

"On Methods of Inference": Notes For Review And Discussion (Including David Sedley Article: "On Signs")

Post by "Cassius" of August 26, 2021 at 6:42 PM

So Sedley rejects the "contraposition" term:

On Signs 245

Most modern interpreters, at least since Bahnsch in 1879,¹⁶ have identified this *anaskeuē* method as 'contraposition'. The principle is then that any conditional 'If p , q ' is to be tested by asking whether its contrapositive 'If not- q , not- p ' is sound. This seems to me a wholly inadequate interpretation, for the law of contraposition holds good for any account whatsoever of conditional validity. Even a Philonian material implication like 'If it is day I am talking' (*PH* II 100) will, if true, yield the true contrapositive 'If I am not talking it is not day'. Yet this is hardly an instance of *anaskeuē*: if someone denies that I am talking he does not *thereby* deny that it is day. Admittedly at 11.26–12.36 Philodemus replies to an argument in which the Stoics had apparently cited the law of contraposition in support of (not, however, as being identical with) the *anaskeuē* method. But there the perfectly proper Epicurean reply is given that the law of contraposition is valid even for those whose use of conditionals does not conform to the *anaskeuē* method. To translate *anaskeuē* as 'contraposition' thus renders the passage unintelligible.