

Perspectives On "Proving" That Pleasure is "The Good"

Post by "Eikadistes" of May 6, 2023 at 10:46 AM

[Quote from Nate](#)

Bailey's *Fragment 10* alludes to Epicurus having declared **ΗΔΟΝΗ** ("pleasure") to be **Τ ΑΓΑΘΟΝ** or "the good".

The *Tetrapharmakos* also indicates that **ΤΑΓΑΘΟΝ** ("the good") is **ΗΔΟΝΗ** ("pleasure").

Athanaeus seems to record Epicurus as identifying **ΤΑΓΑΘΟΝ** ("the good") with **ΗΔΟΝΗ** ("pleasure") in *Deipnosophists* (U67). Diogenes Laërtius also documents this attestation in *Lives of Eminent Philosophers*.

Seneca records Epicurus as having written **HIC SVMMVM BONVM VOLVPTAS EST**, "here our highest good is pleasure" (*Letters To Lucilius* 21.10). Lucretius also employs the phrase **BONVM SVMMVM** in *De Rerum Natura*, Book VI.

In his *Epistle to Menoikeus*, Epicurus declares **ΗΔΟΝΗ** ("pleasure") to be the **ΠΡΟΤΟΝ ΑΓΑΘΟΝ** the "first good". Interestingly, he later declares **ΤΟ ΜΕΓΙΣΤΟΝ ΑΓΑΘΟΝ ΦΡΟΝΗΣΙΣ**, that "the greatest" or "highest good" is "prudence" (or "practical wisdom"). Epicurus also describes **ΦΡΟΝΗΣΙΣ** ("prudence") as being the **ΑΡΧΗ**, the "beginning" or "foundation". Incidentally, he also identifies **ΗΔΟΝΗ** ("pleasure") as both the **ΑΡΧΗΝ** ("beginning") and **ΤΕΛΟΣ** ("end").

In KD7, Epicurus refers to **ΑΣΦΑΛΕΙΑΝ** ("security") as a **ΦΥΣΕΩΣ ΑΓΑΘΟΝ** ("natural good"). Similarly, in KD6 (among a variety of translations), he describes any means by which to acquire **ΘΑΡΡΕΙΝ** ("confidence" or "the assurance of safety") from or between people as being a **ΦΥΣΙΝ [...] ΑΓΑΘΟΝ** (also translated as a "natural good").

Philodemus contrasts the general ideas of **ΤΩΝ ΑΓΑΘΩΝ** with **ΤΩΝ ΚΑΚΩΝ** or "the good" with "ill" (U38); of interest, later, Usener translates Philodemus' phrase **ΤΟΝ ΧΡΗΣΤΟΝ** (*tón khrēstón*) as "the good" (U180).

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I just read Philodemus' treatise "On Death" and found an instance of the phrase **ΤΟ ΜΕΓΙΣΤΟΝ ΑΓΑΘΟΝ** (19.1). Throughout the treatise, he alludes to the pursuit and enjoyment of **ΤΟΥ ΚΡΑΤΙΣΤΟΥ ΒΙΟΥ**, or "the best life" (38.14).