

Psychology Today Article: "Frederick the Happy: The Old Fritz was an Epicurean."

Post by "Hiram" of August 25, 2019 at 2:04 PM

[Quote from Cassius](#)

I moved this thread into the Frederick the Great subforum. I see the article actually labels him an Epicurean. I might at some point move Frederick into the "Epicurean" forum category, but before I did that I would want to see evidence that Frederick ever referred to himself explicitly as an Epicurean.

This is the most unequivocal quote

Quote

Frederick left no doubt about his Epicureanism. In 1749, at the age of 37, he published a 200-line poem called *On Pleasure*. Blanning (p. 156) reports that in it, Frederick "begins with a dismissal of the intense but short-lived and dangerous carnal delights offered by prostitutes" (much like Epicurus did) but that he seeks to "combine a hundred different pleasures to create just one."

"He declared that he would," reports Blanning, "always follow the Epicurean gospel." Epicurus's term for this one pleasure is *ataraxia*, a pleasant, untroubled state of mind. An Epicurean is not obliged to maintain this state at all times but is encouraged to follow its guiding light. Frederick did, and this may be, in no small measure, what made him great.