

Modern Neuroscience And The Katastematic / Kinetic Debate

Post by “Don” of June 30, 2023 at 10:09 PM

I return to this section of Diogenes Laertius (10.136) over and over again when this topic comes up:

(Quote)

[136] He (Epicurus) differs from the Cyrenaics with regard to pleasure (περὶ τῆς ἡδονῆς). They do not include under the term the pleasure which is a state of rest (τὴν καταστηματικὴν - tes katastematiken), but only that which consists in motion (ἐν κινήσει - en kinesei). **Epicurus admits both (i.e., katastematiken and en kinesei); also** pleasure of mind as well as of body (ψυχῆς καὶ σώματος),

as he (Epicurus) states:

1. in his work *On Choice and Avoidance*
2. **and** in that *On the Ethical End*
3. **and** in the first book of his work *On Human Life*
4. **and** in the epistle to his philosopher friends in Mytilene
5. **So also** Diogenes in the seventeenth book of his *Epilecta*
6. **and** Metrodorus in his *Timocrates*, whose actual words are : "Thus pleasure being conceived both as that species which consists in motion (τε κατὰ κίνησιν (kinesin)) and that which is a state of rest (καταστηματικῆς (katastematikes))."
 1. "νοουμένης δὲ ἡδονῆς τῆς τε κατὰ κίνησιν (kinesin) καὶ τῆς καταστηματικῆς (katastematikes)."

The words of Epicurus in his work *On Choice (and Avoidance)* are: "Peace of mind (ἀταραξία - ataraxia) and freedom from pain (ἀπονία - aronia) are pleasures which imply a state of rest (καταστηματικάι - katastematikai); joy (χαρὰ khara) and delight (εὐφροσύνη euphrosyne) are seen to consist in motion and activity (κατὰ κίνησιν ἐνεργεῖα - kata kinesin energeia)."

(End Quote)

According to this report, Epicurus mentions katastematic and kinetic (and mental and bodily) pleasures in at least **four books**, and the Epicureans [Diogenes of Tarsus](#) and Metrodorus each mention it in their books.

I'm still not entirely convinced that the best translation of katastematic is "state *of rest*". I think stable pleasure would be good, but is it stable because it's reliable - or 100% available at all times to paraphrase Little Rocker. καταστημα is defined by LSJ as "condition, state, not

necessarily permanent: 1. bodily or mental condition, "τὸ εὐσταθὲς σαρκὸς κ." Epicur.Fr.68, Metrod.Fr.5, cf. Diog.Oen.29" (3 Epicurean sources cited)

[Henry George Liddell, Robert Scott, A Greek-English Lexicon, Κκ , κατάσσω^τος , κατάστημα](#)

[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."

> Metrodorus, Fragment 5: "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?'" (Source: [Metrodori Epicurei Fragmenta collegit scriptoris incerti Epicurei Commentarium moralem, subiecit Alfredus Koerte](#))

πιστὸν ἔλπιμα.

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.

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. V, 9, 27 tu vero Metrodore, qui. . . definieris summum bonum firma corporis affectione explorataque eius spe contineri, fortunae aditus interclusisti?

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.

Hoc fragmentum paene ad verbum congruit cum Epicuri fragmento 68 Us. τὸ γὰρ εὐσταθὲς καρκὸς κατάστημα καὶ τὸ περὶ ταύτης πιστὸν ἔλπιμα τὴν ἀκροτάτην χαρὰν καὶ βεβαιοτάτην ἔχει τοῖς ἐπιλογίζεσθαι δυναμένοις (Plut. contra Epic. beat. 4 p. 1089D). Cum apud Plutarchum haec verba omisso auctoris nomine referantur (vide tamen 6 p. 1090D Ep. Us. p. 122, 20 sqq.) putet quispiam ea soli Metrodoro adiudicanda esse nisus Clementis Ciceronisque testimoniis. sed quamquam summa sententiae eadem est, tamen initium et finis illius dicti diverse referuntur a Clemente et Plutarcho neque est causa cur suspicemur ab altero verba mutata esse. accedit quod non solum Origenes contra Celsum III 80 p. 165 et Gellius noct. Att. IX, 5, 2 ea Epicuri verba esse testantur, sed etiam Cleomedes II, 1 p. 112 Bak. his ipsis utitur exemplo, quo inelegantem Epicuri sermonem illustret. est igitur veri simile Epicurum haec verba pepigisse, Metrodorum ea recepisse, quia placebant propter vim et acrimoniam. ut Epicurus ipse non dubitabat dicta, quae summa diligentia acuerat, iterum atque iterum proferre (v. Us. stud. Vindob. X p. 181), sic Metrodorum magistri dictis, quae penitus in mente haerebant, pro suis usum esse non est mirum.

> Diogenes of Oenoanda:

Let us now [investigate] how life is to be made pleasant for us both in states (katastēmasi) and in actions (praxesin).**

(εισαν τὰ φρόν[ιμα]. ἡμ[εῖς δὲ ζη]τῶμεν ἤδη πῶς ὁ βίος ἡμεῖν ἠδὺς γένηται καὶ ἐν τοῖς καταστήμασι καὶ ἐν ταῖς πράξεσιν.)

Let us first discuss states (περὶ δὲ τῶν καταστημάτων πρῶτον εἴπωμεν), keeping an eye on the point that, when the emotions which disturb the soul are removed, those which produce pleasure enter into it to take their place.

Well, what are the disturbing emotions? [They are] fears —of the gods, of death, and of [pains]— and, besides [these], desires that [outrun] the limits fixed by nature. These are the roots of all evils, and, [unless] we cut them off, [a multitude] of evils will grow [upon] us.

**in actions (praxesin) < πράξεσιν dative plural of πράξις "act, action, activity, deed, doing"

[Henry George Liddell, Robert Scott, A Greek-English Lexicon, πράξις](#)