

Recent / New Edition of Diogenes Laertius - And Problems With it!

Post by "Cassius" of January 28, 2020 at 1:02 PM

Mike as far as I can tell DeWitt did his own personal review of the texts since he was a classical language expert. Bailey was also an expert and did his own translation with extensive notes. I have his full set of detailed notes on his Lucretius translation. Munro also did his own full translation with extensive notes. There are significant differences too in the 1743 edition that I quote from, which differ from the others too.

Therefore when you say -

[Quote from Mike Anyayahan](#)

since I am still unaware which translation is authoritative.

I would say that there IS no single authoritative translation because no one in a position to know for sure has been alive for close to 2000 years. In every case we are going to have to compare the editions with notes and do our own analysis based on all the evidence we have to determine which one we agree with most.

Truly, however, in most cases, the basic position taken in most translations is essentially the same, and even in the case of this marriage issue the texts can be largely reconciled by pointing to the circumstances clause.

Unfortunately this is something we just have to deal with, but I think it's very manageable, especially since we have Lucretius in very good form, and Lucretius' latin is something that is much more accessible to many more of us than is even the Greek.

Does that address your question because I am not quite sure what part you think calls into question DeWitt's credibility.

If you are commenting on DeWitt's quotes on Bailey, there are many references in Bailey's texts as to how much he disagrees with Epicurean positions, so that in itself is a warning flag about Bailey, but when you know his viewpoint you can factor that in. Here, on the marriage issue, he might even think that he was setting Epicurus to look contradictory, but in doing so he simply followed the text and that helps us expose those who would change it.