

# The Beginning of an Outline of Epicurean Reasoning

Post by "Cassius" of March 17, 2022 at 11:13 PM

Thank you very much Godfrey! All this is extremely helpful and a great step forward in organizing. I particularly like the different translation of Herodotus from Long and Sedley.

In the second post I am going to suggest a tweak to Section One: Somewhere over the years I picked up an aversion to the term "self-evident" - probably because of Jefferson's use of the term in the Declaration to describe a number of assertions that history has shown to be not "self-evident" at all to later generations.

I think the term we are looking for is something more directly related to the force of the evidence and our manner of receiving it - this may in fact be a place where the "ante oculos" term was used by the ancient Epicureans. The words that strike me as more appropriate are more like "plain" and "clear" and "patent" and "obvious" --- with the unstated predicate of "clear to the senses" or "plain to the senses.". I would almost consider the possibility that the legal terms "clear and convincing evidence" and "beyond a reasonable doubt" might be appropriate, particularly if "beyond a reasonable doubt" were defined as something like "a doubt for which one can state a reason ( a reason grounded in evidence from one of the three canonical faculties).

Unless there is some connotation of "self-evident" that has escaped my foggy mind over the years (and that is very possible) it seems to me that Epicurus is focusing on a process of "pointing out to our attention" the thing being considered, and that indeed it is an act of our mind that is involved in paying attention. ... And that's sort of the opposite of being "SELF-evident" which is probably something that might actually contradict the rest of the philosophy. There's "evident to our senses" after we pay attention, but probably not something that is "self-evident" without our act of attention. (In sum, the "self" part being the problem.)

If I recall correctly both the letter to Herodotus and the Torquatus section on Epicurus explaining his observation that please need no logical argument that both seem to highly the issue of "paying attention."

What do you think about that?