

Recent Article on Why Stoicism Remains So Popular (Vis-à-Vis Ancient Rivals)

Post by “Eikadistes” of January 17, 2025 at 3:38 PM

[Quote from Pacatus](#)

[The comment about “*far removed* from politics” might be a bit overly strong – especially considering the adaptations of Roman Epicureans; viz. the essay “Caesar the Epicurean? A Matter of Life and Death” by Katharina Volk, recently shared by Cassius.]

It's tough to distinguish what *is* political versus what is *not* political.

I could see Lysimakhos (King of Thrace) suggesting that Epikouros was being **very** political when he offered his finance minister, Mithres asylum from a sentence. When you additionally consider that the Epicureans paid Mithres' bail, housed him in the Garden, and then helped him escape ... a few things come to mind. Perhaps the *Underground Railroad*? Perhaps *Edward Snowden* (not approving or disapproving one way or another)? Perhaps *North Korean refugees*, or any of the millions of *refugees from the conflict in Rwanda*? Seeking asylum in a foreign country to escape punishment is a supremely political maneuver. Epikouros, himself, seemed not to have fit into the culture of Mytilene, so political awareness was important for him to navigate his social context and find the right group of friends.

Then again, Epikouros never held political office, and advised others against doing so.

But he certainly knew how to play the game. He understand inheritance laws, and financial loopholes, and was able to play the system to ensure that non-Athenian residents maintained *de facto* ownership of the Garden. The residency laws of Athens were written to prevent the very thing Epikouros forced, which was ensuring that the estate was managed by a citizen of Mytilene (Hermakhos). As far as modern lawyers and inheritance laws go ... that was **very** political.

Of course, he never engaged in theory, and never promoted a "best form of government".

Though, in the last 10 Key Doctrines, he seems to indicate (*to me, at least*) that we can pass a moral evaluation on temporary laws, such that they can be categorized as being either "just" or "unjust". Passing that moral evaluation on legislation seems categorically political to my eyes. In fact, that evaluation is often the spark that leads to an impassioned, political debate. Or, to suggest that a wise person will not necessarily follow every law in every context might be interpreted as a suggestion to violate unjust laws, if not doing so leads to greater pain and anguish.

I think we're doing good as long as we stay away from partisanship and campaign ads.

<http://www.epicureanfriends.com/thread/4228-recent-article-on-why-stoicism-remains-so-popular-vis-%C3%A0-vis-ancient-rivals/?postID=33681#post33681>