

New Christos Yapijakis Article: "The Philosophical Management of Stress"

Post by "Don" of January 7, 2023 at 12:27 PM

I should echo [Cassius](#) 's respect for Dr. Yapijakis' efforts in establishing the Gardens in Greece and the conferences in-person and online and the publishing efforts. I did watch most of the online conference in which [Cassius](#) participated (I am remembering correctly that you gave a talk, correct??), and I have an idea what it takes to coordinate events like that. So, that all is impressive in the evangelizing - the spreading the good news - of Epicurean philosophy.

However...

I'm a little uneasy about how some of that paper is phrased, especially (emphasis added):

Quote

Therefore, the Epicureans aimed at eustatheia, the good psychosomatic balance, since they believed that "the consistently good condition of the flesh and the relating hope for its preservation offer the ultimate and surest joy to those who are able to contemplate it."³⁰ Epicureans were taught to ascend the scale of pleasure by intensifying its continuity and to control its discontinuity. They became more interested in quality than in quantity by taking into account (συμμέτρησις, symmetrisis) useful and useless pleasures.

The "aiming at eustatheia" is interesting. It's most prominent in the Usener 68 fragment from Plutarch:

Quote

[U68]

Plutarch, That Epicurus actually makes a pleasant life impossible, 4, p. 1089D: It is this, I believe, that has driven them, seeing for themselves the absurdities to which they were reduced, to take refuge in the "painlessness" and the "stable condition of the flesh," supposing that the pleasurable life is found in thinking of this state as about to occur in people or as being achieved; for the stable and settled condition of the flesh," and the "trustworthy expectation" of this condition contain, they say, the highest and the most assured delight for men who are able to reflect. Now to begin with, observe their conduct here, how they keep decanting this "pleasure" or "painlessness" or "stable condition" of theirs back and forth, from body to mind and then once more from

mind to body.

Aulus Gellius, Attic Nights, IX.5.2: Epicurus makes pleasure the highest good but defines it as *sarkos eustathes katastema*, or "a well-balanced condition of the body."

....

Fragment 68: To those who are able to reason it out, the highest and surest joy is found in the stable health of the body and a firm confidence in keeping it. τὸ γὰρ εὐσταθὲς σαρκὸς κατάστημα καὶ τὸ περὶ ταύτης πιστὸν ἔλπισμα τὴν ἀκροτάτην χαρὰν καὶ βεβαιοτάτην ἔχει τοῖς ἐπιλογίζεσθαι δυναμένοις.

See also VS33

The body cries out to not be hungry, not be thirsty, not be cold. Anyone who has these things, and who is confident of continuing to have them, can rival the gods for happiness (*eudaimonia*).

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Metrodorus also echoes these thoughts, almost exactly in his [Fragment 5](#).

However, Plutarch's text is interesting: *they keep decanting this "pleasure" or "painlessness" or "stable condition" of theirs back and forth*. He seems to imply that the Epicureans used "pleasure" or "painlessness" or "stable condition" almost interchangeably: ἡδονὴν (*hēdonēn*) ταύτην εἴτ' ἀπονίαν (*aponian*) ἢ εὐστάθειαν (*eustatheian*). But this is the first time I've seen the word *eustatheia*. It's not a bad word to use, but I can surmise some may have an issue with it being "aimed at." It might be interesting to delve into that term more. So, I applaud Dr. Yapijakis for calling my attention to that.

I'm more concerned with the phrasing "ascend the scale of pleasure" and "useful and useless pleasures." I agree with [Godfrey](#) that that should be "useful and useless *desires*" at best. The "ascent" doesn't strike me as appropriate either.

In the end, as I said, I can appreciate his work over the years, but I'm not entirely comfortable with some of his emphasis and his framing.