

The Importance Of The Perfect Not Being Allowed To Be The Enemy Of The Good

Post by "Cassius" of May 2, 2025 at 6:39 AM

Tullius comes to the aid of the "perfect is not the enemy of the good" camp in our upcoming Lucretius Today episode 279. In discussing life span, he says at [Tusculan Disputations 1:39](#)

Quote

Men judge better in other things, and allow a part to be preferable to none; why do they not admit the same estimate in life?

At id quidem in ceteris rebus melius putatur, aliquam partem quam nullam attingere: cur in vita secus ?

OK more like ""But indeed in other matters, it is considered better to achieve some part than none at all: why is it different in life?"

It looks like the placement of the comma is questionable and ought to be deleted or moved:

At id quidem in ceteris rebus, melius putatur aliquam partem quam nullam attingere: cur in vita secus ?

So the key Latin phrase is: melius putatur aliquam partem quam nullam attingere

better it is thought a large part, than none, to be achieved.

It also looks like both Yonge and Hicks are ignoring the aliquam and just saying "a part" - when the aliquam seems to indicate "a large part."

Here's nodictionaries.com:

aliquam partem quam nullam attingere, cur in vita secus ?

aliquamlargely, to a large extent, a lot of

nullus, nulla, nullum (gen -ius)no; none, not any

attingo, attingere, attingi, attactus touch, touch/border on; reach, arrive at, achieve; mention briefly; belong to

cur why, wherefore; for what reason/purpose?; on account of which?; because

vita, vitae life, career, livelihood; mode of life

secus otherwise; differently, in another way; contrary to what is right/expected