

PD03 - Best Translation of PD3 To Feature At EpicureanFriends?

Post by "Cassius" of July 17, 2023 at 9:19 AM

The following post is one of a series so that we can get our collection of [the main list of Principal Doctrines under the "Texts" section](#) in better shape. 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 [PD03](#) currently featured here in our Texts section is that of Cyril Bailey from his [Extant Remains](#):

[PD03](#). The limit of quantity in pleasures is the removal of all that is painful. Wherever pleasure is present, as long as it is there, there is neither pain of body, nor of mind, nor of both at once.

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

Bailey: 3. The limit of quantity in pleasures is the removal of all that is painful. Wherever pleasure is present, as long as it is there, there is neither pain of body, nor of mind, nor of both at once.

ΟΡΟΣ ΤΟΥ ΜΕΓΕΘΟΥΣ ΤΩΝ ΗΔΟΝΩΝ Η ΠΑΝΤΟΣ ΤΟΥ ΑΛΓΟΥΝΤΟΣ ΥΠΕΞΑΙΡΕΣΙΣ. ΟΠΟΥ Δ' ΑΝ ΤΟ ΗΔΟΜΕΝΟΝ ΕΝΗ ΚΑΘ' ΟΝ ΑΝ ΧΡΟΝΟΝ Η ΟΥΚ ΕΣΤΙ ΤΟ ΑΛΓΟΥΝ Η ΛΥΠΟΥΜΕΝΟΝ Η ΤΟ ΣΥΝΑΜΦΟΤΕΡΟΝ.

"The limit of great pleasures is the removal of everything which can give pain. And where pleasure is, as long as it lasts, that which gives pain, or that which feels pain, or both of them, are absent." Yonge (1853)

"The magnitude of pleasures is limited by the removal of all pain. Wherever there is pleasure, so long as it is present, there is no pain either of body or of mind or both." Hicks (1910)

"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." Hicks (1925)

“The limit of quantity in pleasures is the removal of all that is painful. Wherever pleasure is present, as long as it is there, there is neither pain of body nor of mind, nor of both at once.” Bailey (1926)

“The removal of all pain is the limit of the magnitude of pleasures. And wherever the experience of pleasure is present, so long as it prevails, there is no pain or distress or a combination of them.” De Witt, Epicurus and His Philosophy 226, 241 (1954)

“The removal of all that causes pain marks the boundary of pleasure. Wherever pleasure is present and as long as it continues, there is neither suffering nor grieving nor both together.” Geer (1964)

“The removal of all pain is the limit of the magnitude of pleasures. Wherever pleasure is present, as long as it is there, pain or distress or their combination is absent.” Long, The Hellenistic Philosophers 115 (1987)

“The limit of the extent of pleasure is the removal of all pain. Wherever pleasure is present, for however long a time, there can be no pain or grief, or both of these.” O'Connor (1993)

“The removal of all feeling of pain is the limit of the magnitude of pleasures. Wherever a pleasurable feeling is present, for as long as it is present, there is neither a feeling of pain nor a feeling of distress, nor both together.” Inwood & Gerson (1994)

“Pleasure reaches its maximum limit at the removal of all sources of pain. When such pleasure is present, for as long as it lasts, there is no cause of physical nor mental pain present – nor of both together.” Anderson (2004)

“Pleasure has its <upper> limit in the removal of everything that produces pain. For, wherever that which produces pleasure resides, for as long as it abides, there can be nothing that produces pain, grief, or both.” Makridis (2005)

“The limit of enjoyment is the removal of all pains. Wherever and for however long pleasure is present, there is neither bodily pain nor mental distress.” Saint-Andre (2008)

“The quantitative limit of pleasure is the elimination of all feelings of pain. Wherever the pleasurable state exists, there is neither bodily pain nor mental pain nor both together, so long as the state continues.” Strodach (2012)

“The limit of pleasure is reached with the removal of all pain. Whenever pleasure is present, and for however long, there is neither pain nor grief nor any combination of the two.” Mensch (2018)

“The limit to the magnitude of pleasures is the elimination of everything painful; and wherever there is pleasant feeling, so long as it lasts, there is no painful feeling or sorrow, or both together.” 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 17, 2023 at 9:21 AM

Here's the poll question:

Post by “Eikadistes” of July 17, 2023 at 9:49 AM

Oh, boy, [Don](#) it's that time!

[Cassius](#), Don and I have a bit of a project going to translate the KD and then ultimately include them in the KD Compilation, so I intend on sharing my attempts in these threads:

“The peak of pleasure [is] the excision of all pain; and wherever pleasure is, for the time that it is, there is neither discomfort, nor distress, nor both.”

Post by “Don” of July 17, 2023 at 9:59 AM

My older attempt at a formal equivalence translation:

"The limit of the magnitude of pleasure (is) the whole of the removal of that which causes pain. Where that which gives pleasure exists, during the time it is present, there is neither pain nor that which causes pain in body or mind nor either of these together."

Post by “Cassius” of July 17, 2023 at 10:59 AM

[Quote from Nate](#)

Cassius, Don and I have a bit of a project going to translate the KD and then ultimately include them in the KD Compilation, so I intend on sharing my attempts in these threads:

That is great to hear!

Post by “Eikadistes” of July 17, 2023 at 2:11 PM

[Quote from Don](#)

My older attempt at a formal equivalence translation:

"The limit of the magnitude of pleasure (is) the whole of the removal of that which causes pain. Where that which gives pleasure exists, during the time it is present, there is neither pain nor that which causes pain in body or mind nor either of these together."

Do we think that the exclusion of the *to be* infinitive is evident of Epicurus' style? Or was it an ancient Greek convention to omit verbs that are otherwise implied? This is my first time **really** deconstructing an ancient Greek-text word-by-word, and cross-reference the tenses and declensions and parts of speech, so I am curious this is Epicurus' (occasional) style.

I notice that we both made the same observation for this *Doxa*.

Post by “Don” of July 17, 2023 at 2:18 PM

[Quote from Nate](#)

Do we think that the exclusion of the *to be* infinitive is evident of Epicurus' style? Or was it an ancient Greek convention to omit verbs that are otherwise implied?

My understanding is that it was quite common to omit the copula in ancient Greek.

[Copula \(linguistics\) - Wikipedia](#)

Post by “Godfrey” of July 17, 2023 at 2:57 PM

I voted for Bailey, but also like the Hicks version. Which brings up the question: which is the best word choice, "quantity" or "magnitude"?

Also, I prefer the versions that begin with pleasure rather than removal of pain. Just seems that this arrangement emphasizes pleasure rather than absence of pain.

Post by “Don” of July 17, 2023 at 3:03 PM

[Quote from Godfrey](#)

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ὄρος limit, rule, standard. A boundary or marker stone Masc. 2nd declension.

μέγέθος of degree, greatness, magnitude.

Pleasure ἡδονῶν comes first in the text.

Post by “Cassius” of July 17, 2023 at 3:33 PM

[Quote from Godfrey](#)

Which brings up the question: which is the best word choice, "quantity" or "magnitude"?

You guys are the experts on the Greek but this is one instance where I am more drawn to Bailey's version.

To my ear "quantity of pleasure" emphasizes a particular dimension, which invites the listener to think that there is more going on here to consider. The more general "magnitude" variations more clearly invite the connotation of "best" or "height of pleasure." My reading of the issues is that Epicurus has something to say about both perspectives, just as he distinguishes between the "most" pleasure and the "best" pleasure in the letter to Menoeceus where the banqueter chooses not the largest quantity of food, but the most pleasant.

It may very well be that Epicurus was intending to address both perspectives, or maybe only one, so I think it will be interesting to see what you guys think as to the Greek. Perhaps quantity is exactly a bad choice because it is not in the text, or maybe it is a great choice because it is. All I know is that Bailey's "quantity" invites the discussion we are having now, which is important to have. A simple "the height of pleasure" or something to that effect would be more easy to interpret as "best" which to a new reader might be misleading.

Post by “Don” of July 17, 2023 at 4:48 PM

μέγεθος • (mégethos) n (genitive [μεγέθους](#) or [μεγέθεος](#)); [third declension](#)

1. [greatness, size](#)
 1. (always in [Homer](#)) [height](#)
 2. ([mathematics](#)) [magnitude](#)
 3. ([sound](#)) [loudness](#)
 4. [power](#)
 5. ([character](#)) [magnanimity](#)

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

The "limit" is that word that Epicurus uses to denote limits elsewhere and is the same word as that "boundary stone" that we've encountered before.

So it could be even something like "the limit of the amount of pleasure"

Post by “Eikadistes” of July 17, 2023 at 5:05 PM

[Quote from Cassius](#)

[Quote from Godfrey](#)

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I picked "the peak" for ὄρος τοῦ μεγέθους because ὄρος ("limit", "rule", "standard") is nearly-identical to the ancient Greek word ὄρος meaning "*mountain*", and Epicurus' employment of ὄρος would have invoked the image of a *mountain*, therein having created a comparison between the notion of "the greatest limit" with a *mountain*.

Additionally, in KD4, just one sentence later, Epicurus uses the word ἄκρον which **literally** means "mountain peak" to refer to the "peak" of severe pain, so I have additional reason to believe that ὄρος τοῦ μεγέθους, which literally means "the greatest limit" is actually a connotation to the ἄκρον or "mountain peak" mentioned immediately thereafter.

Post by "Don" of July 17, 2023 at 5:07 PM

And a mountain could be a metaphorical boundary marker, too.

Post by “Eikadistes” of July 17, 2023 at 5:09 PM

[Quote from Don](#)

And a mountain could be a metaphorical boundary marker, too.

That's a great point: that imagery might even convey the idea of a *summit*, which might be interesting if we consider the bottom of the mountain to be the *summit of pleasure* and the top of the mountain to be the *peak of pain*.

I'll keep that in mind and keep an eye out for "summit" or "some extent of a mountain" elsewhere.

Post by “Godfrey” of July 17, 2023 at 6:00 PM

Wouldn't the summit be the summit of pleasure/removal of pain and the bottom the "summit" of pain? At least that's how I read it from @Nate 's translation above.

Maybe the bottom could relate to katastematic pleasure.... But that might invite going down another rabbit hole, as it were.

Post by “Eikadistes” of July 17, 2023 at 6:03 PM

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Post by “Don” of July 17, 2023 at 7:07 PM

[Quote from Nate](#)

[Quote from Don](#)

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And this is *exactly* why I advocate for not reading the [Principal Doctrines](#) as discrete "sayings." They have to be read as a coherent text, or at least in sections. These metaphors and such that @Nate is finding or pointing out are/were completely lost if you read 1, 2, then 3 then 4. We have to read them as a text just like the letters.

Post by “Cassius” of July 17, 2023 at 7:40 PM

[Quote from Don](#)

We have to read them as a text just like the letters

Possibly better to represent it like the Bible with some or all sentences numbered in Superscript but divided into paragraphs again like Don said as one document/letter rather than a discrete numbered list.

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 *Kuriiai 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!)

Post by "Don" of July 18, 2023 at 8:36 AM

[Quote from Nate](#)

[Quote from Godfrey](#)

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Trivia: That peak that Nate referred to is ἀκρον akron which is also the name of a city in Ohio named because it was the highest point in the surrounding landscape.

"The city was founded by Simon Perkins and Paul Williams in 1825 along the Little Cuyahoga River at the summit of the developing Ohio and Erie Canal. The name is derived from the Ancient Greek word ἄκρον : ákron signifying a summit or high point." (Wikipedia)