

Thread Listing Epicureans Involved in Politics / Public Affairs

Post by "Cassius" of July 20, 2018 at 1:46 PM

A recurring controversy in Epicurean philosophy is the extent to which it makes sense to be involved in "public affairs." In this thread let's simply set up a reference point to list names, involvement, and references, and later we can compile this into a chart.

For example, the basic information we need is:

Name: C. Velleius. Public Position: Roman Senator. Reference: Cicero's "On the Nature of the Gods, paragraph V / five, Yonge translation: "I found him sigging in his study, and in a discourse with C. Velleius, the senator, who was then reputed by the Epicureans the ablest of our countrymen."

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I did so more especially at the discussion that was held at my friend C. Cotta's concerning the immortal Gods, and which was carried on with the greatest care, accuracy, and precision; for coming to him at the time of the Latin holidays,¹ according to his own invitation and message from him, I found him sitting in his study,² and in a discourse with C. Velleius, the senator, who was then reputed by the Epicureans the ablest of our countrymen. Q. Lucilius Balbus was likewise there, a great proficient in the doctrine of the Stoics, and esteemed equal to the most eminent of the Greeks in that part of knowledge. As soon as Cotta saw me, You are come, says he, very seasonably; for I am having a dispute with Velleius on an important subject, which, considering the nature of your studies, is not improper for you to join in.

No need to paste pictures of the references in this thread, but it would be very good to quote the relevant part.

Other possibilities to add are:

Cassius Longinus (Senator?)

Julius Caesar's father-in-law (Senator?)

Juilius Caesar himself (not clearly an Epicurean, although he was accused of Epicurean tendencies in Cicero's orations re Cataline Conspiracy)

Plotina, wife of Emperor Trajan