

# PD03 - Best Translation of PD3 To Feature At EpicureanFriends?

**Post by “Don” of July 17, 2023 at 10:01 PM**

Consider the difference the below makes in contrast to how these are normally read (note: this is just quick and dirty using Hicks' translation from Perseus!):

The magnitude of pleasure reaches its limit in the removal of all pain. When pleasure is present, so long as it is uninterrupted, there is no pain either of body or of mind or of both together. Continuous pain does not last long in the flesh ; on the contrary, pain, if extreme, is present a very short time, and even that degree of pain which barely outweighs pleasure in the flesh does not last for many days together. Illnesses of long duration even permit of an excess of pleasure over pain in the flesh.

Or this:

If the objects which are productive of pleasures to profligate persons really freed them from fears of the mind,--the fears, I mean, inspired by celestial and atmospheric phenomena, the fear of death, the fear of pain ; if, further, they taught them to limit their desires, we should never have any fault to find with such persons, for they would then be filled with pleasures to overflowing on all sides and would be exempt from all pain, whether of body or mind, that is, from all evil.

If we had never been molested by alarms at celestial and atmospheric phenomena, nor by the misgiving that death somehow affects us, nor by neglect of the proper limits of pains and desires, we should have had no need to study natural science. It would be impossible to banish fear on matters of the highest importance, if a man did not know the nature of the whole universe, but lived in dread of what the legends tell us. Hence without the study of nature there was no enjoyment of unmixed pleasures. There would be no advantage in providing security against our fellow-men, so long as we were alarmed by occurrences over our heads or beneath the earth or in general by whatever happens in the boundless universe. When tolerable security against our fellow-men is attained, then on a basis of power sufficient to afford support and of material prosperity arises in most genuine form the security of a quiet private life withdrawn from the multitude.

Edit: Note that in that last section, we have:

- "be filled with pleasures to overflowing" which harkens back to the passage talking about the limit of pleasure.
- "by the misgiving that death somehow affects us" harkens back to "[death is nothing to us](#)"

- And so on...

And so on. The text of *Kyriai Doxai* builds on itself, continuously refers back to previous passages, sets up arguments for later passages. Reading it as isolated sayings, as if it was a list or compilation like "the Vatican Sayings" or, evidently more properly, *Epicurus's Manner of Speaking*, robs it of its structure and the power of its arguments. The book is not *The [Principal Doctrines](#)*. There's no definite article. I'd suggest something more like Sovereign Axioms or Sovereign Opinions or... Just something to shift our paradigm in seeing the text as discrete PDs! I like the Sovereign because it plays off of *κυρία* *kyriai*'s meanings of both adjective principal/ruling/authorized and noun lord/ruler. (Note the Christian "mantra" Kyrie eleison! Lord, have mercy!)