

Horace, *Satires* 2.2: Epicurean Advice on How to Use Wealth and How to Lose It

It would be an understatement to say that the property confiscations of Late Republican Rome were a concern to poets and provided them with much material for their work. Indeed, this theme appears prominently in the first of Vergil's *Eclogues* (1.1-10) and Horace mentions it in the *Epistles* (2.2.50-52). His most extensive treatment of this theme, however, occurs in *Satires* 2.2, in which a rustic sage named Ofellus delivers philosophical precepts regarding the administration and loss of wealth. Although some have made important connections between the advice of Horace's spokesman and the economic views of the Stoics and Cynics, many have rightly made similar connections to the Epicureans. Still, in the case of this last philosophical sect the connections have been basic and thus rather distant from the socio-economic concerns of Romans in the first century BC. This paper will attempt to expand on the role of contemporary Epicureanism for this satire by considering Philodemus of Gadara's treatises *On household management* (PHerc. 1424) and *On wealth* (PHerc. 163), both of which were written during the time of Horace, in Italy and with a Roman audience in mind.

In contrast to Horace's first book of *Satires*, the philosophical content of the poems in Book 2 has generally been glossed over by scholars over the decades. A case in point is the well-known study of Eduard Fraenkel (1957), which, with the exception of *Satires* 2.1 and 2.6, consciously overlooks the second installment of poems as "short of suitable subjects and settings" (137). W. S. Anderson's famous identification of the surrogate speakers in this book as *doctores inepti*, which has found much favor in recent scholarship (Freudenburg 2001), further contributes to the view that personages like Ofellus have very little to offer Horace's audience by way of meaningful ethics. This is not to say, of course, that the philosophical undertones of *Satires* 2.2 have been completely ignored: commentators and Horatian scholars including Niall

Rudd (1966), G. C. Fiske (1971) and Aroldo Barbieri (1977) demonstrate the Epicurean quality of Ofellus' advice, such as his preference for meagre fare (*S. 2.2.17: sale panis*; cf. Arr. 4.131.1: μαῖζα καὶ ὕδωρ) and his parody of Stoic doctrines (*S. 2.2.78-79*). Finally, Anderson (1982) examines the Platonic opening of *Satires 2.2* while G. C. Fiske, as usual, invokes the Cynics by identifying Ofellus as a "Romanized counterpart of the popular Cynic preacher" (379).

This paper will argue that, despite these important but admittedly outdated connections, *Satires 2.2* contains a more profound and relevant ethical message that engages with Philodemus' economic treatises. Recent scholarship, such as that of Asmis (2004) and Tsouna (2012), has made these works more accessible and have also made it easier to elucidate Philodemus' concern for wealth administration within a Roman context. For example, in addition to recommending that decisions be made in accordance with the pleasure calculus, which Ofellus clearly observes (cf. *S. 2.2.41-44*), he also emphatically states that a modest life is "not worthy of fear" (*On wealth* col. 36.11-12), that the "the fall from wealth into poverty is something indifferent" (ibid. col. 53.2-5) and that having few possessions is "good" (ibid. col. 49.11-12) since the requirements of nature are easily fulfilled (*On household management* col. 16-1-4). These beliefs are reflected in Ofellus' optimism in the face of financial ruin, which he bears with equanimity precisely because he is content with the necessities of life (*S. 2.2.116-117: holus fumosae cum pede pernae*). Finally, Philodemus' conviction that friendship is "the most secure bulwark against the turns of fortunes" (*On household management* col. 25.4) is reflected in Ofellus' defiant assertion that, no matter how wildly Fortune rages, she will never diminish the bond of camaraderie (*S. 2.2.126-127: saeviat atque novos moveat Fortuna tumultus: / quantum hinc inminuet?*).

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