

The "Natural and Necessary List" Question

Post by "Don" of August 20, 2021 at 8:55 AM

1) Agreed.

2) Agreed, and I especially like:

[Quote from Cassius](#)

thinking about the consequences and the costs of any action is the way to select among them, since there is in fact no absolute rule of conduct that will tell you what to do in any situation other than to consider the resulting pain and pleasure.

3) Agreed. [VS63](#) is an important one, especially the translation you've provided. But we have to be careful of what the original says. Looks like you're quoting Bailey. Here's his Commentary on that VS:

Quote from Bailey

LXIII is interesting as showing that Epicurus did not wish to push his idea of the simple life to excess: the ascetic will suffer bodily distress like the glutton and so fail to attain *απονια*. The text of the first few words is corrupt but has been set right by Usener. Bignone compares Hor. Sat. I. i. 102 ff. Von der Muehll reads *εν λεπτότητι καθαριτοτης*, but I do not understand the meaning of *λεπτοτης* here.

Here is Saint-Andre's commentary on that word:

Quote from St-Andre

The phrase *έν λεπτότητι καθαριότης* is somewhat obscure; *καθαριότης* means purity, cleanliness, neatness, scrupulousness, integrity, elegance, refinement, simplicity, frugality, economy, etc., while *λεπτότης* means thinness, meagreness, fineness, delicacy, subtlety, etc. Can there be a purity in meagreness, a scrupulousness in delicacy, an integrity in fineness, a frugality in subtlety? Translating this phrase as "an elegance in simplicity" ties it to other statements Epicurus makes about both living beautifully (e.g., Vatican Saying #17) and living simply or naturally (e.g., Vatican Saying #21).

So, the fact that the first part is corrupted in the manuscript is an issue but it seems to me the general flavor of everyone's take does go in the direction Bailey takes it. Here's one more from a Rider essay on gratitude (sorry, don't have the exact cite right now):

Quote from Rider

There is also a proper measure for parsimony [en leptotēti], and he who does not reason it out is just as badly off as he who goes wrong by total neglect of limits.

If you want to look at the definition of λεπτότητι:
<http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?do...y%3Dlepto%2Fths>

Interesting enough from the definition, Epicurus also used the word to describe the eidola/images.

The "thinness, meagerness of the body" citation in the definition is to Plato's Laws which gives some credence to seeing the word used as poverty, etc. See last paragraph in English here:
<http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?do...b&lang=original>

Quote from Plato, Laws

Athenian: And how about plunging into a bad state of body, such as leanness or ugliness or impotence? Should we be surprised if a man of his own free will ever

4) [Cassius](#) , you're bringing in the words "rigorously logical" and Epicurus's argument for pleasure as that to which everything else points is the exact opposite of that, especially in the Cicero section you quote. "Torquatus" is specifically saying Epicurus didn't need "elaborate argument"; he simply needed to point out that pleasure was the thing every living thing strives for. That is the definition of a Chief Good.