

PD06 - Disputes as to correct translation of PD6 - Should it refer to "sovereignty" and "kingship"?

Post by “Eikadistes” of April 12, 2026 at 5:38 PM

[Quote from wbernys](#)

[Quote from Eikadistes](#)

Someday, I would like to fatten-up The Hedonicon with the works of Philódēmos

Certainly would be awesome. I mainly want Torquatus (And Velleius) speech included and some of the english to be more clear and a little less archaic (PD6 in hedonicon is a example where i struggled to understand it). Got the best of Epicurus by classic caves. Like that the most.

That's really perceptive, and I appreciate you noting that one, in particular, because of **all** of the *Doctrines*, I find 6 to be *unquestionably* the most mis-translated, due to the language. You're right, it does need an update, though I caution that other translators are making compromises.

(This might warrant another thread, but...)

Compared against any other doctrine, *Six* has been translated with more difference than any. [You'll find the most differences with each translators treatment of 6.](#) I found that each translator makes some compromise at some point in negotiating with (what seems to me to be) unique phrasing, so, the awkward phrasing that you notice is definitely intentional with *that* one at this point.

Of all available translators, I personally find Makridis (2005) to have rendered a translation of *Doxa 6* that seems to reflect the semantics most authentically, so I used that more as a model:

Quote

“This <human ability to lead a good life> originally became possible by nature and for the sake of imparting courage in human beings <who were then living in a pre-social condition.> And this is the natural origin and principle on which all authority—be it even kingship—is based. And it is from the same <natural propensities> that a human being is able also to arrange a good and pleasant life.”

I like him because he adds some commentary, particularly noting "kingship" as being a translators addition, not authentic vocabulary. The rest seem content to invoke modern political

language:

Quote

*"As for the assurance of safety from the attacks of men, by virtue of the nature of **political dominion and kingly power** this is a good thing, no matter by whose aid one is able to procure it." - De Witt, *Epicurus and His Philosophy* 79 (1954)*

*"**Political rule and kingly power** being what they are, it is a good thing to feel secure in human relations no matter through whose agency one is able to attain this." - De Witt, *St. Paul and Epicurus* 187 (1954)*

*"The natural good of **public office and kingship** is for the sake of getting confidence from [other] men, [at least] from those from whom one is able to provide this." - Inwood & Gerson (1994)*

*"That natural benefit of **kingship and high office** is (and only is) the degree to which they provide security from other men." - Anderson (2004)*

*"It is a natural benefit of **leadership and kingship** to take courage from other men (or at least from the sort of men who can give one courage)." - Saint-Andre (2008)*

"In order that men might not fear one another, there was a natural benefit to be had from government and kingship, provided that they are able to bring about this result." - Mensch (2018)

"There was some natural good in leadership and kingship for the purpose of establishing mutual confidence among people, any time someone is thereby able to do so." - White (2021)

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There's this trend you'll notice them doing where they present two, parallel, sociopolitical words ("political rule and kingly power", "public office and kingship", "kingship and high office", "leadership and kingship", "leadership and kingship"), but those words are not in the original text. Instead, we find a few "to be's" a few infinitives, and frustratingly ambivalent pronouns.

This is a great one to dive into the language for personal study.

To mention a point that [Don](#) always champions, the *Doctrines* should be taken as a whole. While KD6 seems awkward on its own, it makes a lot more sense when you contextualize it against KD5 (*you've gotta be peaceful and practical about pleasure*), and KD7 (*fame usually isn't practical*).

That said, thanks again, and I'll definitely review for the sake of fluidity.