

Gassendi On Happiness

Post by “Robert” of November 11, 2025 at 8:04 PM

[Cassius](#), thank you for starting this thread, and glad folks are finding the essay of interest! I became intrigued by Gassendi for reasons that have been touched on in the thread--i.e., he's a crucial link to the modern era. I was specifically interested in his take on "liberty" and how this links up with the modern understanding of the term. And then I noticed that "Happiness" had relevance to some of the things we have been discussing in the forum and our Sunday sessions.

Certainly some problem areas, as both you and [Patrikios](#) (and Karl Marx) have pointed out. So I'm also quite interested in the divergences, some of which you have identified already. Regarding Gassendi's dismissal of active pleasures, I see that he is going to great lengths to distinguish Epicurus from Aristippus, and maybe this leads him to overcompensate by implying that Epicureans were sort of proto-monastics.

I've only started exploring his work and don't have a good read yet on the availability of translation. I started with the 1699 text, then had a look at the PDF I shared and decided that it was reliable. It's certainly easier to read! But I'll continue poking around.

[Patrikios](#), you've really got me interested now in Marx's take on Epicurus. The fact that Epicurus influenced thinkers as divergent as Jefferson and Marx blows my mind.