

Caesar the Epicurean - Bourne - 1977

Post by "Cassius" of September 22, 2020 at 8:22 AM

This thread is for discussion of Caesar as an Epicurean, with particular focus on the material contained in the article by Frank Bourne - "Caesar the Epicurean"

 or type unknown

This article contains many interesting points and can be read for free here:
https://www.jstor.org/stable/4...=1#page_scan_tab_contents

It's interesting to me that Bourne doesn't really deal with what I presumed to be the main issue - that there is no real record of Caesar calling himself an Epicurean - but he produces a long list of circumstantial evidence that seems very persuasive to me.

In fact the only real reason to doubt that Caesar was an Epicurean is the same "presumption" that all Epicureans were against involvement in politics, because once you deal with that by recognizing the contextual nature of such advice, the rest of Caesar's life does reveal numerous similarities, and the author documents.

I was familiar with the episode from the Cataline conspiracy where Caesar recommended against execution of the conspirators on the ground that that is really not as severe as long-term incarceration, so that makes sense to me, but the author doesn't attempt to make much of Caesar's father-in-law being the owner of the Epicurean library at Herculaneum, which also seems to me to be relevant.

But in general I think it's a very well written article packed with lots of references to Epicurean theory and good citations to how a life of activism CAN be consistent with Epicurean theory, if that's the type of person you are and that's the kind of thing you find pleasure in:



So I see this as a very well written and useful article covering a lot of topics in one place.