

Porphyry - Letter to Marcella - "Vain Is the Word of the Philosopher..."

Post by "Don" of June 12, 2023 at 10:32 PM

ΕΙΣ ΤΟ ΕΝΑΝΤΙΟΝ κ. τ. λ. ΠΒ. 117

Ζήνων τὰς τῶν διαλεκτικῶν τέχνας εἰκαζε τοῖς εἰ-
καίοις μέτροις οὐ πυρὸν οὐδ' ἄλλο τι τῶν σπουδαίων
μετροῦσιν, ἀλλ' ἄχυρα καὶ κόπρια.

6 Πυθαγόρου (Porphy. ad Marc. c. 31).

5 Κενὸς ἐκείνου φιλοσόφου λόγος, ὑφ' οὗ μηδὲν
ἀνθρώπου πάθος θεραπεύεται. ὥσπερ γὰρ ἰατρικῆς
οὐκ ὄφελος μὴ τὰς νόσους ἐκβαλλούσης ἀπὸ τῶν σω-
μάτων· οὕτως οὐδὲ φιλοσοφίας, εἰ μὴ τὸ τῆς ψυχῆς
κακὸν ἐκβάλλοι.

Here's the entry in Stobaeus' Florilegium, 82.6 (lxxxii, 6; ΠΒ'.6) that clearly attributes the saying to Pythagoras (Πυθαγόρου) and cites Porphyry's letter to Marcella.

[Ioannis Stobaei Florilegium, recognovit Augustus Meineke ... v.0003.](#)

Well, this is all a bit disturbing 😞 It appears Usener was *assuming* that Porphyry's unattributed quote was Epicurus and not Pythagoras?? On the basis that it "sounded"

<https://www.epicureanfriends.com/thread/3116-porphyry-letter-to-marcella-vain-is-the-word-of-the-philosopher/?postID=24468#post24468>

something Epicurus would have said??

PS: Honestly, this makes me skeptical of any Usener fragment not specifically citing Epicurus, the Epicureans, Philodemus, or a similar reference within the ancient text. For example,

This is fine:

[U380]

Aetius, Doxography, I.29.6 [p. 326 Diels] (Plutarch, I.29.2; Stobaeus Anthology, Physics 7.9): Epicurus says that chance is a cause which is uncertain with respect to persons, times, and places.

But this now??

[U533]

Uncertain Epicurean Author, Vol. Herc. 2, VII.21 col. XXVIII: The chief of all goods, even if there weren't any other, is that by which he who possesses it advances toward virtue.

So who knows who wrote U533 and yet it's included in his *Epicurea*!

By Zeus! I don't know what to believe now!