

[T.1] Clement of Alexandria *Stromata* II, 4, 16-17 : ναί μὴν καὶ ὁ Ἐπίκουρος, ὁ μάλιστα τῆς ἀληθείας προτιμήσας τὴν ἡδονήν, πρόληψιν εἶναι διανοίας τὴν πίστιν ὑπολαμβάνει· πρόληψιν δὲ ἀποδίδωσιν ἐπιβολὴν ἐπὶ τι ἐναργές καὶ ἐπὶ τὴν ἐναργή τοῦ πράγματος ἐπίνοιαν· μὴ δύνασθαι δὲ μηδένα μήτε ζητῆσαι μήτε ἀπορήσαι μηδὲ μὴν δοξάσαι, ἀλλ' οὐδὲ ἐλέγξει χωρὶς προλήψεως. μὴν δοξάσαι, ἀλλ' οὐδὲ ἐλέγξει χωρὶς προλήψεως. πῶς δ' ἂν μὴ ἔχων τις πρόληψιν οὐ ἐφίεται μάθοι περὶ οὐ ζητεῖ;

Epicurus, too, who very greatly preferred pleasure to truth, supposes faith to be a preconception of the mind; and defines preconception to be a grasping at something evident, and at the clear understanding of the thing; and asserts that, without preconception, no one can either inquire, or doubt, or judge, or even argue. How can one, without a preconceived idea of what he is aiming after, learn about that which is the subject of his investigation?¹

[T.2] Cicero, *DND* I, 43 : *Solus enim vidit primum esse deos, quod in omnium animis eorum notionem impressisset ipsa natura. Quae est enim gens aut quod genus hominum, quod non habeat sine doctrina anticipationem quandam deorum, quam appellat πρόληψιν Epicurus, id est anteceptam animo rei quandam informationem, sine qua nec intellegi quicquam nec quaeri nec disputari potest?*

For he alone perceived, first, that the gods exist, because nature herself has imprinted a conception of them on the minds of all mankind. For what nation or what tribe is there but possesses untaught some 'preconception' of the gods? Such notions Epicurus designates by the word prolepsis, that is, a sort of preconceived mental picture of a thing, without which nothing can be understood or investigated or discussed.²

[T.3] DL X, 33 : Τὴν δὲ πρόληψιν λέγουσιν οἰοῦναι κατάληψιν ἢ δόξαν ὀρθὴν ἢ ἔννοιαν ἢ καθολικὴν νόησιν ἐναποκειμένην, τουτέστι μνήμην τοῦ πολλάκις ἔξωθεν φανέντος, οἷον τὸ τοιοῦτόν ἐστιν ἄνθρωπος: ἅμα γὰρ τῷ ῥηθῆναι ἄνθρωπος εὐθύς κατὰ πρόληψιν καὶ ὁ τύπος αὐτοῦ νοεῖται προηγουμένων τῶν αἰσθήσεων. παντὶ οὖν ὀνόματι τὸ πρῶτως ὑποτεταγμένον ἐναργές ἐστι: καὶ οὐκ ἂν ἐζητήσαμεν τὸ ζητούμενον, εἰ μὴ πρότερον ἐγνώκειμεν αὐτό: οἷον τὸ πόρρω ἐστὼς ἵππος ἐστὶν ἢ βοῦς: δεῖ γὰρ κατὰ πρόληψιν ἐγνώκειναι ποτὲ ἵππου καὶ βοῦς μορφήν: οὐδ' ἂν ὀνομάσαμεν τι μὴ πρότερον αὐτοῦ κατὰ πρόληψιν τὸν τύπον μαθόντες. ἐναργεῖς οὖν εἰσιν αἱ προλήψεις

The concept they speak of as an apprehension or right opinion or thought or general idea stored within the mind that is to say a recollection of what has often been presented from without as for instance 'Such and such a thing is a man': for the moment the word 'man' is spoken, immediately by means of the concept his form too is thought of, as the senses give us the information. Therefore the first signification of every name is immediate and clear evidence. And we could not look for the object of our search, unless we have first known it. For instance we ask 'Is that standing yonder a horse or a cow?': to do this we must know by means of a concept the shape of horse and of cow. Otherwise we could not have named them, unless we previously knew their appearance by means of a concept. So the concepts are clear and immediate evidence³

[T.4] [Plutarchus apud Damascius, *Commentary of Plato's Phaedo*, §280], ἄς εἰ μὲν διηρθρωμένας φασί, περιττὴ ἢ ζήτησις· εἰ δὲ ἀδιαρθρώτους, πῶς ἄλλο τι παρὰ τὰς προλήψεις ἐπιζητούμεν, ὃ γε οὐδὲ προειλήφαμεν.

The Epicureans, finally, appeal to 'preconceptions' - if, by this, they mean fully developed notions, seeking is superfluous; if undevelopped ones, what motive do we have to search for something else in

1 Transl. William Wilson

2 Transl. H. Rackham ; see also DND I, xvii, 44.

3 Transl. Bailey

addition to those preconceptions, something of which we do not have a preconception at all?

[T.5] Sextus Empiricus AM I, 57 : 'Ἐπει οὐτε ζητεῖν οὐτε ἀπορεῖν ἔστι κατὰ τὸν σοφὸν Ἐπίκουρον ἄνευ προλήψεως, εἰ ἂν ἔχοι πρῶτων ὄλων σκέψασθαι τί τ' ἔστιν ἢ γραμμαστική, καὶ εἰκατὰ τὴν ἀποδιδομένην ὑπὸ τῶν γραμματικῶν ἔννοιαν δύναται συστατὸν τι καὶ ὑπαρκτὸν νοεῖσθαι μάθημα.

Since it is not possible either to investigate or to reach an impasse according to the wise Epicurus, without a preconception, it would be a good idea before anything else to inquire what grammar is, and whether, according to the conception delivered by the grammarians, any consistent and real disciplines can be conceived.⁴

[T.6] [AM II, 1] ἀλλ' ἐπει κοινὸν ὑπάρξεως τε καὶ ἀνυπαρξίας ἔστιν ἢ ἔννοια, καὶ οὐδὲν τούτων ἕτερον οἶόν τέ ἐστι ζητεῖν μὴ προλαβόντας ὃ ἔστι τὸ ζητούμενον, φέρε πρῶτον σκεψώμεθα τί ἂν εἴη ῥητορική, τὰς ἐπιφανεστάτας εἰς τοῦτο τῶν φιλοσόφων ἀποδόσεις παρατιθέμενοι.

but since the conception is common to existence and non-existence, and it is not possible to do any investigation of either of these without having formed a preconception of what it is that is being investigated, let us first inquire into what rhetoric is, setting out the most prominent accounts of this given by the philosophers.

[T.7] DL X, 37-38 πρῶτον μὲν οὖν τὰ ὑποτεταγμένα τοῖς φθόγγοις, ὧ Ἡρόδοτε, δεῖ εἰληφέναι, ὅπως ἂν τὰ δοξαζόμενα ἢ ζητούμενα ἢ ἀπορούμενα ἔχωμεν εἰς ταῦτα ἀναγαγόντες ἐπικρίνειν, καὶ μὴ ἄκριτα πάντα ἡμῖν <ἴη> εἰς ἄπειρον ἀποδεικνύουσιν ἢ κενοὺς φθόγγους ἔχωμεν. [38] ἀνάγκη γάρ τὸ πρῶτον ἐννόημα καθ' ἕκαστον φθόγγον βλέπεσθαι καὶ μὴθὲν ἀποδείξεως προσδεῖσθαι, εἴπερ ἔξομεν τὸ ζητούμενον ἢ ἀπορούμενον καὶ δοξαζόμενον ἐφ' ὃ ἀνάξομεν.

Now first of all, Herodotus, we must have a firm grip on what our expressions denote, so that we are able to assess any points of doctrine that are either under investigation or perplexing by referring back to those things, and so that everything won't end up undecided for us as we go on in an endless string of proofs – in which case our expressions turn out empty. [38] For every expression we must look at the first concept and not demand any proof in addition, if at least we're going to have anything to which to refer the point of doctrine that is under investigation or perplexing.⁵

[T.8] [AM VII, 140-141] Διότιμος δὲ τρία κατ' αὐτὸν ἔλεγεν εἶναι κριτήρια, τῆς μὲν τῶν ἀδήλων καταλήψεως τὰ φαινόμενα— ὄψις γάρ τῶν ἀδήλων τὰ φαινόμενα, ὡς φησιν Ἀναξαγόρας, ὃν ἐπὶ τούτῳ Δημόκριτος ἐπαινεῖ—, ζητήσεως δὲ τὴν ἔννοιαν—περὶ παντὸς γάρ, ὧ παῖ, μία ἀρχὴ τὸ εἰδέναι περὶ ὅτου ἔστιν ἢ ζήτησις—, αἰρέσεως δὲ καὶ φυγῆς τὰ πάθη· τὸ μὲν γάρ ὧ προσοικειούμεθα, τοῦτο αἰρετόν ἐστιν, τὸ δὲ ὧ προσαλλοτριούμεθα, τοῦτο φευκτόν ἐστιν.

But Diotimus said that according to him there are three criteria: for the apprehension of unclear things, apparent ones (for apparent things are a sight of things that are unclear, as Anaxagoras said, and Democritus praised him for this); for investigation, the conception (“for in every case, my boy, the only starting-point is knowing what the investigation is about”); and for choice and avoidance, effects on us.⁶

[T.9] [Cicero, *De Finibus* II, i-ii, 3-4] : “*Omnis autem in quaerendo quae via quadam et ratione habetur oratio praescribere primum debet, ut quibusdam in formulis: ea res agetur, ut inter quos disseritur conveniat quid sit id de quo disseratur. Hoc positum in Phaedro a Platone probavit Epicurus sensitque in omni disputatione id fieri oportere.*

4 R. Bett's transl.

5 S. White's transl.

6 AM VII, 140-141.

“However, in philosophical investigation a methodical and systematic discourse must always begin by formulating a preamble like that which occurs in certain forms of process at law, ‘The issue shall be as follows’; so that the parties to the debate may be agreed as to what the subject is about which they are debating. This rule is laid down by Plato in the *Phaedrus* and it was approved by Epicurus, who realized that it ought to be followed in every discussion.⁷

[T.10] [Plato, *Phaedrus* 237c-d]περι παντός, ὦ παῖ, μία ἀρχὴ τοῖς μέλλουσι καλῶς [237ξ] βουλευέσθαι: εἰδέναι δεῖ περι οὗ ἂν ἦ ἡ βουλή, ἢ παντός ἀμαρτάνειν ἀνάγκη. τοὺς δὲ πολλοὺς λέληθεν ὅτι οὐκ ἴσασι τὴν οὐσίαν ἐκάστου. ὡς οὖν εἰδότες οὐ διομολογοῦνται ἐν ἀρχῇ τῆς σκέψεως, προελθόντες δὲ τὸ εἰκὸς ἀποδιδοῦσιν: οὔτε γὰρ ἑαυτοῖς οὔτε ἀλλήλοις ὁμολογοῦσιν. ἐγὼ οὖν καὶ σὺ μὴ πάθωμεν ὃ ἄλλοις ἐπιτιμῶμεν, ἀλλ’ ἐπειδὴ σοὶ καὶ ἐμοὶ ὁ λόγος πρόκειται πότερα ἐρώντι ἢ μὴ μᾶλλον εἰς φιλίαν ἰτέον, περὶ ἔρωτος οἶόν τ’ ἔστι καὶ ἦν ἔχει δύναμιν, [237δ] ὁμολογία θέμενοι ὄρον, εἰς τοῦτο ἀποβλέποντες καὶ ἀναφέροντες τὴν σκέψιν ποιῶμεθα εἴτε ὠφελίαν εἴτε βλάβην παρέχει.

There is only one way, dear boy, for those to begin who [237c] are to take counsel wisely about anything. One must know what the counsel is about, or it is sure to be utterly futile, but most people are ignorant of the fact that they do not know the nature of things. So, supposing that they do know it, they come to no agreement in the beginning of their enquiry, and as they go on they reach the natural result,—they agree neither with themselves nor with each other. Now you and I must not fall into the error which we condemn in others, but, since we are to discuss the question, whether the lover or the non-lover is to be preferred let us first agree on a definition of love, its nature and its power, [237d] and then, keeping this definition in view and making constant reference to it, let us enquire whether love brings advantage or harm.⁸

[T.11] PH II, 10-11: εἰ δὲ φήσουσι μὴ τοιαύτην [λέγειν] κατάληψιν ἡγεῖσθαι ζητήσεως προσήκειν, νόησιν δὲ ἀπλῶς, οὐκ ἔστιν ἀδύνατον [ἐν] τοῖς ἐπέχουσι περὶ τῆς ὑπάρξεως τῶν ἀδήλων ζητεῖν. νοήσεως γὰρ οὐκ ἀπείργεται ὁ σκεπτικός, οἶμαι, ἀπὸ τε τῶν παθητικῶς ὑποπιπτόντων <καὶ> κατ’ ἐνάργειαν φαινομένων αὐτῶ λόγων γινομένης καὶ μὴ πάντως εἰσαγωγῆς τὴν ὑπαρξίν τῶν νοουμένων· οὐ γὰρ μόνον τὰ ὑπάρχοντα νοοῦμεν, ὡς φασιν, ἀλλ’ ἤδη καὶ τὰ ἀνύπαρκτα. ὅθεν καὶ ζητῶν καὶ νοῶν ἐν τῇ σκεπτικῇ διαθέσει μένει ὁ ἐφεκτικός· ὅτι γὰρ τοῖς κατὰ φαντασίαν παθητικὴν ὑποπίπτουσιν αὐτῶ, καθὼ φαίνεται αὐτῶ, συγκατατίθεται, δεδήλωται.

If they say they mean that it is not apprehension of this sort but rather mere thinking which ought to precede investigation, then investigation is not impossible for those who suspend judgment about the reality of what is unclear. For a sceptic is not, I think, barred from having thoughts, if they arise from things which give him a passive impression and appear evidently to him and do not at all imply the reality of what is being thought of – for we can think, as they say, not only of real things but also of unreal things. Hence someone who suspends judgment maintains his sceptical condition while investigating and thinking; for it has been clear that he assents to any impression given by way of a passive appearance insofar as it appears to him.

[T.12] Sextus Empiricus AM VIII, 337 Παρεστακότες καὶ τὸ ἐκ τίνος ὕλης ἐστὶν ἡ ἀπόδειξις, ἀκολούθως πειρασόμεθα καὶ τοὺς σαλεύοντας αὐτὴν λόγους προχειρίσασθαι, σκεπτόμενοι, πότερον ἀκολουθεῖ τῇ ἐπινοίᾳ καὶ προλήψει ταύτης ἢ ὑπαρξίς ἢ οὐδαμῶς. Καίτοι τινὲς εἰώθασιν ἡμῖν, καὶ μάλιστα οἱ ἀπὸ τῆς Ἐπικούρου αἰρέσεως, ἀγροικότερον ἐνίστασθαι, λέγοντες "ἦτοι νοεῖτε, τί ἐστὶν ἡ ἀπόδειξις, ἢ οὐ νοεῖτε. καὶ εἰ μὲν νοεῖτε καὶ ἔχετε ἔννοιαν αὐτῆς, ἐστὶν ἀπόδειξις· εἰ δὲ οὐ νοεῖτε, πῶς ζητεῖτε τὸ μὴδ’ ἀρχὴν νοούμενον ὑμῖν;"

Having described what demonstration is made of, we will follow this by trying to get a grip on the

7 Loeb's transl.

8 Fowler, transl.

arguments that make it shaky, inquiring whether its reality follows from its conception and prior notion or not. Indeed some people, especially those of the Epicurean school, tend to resist us in a rather crude way, saying “Either you understand what demonstration is, or you do not. And if you understand it and have a conception of it, there is demonstration; but if you do not understand it, how can you investigate what you have not the slightest understanding of?”⁹

[T.13] Sextus, Empiricus *AM VIII* 333a-334a: εἰ μὲν γὰρ μίαν εἶχομεν τοῦ ζητουμένου πράγματος πρόληψιν, κἄν αὐτῆ συνεξακολουθήσαντες τοιοῦτ' ἐπιστεύομεν ὑπάρχειν, ὅποιον κατὰ μίαν προσέπιπτεν ἔννοιαν· νῦν δ' ἐπεὶ πολλὰς ἔχομεν τοῦ ἐνὸς ἐννοίας καὶ πολυτρόπους καὶ μαχομένας καὶ ἐπ' ἴσης πιστὰς διὰ τε τὴν ἐν αὐταῖς πιθανότητα καὶ διὰ τὴν τῶν προῖσταμένων ἀνδρῶν ἀξιοπιστίαν, μήτε πάσαις πιστεῦσαι δυνάμενοι διὰ τὴν μάχην, μήτε πάσαις ἀπιστῆσαι τῷ μηδεμίαν ἄλλην ἔχειν αὐτῶν πιστοτέραν, μήτε τινὶ μὲν πιστεῦσαι, τινὶ δὲ ἀπιστεῖν διὰ τὴν (334a) ἰσότητα, κατ' ἀνάγκην ἤλθομεν εἰς τὸ ἐπέχειν.

For if we had just one preconception of the object being investigated, then sticking closely to this we would believe that the matter was such as it struck us in virtue of that one conception; but in fact, since we have many conceptions of this one thing, which are also varied and conflicting and equally trustworthy (both on account of their own persuasiveness and on account of the trustworthiness of the men who support them), being unable either to trust all of them because of the conflict, or to distrust all of them because of having none other that is more trustworthy than them, or to trust one and distrust another because of their equality, we necessarily arrive at suspension of judgment.

[T.14] *AM VIII* 336a: ἀλλ' οἶμαι ὅτι ἀπολογούμενοι φήσουσιν, ὡς ἐπινοεῖ μὲν Ἐπίκουρος τὰ τέσσαρα στοιχεῖα, οὐ κατέληφε δὲ πάντως· ψιλὸν γὰρ κίνημά ἐστι τῆς διανοίας ἢ ἐπίνοια, ἧς ἐχόμενος ἀντιλέγει τῷ εἶναι τέσσαρα στοιχεῖα. τοῖνυν καὶ ἡμεῖς ἔχομεν ἐπίνοιαν τῆς ἀποδείξεως, καὶ ἀπὸ ταύτης ἐξετάσομεν, εἴτε ἔστιν εἴτε καὶ μή, ταύτην δὲ ἔχοντες οὐχὶ καὶ τὴν κατάληψιν ὁμολογήσομεν

But I think that they will say in defense that Epicurus does conceive the four elements, but has absolutely not apprehended them; for conception is a mere movement of thought, which he holds onto in his opposition to there being four elements. So we too have a conception of demonstration, and on the basis of this we will examine whether or not it is; but in having this we do not also agree to the apprehension.

[T.15] Pyrrhon T.53 Decleva Caizzi, *apud Aristoclos apud Eusèbe de Césarée, Préparation Évangélique XIV, 18, 1-4* Ἄλλ' αὐτὸς μὲν οὐδὲν ἐν γραφῇ καταλέλοιπεν, ὁ δὲ γε μαθητῆς αὐτοῦ Τίμων φησὶ δεῖν τὸν μέλλοντα εὐδαιμονήσειν εἰς τρία ταῦτα βλέπειν· πρῶτον μὲν ὅποια πέφυκε τὰ πράγματα, δεύτερον δὲ, τίνα χρὴ τρόπον ἡμᾶς πρὸς αὐτὰ διακείσθαι, τελευταῖον δὲ, τί περίεσται τοῖς οὕτως ἔχουσι. τὰ μὲν οὖν πράγματά φησιν αὐτὸν ἀποφαίνειν ἐπ' ἴσης ἀδιάφορα καὶ ἀστάθμητα καὶ ἀνεπίκριτα, διὰ τοῦτο μήτε τὰς αἰσθήσεις ἡμῶν μήτε τὰς δόξας ἀληθεύειν ἢ ψεύδεσθαι. διὰ τοῦτο οὖν μηδὲ πιστεύειν αὐταῖς δεῖν, ἀλλ' ἀδοξάστους καὶ ἀκλινεῖς καὶ ἀκραδάντους εἶναι, περὶ ἐνὸς ἐκάστου λέγοντας, ὅτι οὐ μᾶλλον ἔστιν ἢ οὐκ ἔστιν, ἢ καὶ ἔστι καὶ οὐκ ἔστιν, ἢ οὔτε ἔστιν, οὔτ' οὐκ ἔστιν. τοῖς μέντοι γε διακειμένοις οὕτω περιέσεσθαι Τίμων φησὶ πρῶτον μὲν ἀφασίαν, ἔπειτα δ' ἀταραξίαν, Αἰνησίδημος δὲ ἠδονήν.

He himself has left nothing in writing, but his pupil Timon says that whoever wants to be happy must consider these three things: first, how things are by nature; secondly, what attitude we should take towards them; finally, what advantage will come for those who have this disposition. According to Timon, Pyrrho declared that things are equally undifferentiated, unstable and inarbitrable. For this reason neither our sensations nor our opinions are true or false. Therefore for this reason we should not trust them but be unopinionated, uncommitted and unwavering, saying about every single thing

that it no more is than is not, or that it both is and is not, or that it neither is nor is not. The outcome for those who are in this disposition, says Timon, will be first speechlessness, and then freedom from disturbance [...].¹⁰

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¹⁰ Transl. M. Bonazzi.