

Episode 154 - "Epicurus And His Philosophy" Part 10 - The Canon, Reason, and Nature 01

Post by "Cassius" of December 31, 2022 at 1:06 PM

Very interesting and thank you Don! It is almost as if Diogenes Laertius was working from a list of questions that he wanted to address as to every philosopher, and that almost everything that he recorded about Epicurus comes from a desire to add in Epicurus' views to this list of topics that he wanted to cover. And that we could learn a lot by looking at what Diogenes Laertius records from that perspective.

If so, that would be entirely consistent with the [Nikolsky](#) article and his observation that by the time Diogenes Laertius was writing he (Diogenes) was influenced by the Division of Carneades. And that would lead to the conclusion that Diogenes Laertius was applying a method of analysis that was current to Diogenes' own time, but which was not necessarily reflective of the time of Epicurus):

Quote from Boris Nikolsky

If Epicurus did not divide pleasures into kinetic and static, the question arises where Cicero and Diogenes Laertius found this idea. We will be able to answer this question if we examine the context in which a classification of pleasures is normally proposed. Both Cicero and Diogenes speak about it when they wish to contrast Epicurus' doctrine with the Cyrenaics' views. According to them, the Cyrenaics recognized only one type of pleasure, pleasure in motion, whereas Epicurus admits two types - pleasure 'in motion' and pleasure 'in a state of rest.' Besides, it should be noted that in comparing Epicurus' and the Cyrenaics' ideas Cicero proceeds from a description of various ethic doctrines that goes back to Carneades and is related to Carneades' division of theories of the supreme good (divisio Carneadea): using the classification principle 'thesis - antithesis - synthesis', the author of this division contraposed the definitions of the supreme good as pleasure in motion, as the absence of pain, and Epicurus' view which he believed to synthesize both of these concepts. Probably, Cicero received this view of Epicurus' concept of pleasure through Antiochus of Ascalon, who, as Cicero himself reported, had often used the divisio Carneadea in his reasoning. Let us now look at the tradition upon which the text by Diogenes Laertius is based.