

Episode 308 - TD36 - Tracing Epicurus' Key Ideas From the Principal Doctrines To The Tetrapharmakon To Cicero's Epicurean Speakers

Post by "Cassius" of November 22, 2025 at 3:24 AM

Good list of various translations - thank you! In this case I'd lean toward one of the latter. Each of them would or could have more consistent implications for being Epicurus' version of explaining how virtue and happiness go hand in hand and how the wise man can always be happy. I could see that especially when you consider how the very next doctrine is a reference to how virtue is essential to happy living.

One way of looking at the first four, leading up to five, is that these are the virtuous way to always be happy, and that this is the true virtuous path to happiness rather than a disreputable one.

ci- had a wide semantic spectrum: easily but also honorably; well; thoroughly; competently;

I especially think of how Epicurus explains in the letter to Menoeceus explains that it is the Epicurean who has a holy opinion of the gods and is not impious. It's the Epicurean who really understands the virtuous / honorable position on these issues.

Cicero may be right in Tusculan Disputations in asserting that the question of whether virtue is sufficient for the happy life / how the wise man is always happy is the central question of philosophy. If so this would not be something Cicero himself came up with but he's simply carrying that opinion down from his heroes Pythagorus - Socrates - Aristotle.

If this was in fact seen as the central question in Epicurus' time too, then the framework of the PDs would be to illustrate the virtuous position on these issues (gods, death, pleasure, pain). The virtuous person has these correctly-understood approaches to the central questions and can always be happy through this understanding.

That would lead to the preference for the translation being NOT that these views of pleasure and pain are "easy," but that they are "honorable," "competent," or "thorough" in the sense of thoroughly attainable .