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Post by “Don” of August 8, 2023 at 7:16 PM

Ah! Bailey's commentary...

I suggest that the MS. text is right as far as it goes (with the obvious correction ζῇ for ζῆ), but that here again there has been a loss owing to parallelism of expression. τοῦτο then refers to ἡδέως ζῆν, the nearest subject in the previous sentence, and ἐκεῖνο to φρονίμως καὶ καλῶς καὶ δικαίως ζῆν. The sentence then becomes a reinforcement of the maxim by the appeal to experience: 'if in fact we see a man's life is not pleasant, then we may be sure that he is not living virtuously: if we see that he is not living virtuously, we may know that he cannot be living pleasantly'. It does not greatly add to the previous maxim, but Epicurus is fond of such repetitions to enforce important points (he uses one in the corresponding place in Ep. iii, § 132), and the correction involves very little textual change.

VI and VII go closely together If, as is stated in V, the pleasant life involves prudence, honourable living, and justice, how is this to be secured? The first necessity is ἀταραξία from without · for a man to live his own life well, he must be protected from molestation by others. It is therefore necessary to seek for such protection, and any means which can provide it is a 'natural good' (VI) In VII he goes on to consider certain false attempts to secure protection. The general idea of these two aphorisms is referred to in XIV, XXVIII, XXXI, and XXXIX, and is implicit in much of Lucretius' description of early civilization in v 1011 ff and 1105 ff.

11 θαρρεῖν ἐξ ἀνθρώπων, 'to have immunity from the attacks of men', a condensed form of expression which Epicurus affects: cf VII τὴν ἐξ ἀνθρώπων ἀσφάλειαν and XIV τῆς ἀσφαλείας τῆς ἐξ ἀνθρώπων γενομένης, and the corresponding use of θαρρεῖν in XXVIII and XXXIX.

ἦν · the inferential imperfect used often in the Κύριαι Δόξαι · cf XII οὐκ ἦν.

κατὰ φύσιν ἀγαθόν, 'a good in accordance with nature' · cf VII τὸ τῆς φύσεως ἀγαθόν ἀγαθὸν ἐξ ὧν is certainly an odd construction, though not impossible for Epicurus. Usener suggests ἀγαθά, which would be easier, but possibly something like ταῦτα ζητεῖν has dropped out.

After κατὰ φύσιν the MSS. have ἀρχῆς καὶ βασιλείας, which Usener excludes as a gloss on ἐξ ὧν. I had at one time thought the words might be retained and ⟨ὀρέγεσθαι⟩ added after them (cf VII *ad fin* ὠρέχθησαν). The aphorism would then become an anticipation of the first part of VII, 'in order to obtain ἀοφάλεια men sought rule and kingship as the means by which they might attain their end'. The sense would be quite in accordance with Epicurus' thought, but I do not think he could speak of this mistaken idea as κατὰ φύσιν ἀγαθόν.

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