

Episode Fifty-Five - Reason Is Dependent On The Senses (Part 2)

Post by "Godfrey" of February 7, 2021 at 6:44 PM

Here are some passages from Tsouna's The Ethics of Philodemus (pages 38-40 in the Kindle version):

*"Like the vices, the emotions consist of cognitive and non-cognitive or extra-cognitive elements. This applies to all kinds of emotions, healthy or destructive, passionate as well as mild. Assuming that they all comprise desires, and that Epicurus classifies desires into natural and **empty** according to the kinds of beliefs on which they depend (KD 29), we may infer that he would classify emotions in a similar manner. In any event, Philodemus suggests that, e.g., anger and the fear of death belong to the category of **unnatural or empty** emotions, since both are related to empty (*i.e., both false and harmful*) beliefs or presumptions about their objects. What kinds of empty beliefs and judgements are involved in harmful emotions? Philodemus' analyses of anger and the fear of death might suggest that he concentrates on the issues of whether there is evil at hand and whether one reacts in an appropriate manner..."*

*"Philodemus says that all emotions, including anger, are 'consequent upon our own entertainment of **false opinion**' (**ψυδοδοξ[ίαν]**; *De ir. VI. 14-15*); in other words, upon **empty beliefs**. In the case of anger, such beliefs chiefly concern the intentions of the offender, the magnitude of the offence, and the value and appropriateness of revenge."*

In the chapter on anger she refers to "orge" and "thymos" which she interprets as natural and **empty** anger. It's a bit confusing though, since apparently Philodemus and his rivals had opposite definitions of the two terms. Possibly examining the original Greek meaning of these two words would provide more to chew on?