

The Neglect of Metrodorus' Economics

Post by "Cassius" of February 15, 2020 at 11:06 AM

Hiram I do not understand why you conclude that this subject is not of interest here. The SUBJECT is certainly of interest, but even in the title of this thread you are stating that the topic is "The NEGLECT of Metrodorus' Economics" and accusing me or others of "neglecting" it?

We don't have a disagreement as to the importance of the subject, we have a disagreement as to your interpretation of what Metrodorus or Philodemus said and meant, and that's where we need to focus the discussion.

So when you say:

[Quote from Hiram](#)

That requires an evolution of the discourse, obviously,

I don't think it is obvious at all what you mean. What kind of "evolution of discourse" is necessary in order to find reliable quotes, post them publicly, and analyse what they say? That is what I am trying to do by pointing out the basic context of the hedonic calculus, and then applying that general rule to economics so that we can judge in context what these fragmentary remains appear to say.

So when you say this:

[Quote from Hiram](#)

Concerning the use of "natural", Epicurus specifically used this word in LMenoecus in the context of hedonic calculus and choices and avoidances, and a few of the Doctrines mention "natural" as a category, so if we approach the text on property management in good will we will see the connection.

.. I am 100% in favor of posting the original quotes and their context, and attempting to tease out of them any new meaning or examples which we can find in them. It may well be the case that Philodemus and others give us lots of specific examples that, if we understand them clearly, can be used as examples of good analysis based on Epicurean reasoning and their personal contexts.

But in doing so I would expect the entire discussion to be held in the framework of understanding that there are no absolute rules of justice or any other type of virtue and morality, and that the overall goal and focus remains where it always is, in contextually pursuing pleasure and avoiding pain. I cannot imagine that Metrodorus or Philodemus

approached it any other way, and I say "cannot imagine" because I am aware of no evidence that they ever intentionally set out to deviate or reform Epicurus' own perspective.

So to repeat, when you say this:

[Quote from Hiram](#)

But if this is a subject that does not interest others we do not have to carry on with a study of economics. There will be another time and another audience for this.

I just think you are wrong to state that the subject "does not interest" me or others here. The SUBJECT is of great interest, but analyzing the subject in a framework that misses the ultimate context of the philosophy is something that I would expect us to have to debate with people Sergio Yona, who wrote that article referenced in this thread and concluded that the topic is about **VIRTUOUS** wealth administration:

Quote

"Despite the lack of detail regarding economics in Epicurus' extant remains, his followers especially Philodemus provide a rich and uniquely Epicurean account of virtuous wealth administration, and one that deserves much more than a simple acknowledgement of the hedonic calculus or a citation made in passing."

I expect to have to debate the role of pleasure with academics who are set on interpreting Epicurus from a minimalist perspective, but I would not think it would be necessary for us to be debating that here -- and yet that is the clear implication of the way you are wording your approach - that you are looking for a "natural measure" framed in Stoic / absolute / virtue terms rather than in terms of pleasure always being the end goal.

I know you and I disagree on the emphasis that should be placed on "pleasure as the goal" but THAT is really what we are going back and forth on here in this thread, not a question of whether others share your interest in the topic. If we could keep the focus on explaining things in a way that is consistent with Epicurus rather than crusading against consumerism in [Alain De Botton](#) style (such as [this at the Daily Stoic](#)) then I think we would be doing a lot more talking about what the texts actually say and less in describing them in language that obscures the main point. De Botton may be accomplishing great things in crusading against consumerism, but he is doing next to nothing to advance Epicurean philosophy, nor would he even seem to be embracing that as his goal. But promoting Epicurean philosophy IS our goal here, not picking and choosing some particular problem and presenting it in a way that can be read to undermine the core analysis.