

Francois Bernier - "Great Partisan of Epicurus"

Post by "Cassius" of December 26, 2018 at 8:27 AM

On page 385 of "Ninon De L'Enclos Life And Letters" by Robinson-Overton (1903), Lord Saint Evremond is recorded to have stated in a letter to NDLE:

M. Bernier, the great partisan of Epicurus, avows to-day, that "After philosophizing for fifty years, I doubt things of which I was once most assured."

Who is Francois Bernier? [Wikipedia Article](#)

François Bernier (25 September 1620 – 22 September 1688) was a French [physician](#) and traveller. He was born at [Joué-Étiou](#) in [Anjou](#). He was briefly personal physician to Mughal prince [Dara Shikoh](#) (28 October 1615 – 30 August 1659), the eldest son of the [Mughal emperor Shah Jahan](#), and after Dara Shikoh's demise, was attached to the court of the Mughal emperor [Aurangzeb](#) (14 October 1618 – 20 February 1707), for around 12 years during his stay in India.

His 1684 publication *Nouvelle division de la terre par les différentes espèces ou races qui l'habitent* (A new division of the Earth) is considered the first published post-Classical classification of humans into distinct [races](#). He also wrote *Travels in the Mughal Empire*, which is mainly about the reigns of Dara Shikoh and Aurangzeb. It is based on his own extensive journeys and observations, and on information from eminent Mughal courtiers who had witnessed the events at first hand.

Bernier abridged and translated the philosophical writings of his friend [Pierre Gassendi](#) from Latin into French. Initial editions of Bernier's *Abregé de la Philosophie de Gassendi* were published in Paris in 1674 by the family Langlois and in 1675 by Estienne Michallet. A complete edition in eight volumes was published by Anisson and Posuel at Lyon in 1678; Anisson and Posuel joined with Rigaud to publish a second edition in seven volumes in 1684. Bernier objectively and faithfully rendered Gassendi's ideas in his *Abregé*, without editorial interjection or invention. However, Bernier remained uncomfortable with some of Gassendi's notions: in 1682, Estienne Michallet was again his publisher, putting forth his *Doutes de Mr. Bernier sur quelques-uns des principaux Chapitres de son Abregé de la Philosophie de Gassendi*.

What did Bernier write or do that caused Saint Evremond to call him "the great partisan of Epicurus"? It appears that Bernier was a close associate of Gassendi. Where can we find an English translation of Bernier material on Epicurus?

Any suggestions or links will be appreciated!