

λάθε βιώσας - "Live Unknown"

Post by "Cassius" of January 6, 2019 at 7:38 PM



Godfrey this "live unknown" is a phrase that Epicurean commentators talk about a lot, but I think it needs to be considered VERY carefully. It comes to us without any context in an Epicurean text, I believe through Plutarch (?) (I will look it up after I finish this note.) People who take a very passivist/quietist view of Epicurus construe it strongly as if it were written in stone for all contexts, while I think a more balanced view is that - like most of his doctrines - how to apply it depends on the context.

Clearly there were multiple Epicurean sayings indicating that it is a good idea to live free of too much entanglement with too many people -- to stay away from politics as a career path - and things like that. So no doubt there is a grain of important truth here, but we can see from the examples of many Roman and Greek Epicureans - including Epicurus himself - that we shouldn't take this too literally.

However given all those caveats what LD and i are saying I think still stands that it is a good idea to be cautious with giving up too much of one's privacy.