

Confidence in Katastematic Pleasure

Post by “Don” of February 10, 2023 at 11:57 PM

I really started down this road in part with the discovery of Metrodorus being quoted in [Clement of Alexandria's Stromata II.131, p. 498](#) which states ([in translation](#))

Quote from Clement of Alexandria

Metrodorus, in his book *On the Source of Happiness in Ourselves being greater than that which arises from Objects*, says: What else is the good of the soul but the sound state of the flesh, and the sure hope of its continuance?

The primary source for my contention was simply the title of Metrodorus's book: *On the Source of Happiness in Ourselves being greater than that which arises from Objects*. The Greek title reads: Περι του μειζονα ειναι την παρ' ημας αιτιαν προς ευδαιμονιαν της εκ των πραγματων αγαθον. The idea that the source of our well-being/eudaimonia is greater "in ourselves than that which arises from Objects" tells me that we can't *rely* on objects outside ourselves for pleasure (happiness, eudaimonia, well-being). We can certainly take pleasure in them, but we can't rely on them. The only thing we can have the most confidence in are the pleasures that are within ourselves. That's how I read that title.

The πράγμα in the title (πραγματων is simply the genitive plural) means "deed, act; thing; circumstances (in the plural)."

[Alfred Koerte's anthology of the sayings of Metrodorus](#) also referenceσ the following (using Google Translate, I know... but it's the quickest route):

Cicero, De Finibus II, 28, 92 ipse enim Metrodorus, paene alter Epicurus, beatum esse describit his fere verbis cum corpus bene constitutum sit, et sit exploratum ita futurum. (...for Metrodorus himself, almost another Epicurus, describes himself as happy in these words, when the body is well constituted, and the future is thus explored.)

Cicero Tusc. disp. II, 6, 17 Metrodorus quidem perfecte eum putat beatum, cui corpus bene constitutum sit et exploratum ita semper fore. (Cicero Tusc. disp. 2, 6, 17 Metrodorus, indeed, considers him perfectly happy, whose body is well formed and examined, and will always be so.)

Cicero Tusc. disp. V, 9, 27 tu vero Metrodore, qui. . . definieris summum bonum firma corporis affectione explorataque eius spe contineri, fortunae aditus interclusisti ? (Cicero Tusc. disp. 5, 9, 27 you, Metrodorus, who . . . You have determined that the highest good is contained by the

firm affection of the body and its explored hope, have you blocked the access of fortune?)

Cicero de officiis III, 33, 117 nam si non modo utilitas sed vita omnis beata corporis firma constitutione eiusque constitutionis spe explorata, ut a Metrodoro scriptum est, continetur, certe haec utilitas et quidem summa — sic enim censent — cum honestate pugnabit. (*Cicero de officii III, 33, 117 For if not only utility, but every happy life is contained in the firm constitution of the body and the hope of its constitution, as it is written by Metrodorus, surely this utility and indeed the highest - for so they think - will fight with honesty.*)

Hoc fragmentum paene ad verbum congruit cum Epicuri fragmento 68 Us. (*This fragment agrees almost verbatim with Epicurus' fragment 68 Us.*)

Using [Attalus' site](#), here is Usener 68 which appears to be quoted from Plutarch and Aulus Gellius:

Quote from Usener 68

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."

This is just a start, but I thought I'd establish where my train of thought left the station first.

PS: Please note that the English translations from Koerte are really bad, now that I go back and read them more closely. They are simply cut and paste Google Translations from the Latin. Consider them at best poor Cliffs Notes. Refer to the Latin and puzzle out your own translations would be my recommendation.