

Comparison Between Cyrenaic and Epicurean Epistemology

Post by "Cassius" of April 24, 2023 at 9:21 AM

Thanks for those comments.

So it appears that the Cyreniacs like Democritus were stuck in skepticism.

It would also be interesting to know if the Cyreniacs were stuck in determinism, and if so that would make them twins with Democritus in having both of those major flaws which Epicurus rejected.

Every time we go back into the Cyreniacs it impresses me that we can learn from them to fill in likely gaps in our knowledge of Epicurus, after we adjust for Epicurean reasoning. I see no reason, for example, that Epicurus would not have embraced the "smooth motion" perspective as the ultimate basis of pleasure, even though I don't think that is explicitly stated in the texts we have today. (Or is it - is something like that in Lucretius?)

It is as if Epicurus studied both the Cyreniacs and Democritus and explicitly went about purging them of skepticism and determinism, placing the final result on a much more sound logical footing. The glue that sticks it all together seems to be the epistemology of placing priority on what our faculties reveal to us, as just as real (more real) than speculation without evidence. Epicurus always traces out logical conclusions tied to observations, and never lets rationalism (speculation without real-world evidence) contradict and spoil the result.