

David Konstan - Life worthy of the Gods

Post by “timrobbe” of October 24, 2020 at 5:28 AM

Friends,

I am now reading Konstan's "Life worthy of the Gods". Interesting piece of work. It combines Epicurean works, Lucretius and psychology. Has anyone already read this book? Care to share your thoughts?

KR

Tim

Post by “Cassius” of October 24, 2020 at 7:44 AM

I remember commenting in some material I found in that book pretty recently - somewhere - if I can find it. I think I found that he had some interesting things to say about anticipations. I'll see if I can refresh my memory.

Post by “Cassius” of October 24, 2020 at 7:55 AM

Tim check this thread for other discussions of Konstan's book; [Managing Expectations In The Study of Epicurus](#)

Also, I remember saying in a conversation here these comments:

I have spent the afternoon listening to my Android read to me a couple of hours of the Konstan book. I definitely think the parts we are focusing on are worthwhile, but as I hear more of the rest i am not so sure of the rest. It is much more focused on "psychological issues" and I confess I get irritated when people seem to go on endless about how everything in Epicurus is reducible to "how to deal with fear of death" as the number one thing of importance.

But clearly there is a lot of interesting research in it.

...

That first chapter on the passions/pathe contains that good analysis we've been discussing, but then after that, (or at least the part I was able to listen too, it turned into a pretty typical psychology discussion of anxiety and fear.

I don't mean to be overly critical of it but it was reminding me how some people come from such different perspectives, and they find the 'psychology' aspect the major thing of interest to them. to each his own, i guess, and I know that life can be very painful to the point where escape seems the most important thing possible. As I get older maybe I'm beginning to see that side myself -- but that's mostly a joke, I don't think Epicurus saw his philosophy as anesthesia or a hospital for sick people but as affirmatively the right approach to life for everyone, including the healthiest and strongest, and not just those who are in bodily or mental trouble.

So my bottom line is that there is some good material in the book, but significant parts that I personally would disagree with. (What else is new? 😊)

Post by “timrobbe” of October 24, 2020 at 8:18 AM

Thanks Cassius. As I am reading the book, the position of the writer seems to be that fear of death underpins limitless desires that are both unnatural and unnecessary (wealth and fame). By living according to the teachings of Epicurus, anyone can live the good life: death is nothing to fear so the unnatural and unnecessary desires become unimportant. One can focus on the good life. I am now reading up on why, if this is a rationally clear and easy to understand position, many people seem to be unable to live accordingly.

I have already learned a lot, but much more needs to be learned 😊