

The Neglect of Metrodorus' Economics

Post by "Cassius" of February 14, 2020 at 9:17 AM

I think I am agreeing with you Hiram, but I still sense danger in "wealth is preferable to poverty" and "this natural measure of wealth is not arbitrary." I agree that those statements can generally and easily be interpreted in a way that makes clear that the goal is pleasure and that all tools are subjective and relative to context.

However lots of people will make the leap on those to hearing "wealth is ALWAYS or INTRINSICALLY preferable to poverty" and "this natural measure of wealth is not arbitrary BUT ABSOLUTE" and I think we have to constantly be on guard against that. This is related to the entire issue of the natural and necessary categorization, which I also think is easily misunderstood to imply that there are bright lines such as a Platonist or Aristotelian or Stoic would assert (which they would assert derives from gods or from virtue).

In fact that's the danger I see in the phrase "natural measure of wealth" is that it will be misunderstood almost as much as would be the word "god" and so demands almost immediate definition in Epicurean terms.

And THAT's the issue I have with the article we're discussing -- it buries the conclusion under reams of details that most people won't read, and then when it gets to the end it doesn't even make the point clearly then.

I agree that it helps a lot to discuss these issues and strategies for presenting them because I think that there IS a hugely important issue here, which is that Epicurus doesn't advise poverty any more than he advises aiming for great riches. But that's what 98% of the people talking about Epicurus seem to think or advocate, so if you take up this issue and make the fundamental point then I really applaud the effort.