

Erler's view on 'True Epicurean Politics'

Post by “Bryan” of March 23, 2024 at 10:48 PM

I think these quotes are related. Allow me to add them to the mix:

Philodemus On Rhetoric (Περὶ Ῥητορικῆς) translated by Hubbell

“But if philosophers do not enter politics, yet they help their native land by teaching the young to obey the laws; nay more, by teaching them to act justly even if there are no laws, and to shun injustice as they would fire.” (2.154, fr. 13)

“The philosophers are not vexed if people, like foolish sheep or cattle, attend to an inferior, but are satisfied that what they say, particularly about the attitude of the common people, shall please the few; and in action they are most blameless, nor do they, as slaves of all, try to rule everything for themselves. For they do not expect to satisfy their wants at the expense of the public.” (1.237, col.)

“The philosophers of our school agree with οἱ πολλοί on a question of what is just and good, differing from them only in this that they arrive at their conclusions by logic as well as by feeling, and never forget these conclusions, but always compare the chief good with things indifferent. They do differ from οἱ πολλοί about the means to attain happiness, and do not think that offices, power, conquests and the like are proper means to the end.” (1.254, col. 21)

“Some things are just or unjust by nature and never change, others vary according to locality and condition. Laws which are not of this nature, but are established for various reasons ought to be obeyed, or if the philosophers do not think that they can live well under these laws they ought to leave the country. They can be social to a high degree by observing those principles which make for likeness and not for differences; we can do this without being observed as well as with publicity, with pleasure and not under compulsion, steadily and not in an uncertain fashion.” (1.258, col. 24)

“The philosopher does not choose his profession for the same reason that one chooses military or political power. The latter with a slowly acting mind is willing to accept any power, while the former by syllogisms and memory of resemblance and difference, and a consideration of consequences, and especially by the use of his sharpness of intellect, rejects everything that does not tend toward happiness, and shares in them only as he uses the necessary arts for the tasks that arise... The philosopher... in every matter uses his keen mind, with which he is able to see when the ambition or idleness of men goes wrong, and neglects everything which is not useful for happiness.” (2.30, col. 20)

“Why is it more disgraceful to be silent and permit Isocrates to speak than to live in a city and allow Manes to dig, or to stay on land and allow the Phoenician trader to be tossed by the waves, or to pass one’s life in safety as a private citizen and allow Themistocles to enjoy the

perils of a general?" (2.55, col. 40)