

Excerpt: ...of himself, but Trismegistus adds, Maximum miraculum homo sapiens , a wise man is a wonder: multi Thirsigeri, pauci Bacchi . Alexander when he was presented with that rich and costly casket of king Darius, and every man advised him what to put in it, he reserved it to keep Homers works, as the most precious jewel of human wit, and yet 452 Scaliger upbraids Homers muse, Nutricem insane sapientiae , a nursery of madness, 453 impudent as a court lady, that blushes at nothing. Jacobus Mycillus, Gilbertus Cognatus, Erasmus, and almost all posterity admire Lucians luxuriant wit, yet Scaliger rejects him in his censure, and calls him the Cerberus of the muses. Socrates, whom all the world so much magnified, is by Lactantius and Theodoret condemned for a fool. Plutarch extols Senecas wit beyond all the Greeks, nulli secundus , yet 454 Seneca saith of himself, when I would solace myself with a fool, I reflect upon myself, and there I have him. Cardan, in his Sixteenth Book of Subtleties, reckons up twelve supereminent, acute philosophers, for worth, subtlety, and wisdom: Archimedes, Galen, Vitruvius, Architas Tarentinus, Euclid, Geber, that first inventor of Algebra, Alkindus the Mathematician, both Arabians, with others. But his triumviri terrarum far beyond the rest, are Ptolomaeus, Plotinus, Hippocrates. Scaliger exercitat. 224 , scoffs at this censure of his, calls some of them carpenters and mechanics, he makes Galen fimbriam Hippocratis , a skirt of Hippocrates: and the said 455 Cardan himself elsewhere condemns both Galen and Hippocrates for tediousness, obscurity, confusion. Paracelsus will have them both mere idiots, infants in physic and philosophy. Scaliger and Cardan admire Suisset the Calculator, qui pene modum excessit humani ingenii , and yet 456 Lod. Vives calls them nugae Suisseticas : and Cardan, opposite to himself in another place, contemns those ancients in respect of times present, 457 Majoresque nostros ad presentes collatos...

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