

Eusebius

Post by "Don" of January 23, 2022 at 5:10 PM

[Eusebius of Caesarea: Praeparatio Evangelica \(Preparation for the Gospel\). Tr. E.H. Gifford \(1903\) -- Book 14](#)

Just going through chapter XXI here and this caught my eye:

Quote from Aristocles via Eusebius

some say that as the principle and criterion of choosing and avoiding we have pleasure and pain: at least the Epicureans now still say something of this kind: it is necessary therefore to consider these points also.

[Aristocles](#) is writing in the 1st c CE; Eusebius is quoting him in the late 3rd/early 4th c CE. I know I just recently did a timeline, but it never ceases to amaze me (and serve as a reality check) that Epicurus's philosophy was still seen as enough of a threat to the Christians in the early 300s CE that he needed to be refuted. Epicurus died in 270 BCE, over 500 years before Eusebius. And yet, Eusebius still saw him as a threat. Way to go, master-builder of human happiness!

Here are some other thoughts from the chapter:

Quote

it is reason that tells whether it is to be chosen or avoided.

Aristocles/Eusebius seems to think this is a "gotcha." Epicurus himself says practical wisdom (phronēsis) is a tool for making wise decisions... To guide one to a more pleasurable life. It's not phronēsis for phronēsis's sake.

Quote

For although they maintain that every pleasure is a good and every pain an evil, nevertheless they do not say that we ought always to choose the former and avoid the latter, for they are measured by quantity and not by quality.

I'm not sure what the argument is here if quantity vs quality. However, given some other discussions we've had on the forum, I thought making note of this may be valuable.

Quote

'While the senses are like the toils and nets and other hunting implements of this kind, the mind and the reason are like the hounds that track and pursue the prey. Better philosophers, however, than even these we must consider those to be who neither make use of their senses at random, nor associate their feelings in the discernment of truth. Else it would be a monstrous thing for beings endowed with man's nature to forsake the most divine judgement of the mind and entrust themselves to irrational pleasures and pains.'

This seems to be Aristocles/Eusebius main argument against the horror of using the feelings of pleasure and pain for anything.

If I continue reading, I'll post some more excerpts and thoughts to this thread.