

PD10 - Interpretations of PD 10 Discussion

Post by "Godfrey" of January 9, 2022 at 10:49 AM

Haven't we discussed previously that Epicurus argued against ranking pleasures? Or was he just arguing against pleasure being unlimited? Either way, he must have been familiar with the Platonic/Aristotelean exercise of ranking pleasures.

PDs 9, 10 and 11 look to me to be similar to PDs 19, 20 and 21 in that they could have been originally written as a single paragraph. As one works through the paragraph, one gets a view of EP which begins with pleasure and leads back to astronomical phenomena and death. This "clump" of PDs then is a very concise overview!

Also, it's possible that the convoluted if-then wording is a jab at Platonic dialogue: rather than leading the reader down a primrose path as Plato does, he makes us work to think through what he's saying. Plato poses questions and answers them for us, assuming that we will accept his answers. If we don't accept his answers (as most of us on this forum don't) then his arguments fall apart. The structure of 9-10-11 might be designed to prompt us to reason things out for ourselves.

Finally, if the PDs were intended to be memorized, it would probably take more mental engagement to memorize a statement in this form as opposed to something more rote like "pleasures are different but can't be ranked". Although this in particular doesn't seem very convincing.