

Gosling & Taylor, The Greeks on Pleasure.

Post by "Cassius" of June 23, 2020 at 11:47 AM

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9- "He laid down as the end the smooth motion resulting in sensation."

This is such a brief statement and I have to question whether there are subtleties that don't come through:

1. So "the end" is what is being discussed? Is this the same as the "highest good" or what Torquatus describes in "On Ends" as "We are inquiring, then, what is the final and ultimate Good, which as all philosophers are agreed must be of such a nature as to be the End to which all other things are means, while it is not itself a means to anything else."
2. If so, where is the word "pleasure" in this formulation?
3. Why the word "sensation" rather than pleasure?
4. Is this a statement that pleasure IS a sensation, specifically the sensation of smooth motion?
5. Is this a way of getting around the problem of defining what specific pleasure is being discussed, which is a stumbling block in so many ways (ie, when people here "pleasure" they seem to immediately think of particular pleasures rather than the abstraction of "the feeling of pleasure" or "pleasure.")

10 - I come back to this passage as having profound implications: "They also hold that there is a difference between "end" and "happiness." Our end is particular pleasure, whereas happiness is the sum total of all particular pleasures, in which are included both past and future pleasures."

11 - "Nor again do they admit that pleasure is derived from the memory or expectation of good, which was a doctrine of Epicurus. For they assert that the movement affecting the mind is exhausted in course of time." <<< Seems clear to me that there is more going on here than meets the eye!

12 - "Hence, although pleasure is in itself desirable, yet they hold that the things which are productive of certain

pleasures are often of a painful nature, the very opposite of pleasure; so that to accumulate the pleasures which are productive of happiness appears to them a most irksome business." << This seems to me like an uncharitable characterization. I also question the "of a painful nature" - A thing having a "nature" of pleasure?

13 - "They affirm that mental affections can be known, but not the objects from which they come; and

they abandoned the study of nature because of its apparent uncertainty, but fastened on logical inquiries because of their utility." <<< What do we know about the Cyreniacs and atomism? Were they essentially Platonists in physics? If so then that has huge implications.

14 -- "Further that the wiseman really exists." << This has got to be an example of something that was referring to an existing argument which makes no sense without the context.

15 - "They also disallow the claims of the senses, because they do not lead to accurate knowledge. Whatever appears rational should be done." << This does not sound promising at all.