

PD01 - Best Translation Of PD01 To Feature At EpicureanFriends?

Post by "Cassius" of July 10, 2023 at 7:42 PM

The following post is first of a series that I intend to make so that we can get our collection of the Principal Doctrines into better shape. One service we can provide here at EpicureanFriends is to present a curated list that has been vetted and commented on by our regulars here who have either good sense of the philosophy, or an ability to read the original Greek and Latin - and preferably both the good sense and the language ability. I plan to post one of these on each doctrine over time and then transfer the result over to

[the main list under the "Texts" section.](#)

Although this thread will include a "poll" in the next post, what we are really looking for is the "best" combination of faithfulness to the original combined with clarity in modern English. I will get with a collection of the Level 3 participants here to work on editing the final list, but the full discussion should be open to everyone to consider, so that's what we will do here. The results of the poll won't control what is featured on the text page but will definitely influence in and probably at least result in a footnote to this thread.

The English translation of [PD01](#) currently featured here in our Texts section is that of Cyril Bailey from his [Extant Remains](#):

The blessed and immortal nature knows no trouble itself, nor causes trouble to any other, so that it is never constrained by anger or favor. For all such things exist only in the weak.

We have access ([thanks to Nate's full collection](#)) to many different variations including:

"That which is happy and imperishable, neither has trouble itself, nor does it cause it to anything; so that it is not subject to feelings of either anger or gratitude; for these feelings only exist in what is weak." Yonge (1853)

"The blessed and incorruptible has no toil or trouble of its own, and causes none to others. It is not subject either to anger or favour." Wallace, Epicureanism 110 (1880)

"A blessed and eternal being has no trouble itself and brings no trouble upon any other being; hence it is exempt from movements of anger and favour, for every such movement implies weakness." Hicks (1910)

"A happy and eternal being has no trouble himself and brings no trouble upon any other being ; hence he is exempt from movements of anger and partiality, for every such movement implies

weakness." Hicks (1925)

"The blessed and immortal nature knows no trouble itself nor causes trouble to any other, so that it is never constrained by anger or favour. For all such things exist only in the weak." Bailey (1926)

"The blissful and incorruptible being neither knows trouble itself nor occasions trouble to another, and is consequently immune to either anger or gratitude, for all such emotions reside in a weak creature." De Witt, Epicurus and His Philosophy 252 (1954)

"The blessed and incorruptible being neither knows tribulation itself nor occasions it to another; it is consequently immune to feelings of either anger or gratitude, for all such emotion signifies a weak creature." De Witt, St. Paul and Epicurus 187 (1954)

"That which is blessed and immortal is not troubled itself, nor does it cause trouble to another. As a result, it is not affected by anger or favor, for these belong to weakness." Geer (1964)

"That which is blessed and imperishable neither suffers nor inflicts trouble, and therefore is affected neither by anger nor by favour. For all such things are marks of weakness." Long, The Hellenistic Philosophers 140 (1987)

"The blessed and immortal is itself free from trouble nor does it cause trouble for anyone else; therefore, it is not constrained either by anger or by favor. For such sentiments exist only in the weak." O'Connor (1993)

"What is blessed and indestructible has no trouble itself nor does it give trouble to anyone else, so that it is not affected by feelings of anger or gratitude. For all such things are a sign of weakness." Inwood & Gerson (1994)

"A blessed and imperishable being neither has trouble itself nor does it cause trouble for anyone else; therefore, it does not experience feelings of anger or indebtedness, for such feelings signify weakness." Anderson (2004)

"That which is blessed and indestructible has no affairs of its own to attend to; nor does it inflict any trouble on others. So, it is agitated neither by ire nor by partiality. For all such are to be found in that which lacks power." Makridis (2005)

"That which is blissful and immortal has no troubles itself, nor does it cause trouble for others, so that it is not affected by anger or gratitude (for all such things come about through weakness)." Saint-Andre (2008)

"The blessed and indestructible being of the divine has no concerns of its own, nor does it make trouble for others. It is not affected by feelings of anger or benevolence, because these are found where there is a lack of strength." Strodach (2012)

"The blessed and immortal has no troubles himself and causes none for anyone else; hence he has nothing to do with resentments and partisanship; for all such impulses are a sign of weakness." Mensch (2018)

"What is in bliss and imperishable neither has troubles itself nor causes any for others, so it experiences no feelings of either anger or gratitude; for everything of that sort indicates weakness." White (2021)

Which of the above, or which with changes you would suggest, should be featured here in the main list? In the interest of space the poll will not include every option, so please add a comment in the thread if you would suggest a variation not listed.

Post by "Cassius" of July 10, 2023 at 7:43 PM

Here is the poll for PDO1

Post by "Don" of July 10, 2023 at 8:14 PM

In an attempt to help everyone in their voting, here are some older notes I had on PD1

Greek text: Usener edition

1 Τὸ μακάριον καὶ ἄφθαρτον οὔτε αὐτὸ πράγματα ἔχει οὔτε ἄλλω παρέχει· ὥστε οὔτε ὀργαῖς οὔτε χάρισι συνέχεται· ἐν ἀσθενεῖ γὰρ πᾶν τὸ τοιοῦτον.

"One who is blessed/completely happy/blissful and imperishable/indestructible has no troubles themselves nor causes troubles for others; as a consequence, they are affected by neither anger nor gratitude; because all this would be an indication of weakness/sickness/lack of strength." Being affected by anger as a sickness or weakness makes sense, but why would being affected by gratitude be a sign of weakness? In the Letter to Herodotus, Epicurus wrote "For troubles and anxieties and feelings of anger and partiality do not accord with bliss, but always **imply weakness and fear and dependence upon one's neighbours.**" This appears to demonstrate that the negative aspects of anger or gratitude would be that it would show a lack of self-reliance / αὐτάρκεια. If we needed reassurance / affirmation from others and didn't just do things because they were pleasurable, we're not truly living a blessed life. That sense of self-assurance would make one τὸ **μακάριον καὶ ἄφθαρτον**. Blessed, yes. Imperishable? This

echoes the idea that, once desires are uprooted, they can't come back. Some of the senses of φθαρτος, opposite of ἄφθαρτος, are "pass away, able to be bribed, adrift." Considering the opposite of these qualities gives a deeper sense to what a mortal life potentially filled with ἄφθαρτος would be like. And consider that Epicurus decided that it is **τὸ μακάριον**, neither male nor female. I think that's significant. Some older translation gloss over that when translating the other parts: **he** is exempt from movements of anger. The proper way to express it might better be to use "one who is..."

Perseus Project: [139] [ι.] Τὸ μακάριον καὶ ἄφθαρτον οὔτε αὐτὸ πράγματα ἔχει οὔτε ἄλλω παρέχει, ὥστε οὔτε ὀργαῖς οὔτε χάρισι συνέχεται: ἐν ἀσθενεῖ γὰρ πᾶν τὸ τοιοῦτον. [ἐν ἄλλοις δὲ φησι τοὺς θεοὺς λόγῳ θεωρητοῦς, οὐς μὲν κατ' ἀριθμὸν ὑφεστῶτας, οὐς δὲ καθ' ὁμοείδειαν ἐκ τῆς συνεχοῦς ἐπιρρύσεως τῶν ὁμοίων εἰδώλων ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτὸ ἀποτετελεσμένῳ ἀνθρωποειδῶς.]

Perseus Project translation: 1. A blessed and eternal being has no trouble himself and brings no trouble upon any other being ; hence he is exempt from movements of anger and partiality, for every such movement implies weakness [Elsewhere he says that the gods are discernible by reason alone, some being numerically distinct, while others result uniformly from the continuous influx of similar images directed to the same spot and in human form.]

- **Τὸ μακάριον** - KD1 - blessed, fortunate, wealthy, "well-off". There appears to me no certain etymology of [makar] or the longer form [makarios/on]. It appears to have something to do with being wealthy (both literally and figuratively?). See also <https://books.google.com/books?id=sPCww...ymology&f=false> , <http://www.crossmarks.com/brian/allsaintb.htm> ; <https://www.studylight.org/language-studi.../index.cgi?a=38>
 - See also KD27 μακαριότης: 27 Ὡν ἡ σοφία παρασκευάζεται εἰς τὴν τοῦ ὅλου βίου μακαριότητα, πολὺ μέγιστόν ἐστιν ἡ τῆς φιλίας κτῆσις. Of all the things that wisdom provides for *the complete happiness of one's entire life*, by far the greatest is friendship.
 - DB - Why translate μακαριότητα (happiness, bliss) *happiness* here but μακαριον *blessed* in KD1 other than obfuscation?
 - ἡ τῆς φιλίας κτῆσις = the property/possession of friendship
- **Ἄφθαρτον** LSJ. incorruptible, Epicur. Ep.1p.29U., al., Phld.D.3Fr.88b, al., Diog.Oen.63, al. eternal, immortal, uncorrupted, undecaying. **Φθαρτον** = destructible, perishable.
- **Πράγματα** LSJ in a bad sense, trouble, annoyance. **π. παρέχειν τινί** to cause one trouble, Hdt.1.155
- **Παρέχει** supply, furnish, provide

Οὔτε ... οὔτε

- Neither... nor

συνέχω

- fut. mid. in pass. sense, Dem.
- I. to hold or keep together, II.: to enclose, encompass, embrace, Hes., Plat.
- 2. to keep together, keep from dispersing, of soldiers, Xen., Dem.: —then, ζ. πόλιν to keep the state together, keep it from falling to pieces, Eur.; καὶ θεοὺς καὶ ἀνθρώπους ἢ κοινωνία ξ. Plat.; ζ. τὴν πολιτείαν Dem.; so, ξ.τὴν εἰρεσίαν to keep the rowers together, make them pull in time, Thuc.
- 3. to constrain or force one to a thing, NTest.
- 4. to compress, oppress, id=NTest.: Pass. to be constrained, oppressed, afflicted, Hdt., attic
- II. intr. to meet, εἰς ἕν Arist.

ἀσθενής m or f (neuter ἀσθενές); third declension **ἀσθενεῖ** DATIVE after εἰν

- without strength, weak
- feeble, sickly
- sick, ill
- insignificant
- poor

ΤΟΙΟΥΤΟΝ

- inflection of **ΤΟΙΟΥΤΟΣ**:

neuter nominative singular Referring back to *Τὸ μακάριον καὶ ἄφθαρτον* masculine and neuter accusative singular Of this kind Such a one

Post by “Joshua” of July 10, 2023 at 8:36 PM

I give Bailey the palm for clear and concise English, well written and very readable.

I like DeWitt's translation for sound philosophy; the gods are "incorruptible" as opposed to "immortal", blissful by their own lights rather than blessed by something else. I quibble only with that word "creature". What is it doing there? Since it literally means "created thing" it seems out of place in what is otherwise very careful diction.

I feel the same way about the word "divine" in Strodach.

Then there is this question of 'movements' vs 'feelings' vs 'emotions' vs something else.

I voted DeWitt. I would only change two things about his translation. Replace 'being' with 'nature', and replace 'a weak creature' with 'what is weak'.

Post by “Joshua” of July 10, 2023 at 8:40 PM

I really am impressed with Bailey here though! I like it more each time I read it.

Post by “Cassius” of July 10, 2023 at 10:35 PM

OK this is a good example of what I am thinking we should do with this project. Bailey seems good, but his "immortal" seems less accurate, and should be "incorruptible." I am entirely ok with a hybrid so long as we document the result.

Don do you agree that "incorruptible" or something like is is more appropriate than "immortal"?

Thank you for all the background info but where do you end up yourself? I see you are questioning the relationship of gratitude but everyone seems to throw that in there so is Bailey basically correct?

Gonna take a long time to go through these and then the Vatican Sayings too but maybe it is a good project to try to focus people on one or two before moving forward.

Post by “Don” of July 10, 2023 at 11:00 PM

[Quote from Cassius](#)

Don do you agree that "incorruptible" or something like is is more appropriate than "immortal"?

Yes. Incorruptible is better than immortal.

α "not, un-" + φθαρτον "destructible, perishable"

χάρισι "favourable disposition towards someone: grace, favor, goodwill; gratitude"

I'll keep my choice to myself as not to influence anyone's vote for now 😊

Post by “Don” of July 10, 2023 at 11:42 PM

There's also the issue of how to translate Τὸ μακάριον καὶ ἄφθαρτον. The definite article Τὸ shows the two words μακάριον (and) ἄφθαρτον should be taken as nouns in the sense of:

One who is...

That which is...

A thing/being that is...

I'd even venture so fast as to suggest:

One who has the traits of blessedness and Incorruptibility...

Do you personify the traits? Do you make them an impersonal thing? Do you apply them to a being??

Post by “Godfrey” of July 11, 2023 at 12:46 AM

I would vote for Wallace. It's not perfect, but I think it's the only one with "incorruptible" and with "favor" instead of "gratitude".

Post by “Eikadistes” of July 11, 2023 at 1:47 AM

If I might take a whack at the task ... **“The blessed and imperishable [gods] neither trouble themselves nor others, as neither anger nor obligation afflict them; for, all of this is weak. <In other places, however, Epicurus said the gods are reached by reason, that, on one hand, [the gods] exist partially distinct; those [gods], however, made of the same consistency exist due to the continuous stream of similar images upon the self, personally, in the form of humans.>”**

Post by “Godfrey” of July 11, 2023 at 2:04 AM

"For perfect peace gods by their very nature
Must of necessity enjoy, and immortal life,
Far separate, far removed from our affairs.
For free from every sorrow, every danger,
Strong in their own powers, needing naught from us,
They are not won by gifts nor touched by anger."

Lucretius I.44-49 (+/-) Melville translation

Arghh, there's "immortal" again. But "won by gifts" fits well with "favor" or "obligation".

Post by "Don" of July 11, 2023 at 7:03 AM

[Quote from Nate](#)

If I might take a whack at the task ... **"The blessed and imperishable [gods] neither trouble themselves nor others, as neither anger nor obligation afflict them; for, all of this is weak. <In other places, however, Epicurus said the gods are reached by reason, that, on one hand, [the gods] exist partially distinct; those [gods], however, made of the same consistency exist due to the continuous stream of similar images upon the self, personally, in the form of humans.>"**

Generally, I like where you're going, but the insertion of [gods] disguises the fact that τὸ μακάριον and (τὸ) ἄφθαρτον are singular, not plural. This may not be significant but then again might be. Sedley seems to imbue those singular references to the gods as referring to one's individual conception of a god.

I think I know what you're trying to convey with the ending but I got a lot lost myself there.

Post by "Cassius" of July 11, 2023 at 7:03 AM

[Quote from Godfrey](#)

I would vote for Wallace. It's not perfect, but I think it's the only one with "incorruptible" and with "favor" instead of "gratitude".

I added Wallace to the poll options.

Also, just to keep the point in mind, I think that a good balance of accuracy but with consideration for "reputation for trustworthiness" probably calls for using Bailey or some other "authority" as the base, but with specific "tweaks" to address specific issues like the "immortality" issue here which jumps out as needing tweaking. Then in the footnote / reference we can give other options including fully rewritten versions that seem best based on the discussion here, regardless of whether they are based primarily on one author or another.

Post by “Don” of July 11, 2023 at 7:07 AM



Can we vote more than once? I think my "first" choice changes daily!

Post by “Cassius” of July 11, 2023 at 7:44 AM

[Quote from Don](#)

Can we vote more than once? I think my "first" choice changes daily!

Yes, votes can definitely be changed.

And the same will go for the final result posted here -- [Principal Doctrines](#)

All of this will be changing over time as we try to improve the final product.

Post by “Cassius” of July 11, 2023 at 9:20 AM

Although this is by no means final for [PD01](#), this is the way I am thinking the finished product should look as we update each one [on the main "Texts" page](#):

[PD01](#). The blessed and incorruptible nature knows no trouble itself, nor causes trouble to any other, so that it is never constrained by anger or favor. For all such things exist only in the weak. ^[1]

1. ↑ Note [PD01](#): This version is primarily Bailey, but with "incorruptible" substituted for "immortal." Bailey's Extant Remains version is: "The blessed and immortal nature knows no trouble itself, nor causes trouble to any other, so that it is never constrained by anger or favor. For all such things exist only in the weak." See Discussion of this version [here](#).

And that "Note" could be expanded to include more explanation including a preferred "Alternate Version" in addition to the link to the discussion of all the options.

Post by "Don" of July 11, 2023 at 9:37 AM

I think I have a problem with "favor." I can't put my finger on it but I'll try to percolate on it.

Post by "Godfrey" of July 11, 2023 at 9:50 AM

[Don](#) you might add "won by gifts" and "obligation" to the "favor" brew....

Post by "Don" of July 11, 2023 at 10:13 AM

Take a look at all the nuances of χάρις in LSJ, especially section II.

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

Post by “Eikadistes” of July 11, 2023 at 11:27 AM

[Quote from Don](#)

[Quote from Nate](#)

If I might take a whack at the task ... **“The blessed and imperishable [gods] neither trouble themselves nor others, as neither anger nor obligation afflict them; for, all of this is weak. <In other places, however, Epicurus said the gods are reached by reason, that, on one hand, [the gods] exist partially distinct; those [gods], however, made of the same consistency exist due to the continuous stream of similar images upon the self, personally, in the form of humans.>”**

Generally, I like where you're going, but the insertion of [gods] disguises the fact that Τὸ μακάριον and (Τὸ) ἄφθαρτον are singular, not plural. This may not be significant but then again might be. Sedley seems to imbue those singular references to the gods as referring to one's individual conception of a god.

I think I know what you're trying to convey with the ending but I got a lot lost myself there.

What is blessed and imperishable that is not a god?

Post by “Don” of July 11, 2023 at 11:41 AM

[Quote from Nate](#)

What is blessed and imperishable that is not a god?

Oh, it's not the reference to the gods, it's the use of the plural where the text has a singular.

Post by “Eikadistes” of July 11, 2023 at 11:54 AM

[Quote from Don](#)

[Quote from Nate](#)

What is blessed and imperishable that is not a god?

"The blessed and imperishable [*being a god*] neither troubles itself nor others, as neither anger nor obligation afflict it; for, all of this is weak. <In other places, however, Epicurus said the gods are reached by reason, that, on one hand, [the gods] exist partially distinct; those [gods], however, made of the same consistency exist due to the continuous stream of similar images upon the self, personally, in the form of humans.>"

How's that?

Post by "Joshua" of July 11, 2023 at 2:14 PM

Quote

What is blessed and imperishable that is not a god?

mellis dulci flavoque liquore..."the sweet yellow liquor of the honey"...

Well, it's imperishable anyway. Depends what we mean by blessed I suppose! 😊

Post by "Don" of July 11, 2023 at 2:35 PM

Nate brings up a good question.

I find myself thinking of one thing that could fall under the rubric of "blessed and imperishable" is possibly the memory of Epicurus himself, also linking it to "reverence is good for the one reverencing." Epicurus is dead, neither he nor his memory have anger or gratitude but the memory still has potency in the world.

Maybe barking up the wrong tree, but I'm trying to find wider application of PD1 within the literal meaning of the text.

Consider this musing out loud.

Post by “Bryan” of July 11, 2023 at 4:53 PM

In English we can say, in plural "The complete and independent are free from troubles themselves and do not pass troubles onto others" but we cannot say, in the singular "The complete and independent is free from troubles (itself) and does not pass troubles on to others." This is an English problem.

Post by “Don” of July 11, 2023 at 5:47 PM

[Quote from Bryan](#)

The complete and independent are

We have to say "The one who is x and y is..."

Post by “Cassius” of July 12, 2023 at 9:00 AM

How about also as to the "blessed" as opposed to "blissful"? The consideration in my mind is that "blessed" sounds like someone external has "blessed" them (such as the irritating "have a blessed day" that many people say nowadays") while "blissful" does not have that connotation of one thing taking action to benefit another.

However my observation is a good example of how a "preference" needs to be guided by "most accurate."

On the other hand, I see DeWitt uses "blissful"

I am thinking for the time being of going with:

The blissful and incorruptible nature knows no trouble itself, nor causes trouble to any other, so that it is never constrained by anger or favor. For all such things exist only in the weak. [\[1\]](#)

With footnote:

Note [PD01](#): This version is primarily Bailey, but with "blissful" substituted for "blessed" and "incorruptible" substituted for "immortal." Bailey's Extant Remains version is: "The blessed and immortal nature knows no trouble itself, nor causes trouble to any other, so that it is never constrained by anger or favor. For all such things exist only in the weak." See Discussion of this version [here](#).

It's possible we should wrap this one up for now and move to discuss [PD02](#). Comments?

Always remembering the famous line that we should not let the perfect be the enemy of the good 😊

Post by “Cassius” of July 12, 2023 at 9:02 AM

One more thing:

What about the opening preposition "The" -- which I think also causes questions that are pretty obvious as implying that the thing being discussed definitely exists, when that is probably not the question in [PD01](#) -- Presuming the real point being made is that "any such beings which do happen to exist" -- Would it be equally or more accurate to substitute "A," ---

A blissful and incorruptible nature knows no trouble itself, nor causes trouble to any other, so that it is never constrained by anger or favor. For all such things exist only in the weak. [\[1\]](#)

Post by “Godfrey” of July 12, 2023 at 9:13 AM

I actually like "the".

1) Epicurus maintained that gods do exist.

2) With an idealist interpretation of the gods, the implication of "the" is that such a condition is achievable. "A" somehow seems watered down to me.

Post by “Cassius” of July 12, 2023 at 9:45 AM

Yes i agree to your statements, but that is the kind of "like" that we want to scrutinize.

Probably the way I should have stated it would be to ask "Since the definite article "the" in English implies certain things that an "A" would not, are we sure that the first word should be a definite article?"

Post by “Don” of July 12, 2023 at 10:06 AM

I'm late to the game here but I'm crafting a response to some of this... Just haven't had a chance to get it finished.

[Quote from Cassius](#)

It's possible we should wrap this one up for now and move to discuss [PD02](#). Comments?

LOL! 😂 "wrap this up" Oh, Cassius is so optimistic. Maybe with the addition of "... For now" 😂

Post by “Don” of July 12, 2023 at 10:07 AM

[Quote from Cassius](#)

the first word should be a definite article?

Yes.

Post by “Eikadistes” of July 12, 2023 at 11:16 AM

[Quote from Don](#)

I'm late to the game here but I'm crafting a response to some of this... Just haven't had a chance to get it finished.

[Quote from Cassius](#)

It's possible we should wrap this one up for now and move to discuss [PD02](#).
Comments?

LOL! 😄 "wrap this up" Oh, Cassius is so optimistic. Maybe with the addition of "... For now" 😄

Let's do it! I'm ready with a new line:

"The afterlife in no way exists for us; for, the sense faculties disintegrate; but the afterlife that is insensible in no way exists for us."

Post by "Cassius" of July 12, 2023 at 11:59 AM

Don is correct this will never "wrap up" other than for current purposes.

At present I am thinking that a good page would be a new one every couple of days just to space things out. Talk can and will continue on each one indefinitely, but we need some kind of a pace to get us through the list in a reasonable time frame.

I'll go ahead and set up a thread for [PD02](#) but of course by all means continue on this one.

Post by "Bryan" of July 12, 2023 at 12:22 PM

As we know, between this and the next $\text{K}\Delta$, Diogenes adds "In other places he says that the Gods are mentally discernible by reason and are conceived as numerically distinct but in a similar shape from the continuous influx of similar films to the same place where they are rendered as human-shaped (X139)"

This comment by Diogenes has connected ΚΔ1 very tightly to the Gods in the minds of the editors, but Ἐπίκουρος uses the vocative of μακάριον when addressing Πυθοκλής as «Μακάριε! (X 6) Mr. Contented!» and speaks of «τὴν μακαρίαν ἡμέραν (X 22) a perfect day». When speaking about the study of nature, Ἐπίκουρος says «τὸ μακάριον ἐνταῦθα πεπτωκέναι (X 77) that the person who is content rests here». Lucretius translates τὸ Μακάριον as «ipsa suis pollens opibus (1.48) itself strong in its own resources»

This is one reason why I stretch it to "The complete [and independent]..." But blissful certainly works well too!

Post by “Bryan” of July 12, 2023 at 2:32 PM

Another point that ΚΔ1 is not just a reference to the gods, is X 77, οὐ γὰρ συμφωνοῦσιν Πραγματεῖαι καὶ Φροντίδες καὶ Ὀργαὶ καὶ Χάριτες μακαριότητι ἀλλ’ ἐν ἀσθενείᾳ καὶ φόβῳ καὶ προσδεήσει τῶν πλησίον Ταῦτα γίνεταί - for Troubles and Anxieties and Tempers and Favors are not consistent with contentment but All come from weakness and fear and dependence on those near by."

Post by “Godfrey” of July 12, 2023 at 4:08 PM

What is X 77?

Post by “Joshua” of July 12, 2023 at 5:56 PM

Quote

What is X 77?

He's referring to the "paragraph" numbers in the (modern) text of Diogenes Laertius

Post by "Don" of July 12, 2023 at 10:56 PM

First, may I say that I find Cassius initial efforts at a simple vote extremely endearing. Cassius: You are the eternal optimist. However, it has elicited an excellent discussion.

Now, instead of nitpicking others' valiant attempts at translation, I'll simply offer my own for consideration... and, yes, it's late and I got lazy at the end and just copied Hicks. He'll do as a start, and it's in the scholion anyway. And I don't expect this translation to be The Chosen One, of course. This is primarily to simply illustrate some points.

Original Text: Τὸ μακάριον καὶ ἄφθαρτον οὔτε αὐτὸ πράγματα ἔχει οὔτε ἄλλω παρέχει, ὥστε οὔτε ὀργαῖς οὔτε χάρισι συνέχεται: ἐν ἀσθενεῖ γὰρ πᾶν τὸ τοιοῦτον.

(ἐν ἄλλοις δέ φησι τοὺς θεοὺς λόγῳ θεωρητοῦς, οὓς μὲν κατ' ἀριθμὸν ὑφ' ἑστώτας, οὓς δὲ καθ' ὁμοειδίαν ἐκ τῆς συνεχοῦς ἐπιρρύσεως τῶν ὁμοίων εἰδώλων ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτὸ ἀποτετελεσμένῳ ἀνθρωποειδῶς.)

Translation: The one who (That which) is blessed and indestructible (or imperishable) neither has troubles oneself nor causes troubles for others, that one is neither annoyed by anything nor troubles others; therefore such a one is constrained by neither anger nor gratitude; for (if that were the case) such a one is lacking in strength.

(Also, in other works he says by means of reason are the gods apprehended through contemplation, "some being numerically distinct, while others result uniformly from the continuous influx of similar images directed to the same spot and in human form.")

We all agree PD1 is describing the blessed/blissful existence of a god. And I use singular "god" deliberately since the words are singular at the beginning. See below for more on that.

Greek regularly turned adjectives into nouns using a definite article: Τὸ μακάριον and (Τὸ) ἄφθαρτον. English typically has to add words; however, we know what we mean if we say something like "The Brave and the Bold." We can also say things like "The Funny One." Here, it's not as easy saying it in English but "The Blessed and the imperishable" gets close. My perspective is that we have to use a "the" or "that which" here, even if it's a circumlocution like "The one who is blissful and imperishable" or "That which is blissful and imperishable."

The juxtaposition of "neither anger nor gratitude" (οὔτε ὀργαῖς οὔτε χάρισι) is interesting, because Philodemus does the same pairing of words in his works when speaking of anger and its opposite, gratitude. He sees these as mirror images or counterparts to each other. Epicurus also pairs these in the letter to Herodotus (DL 10.76-77, gratitude to [Bryan](#) for pointing this out!): "...any being who at the same time enjoys perfect bliss (μακαριότητα) along with immortality (ἀφθαρσία lit., "no-corruption (unable to experience deterioration)"). [77] For troubles and anxieties and feelings of anger (ὀργαὶ) and partiality (χάριτες) do not accord with

bliss (μακαριότητα), but always imply weakness (ἀσθενεία) and fear (φόβω) and dependence upon one's neighbours. (‘οὐ γὰρ συμφωνοῦσιν πραγματεῖαι καὶ φροντίδες καὶ ὄργαι καὶ χάριτες μακαριότητα, ἀλλ’ ἐν ἀσθενείᾳ καὶ φόβῳ καὶ προσδεήσει τῶν πλησίων ταῦτα γίγνεται)."

Many of these words in the Greek text are the same or close to the same as in PD1. So, that pairing evidently goes back to Epicurus himself.

ἀσθενεία: Definition: weakness, frailty; Usage: want of strength, weakness, illness, suffering, calamity, frailty. negating the root sthenos, "strength."

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

As some may know on this forum, I am in favor of the "idealist" position on the gods. The singular use in "That which is blissful and imperishable," to me, could describe an individual's conception of what the god is or should be. We each construct our image of the god in our mind by continually imagining the highest blissful state embodied in human form, imperishable because it has no existence other than our conception, formed of appropriate images. That conception in our mind is also not subject to fear or partiality nor does it trouble anyone.

Okay, that might be pushing it, I admit. That said, Epicurus's explanation within the Letter to Herodotus shows us exactly what the second half of PD1 means. I find it very interesting that troubles, anxieties, and feelings of anger and partiality are plural. The phrase is "feelings of anger and partiality." Keeping that "feelings" in mind is important. The god is not troubled by "feelings of anger and partiality." The primary - maybe only - feeling it has is the highest bliss, and it is unable to experience deterioration.

Lucretius also tells us that such a being does not exist in our world, in our cosmos. They can/could only exist "between worlds," between the pockets of order within the larger universe, within The All (the universe).

I also find the scholion interesting in its use of θεωρητούς which is related to the word used in the "characteristics of the sage": "ἐν ταῖς θεωρίαις" which I have interpreted as "(They shall enjoy themselves more) in contemplation." Yonge is the only one to take this route: "he will find more pleasure than other men in speculations." But if one can contemplate a being that is completely blissful and imperishable, why wouldn't the Epicurean sage enjoy contemplation more than the average member of the hoi polloi. Here is my reasoning for this interpretation:

[Epicurean Sage - ...enjoy themselves more than others in contemplation](#)

Hicks: He will take more delight than other men in state festivals. Yonge: ...and he will find more pleasure than other men in speculations. Yonge appears to...
sites.google.com

That's all for now. I may head over the new PD2 thread now!

Post by “Kalosyni” of June 14, 2025 at 11:17 AM

A [recent post](#) regarding the Tetrpharmakos in the thread "Tsouna's On Choices and Avoidances", opened up a question for me regarding [PD01](#)...and which it seems we can have 3 positions:

- 1) it is speaking about the nature of gods
- 2) it is speaking about the conception of the idea of gods
- 3) it is speaking about the nature of a wise man

And since the translations do not use the word "god" or "gods"...I am wondering where everyone stands on this now?

Post by “Kalosyni” of June 14, 2025 at 11:23 AM

And [PD01](#) seems to force one to use inductive reasoning, don't you think?

Post by “Don” of June 14, 2025 at 2:31 PM

I think it can go a couple different ways. From the human, mortal perspective, if one cultivates and ingrains The Four principles along with an on-going study of the philosophy, one can be a blessed one, makarios (remember the same Greek word used in the Beatitudes), whose understanding of the nature of things is incorruptible.

That's one way an interpretation could go of [PD01](#).

Post by “Bryan” of June 14, 2025 at 2:44 PM

I agree Don, I think both blessedness (i.e., contentment) and indestructibility are necessary qualities of gods. These qualities serve as examples for us -- but our limits in both regards are

fully acknowledged, per Philódēmos:

"...the **intimacy** arising from necessities, in regards to association, gives the emotions over to [that intimacy]: for maintaining intimacy, while existing [together], is not possible without any mixture [of emotions]. Indeed, certainly for us, who are weak and have further need for the necessary things of friendship..."

...χρειωδῶν ἡ **συμφυλία** π[ρὸς τὴν] συνανα[σ]τροφὴν αὐτῆι τὰ πάθη παρ[αδί]δωσιν. οὐ γὰρ δυνατὸν ἔχειν τὴν συμφυλίαν ἄνε[υ] πάσης ἐπιμειξίας ὄντας. ἀμέλει δὲ κ(αὶ) ἐφ' ἡμῶν τῶν ἀσθενῶν κ(αὶ) πρ(ο)σδεγομένων πρ[ὸς τ]ὰ [χρ]ειώδη τ[ῆς] φιλίας
Philodemus, On The Gods, Book 3, P.Herc. 152, fr. 9 (87)

Philódēmos directly connects human weakness with our need for friendship. While discussing the importance of mutual friendship / intimacy (ἡ συμφυλία) he says that generosity is necessary.