

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

Post by "Cassius" of August 26, 2019 at 11:42 AM

I see Frederick's poem can be found in part here: <https://www.historytoday.com/frederick-greats-erotic-poem> and perhaps in full (in German) here: <https://www.zeit.de/2011/38/Schossgebet>

If this is indeed a basically a very direct poem / love letter targeted at a particular lover, that would also lead me away from, rather than toward, considering Frederick a full and complete Epicurean philosopher.

Argh! I just noticed that the lines in this version rhyme, which indicates to me that the writer has not translated it literally, and that causes me to wonder whether this is accurate to the meaning:

Quote

From Königsberg to Monsieur Algarotti, Swan of Padua

This night, vigorous desire in full measure,
Algarotti wallowed in a sea of pleasure.
A body not even a Praxitiles fashions
Redoubled his senses and imbued his passions
Everything that speaks to eyes and touches hearts,
Was found in the fond object that enflamed his parts.
Transported by love and trembling with excitement
In Cloris' arms he yields himself to contentment
The love that unites them heated their embraces
And tied bodies and arms as tightly as laces.
Divine sensual pleasure! To the world a king!
Mother of their delights, an unstaunchable spring,
Speak through my verses, lend me your voice and tenses
Tell of their fire, acts, the ecstasy of their senses!
Our fortunate lovers, transported high above
Know only themselves in the fury of love:
Kissing, enjoying, feeling, sighing and dying
Reviving, kissing, then back to pleasure flying.
And in Knidos' grove, breathless and worn out
Was these lovers' happy destiny, without doubt.
But all joy is finite; in the morning ends the bout.
Fortunate the man whose mind was never the prey
To luxury, or grand airs, one who knows how to say

<http://www.epicureanfriends.com/thread/1129-psychology-today-article-frederick-the-happy-the-old-fritz-was-an-epicurean/?postID=4217#post4217>

A moment of climax for a fortunate lover
Is worth so many aeons of star-spangled honour.
Display More