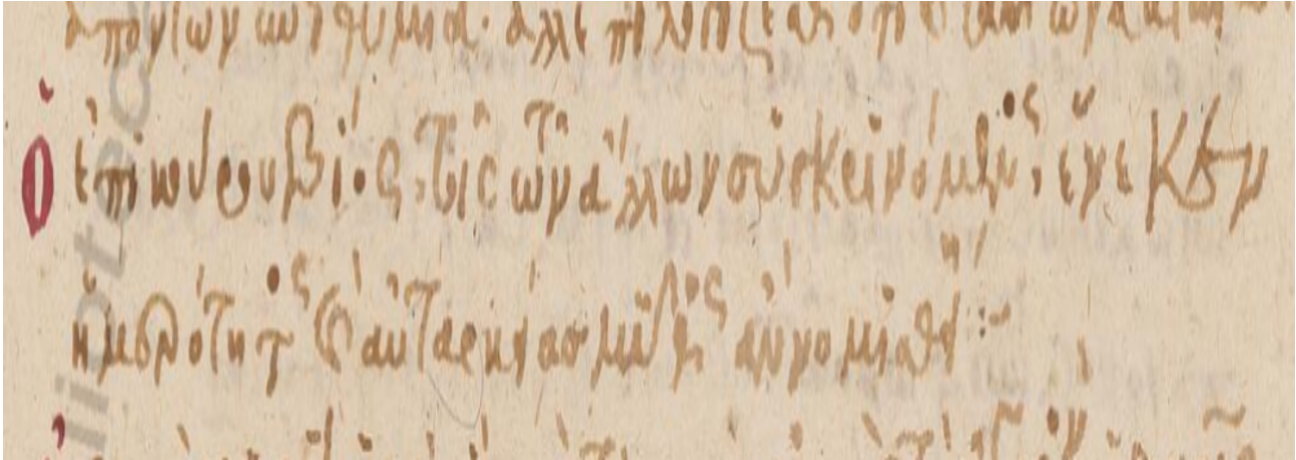


VS36 - Source in Vat.gr.1950 and commentary

Post by "Don" of October 23, 2023 at 10:26 PM

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This "Vatican Saying" doesn't get referenced a lot. In fact, before working through the list, I don't know if I ever came across it!

Saint-Andre doesn't include it in his list as it's obviously NOT a saying of Epicurus. Here is Bailey's transcription, translation, and commentary:

Bailey

[XXXVI. Ὁ Ἐπικούρου βίος τοῖς τῶν ἄλλων συγκρινόμενος ἕνεκεν ἡμερότητος καὶ αὐταρκειᾶς μῦθος ἂν νομισθεῖται.]

[XXXVI. Epicurus' life when compared to other men's in respect of gentleness and self-sufficiency might be thought a mere legend.]

... , and to Epicurus would mean to be hoped for .

XXXVI. This fragment clearly cannot be attributed to Epicurus himself. Usener would assign it to Hermarchus, his successor as head of the school.

2. **αὐταρκείας**: Bignone notices the two sides of this word 'internal contentment' arising from self-sufficiency, and also 'self-control', 'independence of desires' It is perhaps significant that it is the word chosen by the Stoics to express their moral ideal: Epicurus fully satisfied the Stoic standard.

We're familiar with αὐταρκείας (autarkeias "self-sufficiency" or "self-reliance"), but ημεροτητος (hemerotetos) is "gentleness, kindness (of the greatest kind)."

Bailey's comment "Epicurus fully satisfied the Stoic standard" encapsulates some of the issues with Bailey's overall approach to his interpretation of Epicurean texts. He seems to often filter them through a Stoic or ascetic lens.

Autarkeia αὐταρκείας comes up in Epicurean texts, most likely predating and separate from Stoic texts. I don't think Stoics were as much of a rival in the early days of Epicurus's school as they would become later.

VS44. When the sage contends with necessity, he is skilled at giving rather than taking — such a treasury of self-reliance has he found.

ὁ σοφὸς εἰς τὰ ἀναγκαῖα συγκριθεὶς μᾶλλον ἐπίσταται μεταδιδόναι ἢ μεταλαμβάνειν· τηλικούτον αὐταρκείας εὔρε θησαυρόν.

VS45. The study of what is natural produces not braggarts nor windbags nor those who show off the culture that most people fight about, but those who are fearless and self-reliant and who value their own good qualities rather than the good things that have come to them from external circumstances.

οὐ κομποῦς οὐδὲ φωνῆς ἐργαστικούς οὐδὲ τὴν περιμάχητον παρὰ τοῖς πολλοῖς παιδείαν ἐνδεικνυμένους φυσιολογία παρασκευάζει, ἀλλὰ σοβαροὺς καὶ αὐτάρκειαι καὶ ἐπὶ τοῖς ἰδίοις ἀγαθοῖς, οὐκ ἐπὶ τοῖς τῶν πραγμάτων μέγα φρονοῦντες.

VS77. The greatest fruit of self-reliance is freedom.

τῆς αὐταρκείας καρπὸς μέγιστος ἐλευθερία.

Fragment 135a. We value self-reliance not so that we will live simply and cheaply in all things, but so that we will not be consumed by them.

ἐζηλώσαμεν τὴν αὐτάρκειαν οὐχ ὅπως τοῖς εὐτελεσί καὶ λιτοῖς παντῶς χρώμεθα, ἀλλ' ὅπως θαρρῶμεν πρὸς αὐτά.

Fragment 200. Don't think it unnatural that when the body cries out, the soul cries also. The body says don't be hungry, don't be thirsty, don't be cold. It is difficult for the soul to prevent these cries, and dangerous for it to ignore the commands of nature because of attachment to its usual independence.

ἀφυσιολόγητον μηδὲν ἡγοῦ βώσης τῆς σαρκὸς βοᾶν τὴν ψυχὴν· σαρκὸς δὲ φωνή· μὴ πεινῆν, μὴ διψῆν, μὴ ῥιγοῦν· καὶ ταῦτα τὴν ψυχὴν χαλεπὸν μὲν κωλύσαι, ἐπισφαλὲς δὲ παρακοῦσαι τῆς παραγγειλάσης φύσεως αὐτῆ τῆς προσφυοῦς αὐτῆ αὐταρκείας καθ' ἡμέραν.

Fr. 202. He who follows nature and not groundless opinions is completely self-reliant. With regard to what is enough by nature, everything he owns is a source of wealth; whereas with regard to unlimited desires, even the greatest wealth is poverty.

ὁ οὖν τῆ φύσει παρακολουθῶν καὶ μὴ ταῖς κεναῖς δόξαις ἐν πᾶσιν αὐτάρκης· πρὸς γὰρ τὸ τῆ φύσει ἀρκοῦν πᾶσα κτήσις ἐστὶ πλοῦτος, πρὸς δὲ τὰς ἀορίστους ὀρέξεις καὶ ὁ μέγιστος πλοῦτός ἐστι πενία.

Fr. 476. Self-reliance is the greatest wealth of all.

πλουσιώτατον αὐτάρκεια πάντων.