, which is changeable and evolutionary.

### Sextus and stoic philosophy

Attacking dogmatism Sextus wrote against stoics, who claimed that they have had the objective knowledge and the path to reality and truth. He mentioned Stoa ninety times in his writings, Zeno and Chrysippus twenty times and Cleanthes nine times<sup>88</sup>. It is known that the Logos or word is a crucial principle in stoic philosophy and reasonable thinking is a fundamental doctrine. The providence, the spiritual power and luck (eimarmene) dominate on the world<sup>89</sup>. Sextus accused stoics for circular reasoning. Actually, all the reasonable system of values in stoic philosophy was continuously criticized by Sextus. It is known that both of the schools, sceptics and stoics targeted on the peace of mind. However stoics tended to achieve it by reasoning, living according to Logos<sup>90</sup> as well as by self-control and self-domination, whereas sceptics use to practice epoche, suspending of judgment and achieving a state of quietude of mind, imperturbability (ataraxia).

The impressive care and selectivity of stoics concerning their social behavior<sup>91</sup>, was in contrast with the simplicity and the lack of discrimination in the social behavior by the sceptics. A common place in stoic and sceptic philosophy is the detachment of the epistemology from the metaphysics. Sceptics agree with Stoics that logic is neutral regarding metaphysics and that it is self-sufficient, not needing any further justification. Nevertheless the rigid dogmatism of stoic philosophers<sup>92</sup> was the target of a continuous criticism, since the causality of everything is frequently invisible, incomprehensible and many times is impossible to detect the principal cause of every phenomenon or event, due to the subjectivity in searching for the truth and in interpreting the phenomena<sup>93</sup>. Generally speaking, Sextus criticized all those who maintained that objective knowledge of any cause of the phenomena is possible. Sextus would accept only the existence of the phenomena<sup>94</sup>.

The Sceptics strongly believed that the search for the truth is very difficult, so they could agree that stoics were in close proximity with the truth or they possessed the truth. Sextus insisted that there are many points of view of the truth and many pathways leading to the truth. Sceptics rejected the imagination of the understanding (καταληπτικήν φαντασίαν)<sup>95</sup> of the Stoics as a way to the truth<sup>96</sup>, since imagination (phantasia) has always a subjective character and might be confusing, whereas truth as a demonstration of every sign or every proposition has an objective and concrete character. On the other hand, there is no true phantasia, which may not become false and incorrect<sup>97</sup>. The Stoics by the "imagination of the understanding" tried to fill up the gap between subjectivity and

objectivity, approaching therefor the truth par excellence. Sextus acknowledges the existence of the objects and the existence of phenomena, whenever they appear and are recognized by the perception of the mind. But the perception of the objects is different from the knowledge of their essence, their true nature. In addition, it is reasonable that not everything conceived has always a share in existence<sup>98</sup>. Man is inconceivable and consequently he is inapprehensible<sup>99</sup>. In addition, man by nature is incapable of discovering the truth<sup>100</sup>. Sceptics recognizing, that is impossible to approach the truth, suspend judgment and try to lead a tranquil, simple and peaceful life<sup>101</sup>.

### Sceptic psychotherapy

Sceptic philosophers proposed to accept the suspending of judgment (epoche), in cases of isosthenia, as a principal way of life, in order to protect their interior peace and tranquility. They believed that since the external reality is unknowable the criteria of truth are practically inconceivable. Only the reality of experience is indisputable. They insisted that the main aim of the life should be the imperturbability (ataraxia) and the establishment of the peace of mind being beyond the contradictions, the dispute, the futile competitions, the worry, the anxiety and the persistence on dogmatic doctrines.

By the principle of the equal forces (isosthenia) or equal potentiality Sextus treats the thinker from the ambition of the domination and preponderance and from the passion of arrogance and authority, suggesting that the best way for retaining the interior clarity, the peace, the tranquility, the serenity and the self-respect is the suspension of judgment. Man has to rely his affections in order to understand himself and to know the exterior world.

In the philosophy of the ancient scepticism the contradiction, the debate and the opposition were limited only in the exterior world, whereas the spiritual values were faced with great respect and unanimity by all the thinkers. For the inner culture it is always important the peace of mind and the serenity of the soul. Ataraxia is the precious fruit of the inner harmony and the homeostatic equilibrium of the human being, who avoids empathy and dogmatism<sup>102</sup>.

In the modern scepticism the philosophical orientation is turned towards the external world, the world of the senses which must be proved by the scientific investigation, which is continuously upgraded by the ongoing technology.

However, the continuous controversy in everything by the sceptics may induce the unsettledness and the inner instability. The peace of mind and the imperturbability (ataraxia) have only an exterior and provisional character, protecting the soul from anxiety and fear, without being able to fulfill the human expectations for existential harmony and truthful life, which is offered by the genuine, constant, unalterable eternal values<sup>103</sup>.

We could hypothesize that some persons may have a "sceptic personality" either by nature or by the relevant education and the environmental factors. That personality is mostly characterized by uncertainty, criticism, debate and dispute without any conclusion. Jaspers<sup>104</sup> underlined the type of that specific personality and described its profile, which might be

quite pessimistic and unstable existentially.

The continuous dispute and the lack of a definite decision and of a stable orientation may relieve the thinker from the burden and the worry of an eventual false option and of the consequent criticism. We might think that modern scepticism may be an excuse for escaping from the anxiety of the modern western society<sup>105</sup>.

### Sextus and the Objectivity in Science

Although Sextus wrote a substantial number of books, he remained almost unknown for many years. During the medieval era his philosophical doctrines exerted minimal influence on the thinkers. The Latin translation of Pyrrhonian Hypotyposes (Outlines of Pyrrhonism) by Niccolò da Reggio, remained in silence. Later on the translations by Henri Étienne (Henricus Stephanus) published in Geneva in 1562 and the Latin translation of "Pros Mathematicus" (Against the Professors) by Gentian Hervet (Gentianus Hervetus<sup>106</sup>) in 1569, started gradually to exert an influence on the rising European Philosophy, which endeavored to search for the truth, avoiding inflexible dogmatism<sup>107</sup>. However, we would say that scepticism and Academician scepticism particularly, became known in the Latin Bibliography, rather by Saint Augustin's works "Contra Academicos"<sup>108</sup> than by Sextus' early Latin translations. Although St. Augustin was not in favor of the principles of scepticism<sup>109</sup>, nevertheless he was influenced by them, as it is revealed in his Confessions by the expressions, "sub specie dubitationis", "Eo ipso tempore dubitationis meae"<sup>110</sup> and by his thoughts on death<sup>111</sup>, which induce the idea of an Augustinian scepticism.

In the Greek world, who enjoyed the knowledge of Greek language and had access to the original works of Greek authors, Photios, the Patriarch of Constantinople included Sextus' writings in his "Library"<sup>112</sup> claiming that sceptics become basically dogmatics, insisting that "nothing could be an object of knowledge"<sup>113</sup>. Theodoros Metochitis<sup>114</sup> in his «Outlines» cited sceptics, calling them "Epektikoi, Ephectics, Suspensive" writing that «Ἐπι οὐκ ἔξω λόγου παντάπασι δόξειεν ἂν εἶναι τὰ τῶν Ἐφεκτικῶν ἐναντιουμένων πρὸς πᾶσαν κατάληψιν, καὶ ὅτι Πλάτων καὶ Σωκράτης ἀρχὰς εἰς τοῦτ' ἔδωκαν»<sup>115</sup> Metochitis and his pupil Gregoras condemned Sextus arguments, fearing that they might infiltrate the Church.

The Greek text of Sextus writings was transferred from Constantinople to Venice in 1427 by Francesco Filelfo, who was acknowledged as the first Italian scholar with serious interest in Sextus. The Greek text was published for the first time in 1621 by Petrus Jacobus Chouet. From that time Sextus started receiving an increasing attention from humanists, been studied in Italy by Savonarola<sup>116</sup> and other scholars in Florence, especially Gianfrancesco Pico della Mirandola (1469-1533), who read Sextus in Greek, contributing greatly in the creation of the philosophical atmosphere of Renaissance<sup>117</sup> free from dogmatism and respectful fixation on Aristotle of scholastic philosophers.

During the first half of the sixteenth century, Sextus doctrines enjoyed a very favorable reception in France, deeply affecting French philosophy. Michel de Montaigne<sup>118</sup>, a real humanist, who studied Stephanus' translation of Pyrrhonian Hypo-

typoses and the Latin translation of Diogenes Laertius "Life of Pyrrho", tried to interpret the scepticism in an ethical and Christian manner<sup>119</sup>. Montaigne writings induced a strong sceptic movement in France, represented mainly by Gabriel Naude, Guy Patin, Francois de la Mothe Le Vayer and Pierre Gassendi. Sextus scepticism was propagated from Italy and France to northern Europe exercising remarkable influence on David Hume<sup>120</sup> and Hegel.

During the seventeenth century Rene Descartes<sup>121</sup>, in France, wrote his "Meditations" deeply impressed by scepticism. He claimed from a purely epistemological perspective, that the thinker may approach the real meaning of the science only defeating dogmatism and searching for new theories and their objective verification. According to Descartes, the mental brightness, and the detailed observation are the main ways to the scientific knowledge. The deep and focused thought, the right perception, the detailed and critic analysis of the phenomena and the proving procedures compose the pattern of the scientific methodology<sup>122</sup>.

The statement "Cogito, ergo sum". ("I think therefore I am) by" Rene Descartes became the symbol of the modern philosophy. According Descartes thinking means doubting, denying, affirming and refusing. The mind is distinct from the body and it exists independently of the body. In the field of Metaphysics Descartes believes in an omnipotent, infinite, omniscient, all good God and he insists that truth is only in God. All the ideas, which are related with truth are derived from God. He states, "I clearly understand that there is more reality in an infinite substance than there is in a finite one"<sup>123</sup>. However the role of reason in Descartes' philosophy is essential.

The human being must have the capacity to accept the eternal truth and incorporate it in his thoughts, since God offers the potentiality to human nature to understand all the worth and values, which are determined for the man. Descartes admitted that the belief that there is a God who is all powerful, and who created him, such as he is, has, for a long time, obtained steady possession of his mind<sup>124</sup>.

The ideas according Descartes have a etiological background and a point of reference, that gives them their substantiality. Between the various dilemmas that the thinker frequently faces he must accept those ideas, which have a metaphysical value, in order to avoid a dogmatism based only on experience. Descartes' scepticism has frequently an existential character<sup>125</sup>. Thinking is an attribute of the soul and here he discovered what properly belongs to himself. Thinking alone is inseparable from him<sup>126</sup>.

Although both Sextus and Descartes are against dogmatism and they endeavor to find the truth, the main difference of their doctrine is that Descartes accepts the metaphysical certitude, strongly believing that the truth is only in God<sup>127</sup>. In addition, scepticism in Descartes has mostly an epistemological and not a methodological character.

The modern philosophy of education under the influence of scepticism and particularly of Sextus' concepts endeavored to enlarge the dimensions of education and learning and to prove any theory by the objective data of the basic research. At the same time scepticism contributed in deliberating education from dogmatic standards and introduced the enthusiasm of

discovering new horizons in thinking.

### Scepticism and Science

The contribution of scepticism in the scientific thought is considerable. The detachment of the epistemological thinking from dogmatic fixations and the orientation towards research and scientific investigation induced a remarkable pragmatism arguing that there are objective ways of approaching the scientific truth. Scientific scepticism criticizes the veracity of assertions, which are not based on empirical evidence or experimental data. It is reasonable that the acceptance of a theory as a standard scientific knowledge requires a 'critical or experimental verification', that must be capable of providing evidence that the theory is based on objective data.

The high fever of the research in the last centuries was enforced by the anxiety and enthusiasm for approaching the scientific reality. In addition, the scientific achievements opened the mind of the scientist further showing that the real knowledge is not inaccessible.

However, the scientist of our times, whereas retains always his scepticism, is not in accordance with suspending of judgment for the sake of tranquility in cases of equipollence of the opposed theories (isosthenia), realizing that the happiness from research is more important than tranquility of mind or imperturbability (ataraxia). Therefore, to suspend judgment on the validity of opposed theories is replaced by the proceeding to an accurate and critical experimentation, in order to reveal the validity of the right theory, based on evidence. On the other hand Sceptics achieve tranquility, not by finding the truth, but by suspending judgment about whether the truth can be found.

Many modern scientific theories are based on Sextus scepticism. Sextus' theory of relativity, which revitalized and proved, many centuries later, by physics and mathematics<sup>128</sup>, was the supreme concept, which opened new immense horizons in science and philosophy. Sextus' scepticism exerted also a strong influence on the evidence based Medicine<sup>129</sup> and the current Psychology<sup>130</sup>.



## ΣΧΟΛΙΑ

1. Adv.Math.A.246, Hyp.I,152, Hyp.III,211,214
2. Diog. Laert. IX. 12, 116.
3. The fact that Sextus was physician is proved by the numerous references to medicine and medical issues in his writings, which advocate his medical education (Adv. Math I, 260, PH II 238, AD V 47, Adv. Math. V 104, PH I 44, 51–52, 71, 80, 93, 101–103, 126–127, 131, 133, II 237–240, III 280–281; AD I 179, II 188, 219–221; AM I 95, 307–308, II 49).
4. See also: Edelstein Ludwig: Empiricism and Scepticism in the Teaching of the Greek Empiricist School. In: Edelstein: Ancient Medicine. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press 1967, 195–203
5. Fabricius Testimonia p.2. Pappenheim claims that Sextus was a member of the Methodical School of medicine, based on PH I, 236 (Pappenheim Der Sitz der Schule der Griechischen Skeptiker. Archiv für Geschichte der Philosophie, 1887, 1, 1, 47).
6. Baloyannis SJ: The Neurosciences in the Greek World. In KK. Sinha and DK. Jha (Eds) Some aspects of history of Neurosciences. Catholic Press, Ranchi, 2003, pp.97-117.
7. Empiricists and Sceptics were closely related, following a parallel way since they have several features in common. Menodotus from Nicomedia and Theodas from Laodocia were the first sceptic empiricists (Diog. IX. 12, 115). The most well known sceptics were Pyrron from Ilida (360-270 b.C) and Timon Phliasios (330-240 b.C), who endeavored to avoid dogmatism and to base any knowledge on observation of objective phenomena and on extensive argumentation. See also Plato *Logos* 720A-C, 857C-D.
8. Hyp.1,10.
9. See also the philosophical concepts of Friedrich Nietzsche (1844–1900) on the truth in "The Will to Power" New York: Vintage Books. 1968.
10. "We accept 'equipollence' as a kind of equality with regard to being convincing or unconvincing, and: none of the conflicting accounts takes precedence over any other as being more convincing". Hyp. I.10. "To every argument an equal argument is opposed,"
11. Hyp I.8.
12. Hyp. I,32-35
13. "It is enough, I think, to live by experience...in accordance with common observations (phenomena) and preconceptions, and to suspend judgment about what is said with dogmatic superfluity" Hyp. II.246.
12. Hyp.1,36
15. Hyp.I, 106-111.
16. The sceptic is acutely aware of the fact that in all sorts of ways things might, in reality, be quite different from the way they appear to be.
17. Hyp.I, 38.
18. Hyp.I, 27-28.
19. Frede M. "The Sceptic's Beliefs." Burnyeat and Frede eds *The original Sceptists*, 1997 pp. 1-24.
20. Kant claims that scepticism is the second step towards the pure reasoning, the third one being the analysis of the pure reason. See *Kritik der reinen Vernunft (KrV) A 761, B 789*.
21. Cletomachus (187-100 π.Χ.) was a pupil of Carneades and his successor in Academy. He was a very knowledgeable philosopher and author of many dissertations. He used to criticize Epicurians and Stoics. His doctrines survived in the works of Sextus, Plutarch and Cicero.
22. It is important to underline that the main difference between sceptics and the other philosophers is based not only on the difference of their principles but mainly on the different attitude towards their principles. See also Frede M. "The Sceptic's Beliefs." Burnyeat and Frede eds *The original Sceptists*, 1997 pp. 23-24.
23. Hyp. B, 246.
24. Adv.Math.vii,202
25. Adv.Math.I,61.
26. Pyrrhonian Sketches (Pyrrhonian Hypotyposes) are the earliest Sextus' writing, explaining the value of the sceptic principles and doctrines in a very analytical and detailed way.
27. Pyrrhon from Elis, son of Pistokrates, was born in Elis in 365 b.C. he was a pupil of Bryson and Anaxarchus. He accompanied Alexander the Great in his expedition to India, where he came in contact with the Indian gymnosophists and acquainted himself with the oriental philosophy. His doctrines were obviously influenced by Indian philosophy regarding the vanity of the human life and the worthless of the earthly goods. He tried to deliberate himself from any material and carnal desire, in order to achieve the interior peace and tranquillity and defeat pain and suffering. He was the founder of the Sceptic School of philosophy in Elis and he has led a peaceful, simple and harmonious life, gaining respect by the citizens of Elis and the majority of philosophers of his times. Cicero described him as a man of virtue and honesty, who used to live in equality of spirit and teach the "summum bonum (De orat.111,62). Pyrrhon respected Democritus' doctrines (Diog.Laert IX,11,67) and the meaning of his life is to establishing the interior harmony, avoiding worry and emotional turmoil, reaching eventually to a state of continuous tranquillity, the state of imperturbability (ataraxia), which is the ultimate achievement of the spiritual culture.
29. Hyp.I, 14)
30. Hyp.I,22
31. Hyp. I,49,54,55-59).
32. Hyp. I,100.
33. «άλλος γὰρ τ' ἄλλοισιν ἀνὴρ ἐπιτρέπεται ἔργοις» Homer Odes. ξ' 228.
34. Hyp.1,85.
35. Adv.Math. XI,140.
36. Hyp. I,36. Diog. Laert. IX,11,87.
37. Hyp. I,186.
38. Hyp. I,186.
39. Hyp. I,186.
40. Hyp. 1,192.
41. Hyp. I,196.
42. « παντὶ λόγῳ λόγος ἴσος ἀντίκειται» Hyp. I,202
43. It seems that Aenesidamu as well as Protagoras have been deeply influenced by Heraclitian Philosophy which induced to them the sceptical orientation. It is known also that Diogenes Laertius thinks that Heraclitus, Archilochus, Homer, Empedocles as well as Hippocrates were basically sceptics. (Diog.Laert. IX,11,71-78).
44. See also Baloyannis SJ Heraclitus and our times. *Encephalos* 2013; 50, 1-21.
45. Hyp. 1,210.
46. Frag.80
47. Frag.18
48. All things are exchanged for Fire, and Fire for all things, even as wares for gold, and gold for wares. According to Heraclitian Philosophy the Universe was made of fire, which never extinguishes (πυρ αἰζίωον), lighting perpetually contributing to cosmic harmony. The fire is therefore a symbol of life and eternity, the symbol of absolute harmony since it has the capacity to purify and regenerate everything. The fire is the ultimate form of energy, which has an existential importance (Frag. DK22 B30. Clemes Strom.V 105). See also Schuhl PM: *Essai sur la formation de la Pensée Grecque*: 2d edit: Paris 1949. According to Aristotle the fire is the finest element, which might be immaterial, it is in a continuous motion and can also animate other elements. (Aristotle on Anima 405a 5).
49. Heraclitus claims that from the strain of binding opposites comes harmony and change gives rest. Heraclitus frequently asserts the unity of opposite (Fragm.DK22 B80. Origen, *Against Celcus* I 42s), thus "the road up and down is one and the same road" and "in the circumference of the circle beginning and end are the same". Even good and evil are one. Every day seems equal to the rest. Cold things become warm and warm become cold (Fragm. DK22 B126). Everything is generated from the opposite, such as the dead from the living, the old from the young and the ill from the healthy. Thus, in a symbolic way Heraclitus states that fire's death is birth for air and air's death is birth for water. Death for earth is to become water and water's death is birth of air (Marcus Aurelius IV,46). The natural reality is a continuous circle of transformations and energy exchange in life and death. Coming into existence is basically coupled with passing away. Heraclitus believes that an unapparent connection links many things more firmly than an apparent and concrete one. A hidden and even secret harmony exists, which is more precious than an obvious one (Fragm.DK22 B54) and an unapparent harmony is stronger than an apparent one. A harmony exists even if there is an apparent competition between the opposites (Fragm..DK22



- B80. Origen, Against Celcus ΩΙ 42), since any competition conceals the attraction and attraction induces union. See also: Hegel GWF: *Phaenomenologie des Geistes*, Werke II, Berlin 1832-1845. and Hegel GWF: *Lectures on the History of Philosophy* ed. Hoffmeister 1940
50. Diogenes Laertius IX 2
51. Frag..DK22 B41 Diog.Laertius.IX,1
52. Frag..DK22 B62
53. Biological sciences revealed the important role that genes play in the determination of many physical and mental characters of the man. At the same time is well known that genes have the character of a lasting stock of numerous information, which may be hidden during the limited time of human life.
54. Porphyry *Quaestiones Homericae* 24.200 p.190
55. Kirk GS: Natural changes in Heraclitus. *Mind* 1951; 60:35-42.
56. Fragm.DK22 B91. See also Vlastos G: On Heraclitus. *Am. J. Philosophy* 1955;76:337-368.
57. See Kirk GS: Natural changes in Heraclitus. *Mind* 1951; 60:35-42.
58. Aristotle *Meteorologia* 2,2, 355a13.
59. Frag.DK22 B90
60. See also Nussbaum MC: *Psyche in Heraclitus*. *Phronesis* 1972;17:1-16.
61. See also Rosetti L; *Atti del Symposium Heracliteum* 1981, Edizioni dell'Ateneo, Roma 1983, vols. 2
62. See also Gross J: *La divinisation du chr tien d' apr s les Pères grecs; contribution historique à la doctrine de la grâce*: Paris 1938, page 344. and Ware Kallistos : *Through the Creation to the Creator*. London: Friends of the Centre,1997.
63. Hyp. I,220.
64. Hyp. I,225.
65. Hyp.. I,226.
66. Hyp.. I,231
67. See also Flückiger Hansueli: *The ephektikoi in the Commentators*. In: Branacci A. (ed.): *Philosophy and Doxography in the Imperial Age*. Firenze: Leo S. Olschki Editore 2005, 113–129.
68. Hyp. 163-166 See also Patzig G. *Aristotle's Theory of the Syllogism*, Reidel 1968, pp. 4-8.
69. Hyp. I 84
70. *De anima* II 2, 414a12-14
71. *Metaphysica* XII 10, 1075a16-19
72. See also Lawrence, Gavin. 1993. "Aristotle and the Ideal Life." *Philosophical Review* 102: 1-35.
73. Hyp. III, 169
74. *Nicomachean Ethics* I 5
75. Aristotle says "The same thing seems to follow from a consideration of self-sufficiency, also, for the complete or final good seems to be self-sufficient. We mean the self sufficient not for someone who is alone, living a solitary life, but also in relation to his parents, children, wife, and, in general, his friends and fellow-citizens, since a human being is by nature a political animal. *Nicomachean Ethics* I, 7 1097b6-11. See also *Politics* VII 5 1326b29-30: "the self-sufficient has everything and needs nothing"
76. See also Ackrill J L 1974/1980. "Aristotle on Eudaimonia." in *Essays on Aristotle's Ethics*, ed. A. O. Rorty, Berkeley, University of California Press, pp. 15-33.
77. Hyp. III,181.
78. See also Runia D., *What is doxography?*, in: P. van der Eijk (ed), *Ancient histories of medicine*, Leiden 1999, 38–39; Mansfeld (n. 11), VIII. Says "The term doxography... is rather unfortunate because, if only by association. it suggests something as solid, impersonal, and objective as, say, cartography"
79. See Diels, H., 1879, *Doxographi Graeci*, Berlin: Weidmann. and Zhmud, L., 2001, 'Revising Doxography: Hermann Diels and his Critics', *Philologus*, 145: 219–243.
80. See also Taylor C C W. *Aristotle's epistemology*, in *Epistemology Companions to Ancient Thought*, ed. by S. Everson, Cambridge 1990, pp. 116-42.
81. Albert Einstein insisted that imagination is the basis of creativity and for this reason it is more precious than the erudition. See also Isaacson, Walter. *Einstein: His Life and Universe*, Simon & Schuster, 2007.
82. Hyp.II,10.
83. Hyp.II,11
84. *Iliad* I, 469
85. *Iliad*, XXIV, 54
86. *Diog.Laertius*. X, 4.
87. Epicurus stated that "all ideas are formed from sense-perceptions by direct experience or by analogy or by similarity or by compounding, with reasoning also making a contribution" (*Diog. Laertius Lives of the Eminent Philosophers*, 10.33)
88. See also Janasek K: *Sextus Empiricus Indices*.
89. «τὴν εἰμαρμένην κίνησιν ἄδιον. συνεχῆ καὶ τεταγμένην» SVF II 916.
90. SVF 1552
91. SVF III 631.
92. See also Baloyannis SJ. *Suicide and death in stoic philosophy*. Volume in memory of metropolitan Panteleimon the 2nd. Thessaloniki 1990,pp.380-391.
93. Hyp.III,22
94. "Sense perception reveals to the percipient, what appears, but what appears could not be used as evidence of what it is". Hyp.II,4
95. See also F. H. Sandbach, "Phantasia kataleptike", in: A. A. Long, ed., *Problems in Stoicism* (London 1971), 9–21
96. Oberti, Margherita *Scepticism versus dogmatism: an internal analysis of Sextus Empiricus' Against the mathematicians*, book VII Thesis University of British Columbia 1978.
97. The Stoics claimed that it is impossible to find two phantasiai almost identical in all respects, whereas the Academics argued that a false phantasia might be identical to a true one. See also Oberti's Thesis. Cicero says that there are things, which seem to be identical, but after a detailed inspection they are pronounced different.(Cicero *Acad. pr. II*,18).
98. *Against Math*.IX.49.
99. *Against Math*. VIII, 263. Sextus also stated that conception in every case precedes apprehension and man being incapable of knowing himself is inapprehensible.
100. *Against Math*. VIII, 343.
101. See also Machuga Diego: *The Pyrrhonist's ataraxia and philanthrōpia*. In: *Ancient Philosophy* 2006; 26: 111– 139.
102. «ὡς χρὴ τοῦ σοφοῦ ἐν τοιαύτῃ καθιστάνα ἀταραξία» (It is important that the wise man should establish ataraxia in his soul) (*Diog.Laertius*. IX 69).
103. It is very impressive the uncertainty and the contestation which dominate in the writings of the modern sceptic philosophers. See also Ingemund Gullvåg. *Scepticism and Absurdity*. *Inquiry* 1964;7 (1-4):163-190 and *Criteria of Meaning and Analysis of Usage*. *Synthese* 1955; 9 (1):341 – 361.
104. Karl Jaspers. *Psychologie der Weltanschauungen* Springer-Verlag Berlin 1954
105. Baloyannis SJ: *The psychotherapy in the antiquity*. *Annals of the School of Theology*. Aristotelian University Press 1992, pp.432-438.
106. Gentianus Hervetus (1499-1584) was a priest of the Catholic Church. He participated in the Council of Trent in 1562-63. He tried to use scepticism in defending the principles of the Roman Catholic Church.
107. See also Popkin Richard: *The History of Scepticism from Erasmus to Descartes*. Assen: van Gorcum 1960.
108. Sancti Aurelii Augustini: *Contra Academicos*, in W M Green, (ed.) *Corpus Christianorum, Series Latina, XXIX: Aurelii Augustini Opera*, pt. II, 2, 3–61 (Turnhout 1970). and St.Augudtine. *Against the Academics*. Trans, by John J O'Mears. Pages vi-f 213.1950.
109. *Isti homines ... caducarii sunt ...*" (b. vita 2.16)
110. conf. 5.14.25
111. O'Connell, Robert J. (1969): *St. Augustine's Confessions: The Odyssey of Soul*, Harvard University Press, 1969 and O'Donnell, James J. (1992): *Augustine: Confessions*. Text and Commentary in 3 volumes, Oxford University Press, 1992.
112. Photios *Bibliothèque*, Paris: Les Belles Lettres 1962.
113. *Bibl.cod.*212,169,40ff.
114. See also Triantaris S. *Scepticism in the writings of Byzantine thinkers of the 14th century*:Theodoros Metochitis, Nikiphoros Gregoras, *Byzantina* 1999;20: 43-64.
115. See also *Miscellanea, philosophia et historica* (ed) Th. Kiessling, A. Hakkert, Amsterdam 1966, pp. 370-377.
116. Girolamo Savonarola (1452–1498)
117. See also Granada Miguel, *Apologetique platonicienne et apologetique sceptique*: Ficin, Savonarole, J. F. Pic de la Mirandole, *Le scepticisme au XVIe et au XVIIe siecle*, A. Michel Paris 2001.
118. See also Montaigne, *Les Essais, XII Oeuvres completes*, Gallimard (Pleiade) Paris, 1962. and Pierre Villey, *Les sources de l' evolution des Essais de Montaigne*, Hachette, Paris 1908 . Montaigne under the influence of Sextus writings became a genuine Pyrrhonian Philosopher. See also Schiffman ZS. *Montaigne and the Rise of Scepticism in Early Modern Europe. A Reappraisal*. *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 1984;45: 499-516. Montaigne represents modern scepticism, where ancient argumentation are amalgamated with Christian understanding of the world and enriched by renaissance scientific experience. His writings exerted a strong influence upon the thinkers in France particularly on Gabriel Naude, Guy Patin, Francois de la Mothe Le Vayer, Pierre Gassendi.
119. See Luciano Floridi: *Sextus Empiricus The Transmission and Recovery of Pyrr-*

rhonism. Oxford University Press 2002.

120. Hume D, Enquiries concerning Human Understanding and concerning the Principles of Morals, ed. L. A. Selby-Bigge and P. H. Nidditch, Oxford 1975.

121. Descartes was born on March 31, 1596, in La Haye, a small town in Touraine, France. In 1616 received his baccalaureate in law. In 1630, Descartes wrote his Rules for the Direction of the Mind and The World or Treatise on Light. In 1637, he published a Discourse on the Method for Conducting One's Reason Rightly and for searching for Truth in the Sciences. In the spring of 1640, Descartes wrote his Meditations on First Philosophy, published in 1641. He died in 1650, from pneumonia.

122. Meditation II; PWD ii, p. 24; AT vii, p. 35 Descartes contributed in making elaborated and deeper sceptical arguments. Thus he became one of important creators of modern scepticism. See also Renata Ziemińska Descartes meditations in the history of scepticism. Studies in logic, grammar and rhetoric 2009;15 (28) :47-62.

123. Rene Descartes. Meditations on First Philosophy. Translated by Donald A. Cress. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1993, 31.

124. Meditations I,9

125. "But I do not yet know with sufficient clearness what I am, though assured that I am; and hence, in the next place, I must take care, lest per-

chance I inconsiderately substitute some other object in room of what is properly myself, and thus wander from truth, even in that knowledge (cognition ) which I hold to be of all others the most certain and evident. For this reason, I will now consider anew what I formerly believed myself to be, before I entered on the present train of thought; and of my previous opinion I will retrench all that can in the least be invalidated by the grounds of doubt I have adduced, in order that there may at length remain nothing but what is certain and indubitable." (Meditations II,4) and also "Certainly I did exist, if I convinced myself of something" (Meditations II, 25), and also "From the bare fact that I exist, and that in me there is an idea of a supremely perfect being, that is God, it is proved beyond question that God also exists" (Meditations III, 51)

126. Meditations II,6

127. Meditation III, 25; AT vii, p. 36.

128. Einstein A. Fundamental Ideas and Problems of the Theory of Relativity, Nobel Lectures, Physics 1901–1921, Amsterdam: Elsevier Publishing Company, archived from the original 2007.

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