

Paper On Epicurean Engagement With Society - Jeffrey Fish - "Not All Politicians Are Sisyphus"

Post by "Cassius" of March 6, 2023 at 9:56 PM

Well I am just starting this article but it is already clear that Don wins the coveted "Article Most Likely To Win Cassius' Approval" Award for the day!

...from public life to the company of Epicurean friends.

I maintain instead that *On the Good King* itself constitutes a positive case for a form of Epicurean statesmanship.¹³ Although Philodemus' analysis of Homeric kings makes use of several stock elements from kingship literature, he concentrates on one theme especially compatible with Epicureanism, and one, I think, especially articulated within the school. *KD* 7 identifies glory as a risky pleasure, but adds that there would be no reason not to enjoy it were it risk-free. A ruler's virtuous exercise of power leads to, or at least tends to promote, his safety.¹⁴ I suggest that, with the help of Philodemus and others like him, Roman statesmen were able to connect two strands of Epicurean thought in order to justify their political life: one, that a person's virtues are productive of the good will and love of others, actual pleasures in themselves;¹⁵ the other, that power can in fact lead to safety. Combining the two could result in the claim that the virtuous exercise of political power can sometimes provide safety as well as pleasure to a ruler. Epicurean statesmen in previous generations likely held a similar point of view.