

The Neglect of Metrodorus' Economics

Post by "Cassius" of February 16, 2020 at 8:43 AM

I agree with what Elayne is saying, but I would say that it is "possible" that Metrodorus or Philodemus would or did use the term "natural measure," because they have previously stated clearly that the only tool given by nature for our guidance is pleasure and pain, and in that sense feeling - pleasure and pain - ARE, or at least PROVIDE the tools for assessing, a "natural measure" of anything. But this is so obvious as to hardly need saying, and it does not lead in the direction of "happiness correlates to wealth up to 60-75 K income" except to state that such calculations are truly impossible either to expand to the world at large, or even to apply to any individuals within that statistical sample. This is nothing but Benthamite utilitarianism in action.

Hiram, we cannot ourselves even agree what the definition of "happiness" is. How useful is a survey about "happiness" really going to be without giving some explanation of what that term means?

But I really do not like continuing to debate issues like this without providing CLEAR references to the texts that are involved, and evaluating THEM for reliability, and that is as much my frustration with this discussion as anything else.

It ought to be right at the top of our list of things to do to establish What exact text we are talking about and how reliable it is. It is not a violation of copyright to cut and past excerpts from passages from any of these books we are talking about, and whenever we introduce something controversial we ought to start with our documentation of it so we know exactly who and what we are relying on -- because in every case we are NOT relying on Philodemus or Metrodorus or even Epicurus themselves, we are relying on a 2000 year chain of copyists and interpreters and commentators, of which well over 90% - especially the moderns - are hostile to the core ideas of Epicurus.

If indeed there is good documentation of the use of "natural measure of wealth" then lets by all means discuss it, along with all the details that go along with it, but Elayne's comments about the general situation are correct in my view.