

Gassendi On Happiness

Post by "Cassius" of November 11, 2025 at 3:45 AM

Thank you Tau Phi this will be extremely helpful!

As a test I decided to look for the original version of whatever was used to generate this part, which occurs on page 21 right before the beginning of the section entitled "How Epicurus and Aristippus Differ"

There is only one passage that seems to be able to create difficulty. [It is a passage that Cicero claims to quote from a book by Epicurus; and Gassendi piles up evidence that it was not written by Epicurus, and was probably inserted into Cicero's personal copy of the book by malicious Stoics.]

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Checking the digital copy of the English translation it appears to me that looking for this would take us to this page, to which I would then scroll to the bottom:

<https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo2/A42442.0001.001/1:4.1.2?rgn=div3;view=fulltext>

But I can't find anything parallel there.

In contrast, the paraphrasing of the start of the next section "How Epicurus and Aristippus Differ" does track nicely with the original, which is here:

<https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo2/A42442.0001.001/1:4.2.1?rgn=div3;view=fulltext>

I'm not sure why that method of finding the link doesn't track, but here's one that does seem to match:

<https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo2/A42442.0001.001/1:4.2?rgn=div2;view=fulltext>

Quote

Which can be word searched to find:

There is but one passage more that may seem to create some difficulty. It is that which Cicero objects, as being taken out of the Book wherein Epi|curus's Ends and Designs are described; for he makes him say, That if we take away Bodily and Sen|sual Pleasures, he knows no other good. But why may we not easily suppose that the Stoicks, who have been so bold to forge whole Books, and make Epi|curus their Author, have maliciously put this Passage in his Book, and it being thus abused and falsified, it

is come into the hands of Cicero, and Atheneus? That which makes us suspect this is, First, That Laertius, who hath left us a Catalogue of Epicurus's Books, and consequently ought to know what was in them, when he relates a passage out of his Book of The End, and others of the same, saith, That they are Fools that impose such things upon Epicurus,

for they are not to be found in the true Copies. And Hesichius assures us that they are gross Lyars, that assert any such thing of him. Secondly, Epicurus himself complains of their making him speak those words which were against his Judgment, and his Disciples would never acknowledge that passage; but they have rather always complain'd of it, and exclaim'd against it. Thirdly, These words are expresly contrary to those, which are known to be of Epicurus, Res Venereae nunquam prosunt, & multum est ni noceant, as we have already observ'd. Fourthly, That Cicero amongst these Objections that he makes, cannot but propose this Question, as if Truth himself had forced him to it; What, do you believe that Epicurus was of this Perswasion, and that his Opinions were dishonest, sensual, and lewd? For my part I can't believe it; for I find, that he declares a great many excellent things, and very vertuous. Fifthly, That Cicero acknowledges, as he was a very Popular Man, that he did not tie up himself to speak according to the strict Opinions of the Philosophers, but agreeable with the Notions of the People. Verum ego non quaero nunc quae sit Phi|losophia verissima, sed quae Oratori conjuncta maxime: Not to say that he could not bar himself from speaking well of Epicurus, as being a Man without Malice, or rather a right honest Man. Venit Epicu|rus Vir minime malus, vel potius Vir optimus. And when he speaks of the Epicureans, he saith, that they are very good Men, that he hath never met with a sort of Persons less malicious; that the Epicureans complain of his endeavouring to speak ill of Epicurus; that whole Crowds of Epicureans came frequently to visit him, but that nevertheless he doth not despise them. Quos tamen non aspernor; These are his own words. description PAGE 58 Wherein Epicurus, and Aristippus differ. NOW that we may see exactly in what Epicu|rus differs from Aristippus, we ne

So the paraphrase is definitely accurate and Gassendi does allege that this statement is not true to Epicurus.

I don't find Gassendi's reasoning to be persuasive nor do I recall other scholars following him on it.

So this little exercise indicates well of the paraphrase but also indicates the hazards of following Gassendi too closely.