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TO KAT' ENDEIAN ALGOYN  
AND EPICUREAN KATASTEMATIC PLEASURES

**Abstract.** In this article I wish to emphasize the significance of τὸ κατ' ἔνδειαν ἀλγοῦν, an expression appearing in our sources on Epicurean ethics which seems to have been neglected in the scholarly literature. On the strength of my findings I shall suggest a new interpretation of one category in the Epicurean division of pleasures, namely καταστηματική ἡδονή. I shall argue that within the katastematic pleasures a division is to be made between the removal of pain due to want and the removal of pain due to what is present. These two subgroups will then be identified with the division between katastematic pleasures concerning the body and katastematic pleasures concerning the soul respectively.

**Keywords:** Epicurus, pleasure, katastematic.

**Introduction**

Epicurus' theory of pleasures has been discussed by many scholars<sup>1</sup>, and yet numerous problems still remain. It is no surprise that until now no real attempt has been made to organize all of Epicurus' pleasures on the basis of their divisions and subdivisions and to present them as a complete and coherent system. This deficiency is due to disagreements among scholars even over the nature of very basic terms of Epicurean ethics such as *katastematic* and *kinetic*, including their exact meaning and the kind of pleasures constituting each group<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Out of the many studies of the Epicurean theory of pleasures one may mention J. Rist, *Epicurus: An Introduction*, J. C. B. Gosling & C. C. W. Taylor, *The Greeks on Pleasure*, G. Giannantoni, *Il piacere cinetico nell'etica epicurea*, P. Mitsis, *Epicurus' Ethical Theory*, J. Purinton, *Epicurus on the telos*, M. Stokes, *Cicero on Epicurean Pleasures*, G. Striker, *Epicurean Hedonism*, B. Nikolsky, *Epicurus On Pleasure*, J. Warren, *Epicurus and Democritean Ethics: An Archaeology of Ataraxia*.

<sup>2</sup> For a survey of the different views and approaches see B. Nikolsky, *Epicurus On Pleasure*, pp. 440–444.

In a recent article I have argued that *katastematic* and *kinetic* pleasures are to be identified with necessary and unnecessary pleasures respectively<sup>1</sup>. As the present paper is based on what has been said in that article and takes its conclusion as a starting-point, a few words are necessary as a proper background to what I am about to argue.

As against most of the scholarly literature, which regards *kinetic* and *katastematic* as terms concerned with states of motion as against states of stability respectively, I have argued that the focus should be turned on whether this or that pleasure has to do with removing pain or not<sup>2</sup>. Accordingly, what has to be understood by the terms *kinetic* and *katastematic* is not the element of movement as against the element of stability respectively but rather the *end*, or *purpose*, of each kind of pleasure<sup>3</sup>. Thus the *end* of a kinetic pleasure is the movement itself<sup>4</sup>, such as keeping on drinking after thirst has been quenched, and not the removal of pain. This claim necessarily redefines the meaning of *katastematic* pleasure too. Indeed, *katastematic* pleasure is no longer only the state of equilibrium where all pain has been removed<sup>5</sup>. This state is indeed its final stage, but a *katastematic* pleasure includes also the process towards this final stage. In other words, I reject what I call *The Process-Result Interpretation*, so prevalent in the secondary literature, according to which the process towards the removal of pain is identified with kinetic pleasure and the result where all pain has been removed is identified with *katastematic* pleasure. In my view, the process and the result of removing pain are both parts of a *katastematic* pleasure, while kinetic pleasure means satisfying a desire which does not remove pain. Since for Epicurus removing pain is a necessary and sufficient condition for happiness<sup>6</sup>, a *katastematic* pleasure which, according to my view, is a pleasure which is wholly concerned with removing pain alone, happens to be identified with a necessary pleasure. This kind of pleasure with its subdivisions will be my subject in this paper.

In what follows I wish to take this view a step further and argue that the criterion by which it is determined whether *katastematic* pleasures concern the body or the soul is the origin and essence of the pain removed. Pain can be due to what is lacking or due to what is present. *Katastematic* pleasure concerning the body removes pain due to what is lacking, while *katastematic* pleasure concerning the soul removes pain due to what is present (detailed explanation in the following). I base my thesis on an expression which appears

<sup>1</sup> See Y. Liebersohn, *Epicurus' "Kinetic" and "Katastematic" Pleasures. A Reappraisal*.

<sup>2</sup> For a similar view see also D. Konstan's innovative paper, *Epicurean Happiness: A Pigs Life? On the meaning of the terms kinetic and katastematic in such a theory and their relation to state and movement* see Y. Liebersohn, *"Kinetic" and "Katastematic" Pleasures. A Reappraisal*, p. 281 and n. 34.

<sup>3</sup> Perhaps the words *end* and *purpose* are not so appropriate (hence italics) since for Epicurus pleasure *is* end. Yet by using the term *end* I refer more to the content of each pleasure. It can be removing pain or not.

<sup>4</sup> Which means that it has no external end.

<sup>5</sup> See τὸ εὐσταθὲς σαρκὸς κατάστημα (in: Plutarch, *A Pleasant Life Impossible* 1089d).

<sup>6</sup> See *The Letter to Menoecus* 128 & 131.

in our sources concerning the Epicurean theory of pleasures τὸ κατ' ἔνδειαν ἀλγοῦν<sup>1</sup>.

I would like to preface the presentation of my argument with three important clarifications.

1. The relation between desires and pleasures: it is my contention, as well as my working hypothesis, that Epicurus' taxonomy of desires can and should be applicable to pleasures as well as desires<sup>2</sup>. Pleasures and desires surely differ, but are nevertheless related in that a satisfied desire is pleasure and a desire which is not satisfied becomes, naturally enough, a pain. I would go even further and claim that pleasure is nothing but the satisfaction of desire, be it *real* or *empty*<sup>3</sup>, and be it for acquiring or avoiding. Even a sudden and unexpected pleasure should be taken as a satisfaction of a desire, since the very fact that one feels a pleasure means that a desire has been satisfied.

2. *Pleasure which removes pain* and *pleasure which does not remove pain*: these phrases are to be understood as referring only to *real* or *legitimate* pain. Every desire incurs pain so long as it is not satisfied; but only necessary desires – those which have their origin in a legitimate pain – ought to be satisfied. Sating hunger removes a legitimate bodily pain. Still desiring to eat after sating hunger induces further pain, but this pain is not legitimate since its origin is not in the body itself, and hence should not be removed by satisfying it<sup>4</sup>. The desire itself should be removed, through understanding that it is not necessary<sup>5</sup>. The phrase *remove pain* in this paper always refers to real pain<sup>6</sup>. Epicurus himself, it should be noted, simply refers to *pain* and which pain he is referring to should be decided according to context<sup>7</sup>.

3. Epicurus' style of writing: Epicurus is well-known for his contempt of polished style and rhetoric in general. This does not, however, exclude the possibility that he was exact. He may also have disguised certain divisions and subdivisions in writings directed at the layman, such as the *Letter to Menoeceus* and the *Kyriai Doxai*. I shall be analysing a few sentences from these works which suggest that this is the case. Epicurus would seem to have been very exact, at least when he wished to be so<sup>8</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> In what follows I do not claim that this expression was first coined by Epicurus nor even that Epicurus was the first to give it its special meaning. My claim is restricted to the fact that with Epicurus this term receives its appropriate place within his system.

<sup>2</sup> See also R. Woolf, *Pleasure and Desire*, who also uses the taxonomy of desires at *Menoec.* 127 when he discusses pleasures.

<sup>3</sup> See Cic. *De Finibus* I, 43–45 and see n. 6 below.

<sup>4</sup> Unless as a *varietas*. See Cic. *De Finibus* I, 38 & II, 10, Sen. *Ep.* 66, 46, *Kyriai Doxai* 18.

<sup>5</sup> See *Kyriai Doxai* 10–11, 18, 20 and esp. 30.

<sup>6</sup> Unnecessary desire is not identical to *empty* desire since it may still be natural. Yet natural but unnecessary desire is a subdivision beyond the scope of this paper.

<sup>7</sup> See, for example, *Kyriai Doxai* 26. By context it is clear that the word ἀλγος refers to pain whose origin is something which by nature is missing (natural and necessary).

<sup>8</sup> There are times when Epicurus seems not to be interested in exactness, as in the case of alternating apparently indiscriminately between pleasure and desires. See also his terminology concerning pain, where he alternates between πόνος and ἀλγηδών. See also DL X.137 and Sext. *Emp. Adv. Math.* XI, 96 for pleasures and pains respectively.

### Sources and Method

Our main sources for Epicurean ethics are three. The *Letter to Menoeceus* in Diogenes Laertius X.122–135; a collection of forty mainly ethical sentences known as *Kyriai Doxai* in Diogenes Laertius X.139–154; and another collection of eighty–one sentences known as *Sententiae Vaticanae* which deal with ethical and other issues. Apart from these sources, which at least purport to give us Epicurus' own words or those of Epicureans, we have other sources, of which some are plainly hostile, such as Plutarch's *Non posse*, and *Adversus Colotem*, and some, although not blatantly hostile, are somewhat unsympathetic to Epicurean philosophy, such as Cicero's *De Finibus* and *De Natura Deorum*. There are also sporadic references to Epicurean ethics in Diogenes Laertius in parts which are not explicitly from Epicurus' letters (X.1–34, 117–121, 136–138); and lastly, Porphyry, Athenaeus, and Lucretius, especially in the prefaces to the various books of *De Rerum Natura*.

Because these sources are far from unanimous, to say the least<sup>1</sup>, it is methodologically sound practice to begin with a relatively safe source, the *Letter to Menoeceus*. No one has ever challenged the authenticity of this letter, and the fact that it deals exclusively and in an unusually clear style with ethics makes it a natural starting–point. All other sources should be considered in light of this letter. Let us turn, therefore, to the *Letter to Menoeceus* 127 and divide it into its parts:

Ἀναλογιστέον δὲ ὡς τῶν ἐπιθυμιῶν

1. αἱ μὲν εἰσι φυσικαί, αἱ δὲ κεναί

2. καὶ τῶν φυσικῶν αἱ μὲν ἀναγκαῖαι, αἱ δὲ φυσικαὶ μόνον·

3. τῶν δ' ἀναγκαίων

A. αἱ μὲν πρὸς εὐδαιμονίαν εἰσὶν ἀναγκαῖαι,

B. αἱ δὲ πρὸς τὴν τοῦ σώματος ἀοχλησίαν  
{sc. εἰσὶν ἀναγκαῖαι}

C. αἱ δὲ πρὸς αὐτὸ τὸ ζῆν {sc. εἰσὶν ἀναγκαῖαι}.

*One must reckon that of desires*<sup>[2]</sup>

1. *some are natural, others groundless (= empty);*

2. *and of the natural some are necessary and some merely natural;*

3. *and of the necessary*

*A. some are necessary for happiness*

*B. and some {are necessary} for freeing the body from troubles*

<sup>1</sup> Because of the special and extremely problematic and confusing state of our sources concerning Epicurus' philosophy one cannot ask for *regular* strict textual proofs as is required concerning other philosophers. In my view a proof with what concerns Epicurus has to be based on a theory which can reasonably and adequately explain as much sources and citations as possible (and no theory can explain all citations and sources) thus presenting a comprehensive system (which I believe Epicurus presented).

<sup>2</sup> On the relation between the taxonomy of desires and pleasures see p. 7 above.

C. and some for life itself.<sup>1</sup>

This passage gives the reader what seems to be a full scheme of the choice between desires, and, indeed, this is the right place for such a scheme, namely a short guide which ought to classify all kinds of human desires. Yet the exact content of each kind of desires and the exact hierarchy between them seem to be missing. One is at a loss in trying to apply to this division other divisions and terms which are known to us from other sources, such as pleasures concerning the body and pleasures concerning the soul, and above all *kinetic* and *katastematic*. This omission, however, should not surprise us. This letter, though sent to Epicurus' disciple Menoeceus, is something of a *protreptikos logos* aimed at attracting the not-yet Epicurean into the Epicurean school<sup>2</sup>, and this is, perhaps, why it does not use further divisions and technical terms<sup>3</sup>. On the other hand, the devoted Epicurean who will read this letter would be able to supply for each group of desires its exact and appropriate terminology concerning its pleasures. This *supplying* is one of my aims in this paper.

Our passage presents us with a descending hierarchy. The first two groups mention *empty*<sup>4</sup> desires as the first group and *natural but unnecessary desires* as the second. Common to both is the fact that they do not remove pain. According to my view<sup>5</sup> these refer to kinetic pleasures and hence need not concern us here. The third group is of necessary desires, which accordingly are to be referred to *katastematic pleasures*. This third group will be analyzed here.

Here we find a triple division whose components, although different from each other, all share one characteristic: the necessity of removing pain without which happiness is impossible. Some questions need to be asked. What do the words πρὸς εὐδαιμονίαν (A) mean? Do they imply that the two other kinds of desires are necessary but not πρὸς εὐδαιμονίαν? If so, what are they

<sup>1</sup> Translation taken from B. Inwood & L. P. Gerson, *The Epicurus Reader: Selected Writings and Testimonia*.

<sup>2</sup> See C. Bailey, *Epicurus: The Extant Remains*, p. 327: *The letter is not intended, like that of Herodotus, for the use of advanced students, but is a simple and straightforward exposition for the general reader. It is in fact an exoteric work, as Aristotle might have called it [...] It is clear that however devoted a disciple Menoeceus may have been, the letter was intended to reach a wider public who might still be under the influence of an erroneous philosophy or of the unsupported maxims and opinions of popular thought.* See also J. E. Heßler, *Epikur. Brief an Menoikeus: Edition, Übersetzung, Einleitung und Kommentar*, p. 40: *Der Menoikeusbrief Epikurs wird im Allgemeinen als protreptischer Text betrachtet.*

<sup>3</sup> One should not dismiss the possibility that Epicurus distinguished between a division concerning desires and division concerning pleasures although the second division corresponds the first. Thus terms such as *empty* and *necessary* refer to the division concerning desires while kinetic and *katastematic* refer to the division concerning the soul.

<sup>4</sup> The use of *empty* (in Inwood's translation above *groundless*) instead of *unnatural* which obviously is what is meant by this term is intended to supply the reason *why* these desires are unnatural: namely, that they do not come from a real object. The desire *qua* desire is indeed an outcome of an εἶδωλον which hits one of our sense organs, but the atoms of which this εἶδωλον is composed do not come from a real object. Hence this desire (and apparently the pleasure which satisfies this desire) is *empty*. A natural desire is, therefore, a desire which has its origin in a real object. See J. Annas, *The Morality of Happiness*, pp. 190–192 for an interesting discussion of this issue. See also n. 6 on p. 7 above.

<sup>5</sup> See p. 6 above.

necessary for? It may already be suggested from the word  $\sigma\omega\mu\alpha$  being specified in B that not all the kinds are necessary with regard to the  $\sigma\omega\mu\alpha$ . If, however, the necessary desires are divided with regard to body and soul, this would account for only two of the three types. Furthermore, C contains the somewhat vague expression  $\pi\rho\acute{\omicron}\varsigma\ \alpha\upsilon\tau\acute{\omicron}\ \tau\acute{\omicron}\ \zeta\eta\nu$ . Other Epicurean texts may help sort out the problem. Let us therefore turn to *Kyriai Doxae*.

### $\tau\acute{\omicron}\ \kappa\alpha\tau'\ \acute{\epsilon}\nu\delta\epsilon\iota\alpha\nu\ \acute{\alpha}\lambda\gamma\omicron\upsilon\nu$ and the *KD*

While the *Letter to Menoecus* is universally accepted as a work of Epicurus, there is no such unanimity with regard to the *Kyriai Doxai*. The ancients did not doubt that Epicurus himself was the author, but this was called into question in the 17<sup>th</sup> century by one of the predominant Epicureans of the age, Pierre Gassendi, and a debate has raged ever since. Without going into this dispute<sup>1</sup>, whoever the author of the *Kyriai Doxai* in their present form may be, many of its *doxai* certainly derive from lost books of Epicurus. Some sentences may easily be identified as quotations, but others seem to be paraphrases, reflecting to a greater or lesser extent an original Epicurean thought. Even a less accurate paraphrase may be of use to the modern scholar if it preserves a technical expression. Moreover, if such a technical expression appears in several different contexts, it may be assumed to originate with Epicurus himself. The expression may not always be used by the *Kyriai Doxai* author in its original meaning, but it is still an essential element to be considered in any modern reconstruction. Such an expression, I argue, is  $\tau\acute{\omicron}\ \kappa\alpha\tau'\ \acute{\epsilon}\nu\delta\epsilon\iota\alpha\nu\ \acute{\alpha}\lambda\gamma\omicron\upsilon\nu$  which may be translated as *pain due to want*<sup>2</sup>.

This expression deals evidently with a *katastematic* pleasure, since a pleasure the aim of which is to replenish a deficiency (= removing pain), is necessary, and according to our working hypothesis a necessary pleasure (= removing pain) is a *katastematic* pleasure. What is left to find out, therefore, is whether this expression refers to a *katastematic* pleasure concerning the body or to a *katastematic* pleasure concerning the soul. In both places where the expression appears in the *Kyriai Doxai*, and another which appears in the *Letter to Menoecus*, the context clearly concerns the body.

1. *Kyriai Doxai* 18 deals with the *katastematic* pleasure, since its aim is removing pain. The sentence in its whole is divided into a pain concerning the body and a pain concerning the soul, but at this stage I wish to concentrate on the first part alone, on pain concerning the body, which reads as follows:

Οὐκ ἐπαύξεται ἐν τῇ σαρκὶ ἢ ἡδονή, ἐπειδὴν  
ἅπαξ τὸ κατ' ἔνδειαν ἀλγοῦν ἐξαιρεθῆ, ἀλλὰ  
μόνον ποικίλλεται.

<sup>1</sup> See C. Bailey, *Epicurus: The Extant Remains*, pp. 344–347.

<sup>2</sup> Sometimes we may find a similar and somewhat abbreviated expression such as  $\pi\rho\acute{\omicron}\varsigma\ \acute{\epsilon}\nu\delta\acute{\epsilon}\omicron\nu$ . See *Men.* 128 and p. 17 below. This term by itself is by no means an original invention of Epicurus. It appears already in Arist. *Magna Moralia* II, 7. 1205b20ff. See also G. Striker, *Epicurean hedonism*, p. 206, n. 11. Yet Epicurus gives this term a completely new meaning and function in his theory of pleasures.

*The pleasure in the flesh is not increased, when once the pain due to want is removed, but is only varied.*

My emphases highlight the fact that the pain in this sentence pertains to the body and is due to want. Let us turn to another saying<sup>1</sup>.

2. The expression τὸ κατ' ἔνδειαν ἀλγοῦν again refers to necessary bodily pleasure in the *Letter to Menoecus* 130:

οἱ τε λιτοὶ χυλοὶ ἴσην πολυτελεῖ διαίτη τὴν  
ἡδονὴν ἐπιφέρουσιν, ὅταν ἅπαν τὸ ἀλγοῦν  
κατ' ἔνδειαν ἐξαιρεθῆ<sup>2</sup>

*And so plain savours bring us a pleasure equal to a luxurious diet, when all the pain due to want is removed.*

In this sentence, again, the expression τὸ ἀλγοῦν κατ' ἔνδειαν refers to the katastematic pleasure (= necessary pleasure) concerning the body.

3. Our final quotation brings us back to the *Kyriai Doxai*, this time to *Kyriai Doxai* 21, and I shall divide it into its parts according to my analysis below:

Ὁ τὰ πέρατα τοῦ βίου κατειδῶς οἶδεν, ὡς  
εὐπόριστόν ἐστι  
1. τὸ <τὸ> ἀλγοῦν κατ' ἔνδειαν ἐξαιροῦν καὶ  
2. τὸ τὸν ὅλον βίον παντελεῖ καθιστάν·  
ὥστε οὐδὲν προσδεῖται πραγμάτων ἀγῶνας  
κεκτημένων.

*He who has learned the limits of life knows that it is easy to obtain*

*1. that which removes the pain due to want and  
2. that which makes the whole of life complete;  
so that there is no need for actions which involve competitions.*

Between the opening and ending of this aphorism are two statements which I argue are concerned respectively with pleasures concerning the body and pleasures which pertain to the soul<sup>3</sup>. *Kyriai Doxai* 18 and the *Letter to Menoecus* 130 (above) clearly connect τὸ ἀλγοῦν κατ' ἔνδειαν with pain

<sup>1</sup> I shall deal with the second part of *Kyriai Doxai* 18 later (p. 14 below). The verb ποικίλλεται is interesting in itself, but it refers to an unnecessary pleasure (= kinetic pleasure) which is beyond the scope of this paper.

<sup>2</sup> The context of these sections is evidently pleasures concerning the body. Thus, both terms φυσικόν and κενόν – which are mentioned a line earlier – are also to be understood here with regard to pleasures concerning the body: φυσικόν refers to necessary bodily pleasures (e.g. drinking up to and including the state where thirst is quenched); κενόν refers to unnecessary bodily pleasures (e.g. continuing to drink after thirst has been quenched).

<sup>3</sup> Some scholars interpret this aphorism as referring wholly to pleasure concerning the body alone. See e.g. C. Bailey, *Epicurus: The Extant Remains*, p. 99 who translates: *that which removes the pain due to want and makes the whole of life complete is easy to obtain*. Yet it is difficult to understand how, according to the Epicurean view, removing pains concerning the body alone can make one's whole life perfect.

concerning the body, while the second statement alludes to the superiority of the pleasures concerning the soul<sup>1</sup>. The expression τὸ τὸν ὅλον βίον παντελεῖ καθιστάν is similar to another one in *Kyriai Doxai* which pertains to a pleasure concerning the soul<sup>2</sup>.

The three passages<sup>3</sup> adduced above indicate, therefore, that the expression <τὸ> ἀλγοῦν κατ' ἔνδειαν ἐξαιροῦν pertains to necessary (= katastematic) pleasures concerning the body.

### An interim conclusion

The expression τὸ κατ' ἔνδειαν ἀλγοῦν has been shown to pertain to katastematic pleasures concerning the body. This inevitably leads to the question whether there are not katastematic pleasures concerning the soul. If a katastematic pleasure removes pain, and there are pains of the soul which need to be removed<sup>4</sup>, it would follow that there are katastematic pleasures concerning the soul.

Here I come to the main point of this paper. I shall first briefly describe it, and then explain it in detail. A katastematic pleasure pertains to the removal of pain, but not every pain is due to want. The removal of pain due to want is, as I have argued, a katastematic pleasure concerning the body<sup>5</sup>. I shall now argue that the removal of pain not due to want is a katastematic pleasure concerning the soul. The nature of a necessary (= katastematic) pleasure<sup>6</sup> not pertaining to the removal of want is a matter for conjecture. Here is my proposal.

<sup>1</sup> See e.g. DL X.137: οὕτως οὖν καὶ μείζονας ἡδονὰς εἶναι τῆς ψυχῆς (*In this way also he holds mental pleasures to be greater than those of the body*), *Kyriai Doxai* 18: [...] τῆς δὲ διανοίας [...] τοῦς μεγίστους φόβους [...]. See however C. Bailey, *Lucretius, De Rerum Natura*, p. 61: *What then are the pleasures which give the maximum? Epicurus does not hesitate to state that they are the pleasures of the body.* For a detailed discussion of the fragment used by Bailey in support of his statement (*Epicurus apud Athen.* xii. 546e (= Usener fr. 67)), see J. Purinton, *Epicurus on the telos*.

<sup>2</sup> See *Kyriai Doxai* 27: εἰς τὴν τοῦ ὅλου βίου μακαριότητα. The context deals with friendship, a pleasure concerning the soul. See my discussion on pp. 13–14 below.

<sup>3</sup> One may add here Diogenes of Oinoanda fr. 48. II. 1–10: διὸ εἶδη τρία τῶν ἀλλαγμάτων – καὶ τοῦ μὲν ἀπὸ ἐνδείας συμβαίνοντος ἡμῖν, τοῦ δ' ἀπὸ τιμμάτων καὶ τῶν ὀστέων εἴτε κατὰ πληγὰς εἴτε ἀδήλως, τοῦ δ' ἀπὸ νόσων πάντων ἐστὶ διαφεύγειν ἐφ' ὅσον ἀνθρώπου φύσις δύναται φεγγεῖν. (*Therefore three kinds of pains – one coming to us from want, another from sprains and the bones (whether through blows or imperceptibly), another from diseases – it is in the power of all to escape, in so far as man's nature is able to avoid them.*, transl. M. F. Smith, *The Epicurean Inscription*, p. 392). Here again the context in which *pain due to want* appears is clearly a bodily pain. See also the previous fragment (47) which deals with bodily pain and the famous Epicurean argument that a bodily pain, if severe, is short-lived.

<sup>4</sup> See DL X.136, *Menoec.* 128. DL X.136 is one of the most difficult testimonies for Epicurus' ethics (for an original interpretation of this fragment see B. Nikolsky, *Epicurus On Pleasure*, pp. 455–460). Yet it is clear enough that Epicurus did draw a line between pleasures concerning the body and pleasures concerning the soul as well as between kinetic pleasures and katastematic pleasures. While there seems to be a difficulty with kinetic pleasures in that Epicurus uses two terms – εὐφροσύνη and χαρὰ – both of which seem to be concerning the soul (on this see D. Wolfsdorf, *Epicurus on Eὐφροσύνη and Ἐνέργεια*), there is no dispute that concerning katastematic pleasures the division between body and soul refers to ἀπονία and ἀταραξία respectively.

<sup>5</sup> It is my contention that for Epicurus there is no necessary pleasure (i.e. a pleasure which removes [real/legitimate] pain) concerning the body which is not *due to want* (hunger is caused by the lack of food; headaches, to give another example, may be caused by a lack of sleep).

<sup>6</sup> This emphasis on *necessary pleasure* is intended to exclude unnecessary (although natural) pleasures concerning the body, such as continuing to drink after thirst has been quenched. Such a pleasure does not pertain to a want, and is, by definition, unnecessary.



I suggest that the Epicurean concept of pain due to want, which refers exclusively to necessary (= katastematic) pleasures concerning the body, has a parallel in pain due to what is present<sup>1</sup> – which refers to necessary pleasures concerning the soul. Logically speaking, there can be only two options about the origin of pain. It is either because an absence of something causes pain, or because the presence of something causes pain. Hence in the first place one should *fill* what is missing (= remove the absence), while in the second place one should *change* what is already there (= remove the presence). Thus I argue that Epicurus considered katastematic bodily pleasure to be that which removes pain due to want, by *filling* what is missing<sup>2</sup> while katastematic pleasure of the soul removes pain due to what is present, by *replacing* what is present. The phrases *pain due to what is present* and *replacing what is present* may be better understood after a detailed examination of katastematic pleasures and the distinction between those of the body and those of the soul.

### **Katastematic pleasures: Between *filling what is lacking* and *replacing what is present***

According to Epicurus, katastematic pleasures concerning the soul consist mainly of philosophy and friendship<sup>3</sup>. If a katastematic pleasure consists of removing pain, philosophy and friendship must remove some kind of pain, but this pain has nothing to do with a lack of anything. The Epicurean theory of nature, man and the world (= philosophy<sup>4</sup>) will not remove any lack for the simple reason that no one lacks a theory or outlook concerning the world. Epicurean philosophy may change one's outlook, and this *changing what is present* may be considered *removing pain* along with the removal of painful false opinions – such as the belief in gods who punish men after death, one of the main causes of *ταραχή*, disturbance. This belief is replaced by another, that there is nothing after death and even death itself is nothing<sup>5</sup>, and this is a great relief<sup>6</sup>. The same goes for friendship. The struggle for status and

<sup>1</sup> Perhaps this kind of pain had a technical formula parallel to τὸ κατ' ἔνδειαν ἀλγοῦν, but if there were such a formula it has not survived. It seems more probable, however, that Epicurus felt the need for a formula to emphasize κατ' ἔνδειαν only when dealing with necessary pleasures concerning the body, but not with regard to pain concerning the soul.

<sup>2</sup> This point has been emphasized by B. Nikolsky, *Epicurus On Pleasure*, p. 445 who calls it *restoration or preservation of the natural state of the organism*. Nikolsky regards this kind of pleasure to be the standard concept of pleasure among philosophers before Epicurus. I argue that for Epicurus this is only one type of pleasure: a necessary pleasure concerning the body.

<sup>3</sup> While there are no explicit statements that philosophy and friendship are necessary pleasures concerning the soul, it is not hard to deduce. First, and most obviously, they are pleasures not concerning the body. Second, as I shall show in what follows, they remove (real) pain, and whatever removes (real) pain is necessary (see p. 6 above). For philosophy see Porphyry, *Ad Marcellam* 31 (= Usener fr. 221), for friendship see *Kyriai Doxai* 28. See also *Sententiae Vaticanae* 23, 78, *Kyriai Doxai* 18, 27, Cic. *De Finibus*, II. 65–70. For a different view concerning pleasures concerning the soul see D. Wolfsdorf, *Epicurus on Εὐφροσύνη and Ἐνέργεια*, pp. 224–226.

<sup>4</sup> Though Epicurus himself calls it *physiology*. See especially *Kyriai Doxai* 11, 12, *Sententiae Vaticanae* 45.

<sup>5</sup> See especially *Kyriai Doxai* 2, *Menoec.* 124–126. See also D. Wolfsdorf, *Pleasure in Ancient Greek Philosophy*, pp. 172–173.

<sup>6</sup> As we all know, a pain concerning the soul hurts far more than a pain concerning the body. See Cic. *De Finibus* I, 56 and *Kyriai Doxai* 18, second part of sentence.

honours<sup>1</sup> is painful and distressing, but the cause is not a real lack of anything. Epicurus provides an alternative way of life to this miserable citizen. The Epicurean community comprises members who have each chosen to renounce rivalry and social status, replacing them with mutual cooperation and a sense of security. The old disturbance is replaced by calm<sup>2</sup>. Once again, a great pain is removed, a pain not due to want, but due to what is present<sup>3</sup>. While philosophy changes one's thinking, friendship changes one's social environment.

Now that katastematic pleasures of the body and of the soul have been distinguished, it is time to return to *Kyriai Doxai* 18 to focus on the second part of that saying, where, according to my analysis, the katastematic pleasure of the soul appears:

Οὐκ ἀπαύξεται ἐν τῇ σαρκὶ ἡ ἡδονή, ἐπειδὴν ἄπαξ τὸ κατ' ἔνδειαν ἀλγοῦν ἐξαιρεθῆ, ἀλλὰ μόνον ποικίλλεται. τῆς δὲ διανοίας τὸ πέρασ τὸ κατὰ τὴν ἡδονὴν ἀπεγένησεν ἢ τε τούτων αὐτῶν ἐκλόγισις καὶ τῶν ὁμογενῶν τούτοις, ὅσα τοὺς μεγίστους φόβους παρεσκεύαζε τῇ διανοίᾳ.

*The pleasure in the flesh is not increased, when once the pain due to want is removed but is only varied: and the limit as regards pleasure in the mind is begotten by the reasoned understanding of these very pleasures and of the emotions akin to them, which used to cause the greatest fear to the mind.*

The belief that pleasure can be increased causes misery and pain. However, the fear may be dispelled *by the reasoned understanding of these very pleasures and of the emotions akin to them, which used to cause the greatest fear to the mind*, and this I would interpret as the removal of fear by a change of opinion. The new opinion, or rather knowledge, is that after pain has been removed (= filling the lack), pleasures concerning the body (the first part of the saying) can only be varied, and it is by acting on this new opinion that one can be happy<sup>4</sup>. This then is an example of the removal of a pain due to what is present.

<sup>1</sup> For friendship and honour as counterparts see also Cicero's *De Amicitia* 34: *pestem enim nullam maiorem esse amicitii quam in plerisque pecuniae cupiditatem, in optimis quibusque honoris certamen et gloriae (for while with the generality of men, the greatest bane of friendship is the lust for money, with the most worthy men it is the strife for preferment and glory).*

<sup>2</sup> See *Kyriai Doxai* 40, *Sententiae Vaticanae* 34.

<sup>3</sup> The difference between pain due to want and pain the origin of which is not want but rather something which is present can be analysed in another way. In what concerns hunger, thirst and cold (= bodily deficiency) everyone is well aware of the lack, while in what concerns the soul, even if there is a lack of the right way of thinking, a man – as long as he sticks to his old views – is not aware of it. After all, there is no one who does not have some world-view. Hence, even if he lacks the real world-view, and in consequence of it he suffers from a lack, still Epicurus would not regard this situation as a pain due to want, since the *want* is not conscious.

<sup>4</sup> The same goes for friendship, of course.

It is now time to return to the triplet of necessary desires, which we have identified with katastematic pleasures, appearing in the *Letter to Menoeceus* 127<sup>1</sup>.

3. τῶν δ' ἀναγκαίων

A. αἱ μὲν πρὸς εὐδαιμονίαν εἰσὶν ἀναγκαῖαι,

B. αἱ δὲ πρὸς τὴν τοῦ σώματος ἀοχλησίαν {sc. ἀναγκαῖαι}

C. αἱ δὲ πρὸς αὐτὸ τὸ ζῆν {sc. ἀναγκαῖαι}

I wish to argue that A refers to katastematic pleasures concerning the soul, i.e. *ataraxia*, while B and C refer to katastematic pleasures concerning the body, i.e. *aponia*<sup>2</sup>. B and C are distinguished from A as *removing pain due to want*<sup>3</sup>, while A is distinguished from B and C by the conjectural corollary, *removing pain which is not due to want* (= pain due to what is present)<sup>4</sup>. In short, between the title of the third group and its components another axis should be inserted – τὸ κατ' ἔνδειαν ἀλγοῦν and its opposite. On the next page I present a scheme which summarizes my findings<sup>5</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> See p. 8.

<sup>2</sup> Based on DL X.136. True, the terms *ataraxia* and *aponia* do not appear here, but this should not be of any concern to us. As I said before (p. 9 above) the *Letter* is aimed at those who are not yet necessarily Epicureans, and, therefore, its avoiding the use of professional terminologies is understandable.

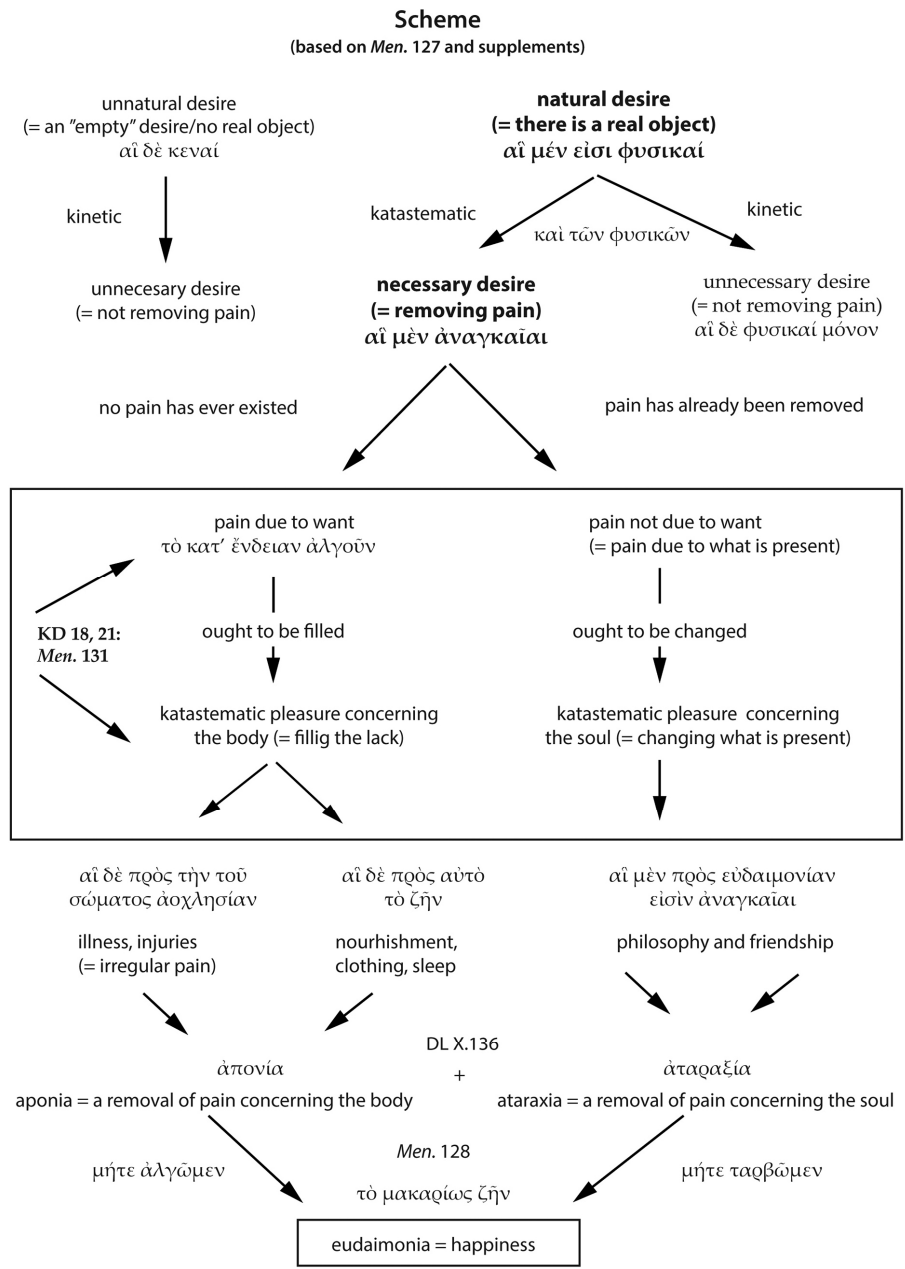
<sup>3</sup> B and C are distinguished from each other by the content of what is lacking. The expression πρὸς αὐτὸ τὸ ζῆν which characterizes C implies what I call a *lack concerning the life-routine* (or *regular pain*), such as eating, sleeping and clothing, since this regularity of life is necessarily involved with repeated emptying and filling (compare *Sententiae Vaticanae* 33: Σαρκὸς φωνὴ τὸ μὴ πεινῆν, τὸ μὴ διψῆν, τὸ μὴ ῥίγουν). The expression αἱ δὲ πρὸς τὴν τοῦ σώματος ἀοχλησίαν which characterizes B implies what I call a *lack concerning things outside the life-routine* (or *irregular pain*), such as diseases and woundings. It is interesting to compare this division with that which appears in Diogenes of Oinoanda (p. 12, n. 3 above). What appears here as lack concerning the life-routine (αἱ δὲ πρὸς αὐτὸ τὸ ζῆν {sc. ἀναγκαῖαι}) appears in Diogenes as ἀλγημα ἀπὸ ἐνδείας, while what appears here as lack concerning things outside the life-routine (αἱ δὲ πρὸς τὴν τοῦ σώματος ἀοχλησίαν {sc. ἀναγκαῖαι}) is divided by Diogenes into two different groups, ἀλγημα ἀπὸ τιμμάτων καὶ τῶν ὁστών on the one hand and ἀλγημα ἀπὸ νόσων on the other. This difference seems to be typical in the tradition. It seems as though Diogenes understood the phrase ἀπὸ ἐνδείας not as a general term for all kinds of *pain due to want* but as a specific subgroup of it.

<sup>4</sup> Namely, philosophy and friendship (see *Menoec.* 122, where the phrase πρὸς εὐδαιμονίαν refers to philosophy). A question to which I still do not have a full answer is why Epicurus includes under necessary pleasures concerning the body (*pain due to want*) two subgroups (B and C) while under necessary pleasures concerning the soul (*pain which is not due to want*) he has but one group (A): philosophy and friendship could have served as two subgroups, but do not. One may speculate that there is a hierarchy between philosophy and friendship within the necessary pleasures concerning the soul, but this is perhaps to be ascribed to a later stage in the Epicurean school (see *Sententiae Vaticanae* 78 and esp. Cic. *De Finibus*, II. 65–70). Yet this issue is beyond the scope of this paper.

<sup>5</sup> The part surrounded by a frame is my reconstruction – aimed at supplementing things not explicitly said here by Epicurus – based on other Epicurean texts.

**Τὸ κατ' ἔνδειαν ἀλγοῦν and the Epicurean καταστηματικὴ ἡδονή**

Yosef Z. Liebersohn



We began our discussion with the *Letter to Menoecus* 127 and Epicurus' division of desires. The section seems to be summarized in the following paragraph (128), where the expression we have been dealing with in this paper – τὸ κατ' ἔνδειαν ἀλγοῦν – appears in a slightly different form, but in the sense we have given it in our analysis<sup>1</sup>:

ὅταν δὲ ἅπαξ τοῦτο {sc. μήτε ἀλγεῖν μήτε  
ταρβεῖν} περὶ ἡμᾶς γένηται, λύεται πᾶς ὁ τῆς  
ψυχῆς χειμῶν, οὐκ ἔχοντος τοῦ ζώου βαδίζειν  
ὡς πρὸς ἐνδέον τι καὶ ζητεῖν ἕτερον ᾧ τὸ τῆς  
ψυχῆς καὶ τὸ τοῦ σώματος ἀγαθὸν συμπλη-  
ρῶσεται.

The underlined terms πρὸς ἐνδέον τι and τὸ τοῦ σώματος (ἀγαθὸν) parallel the terms in bold, ζητεῖν ἕτερον and τὸ τῆς ψυχῆς (ἀγαθὸν)<sup>2</sup>. The release from bodily pain is dependent upon filling what is lacking (= πρὸς ἐνδέον τι), while the release from pain concerning the soul is dependent upon replacing what is present with something else (= ζητεῖν ἕτερον). The passage might be translated thus (with a certain amount of paraphrasing):

*As soon as we achieve this state* {sc. free of pain and  
fear} *every storm in the soul is dispelled, since the  
living creature is not in a position to go after some  
need* {sc. concerning his body} *nor to seek something  
else* {sc. concerning his soul} *by which*<sup>3</sup> *he can  
complete the good of the soul and of the body.*<sup>4</sup>

## Summary

My analysis and partial reconstruction of Epicurus' *katastematic pleasures* may reveal what exactly is hiding behind the terms ἀταραξία and ἀπονία in the account of pleasures in DL X.136<sup>5</sup>. Under the first term we find pleasures concerning the soul – philosophy and friendship – which do not remove pain

<sup>1</sup> That it deals with necessary pleasures is supported by the previous sentence, which argues that the necessary desires should be chosen from the hierarchy of different pleasures presented. The necessary desires are those whose satisfaction removes pain (= *katastematic pleasures*): τούτων γὰρ ἀπλανῆς θεωρία πᾶσαν αἴρεσιν καὶ φυγὴν ἐπανάγειν οἶδεν ἐπὶ τὴν τοῦ σώματος υγίειαν καὶ τὴν τῆς ψυχῆς ἀταραξίαν, ἐπεὶ τοῦτο τοῦ μακαρίως ζῆν ἐστι τέλος (128). The term υγίεια can be used both of body and of soul: when contrasted, as here, to the ἀταραξία of the soul, it seems to equate to the bodily ἀπονία of DL X.136. At *Menoec.* 122 it is used explicitly in the context of philosophy and soul (πρὸς τὸ κατὰ ψυχὴν υγιαινόν) and there seems to equate to ἀταραξία.

<sup>2</sup> The bodily and psychic necessary pleasures lead to the removal of πᾶς ὁ τῆς ψυχῆς χειμῶν. The term ψυχὴ might be understood here as referring to the human being in general.

<sup>3</sup> The words *by which* translate the Greek – which grammatically goes with ἕτερον and thus apparently refers only to καὶ ζητεῖν ἕτερον which we have interpreted as implying the necessary pleasures of the soul (= changing what is present). Yet, from the context of the whole sentence and the sentence before it, which both dwell on the body/soul parallel, the relative pronoun *by which* pertains to *both* sides of the parallel: what completes the good of the body and of the soul is respectively filling what is missing (= πρὸς ἐνδέον τι) and replacing that–which–is with something else (= ζητεῖν ἕτερον), at which stage no further filling or replacing will lead to a greater or more complete good.

<sup>4</sup> I use here alternately the translations of C. Bailey, *Epicurus: The Extant Remains* and B. Inwood & L. P. Gerson.

<sup>5</sup> See p. 12, n. 4, above.

due to want but pain due to what is present. Under the second term we have pleasures concerning the body which remove pain due to want<sup>1</sup> – e.g. illnesses and injuries (= lack concerning things outside life–routine) and deficiency of nourishment, clothing and sleep (= lack concerning life–routine).

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<sup>1</sup> The only place in the scholarly literature I have managed to find which mentions this phrase – τὸ κατ' ἔνδειαν ἀλγοῦν – in its own right (apart from just translating it) is C. Bailey, *Lucretius, De Rerum Natura*, p. 61. In the course of his introduction to Lucretius' poem, Bailey offers a brief survey of Epicurus' system to the extent that it touches on Lucretius. Within the ethical part of his introduction Bailey provides the reader with three principles characterizing the nature of Epicurean pleasure. On the second principle Bailey writes: *Pleasure is the fulfilment of desire, the satisfaction of pain due to want*. No distinction is made here between body and soul. Bailey cites *Kyriai Doxai* 18, where τὸ κατ' ἔνδειαν ἀλγοῦν appears, but he does not note that this is used to specify a subgroup within those pleasures removing pain.

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