

"Epicurean Philosophy: An Introduction from the 'Garden of Athens'" edited by Christos Yapijakis

Post by "Don" of January 10, 2023 at 7:22 AM

The "fourth leg" seems to me that it's simply the way the mind can be used as a "sense organ." I grasp smells with my nose, sights with my eyes, sounds with my ears, physical senses with me sense of touch, tastes with my tongue (and nose!), and ideas with my mind. I can't "see" language, as a concept, but I can grasp it with my mind.

That said, I could also see this "Fourth leg" as just a synonym for prolepsis or a "kind" off prolepsis. It seems to me that the 4 instead of 3 is maybe splitting hairs unnecessarily.

I found this from one of my posts from similar discussions last year looking at a Sedley paper:

Quote from Sedley

According to Diogenes Laertius (X 31), the Canon gave the three criteria as being sensations, *προληψεις*, and feelings. Cicero's translation of this phrase shows that there is no significance; except perhaps a grammatical one, in Diogenes' omission of the article before *προληψεις*. I mention this because Furley and Rist have deduced from it that *προληψεις* were lumped together with sensations as constituting a single category. Its inclusion of *προληψεις* as truth-criteria dates the Canon at any rate later than the Letter to Herodotus, according to the principle established above. It may well also be significant that the metaphor of *κανων*, meaning a truth-criterion, does not occur in the fragments of On Nature Books I-XV, or in the Letter to Herodotus, but is found frequently in the writings which we have already established to belong after 300 B.C.71

This should help dispel the mystification created by Diogenes Laertius' observation that the Epicureans add *φανταστικαι επιβολαι της διάνοιας* as truth-criteria, which has appeared to many to conflict with Epicurus' own acceptance of these 'image-making mental acts of concentration' as virtual truth-criteria in the Letter to Herodotus 79 and in KD XXIV. If we assign an early date not only to the Letter to Herodotus but also to KD XXIV, the most satisfactory solution will be that when he came to develop the notion of *προληψεις* in the following years he subsumed under it certain truth-criteria to which he had previously granted an independent validity. We have already observed that the 'fundamental meaning of a word' became an element in the broader concept of *προληψεις*; and the same goes also for the *φανταστικαι επιβολαι της διάνοιας*, without which we could not visualise things at will, and consequently could have no generalised conceptions at all. Thus when he came to write the Canon he had downgraded *φανταστικαι επιβολαι της διάνοιας* in favour of *προληψεις*. And if later

Epicureans chose to upgrade them once more to the status of criteria, they had good authority in their master's early works for so doing. (p.16)

Sedley's paper is available on Academia.edu:
<https://www.academia.edu/resource/work/4310042>