

Exploration of Epicurean Concepts of Justice, Contracts, & Not to Harm or Be Harmed

Post by “Don” of January 1, 2022 at 5:51 PM

[Quote from Cassius](#)

I was thinking that was a reference in Seneca, so I could be thinking wrong. Do you have a particular cite for it in Philodemus beyond what you quoted above? I am always more skeptical of Philodemus quotes too due to the uncertainties of the text.

That link in my post has the full PDF of Philodemus's On Frank Speech. It's in Fragment 45.

The SFOTSE is Seneca:

Quote

(Seneca's Letters, Book I- Letter XXV) But do you yourself, as indeed you are doing, show me that you are stout-hearted; lighten your baggage for the march. None of our possessions is essential. Let us return to the law of nature; for then riches are laid up for us. The things which we actually need are free for all, or else cheap; nature craves only bread and water. No one is poor according to this standard; when a man has limited his desires within these bounds, he can challenge the happiness of Jove himself, as Epicurus says. I must insert in this letter one or two more of his sayings: “Do everything as if Epicurus were watching you.” (Sic fac omnia tamquam spectet Epicurus) There is no real doubt that it is good for one to have appointed a guardian over oneself, and to have someone whom you may look up to, someone whom you may regard as a witness of your thoughts. It is, indeed, nobler by far to live as you would live under the eyes of some good man, always at your side; but nevertheless I am content if you only act, in whatever you do, as you would act if anyone at all were looking on; because solitude prompts us to all kinds of evil. And when you have progressed so far that you have also respect for yourself, you may send away your attendant; but until then, set as a guard over yourself the authority of some man, whether your choice be the great Cato or Scipio, or Laelius, - or any man in whose presence even abandoned wretches would check their bad impulses. Meantime, you are engaged in making of yourself the sort of person in whose company you would not dare to sin. When this aim has been accomplished and you begin to hold yourself in some esteem, I shall gradually allow you to do what Epicurus, in another passage, suggests: “The time when you should most of all withdraw into yourself is when you are forced to be in a crowd.”