

Article: "Was Gassendi an Epicurean?"

Post by "Cassius" of March 3, 2025 at 7:14 PM

Author's final paragraphs are ambiguous, but his answer early in the paper (with which I agree) is clear: No.

340

HISTORY OF PHILOSOPHY QUARTERLY

of the (Epicurean) materialist "giants" against the theistic "gods" (represented by, e.g., Descartes) in his early modern replay of Plato's *Battle of the Gods and Giants*.⁹

But Gassendi himself would be horrified at not being placed on the side of the gods in Lennon's battle. Gassendi repudiates the main tenets of Epicureanism: their conception of gods, and denial of creationism, providence, teleological explanations, and human immortality. Although he accepts in a modified form the physics of atoms, empiricist epistemology, and emphasis on pleasure and freedom in ethics, still they stand diametrically opposed, from the standpoint of what both Epicurus and Gassendi acknowledge to be all-important.