

Epicurus and the Art of Land Surveying

Post by "Joshua" of January 23, 2020 at 10:47 PM

As I was setting up the instrument the other day in preparation for a topographic land survey, I found myself thinking back to Plato's dictum;


"Let no one who is ignorant of geometry enter here."

Now, It happens that I am not altogether ignorant of geometry; but working as a land survey rodman is giving me a more thorough education in its practical application than I had ever hoped for. My library (after much shrinking) is beginning to expand in odd directions; I've ordered four books on land surveying and one, an irresistible Loeb edition by the Roman engineer Frontinus, on the engineering of aqueducts. Lucretius in several places makes reference to "boundary marks" and "the shining borders of the light", and I've lately found myself reading those lines with a fresh eye. Perhaps I will bring myself closer to those Epicureans of whom Torquatus said,

Quote

We value the art of medicine not for its interest as a science, but because it produces health. We commend the art of navigation for its practical, and not its scientific value, because it conveys the rules for sailing a ship with success.

I haven't been as active here as I'd like to be, but I do remain dedicated to the study of Epicurus and the pursuit of pleasure.

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Quote

Great thoughts hallow any labor. To-day I earned seventy-five cents heaving manure out of a pen, and made a good bargain of it. If the ditcher muses the while how he may live uprightly, the ditching spade and turf knife may be engraved on the coat-of-arms of his posterity. —The Journal of Henry David Thoreau