

Episode One Hundred Six - The Epicurean Attitude Toward Fate / Fortune and the Role of Reason

Post by "Cassius" of January 24, 2022 at 1:27 PM

I agree with most of that Martin but this is not my understanding of the situation with Stoicism, so I will have to gather more material on this:

[Quote from Martin](#)

The Stoics are relatively innocent and typically use logic properly for their reasoning as they have learned from Aristoteles except that some basic premises of the ancient Stoics are most likely false. There is no "Stoic logic" to refute.

For now, I would generally refer to a couple of the standard texts that simply refer to "logic." I agree, and I think we discussed in the episode, that it is necessary to establish just what is being criticized, so we can deal with these uses of the word "logic" that appear in the standard translations:

Diogenes Laertius:

"...the Logicians [he called] 'The destroyers,'"

[24] Metrodorus' writings were as follows:

Three books Against the Physicians. About Sensations. To Timocrates. Concerning Magnanimity. About Epicurus' Ill Health. ***Against the Logicians***. Nine books Against the Sophists. Concerning the Path To Wisdom. Concerning Change. Concerning Wealth. Against Democritus. Concerning Nobility of Birth._

[31] Logic they reject as misleading. For they say it is sufficient for physicists to be guided by what things say of themselves. Thus in The Canon Epicurus says that the tests of truth are the sensations and concepts and the feelings; the Epicureans add to these the intuitive apprehensions of the mind. And this he says himself too in the summary addressed to Herodotus and in the [Principal Doctrines](#). For, he says, all sensation is irrational and does not admit of memory; for it is not set in motion by itself, nor when it is set in motion by something else, can it add to it or take from it.

DeWitt:

...He declared dialectic a superfluity but was able to criticize Plato with great acumen and he wrote against the Megarians, the contemporary experts in logic.

...

The rejection of Plato's teachings is almost total. If the Authorized Doctrines be read item by item it may be observed that almost all are contradictions of Plato, and thus it becomes plainly manifest that the writings of Plato occupied the chief place in the youthful studies of Epicurus. The Platonic dialogues were the textbooks of dialectic and in modern parlance would be "required reading."

This almost total rejection does not, on the contrary, preclude extensive borrowing and adaptation on the part of Epicurus. Dialectic by virtue of its dramatic form is committed to a very casual employment of a great variety of analytical tricks and logical devices. If incidentally it furnishes instruction in logic, this is by a method analogous to the case system in the teaching of law. This casual use of logic is precisely what we find in the writings of Epicurus, and it was this practice that gave superficial justification to Cicero in accusing him of "abolishing definitions and offering no instruction in classifications and in partitions of subject matter." B2 Epicurus was not so foolish as to think of abolishing logic; he was merely determined to keep it in a subordinate place. This deliberate choice is additional evidence of extreme familiarity with dialectical writings.