

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

Post by "Cassius" of August 26, 2021 at 8:49 PM

Ok having read to the end of Sedley's article I think he acquits himself well and his whole article is in my view supportive of Epicurus. It's also in my view largely consistent with De Lacey.

I don't think this was the target of the article and so I don't criticize him for it, but it seems to me that Sedley dives deeper and deeper into detail without ever coming back at the end of the article to discuss why the whole issue is significant.

That is OUR task, to clarify and articulate the important lessons to be learned from the fight between Stoic and Epicurean methods of "logic."

And at the moment I am not inclined to think I need to change my assessment that DeLacey

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Aristotle regards empiricism as inadequate because he believes that observation can never give necessary connections between objects. In the absence of causal knowledge the empirical scientist must base his knowledge on a study of signs, and inferences from signs are not reliable except in cases where the inferences may be converted into valid syllogisms. He says in one place that a science of physiognomy would be possible only if an invariable correlation could be established between physical qualities and mental traits, for instance between large extremities and courage. In that case one

Thus the Epicureans were at war with those (Platonists, Aristotelians, Stoics) who held that inferences from signs ( i.e., true opinions) are not reliable unless they can be stated into formal

logically valid syllogisms. In other words, the ability to play games with words to make up a logically consistent assertion is not what establishes truth for us. Rather, its always the ability to judge the contours of truth by our canonical faculties is what establishes truth for us.

So the reverse of the Stoic position is actually the case and seems to be the position the Epicureans took: it is only when an opinion can be confirmed through repeated and reliable observations of the canonical faculties that something is established as true for us.