

# Do Pigs Value Katastematic Pleasure? ( Summer 2022 K / K Discussion)

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## ABSTRACT

The paper deals with the question of the attribution to Epicurus of the classification of pleasures into 'kinetic' and 'static'. This classification, usually regarded as authentic, confronts us with a number of problems and contradictions. Besides, it is only mentioned in a few sources that are not the most reliable. Following Gosling and Taylor, I believe that the authenticity of the classification may be called in question.

The analysis of the ancient evidence concerning Epicurus' concept of pleasure is made according to the following principle: first, I consider the sources that do not mention the distinction between 'kinetic' and 'static' pleasures, and only then do I compare them with the other group of texts which comprises reports by Cicero, Diogenes Laertius and Athenaeus. From the former group of texts there emerges a concept of pleasure as a single and not twofold notion, while such terms as 'motion' and 'state' describe not two different phenomena but only two characteristics of the same phenomenon. On the other hand, the reports comprising the latter group appear to derive from one and the same doxographical tradition, and to be connected with the classification of ethical doctrines put forward by the Middle Academy and known as the *divisio Carneadea*. In conclusion, I argue that the idea of Epicurus' classification of pleasures is based on a misinterpretation of Epicurus' concept in Academic doxography, which tended to contrapose it to doctrines of other schools, above all to the Cyrenaics' views.

The real issue here comes down to whether

(1) the term "Pleasure" as the goal of life needs to be replaced with "katastematic pleasure" as Wikipedia's commentators would do, or

(2) the term "Pleasure" as the goal of life is perfectly adequate, but needs to be stated clearly to include ALL pleasurable aspects of life of any kind, mental or physical, resting or active, necessary or unnecessary, or any other categories one wants to come up with.

It's when the categories (which allow us to focus on certain aspects of pleasure that allow us to focus on what is important to us at a particular moment) take over the entire discussion that the cart gets before the horse. I think this is directly analogous to the issue with "virtue" -- so long as we understand "virtue" in its proper role of a thing which is valuable for producing pleasure, then "virtue" is a valuable thing to talk about. It's when "virtue" becomes the goal in and of itself that the problem arises.

Here, "katastematic pleasure," which is at most a single category of the much wider term "pleasure" threatens to take over the whole field, and crowds out a proper understanding that it is just one among many pleasures, not by any means the ultimate or highest or only significant pleasure to aim for.