

# Epicurean Epilogismos - Phillip de Lacy

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Article on Epicurus' views on logic / reasoning by Phillip de Lacy:

Phillip De Lacy

## EPICUREAN EPILOGISMOS

In a detailed study of *ἐπιλογισμός* and related words in Epicurean texts,<sup>6</sup> G. Arrighetti maintains that these terms refer to an immediate awareness—intuition or consciousness—rather than to a kind of reasoning. Acknowledging that *ἐπιλογισμός* means calculation, he nevertheless contends that the *prokta* are, expressing immediacy, restricts the application of the compound to non-inferential forms of knowledge. He accordingly rejects the view that *ἐπιλογισμός* is used by the Epicureans of inductive inference.<sup>7</sup>

Prominent among his arguments is that from the occurrence of *ἐπιλογισμός* in ethical contexts. Epicurus several times uses the phrase, *ἡ οὐκ ἔστιν ἐπιλογισμὸς* (*De Finis*, 20, 27; *Letter to Menecemus*, 128) and fragments from *De Virtute*, edited by C. Diels, *Epistolarum* (Florence, 1946), pp. 29 and 47); but he denies that the acceptance of pleasure as the good requires reasoning: *κατὰ οὐρανὸν οὐκ ἔστιν οὐδὲν* (*De Fin.*, I, 20). Arrighetti concludes, therefore, that *ἐπιλογισμός* is not a form of reasoning.

Yet Cicero's formulation by no means eliminates logical operations from the identification and pursuit of the highest good. The immediate experience of pleasure as a good is, to be sure, a *ratio*,<sup>8</sup> and cannot be identified with *ἐπιλογισμός*;<sup>9</sup> but the very generalization that there is no end other than pleasure requires a certain amount of attention to a variety of experiences (*moderata animalium ratione etiam admodum*) and implies that the principle thus established is valid even of actions which lie outside the limits of our experience.<sup>10</sup> More important, however,