

"Cicero' And His Clamorous Silences" - Paper by Javier Aoiz and Marcelo D. Boeri

Post by "Cassius" of September 25, 2023 at 9:09 AM

For this I offer a standing ovation to the writers:

Quote from Cicero and His Clamorous Silences

To make our point clearer, we think that Cicero and other writers (such as Plutarch) «absolutize», so to speak, the slogans «do not participate in politics» and «live unnoticed» as if they were principles of conduct of the Epicureans. However, they do not dedicate a single line to the specification of which text of Epicurus it comes from and what its original context was. Diogenes Laertius (10, 119) states that «do not participate in politics» was contained in the first book of On Ways of Life but offers no further information. The case of the slogan «live unnoticed» is even more significant and, to some extent, more intriguing, since Plutarch devoted to it an entire treatise (Live Unnoticed) which does not contain the slightest information about its meaning or the text of Epicurus from which it comes. From this perspective, Plutarch's opusculum is especially disappointing, although very illustrative of how some topics in ancient thought were formed. Plutarch, in fact, not only does not provide any indication about the context of the expression λάθε βιώσας but almost makes it the appropriate motto for a hidden way of life by emphasizing its perversity (Live Unnoticed 1128d-e). These are undoubtedly characteristic rhetorical procedures in the philosophic diatribes of antiquity that require caution regarding the absolutization of the motto «live unnoticed». In fact, none of the Key Doctrines (hereafter KD) offers categorical rules of conduct and, not for nothing, Epicurus places prudence at the top of the doctrine (LM 132). As we will show in this paper, the testimonies about Epicurus do not paint a picture of a person shut away in the Garden and isolated from the life of Athens, but of someone who, while refusing to participate actively in politics, respected the laws and institutions of the city, participated in its worship and piety, integrated family relationships into the exercise of philosophy and cultivated friendships and philanthropy.

(underlined emphasis is mine)