

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

Post by "Cassius" of August 26, 2021 at 10:35 PM

The logical form in which the semiotic inference is formulated is the paraconditional (*parasyntemmenon*), 'Since p, q' or, in other words, 'since (*epel*) p, then q', which implies, unlike the simple conditional (*syntemmenon*), the truth of 'p' (Burnyeat 1982: 218–224). According to Sedley (1982: 243), this formulation, typical of *On Signs*, is an improvement on the classic Stoic formula, in which the sign is the antecedent in a conditional statement of the type 'If p, then q', in which case it is not possible to include any indication regarding the truth of the antecedent, as it must be insofar as it is effectively functioning as a sign. In general this is an abbreviated form of the *modus ponens*, whose complete formulation is 'If the first, then the second; but the first; therefore, the second'.

As Elizabeth Asmis notes (1996: 157), it is interesting that in Epicurus there is no sort of argument which supports the conditional form of the inference. Two generations after Epicurus, Zeno of Sidon and his colleagues seem to formulate the inferential statement in the manner that we have just seen. According to Asmis this leads one to think that they had appropriated their opponents' definition of the sign.

The sign (*σημειον*) is that from which the inference begins, and

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