

PD09 - Condensed Pleasure

Post by "Cassius" of March 27, 2019 at 2:13 PM

One good place for the textual analysis is this: [http://wiki.epicurism.info/Principal Doctrine 9/](http://wiki.epicurism.info/Principal_Doctrine_9/)

I don't always agree with the Epicurism wiki perspective, but in this case I do think it makes sense that "Epicurus presents here a logical defense for his belief that the various pleasures are in an important sense independent: if, he hypothesizes, all pleasures could be somehow "condensed", so that their sum total could be experienced all at the same time, then one pleasure would not differ from any other. Yet the pleasures do differ, Epicurus implies, since they cannot be thus condensed -- another syllogism by negative hypothesis, demonstrating that the opposite is in fact true."

I definitely agree that Epicurus regularly uses syllogisms by negative hypothesis on a regular basis. And as the last part of the analysis indicates, there is probably some complicated context involved here.

Principal Doctrine 9

Εἰ καταμνηστέον ἅμα ἅπαντα, καὶ γούνη καὶ καὶ ἄλλο τὸ ἡδυστάτην ἕτερον ἢ τὸ κατώτατον

ἢ - every pleasure/would be condensed - to time and same person about the whole - simple human - to the most/pleasant

πάντα τῶν ἡδυστάτων ἅμα ἢ πᾶσι καθ'ἑαυτὸν ἀλλήλων ἴσα ἴσονται. [1]

each - of nature - the pleasures/would be each - other - from each other - [1]

Translation

If every pleasure could be prolonged to endure in both body or mind, pleasures would never differ from one another.

Analysis

Epicurus presents here a logical defense for his belief that the various pleasures are in an important sense independent. If, he hypothesizes, all pleasures could be somehow "condensed" so that they were not only experienced all at the same time, but also experienced by the same person, then any pleasure would not differ from any other. Yet the pleasures do differ, Epicurus implies, since they cannot be thus condensed -- another syllogism by negative hypothesis, demonstrating that the opposite is in fact true.

The Greek is in brackets... is essentially confirming the disjunctive proposition (begins with εἰ) and does not stand on its own, without confirmation. The logically next plausible reading is that the clause is dependent on the main clause, meaning that hypothetically if/when all pleasures would be condensed and that the experientially the "whole" human, one and the same, or subsequently by the "principal parts of his/her nature". The verification stems from the (perhaps-didactic) parallel construction, by which the sum total of pleasures is related to the sum total of the human nature.