Arguing from οἰκείωσις: Reading Aristotle’s Ethics in the First century BCE

Dr. Georgia Tsouni (University of Bern, Switzerland), georgia.tsouni@philo.unibe.ch*

The rise of developmental theories of ethics is a characteristic feature of Hellenistic philosophy; ¹ such theories sought to ground the activity of the mature ethical agent in fundamental pre-rational desires. In the first part of the paper, I will discuss briefly the way the concept of oikeiōsis came to occupy a central role in the ethical debates of the (late) Hellenistic period, among Epicureans and Stoics, as reflected primarily in Cicero’s dialogue De Finibus Bonorum et Malorum. The importance of the concept is reflected in two sources from the first century BCE as well which attempt to convey Aristotle’s ethical views from a ‘modernised’, contemporary (to the author) standpoint: the Antiochean account in Cicero’s De Finibus 5 (chs. 24-74) and (Ar.?) Didymus² doxography Of Aristotle and the Rest of the Peripatetics on Ethics which survives in the second book of Stobaeus’ Eclogai.³ I will sketch the hypothesis that this type of argumentation was integrated into a reading of Aristotle’s ethics as a polemical strategy, and in order to offer an alternative to existing types of argumentation on the part of both Epicureans and Stoics.

* This paper is work in progress; please do not circulate without permission of the author.

¹ See Annas J., The Morality of Happiness, New York/Oxford, 1993, p.148 who finds in this a reason ‘why Aristotle’s followers in the Hellenistic period were tempted to rewrite and update Aristotle’s ethics in an explicitly developmental form’. Annas ascribes the developmental approach towards ethics to the Stoics (ibid.:215) and regards later Peripatetics as borrowing Stoic ideas. Although it is probably true that later Peripatetics borrowed the concept of oikeīōsis from the Stoa, this does not necessarily mean that they understood the concept in the same way.

² The identity of the author of the Peripatetic doxography in the second book of Stobaeus’ Eclogai is still a controversial issue, since the hypothesis of Diels (Doxographi Graeci, p.69ff) that he is to be identified with the First century AD Stoic philosopher Arios Didymus has been put into question (see e.g. Göransson, Albinus, Alcineus, Arios Didymus, Götteborg, 1995, ch. 10). The identification of the author has of course important consequences for the dating of the text. The author will be henceforth referred to solely as Didymus.

³ References to this edition follow the page and line numbers of Ioannis Stobaei Eclogae physicae et ethicae, recensuit C. Wachsmuth Berlin 1884. A new edition and translation of the text by Tsouni will be included in a forthcoming volume of Fortenbaugh B. (ed.), Rutgers Studies in Classical Humanities vol. 17 following upon a conference dedicated to Didymus in Rutgers University in September 2014.
In the second part of the paper, I will reconstruct the reading offered by Antiochus and Didymus and show how it offers a developmental account of the Aristotelian telos progressing from the foundational desires of new-born children towards the perfected state of the wise person through an intermediate stage connected with the grasping of καθήκοντα. Whereas οἰκείωσις relates to the first stage, it has consequences for the second (and the third). Acting with reference to the kalon for example is seen in the aforementioned sources as a capacity of the wise person by virtue of his or her reason, but at the same time as grasping the inherent value of objects to which we are drawn from the moment of birth due to foundational norms established by nature. In this respect, the Peripatetic authors of the era are committed to some form of ethical naturalism. In a small coda at the end of the paper, I will show that the topic of foundational desires remained alive well into the first century AD (and possibly the beginning of the second century AD) with later Peripatetics offering different views on the topic.

1.1 The quest of ethical archai in the late Hellenistic period: Carneades, Epicureans, Stoics

The attempt of Hellenistic schools to ground their ethics in fundamental, natural desires is reflected in the requirement of the Academic sceptic Carneades to structure the discussion on ethics with reference to what is manifest ‘from the moment of birth’. This appears as a basic methodological requirement of the Academic’s carneadea divisio, a system of classification of ethical theories which was devised in the second century BCE as an instrument of comparison and refutation of the various ethical theories. The first criterion of this divisio consists in the requirement of seeking the ‘primitive’ objects of human impulse as a foundational starting point for an ethical theory to which what is posited as the telos should conform. The following passage, which prefaces the Antiochean account in Cicero’s Fin. 5, refers to the methodological requirement of Carneades’ scheme:

---

4 The aim of this Hellenistic interpretation of Aristotle is, however, not to reduce ethical (or moral) norms to ‘brute’ natural facts, nor to derive normative claims from natural descriptions, as some modern conceptions of naturalism in ethics attempt to do.
Constitit autem fere inter omnes id in quo prudentia versaretur et quod assequi vellet aptum et accommodatum naturae esse oportere et tale ut ipsum per se invitatet et adliceret appetitum animi, quem ὀρμήν Graeci vocant. Quid autem sit quod ita moveat itaque a natura in primo ortu appetatur non constat, deque eo est inter philosophos, cum summum bonum exquiritur, omnis dissensio. Totius enim quaestionis eius quae habetur de finibus bonorum et malorum, cum quaeritur in his quid sit extremum et ultimum, fons reperiendus est in quo sint prima invitamenta naturae; quo invento omnis ab eo quasi capite de summo bono et malo disputatio ducitur. Fin. 5.17

Now almost all have admitted that the object with which wisdom is concerned and what it desires to attain should be in conformity and agreement with nature and such that in itself it entices and allures that mental impulse which the Greeks call hormē. But what that object is which exercises this attraction and is in this way sought by nature at the very moment of birth is not agreed, and on this matter great divergence appears among philosophers during the search of the supreme good. But as concerns the whole enquiry which is carried on about the limits of good and evil, when we debate with regard to them, what is their end, we must discover some source in which are contained the earliest attractions of nature; and when this has been found, the whole discussion about good and evil takes its rise from this as from a fountain head.

Central place in the Hellenistic accounts (formulated under the influence of Carneades’ requirement) is occupied by the notion of the oiκείον which may be translated as the ‘familiar’, ‘what is one’s own’, the ‘proper’ or (in a stronger normative sense) the ‘appropriate’; it suggests a relation of belonging, familiarity, or appropriateness between two things, i.e. x is oikeion to y.⁵ Oikeiōsis, as the suffix –sis suggests, is the activity connected with this relation. Thus, contrary to oikeiotēs, oikeiōsis as a nomen actionis centres around the activity of the pursuit of the oikeion, more than on its objective manifestation as a given fact.⁶ In the sense of activity, the noun may derive from the active verb oiκειοῦν which presupposes an actor of the process of ‘familiarisation’, but also from the middle-passive form oiκειόθαι, complemented by a dative or the preposition πρὸς, which expresses the (existing) relationship towards something familiar. In accordance with Cicero’s usual practice, there are two alternatives offered for the rendering of the term oikeiōsis in Latin:

---
⁵ The word oiκείος in Greek, when referring to persons, most commonly signifies a kinsman or relative, someone who is related by natural, biological ties or belongs to the domestic environment. The relationship of intimacy is conveyed also by the abstract noun oikeiotēs, which applies primarily to kinship or generally to intimate relations.

⁶ In that sense, found already in Thuc. 4.128.4-5: τὰ μὲν ύπολογίαν κατέκοπτον, τῶν δὲ οἰκείωσθιν ἐποιοῦντο.
impulse towards what is ‘proper to nature’: ὁδείποτε οἰκεῖον, ὡς ἶσοι εἰς ἄρμότον, a word with clear teleological connotations.

In the ethical debates of the Hellenistic period the term oikeios acquires a distinctive meaning, being applied specifically to the foundational object of desire i.e. to what is desired from the moment of birth as the correlate of a desiring faculty. Thus, oikeiōsis applies to the relation in which living beings stand towards their respective objects of desire suggesting a positive affective attitude towards them (accordingly, the opposite of oikeion, the allotron, suggests a negative affective attitude manifested in avoidance or repulsion from a potential object of desire). The attempt to identify what is the oikeion formed part of a larger methodological quest in the Hellenistic era to trace objective principles or starting-points of ethics.

The Epicurean school provides a testimony to this development: Epicureans attempted to derive goodness and rightness from feelings of pleasure and pain. According to the Epicurean view, our judgement about what should be pursued or avoided is based on affections of pleasure and pain. The foundational character of such feelings is suggested by their characterisation in the Epicurean sources as ‘first’ (πρώτον) and ‘congenital’ (συγγενικόν). In the same vein, the goodness of pleasure is cast in terms of its ‘natural affinity’ to our constitution: πάσα οὐδὲν ἴδια τὸ φύσιν ἔχειν οἰκεῖαν ἰγαθόν. (Ep. Ad Men. 129). The term oikeios does not

---

7 Conciliari and commendari are presented as translations of οἰκειόθεται πρὸς in Fin. 3.16.
8 We find an explicit translation of οἰκεῖον at Luc. 38: nam quo modo non potest animal illum non adpetere id quod accommodatum ad naturam adpareat (Graeci id οἰκεῖον appellant).
9 See Lewis and Short s.v.
10 The most important precedent here is the Platonic Lysis: see e.g. 221e3-5: τὸ οἰκεῖον δὴ, ὡς ἐναρκήν, ὅ τι ἔρως καὶ ἡ φύλα καὶ ἡ ἐπιθυμία τυγχάνει οὖσα, ὡς φαίνεται, ὃς ἠλέσει τε καὶ λύσει, and ibid. 222a5-6: τὸ μὲν δὴ φύσει οἰκεῖον ἀναγκαῖον ἡμῖν πόρφωνται φιλοῦ.
11 Ep. Ad Men. 129= D.L. 10... Καὶ δὰ τοῦτο τὴν ἴδιόνυν ἀρχὴν καὶ τέλος ἔγγονον εἶναι τοῦ μακαρίως ζῆν, ταύτην γὰρ ἰγαθόν πρῶτον καὶ συγγενικόν ἔγγονον, καὶ ἀπὸ ταύτης καταρχῆς ἡμῖν ἰναχείσθω καὶ φυγῇς καὶ ἐπὶ ταύτην κατανάλωμα ὡς κανόνι τὸ πάθη πᾶν ἰγαθόν κρίνοντος. Καὶ ἕκαστον ἰγαθόν τοῦτο καὶ σύμφορον, διὰ τοῦτο καὶ οὐ πάσαν ἴδιον ἰγαθόν αἰρομένα, ἀλλὰ ἐστὶν ὅτι πολλάς ἴδιον ἰγαθῶν ἕπειρομένης, ὅταν πλέον ἡμῖν τὸ δισημείᾳ ἓκ τούτοις ἐπέτη.
presuppose here a ‘metaphysical’ theory of nature, as a principle which entails aims and functions, but relates rather to a ‘mechanical’ sense of ‘appropriateness’: pleasure is the aim of our desires and actions because our senses are able to perceive the sensation that pleasure is and our sense organs offer (at least at the beginning of our lives) an infallible judgement about their perceived objects.

Although absent in the popular writings of Epicurus that have come down to us, an argument from oikeiōsis is attributed to the Epicurean sect in Cicero’s *Fin.* 1.30-31 with the explicit confirmation on the part of Cicero that this is the way Epicurus himself ‘set out to establish his teaching’ (*idque instituit sc. Epicurus docere sic*). Torquatus conveying Epicurus’ doctrine defends the view in *Fin.* 1.30 that pleasure is sought by all living things from the moment of birth as the ‘ultimate good’ and, accordingly, pain is avoided as the ‘ultimate evil’ (*omne animal, simul atque naturum sit, voluptatem appetere eaque gaudere ut summo bono, dolorem asperrari ut summum malum et, quantum possit, a se repellere*). The statement functions in this case as the fundamental justification of the principle of Epicurus’ ethical philosophy; contrary to other aspects of reality, such as the existence of atoms and void, this fundamental practical truth does not admit of proof through inference but is a ‘primitive’ axiom on which the Epicurean ethical system is built. As Torquatus states at *Fin.* 1.30: ‘there is no need to use argument or discuss for what reason pleasure is to be sought, and pain to be avoided’ (*negat opus esse ratione neque disputatione quam ob rem voluptas expetenda fugiendus dolor sit*). According to the proponents of the Epicurean theory, on the testimony of Cicero, we perceive directly that pleasure is desirable for its own right through our senses in the same way as we perceive the heat of fire, the whiteness of snow and the sweetness of honey (*sentiri haec putat, ut calere ignem, nivem esse albam, dulce mel*); alternatively, some Epicureans claimed that we grasp the practical axiom that pleasure is to be sought for its own sake, and accordingly pain to be avoided, by virtue of possessing an innate concept (*naturalem atque insitam…notionem*) of its goodness. This is prompted by

[8] This might reflect the methodology of lost writings of Epicurus that have not come down to us such as the Epicurean work *Peri télos*.

[9] See *Fin.* 1.30, where there is reference to the ‘judgement of nature’ according to which we are attracted towards pleasure: *ipsa natura incorrupte atque integre indicante*.

[10] In *Fin.* 1.31, they are called people who talk in a more ‘refined’ way (*quidam e nostris qui haec subtilius velint tradere*) about the fundamental principle of Epicurean ethics.
our sensation of pleasure but is an achievement of the rational part of our soul which is capable of grasping with the intellect the pleasant as something good. In both cases, we cannot deductively prove the relevant axioms but only indicate to them (satis esse admonere), as to something evident and accessible to experience (prompta et aperta). 16 From this principle, Epicurus deduced that the pursuit of pleasure remains throughout life, and even when a person has reached the rational stage of development, the main aim of action. Morality is presented as being instrumental to the pursuit of the primary psychological aim, and thus there is arguably not a gap between the factual primitive desires and the normative goodness perceived by the rational agent. In this vein, Sextus ascribes to the Epicureans the idea that pleasure is ‘by nature an object of choice’ (φύσει αἱρετὴν) by virtue of being the first motivating factor of living beings.17 Similarly, the Epicurean Torquatus in the first book of Cicero’s De Finibus moves in his account from the psychological desire for pleasure and the aversion towards pain at the beginning of life, to their rational choice and avoidance (voluptas expetenda, fugiendus dolor) at a later stage, deducing the pleasant as a normative aim from the psychological primary feeling of pleasure that we experience upon birth.

At the antipode to what Epicurus defended, we may trace in the Stoic deductive mode of argumentation a different way of identifying the fundamental object of desire. The early Stoics argued on the basis of the nature of the divine cosmos that the human ethical telos consists in a ‘life according to reason’.18 The innovation of the Stoa

---

16 Following Aristotelian methodology, Torquatus differentiates in Fin. 1.30 between a rational (deductive) argument (argumentum rationis) which reveals something hidden and inaccessible to experience (occulta et quasi involuta) and an empirical indication (animadversionem atque admonitionem) which points to evident things which are accessible to experience (prompta et aperta). Still, in the Epicurean doxography of D.L. 10.137 (fr. 66 Usener) the fact that animals upon birth delight in pleasure and avoid pain serves as a proof (ἀπόδαξις) for identifying the final end of life with pleasure: ἀπόδαξις δὲ χρῆται τοῦ τέλος ἐνὶ τὴν ἡδονὴν τῷ τὸ χαῖρε ἢμα τῷ γεννηθεῖν τῇ μὲν εὐφροσυνῇ, τῷ δὲ πόνῳ προσκρούειν φυσικῶς καὶ χωρὶς λόγου. Notice that ἀπόδαξις is substituted by πίστιν in the Cyrenaic version of the oikeiosis argument in Diogenes Laertius 2.88: πίστιν δ᾿ εἶναι τοῦ τέλους ἐνὶ τὴν ἡδονὴν τὸ ἀκροάρτεστος ἡμᾶς ἐκ παθῶν ἔκκεντρωθαί πρὸς αὐτήν, καὶ τούτον τά εἰδὴ μὴν ἐπιζήτητε, μηθὲν τὸ σῶμα φεύγειν ὡς τὴν ἐναντίαν αὐτῇ ἀληθοῦν.

17 S.E. PH 3.194: ὅθεν καὶ οἱ Ἐπικουρικοὶ δεικνύονται νομίζουσι φύσει αἱρετὴν εἶναι τὴν ἡδονὴν· τὰ γὰρ ξάφνιον ἀμα τὰ γενεσθαι, ἀδιάστροφον ἡντε, ὅρμαν μὲν ἐπὶ τὴν ἡδονὴν, ἐκκλίνειν δὲ ἀληθοῦν.

18 For the derivation of the Stoic value theory from arguments about the ‘common nature’ and the cosmic administration, see esp. Plut. Si. Rep. 1035c-d=SVF 3.68: πάλιν ἐν ταῖς Φυσικαῖς Θέσεισιν ὁὐ γὰρ ἐστιν ἄλλος οὐδ᾿ ἐπελθὲν ἐπί τὸν τόν ἁγαθὸν και κακὸν λόγον οὐδ᾿ ἐπὶ τὰς ἄρετας οὐδ᾿ ἐπὶ εὐδαιμονίαν, ἀλλ᾿ ἡ ἀπὸ τῆς κοινῆς φύσεως καὶ ἀπὸ τῆς τοῦ κόσμου διοικήσεως· προελθὸν δ᾿ αὐθὲς· δεὶ γὰρ τούτοις συνέχατο τὸν περὶ ἁγαθοῦ και κακοῦ λόγον, οὐκ ὡσὶς ἄλλης ἁρχῆς αὐτῶν ἀμείνονος οὐδ᾿ ἀναφορᾶς, οὐδ᾿ ἄλλου τινὸς ἐνεκε τῆς φυσικῆς θεωρίας παραλληπτῆς οὐσίας καὶ πρὸς τὴν περὶ ἁγαθοῦ και κακοῦ διάστασιν· γίνεται τούτων ἁμα πρόσω καὶ ὁπίσω τῶν ἡθικῶν ὁ φυσικὸς λόγος κατά Χρύστης.
consisted therein, that the school made explicitly the human telos a matter of ‘agreement’ or ‘common reasoning’ with a principle that includes human beings themselves and extends to the whole cosmos. Their reasoning seems to run thus: If the divine principle is perfect, then it must (by virtue of its very notion) possess rationality, a praiseworthy attribute, to the highest degree. Humans (should) agree with the all-encompassing physis through the use of their own reasoning capacity. Therefore, the telos for them consists in a ‘life in agreement with reason’. If that is correct, then oikeiōsis, the pre-rational impulse towards things related to our constitution, constitutes in Stoicism a process which has both a cosmic and psychological dimension and is intimately connected with the immanence of the cosmic rational principle in all human beings.

When exactly the Stoics adopted a developmental scheme for the exposition of their ethical theory remains controversial; probably, the most secure starting-point that we have is the evidence of Diogenes Laertius about Chrysippus’ book Περὶ Τελῶν. From the doxographical account in D.L. 7.8519 we can see how oikeiōsis was embedded in the providential outlook of the Stoics, at least in its expression in Chrysippus, the only member of the Old Stoa for whom we have secure evidence that he made use of the notion: 20

The Stoics say that an animal’s primary impulse (πρῶτην ὀρμήν) is towards preserving itself, since nature familiarised it with itself (οἰκειωσός < αὐτῶ < αὐτῆς τῆς φύσεως) from the start, as Chrysippus says in the first book of On Ends, when saying that the primary familiar thing (πρῶτον οἰκεῖον) for each animal is its own constitution and the awareness thereof; for it was not likely that nature either alienated it from itself, nor, after having created it, neither alienated it nor familiarised it with itself. We have to conclude then that nature, after having constituted the animal, familiarised it with itself (οἰκεῖοσαμ πρὸς ἑαυτό); for in this way the animal repels detrimental things and accepts familiar ones.

19 Even though the text contains quotations from Chrysippus’ Περὶ τελῶν, it is not entirely clear what belongs to later additions from the doxographer, or how the original quotations fitted into their context. For the defence of DL’s doxography as the most canonical expression of (early) Stoic ethics in general, and the theory of oikeiōsis in particular, see Inwood B., Ethics and Human Action in Early Stoicism, Oxford, 1985, p. 189 and Lee C-U., Oikeiosis. Stoische Ethik in naturphilosophischer Perspektive, Freiburg/München: Verlag Karl Alber, 2002, p. 49.
20 Nowhere is the idea of oikeiōsis ascribed specifically to Zeno; the expression οἱ ἀπὸ Ζήνωνος in Porphyry’s De Abst. 3.19 need not mean anything more than ‘the Stoics’: τὴν δὲ οἰκείωσιν ἀρχὴν τίθεναι δικαιοσύνης οἱ ἀπὸ Ζήνωνος.
The focus in Stoic theory, as expressed in Diogenes’ doxography, lies on nature as the subject of a creative action (suggestive in this regard is the use of the active form οἰκείωσις), as a result of which organisms experience, primarily, a relationship with their own constitution and an awareness of it. The subsequent recognition of anything else as oikeion or valuable on the part of human beings (and accordingly the avoidance of things perceived to be detrimental to oneself) is mediated through the relationship with oneself established by the primary (providential) act of nature. Thus, the organism’s desire and choice for things in the external environment and the conferring of value upon them, linked in the text with the fundamental desire for self-preservation, seems to be premised upon the primordial act whereby we have become related to our very nature through the establishment of a faculty of ‘self-awareness’ (συνείδησιν). This is in its own right supported by a reductio argument: if the establishment of oikeiosis is a presupposition for an organism’s survival, then its existence shows that nature acts in a providential way. The absence of such a process, given nature’s purposiveness and rational structure, would be highly implausible.

The role of the providential act of nature as the source of oikeiosis does not become equally clear in Cato’s account in Fin. 3, where emphasis is laid on the way oikeiosis is manifested as, mainly, a cognitive and psychological phenomenon;\(^2\) this is reinforced by the use of middle-passive forms of the verb οἰκείωσις (sibi conciliari, commendari, alienari) for the description of the process. When introducing the notion at Fin. 3.16, Cato chooses to refer to the way each animal ‘has been familiarised from the moment of birth to its own preservation and constitution’ (simulatque natum sit animal (...), ipsum sibi conciliari et commendari ad se conservandum et ad suum statum). Cato focuses thereby on oikeiosis as a psychological phenomenon rooted in the living being’s desire to experience itself and the world, and less on the metaphysical presuppositions of such an experience. Also, contrary to what we find in

\(^2\) The Stoic account in Fin. 3 has served as evidence for an ‘Aristotelising’ version of Stoic ethics, as represented by Annas J., *The Morality of Happiness*, New York/Oxford, 1993. Οἰκείωσις as a primarily psychological phenomenon has been at the centre also of Inwood’s analysis of Stoic ethics in Inwood B., *Ethics and Human Action in Early Stoicism*, Oxford, 1985. Engberg-Pedersen T. in *The Stoic Theory of Oikeiosis*, Aarhus, 1990 also locates the foundation of Stoic ethics in ‘a subjective or internal viewpoint’ and takes Fin. 3 as grounding this supposition. On the other hand, the idea that the foundation of Stoic ethics is to be sought not in the specifically human but in the universal, cosmic nature (which includes the human one) has been highlighted by Cooper J. in ‘Eudaimonism and the Appeal to Nature in the Morality of Happiness: Comments on Julia Annas, The Morality of Happiness,’ *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* Vol. 55, No. 3 (Sep., 1995), pp. 587-598 and Lee C-U. in *Oikeiosis. Stoische Ethik in naturphilosophischer Perspektive*, Freiburg/München: Verlag Karl Alber, 2002.
Diogenes Laertius, self-love becomes an important component in the analysis of ‘primary’ actions in *Fin.* 3.16: as an outcome of *oikeiōsis*, ‘any sentient creature feels affection for its own constitution, and for all that tends to maintain that constitution, while it recoils from destruction, and from all that seems to induce destruction’ (*eaque, quae conservantia sint eius status, diligenda, alienari autem ab interitu iisque rebus, quae interitum videantur adferre*). This primary love towards one’s constitution, as an expression of *oikeiōsis*, prescribes actions which promote the preservation of oneself and the avoidance of one’s destruction. The fundamental love for one’s constitution is further in Cato’s account premised upon an awareness of the self which is equally fundamental (*fieri autem non posse ut appeterent aliquid nisi sensum haberent sui eoque se diligerent*), in line with the Stoic evidence from Diogenes Laertius. The shift in emphasis and the focus on the manifestation rather than the justification of *oikeiōsis* are not incompatible with the thesis about the rationality of the cosmos and the dependency of human action upon it that we find elsewhere in Stoic sources, and even in other instances in Cato’s account itself. This shift might be indeed an outcome of the attempt of later Stoics to enter into a debate with schools which regarded the first impulses manifested from the moment of birth as ‘primitive’ and not further admitting of justification, as in the case of the Epicureans.

From these psychological ‘primitives’ the Stoics deduced conclusions which are proper to their particular conception of ‘moral’ value: thus, from the fundamental desire for self-preservation and for things that are ‘according to nature’ (*secundum naturam*) they drew the conclusion that things ‘according to nature’ are ‘valuable’ (*aestimabiles*), i.e. have a *selective* value. This selectivity grounds fundamental ‘appropriate actions’ (*καθήκοντα*) towards oneself and others (e.g. the fundamental duty of preserving oneself to life is grounded in the selective value of life against

---

22 The psychological account of *οἰκείωσις* is supplemented in the Stoic account of *Fin.* 3 with references to the role that the process plays within a larger providential framework, see especially *Fin.* 3.23: ‘*atque ut membra nobis ita data sunt, ut ad quandam rationem vivendi data esse appaerant, sic appetitio animi, quae ὁρμή Graece vocatur, non ad quodvis genus vitae, sed ad quondam formam vivendi videtur data, itemque et ratio et perfecta ratio.*’ *Cf.* *ibid.* 3.62; 3.73. This providential framework could help establish a unity in Stoic theory between the stage of *oikeiōsis* and that of the (perfectly) rational agent and thus rebut the critique of ‘discontinuity’ in ethical development leveled against the Stoics through the mouth of (the Academic sceptic) Cicero in *Fin.* 4.
death). At the final stage of (ethical) development which results in the perfect knowledge of the sage, deliberation and action is in ‘full agreement with nature’, a state rendered in Fin. 3.31 as convenienter congruenterque naturae vivere. For the Stoics, this stage signifies a disposition to act in accordance with a higher rational principle of nobility and perfect goodness (rendered in Latin as the honestum), this latter being the only aim that is recognised as being choiceworthy for its own sake for the ideally developed agent. The ‘moral’ value of action resides in the case of the Stoics entirely within the reasoning ability of the agent him or herself and is captured by the ideal of ὀμολογία (‘agreement’ or ‘consistency’ with reason). The state of mind that captures this principle follows at a later stage and is not prefigured in the initial non-rational oikeiosis towards the preservation of our constitution.

1.2 Antiochus’ and Didymus’ ‘Aristotelian’ version of oikeiosis

It transpires that the use of the oikeion as a description of the object of desire reflects the different metaphysical assumptions of the philosophical schools in the Hellenistic period, and especially of Epicureanism and Stoicism. In the late Hellenistic period, to those two schools was added a Platonic and Aristotelian understanding of oikeiosis through Antiochus, who read the ‘ancients’ through a Hellenistic methodological lens. Antiochus shares with Epicureans and Stoics the project of founding ethics on

---

23 See Fin. 3.20: initiis igitur ita constitutis, ut ea, quae secundum naturam sunt, ipsa propter se sumenda sint contrariaque item reicienda, primum est officium – id enim appello καθῆκον –, ut se conservet in naturae statu, deinceps ut ea teneat, quae secundum naturam sint, pellatque contraria.

24 The prima naturae are according to the Stoics not choiceworthy for their own sake, see Fin. 3.21: cum igitur in eo sit id bonum quo omnia referenda sint, honeste facta ipsunque honestum – quod solum in bonis ducitur, quamquam post oritur – tamen id solum vi sua et dignitate expetendum est; eorum autem, quae sunt prima naturae, propter se nihil est expetendum.

25 See Fin. 3.24: sola enim sapientia in se tota conversa est, quod idem in ceteris artibus non fit.

26 Cato suggests in Fin. 3.33 that the concept of the ‘moral good’ is an outcome of logical inference (collatio rationis): cum enim ab ipsis rebus, quae sunt secundum naturam, ascendit animus collatione rationis, tum ad notionem boni pervenit. In ibid. 3.21 it is associated with perceiving order and harmony in things ‘to be done’: simul autem cepit intellegentiam vel notionem potius, quam appellant ἔννοιαν illi, viditque rerum agendarum ordinem et, ut ita dicam, concordiam, multo eam pluris aestimavit quam omnia illa, quae prima dilexerat.

27 Fin. 3.22: cum vero illa, quae officia esse dixi, profisciscantur ab initiis naturae, nuceesse est ea ad haec referri, ut recte dici possit omnia officia eo referri, ut adipiscamur principia naturae, nec tamen ut hoc sit honorum ultimum, propeterea quod non inest in primis naturae conciliacionibus honesta actio; consequens enim est et post oritur, ut dixi.

28 Antiochus, who at some point in the First century BCE defected from the (Academic sceptic) school of Philo of Larissa, held the view that Plato and Aristotle endorse the same set of fundamental doctrines in all three domains of philosophy (ethics, physics and logic). A concise overview of these doctrines is provided by the character Varro in Cicero’s Academica 19-35.
a concept of ‘nature’ and reads Aristotelian (and, according to his peculiar hermeneutical stance, Platonic ethics)\(^\text{29}\) along these lines.

According to Antiochus’ use of the concept of the oikeion, the things desired as psychological primitives at the non-rational stage of our lives (the things regarded as ‘one’s own’ or the objects of one’s concern) reflect the inherent teleological structure of human nature (what belongs objectively to our nature); the concept of oikeios is apt to convey this, since its semantic range covers both these meanings (being both the ‘proper’ and the ‘appropriate’ object of desire). Accordingly, Antiochus understands oikeiōsis as the process underpinning each organism’s desire for things related to itself in accordance with each being’s peculiar nature and inner power granted to it by nature.\(^\text{30}\) This tallies with the advocacy of a species-specific teleology in *Fin.* 5.25-6: whereas it is true, Piso asserts there, that every animate creature has as its telos to fulfil its nature and reach the perfection of its natural kind,\(^\text{31}\) the final end is different for animals belonging to different species (*extrema illa et summa…inter animalium genera distincta et dispertita sint*) and, thus, it cannot be expressed with a single formula.\(^\text{32}\) The specific final end for different species of animals corresponds to what is suited to the desire of each animal’s peculiar nature (*ad id apta quod cuiusque natura desideret*),\(^\text{33}\) suggesting that different animals perceive different things as oikeia according to their iōia φύσες.\(^\text{34}\) This betrays the influence of an Aristotelian methodological principle according to which one seeks similarities (κοινόν) but also the special property of the species (τὸιον) for the explanation of natural kinds.\(^\text{35}\) Piso accordingly recognises the peculiar nature and capacities of each living organism, but at the same time acknowledges that the final end is analogous for all kinds of

\(^{29}\) Antiochus constructed a single Academic lineage with a unanimous philosophical identity, that of the ‘Old Academy’, which he opposed to the ‘New Academic’ version of the history of philosophy; for an expression of the ‘unity thesis’, see for example *Fin.* 5.7. His reading was supported by a renewed study of the so-called ‘esoteric’ Aristotelian treatises. The hermeneutical assumptions of this interpretation of the old tradition are discussed extensively in the monograph *Antiochus and the Peripatetics* (Tsouni, forthcoming).

\(^{30}\) In the Antiochean account we find many references to a congenital vis which underpins the oikeiōsis of living organisms, s.e.g. *Fin.* 5.43 (with reference to human beings). On δύναμις as synonymous for soul as a principle of motion, see *De An.* 2.413a25-28; διό καὶ τὰ φύομεν πάντα δοκεῖ ζῆν· φαίνεται γὰρ ἐν αὐτοῖς ἔχοντα δύναμιν καὶ ἄρχειν τουτοῦ, δι’ ἦς αὐξήσιν τε καὶ φθάσιν λαμβάνουσιν κατὰ τοὺς ἑαυτῶν τόπους and *NE* 1.1102a34.


\(^{32}\) *Fin.* 5.26: quare cum dicius omnibus animalibus extremum esse secundum naturam vivere, non ita accipienda est, quasi dicamus unum esse omnis extremum.


\(^{34}\) Cf. *NE* 1.1098a15: ἔκειντο δὲ ὑπὸ κατὰ τὴν οἰκείαν ἀρτειν ἀποτελέσται.

\(^{35}\) This is reflected in the so-called ‘function argument’ of *EN* 1.1097b33ff: τὸ μὲν γὰρ ζῆν κοινὸν εἶναι φαίνεται καὶ τοῖς φυτοῖς, ζητεῖται δὲ τὸ ιδιόν.
organisms, albeit not the same for all of them (necesse sit omnium rerum quae natura vigeant similem esse finem, non eundem). The oikeion seems to be invested in the case of Antiochus with a strong sense of ‘appropriateness’ and relates to desires which are ‘normatively interpreted’, in the sense of being appropriate for (and not merely proper to) specific life-forms. Precedents for this use could be found in writings of the Aristotelian tradition, where in some cases the word applies to the desire of organisms for suitable things in their surrounding environment; relevant examples include birds living by the sea whose nature has been naturally equipped for their aquatic environment, and the way animals seek the food which is proper to them (oikeia τροφῆ) in line with the kind of environment they grow up in. The oikeion is prominent in the Theophrastean botanical treatises as well (writings Antiochus seems to have been familiar with judging from various references in Fin. 5). There, Theophrastus discusses the importance of the appropriate place (οικείος τόπος) for a plant’s development, in which he includes both ‘air’ or seasonal occurrences and soil; furthermore, the word stands there in close association with the ἀρµόστυνν, i.e. with what is suited to an organism and its peculiar ‘power’.

Another expression used both in the Antiochean account in Cicero as also in Didymus as an equivalent expression to the oikeia, i.e. the ‘appropriate’ objects of desire, is that of πρότα κατὰ φύσιν, the ‘first things according to nature’. The equivalent Latin terms are prima secundum naturam, prima naturae, prima data natura or prima naturalia, translating the Greek terms πρότα κατὰ φύσιν, πρότα φύσει, πρότα τῆς φύσεως and φυσικά (ἀγαθά). Such objects are first in the ‘Aristotelian’ accounts in a chronological sense by preceding the manifestation of the final end, but also in an

36 Fin. 5.26. For the idea that human and animal faculties are analogous, see HA 588A28-31; cf. Fin. 4.32.
37 HA 621b4-6: ἀπαντᾷ δὲ καὶ τὰ πλοῖτά καὶ τὰ μόνιμα τούτοις νέμεται τοὺς τόπους ἐν οἷς ἀν φύσις, καὶ τοὺς ὑμὸιους τούτοις· ἡ γὰρ οἰκεία τροφῆ ἐκάστου ἐν τοῖς ἑστιν.
38 See e.g. Fin. 5.10: persecutus est Aristoteles animantium omnium ortus victus figuras, Theophrastus autem stirpium naturas omniumque fere rerum quae e terra gignerent causas atque rationes.
39 See e.g. CP 1 9.3; 1 16.11; 2 3.7; 2 7.1; 3 6.6; 3 6.7.
40 CP 2.19.6.5-6: ἐκ τούτων γὰρ τὰ κοινὰ πάθη καὶ αἱ κατὰ γένεσα παραλαγαὶ καὶ τὸ ἀρµόστυνν καὶ τὸ οἰκεῖον ἐκάστους γίνεται φανερὸν; however, the oikeion retains a more intimate connection with an organism’s nature, see CP 2.16.8.5-7: διττὸς δὲ καὶ τὸ τῆς χώρας πρόσφορον· ἡ γὰρ τὸ οἰκεῖον τῆς φύσεως ἢ τὸ πρὸς ἱσχὺν καὶ δύναμιν ἀρµόστυνν. See also CP 1.16.13.9: ἐξ ὧν καὶ διαφερέται ὁσπερ καὶ ἡ φύσις δηµιουργεῖ ἡµέρας καὶ ἀργῆς ὑµῶν ἐν τῇ ὤµοις καὶ φυτῶς, ἐκείνης γὰρ ἐστὶν πάλιν φυσικά καὶ οἰκεία καὶ πρὸς οἰκείαν καὶ πρὸς δύναμιν καὶ πρὸς ἱσχὺν καὶ πρὸς τὴν τῶν καρπῶν γέννησιν.
41 See e.g. Fin. 5.45. From Augustine (Civ. Dei 19.2) we learn that Varro called the πρότα κατὰ φύσιν primigenia.
42 For this chronological meaning of πρότα suggesting ‘being first in a linear development’, see Them. In Arist. De An. CAG 5.3.107.30=Fr. 307A FHS&G and Protrepticus Fr. B 13 Düring:
epistemological sense by way of admitting of no syllogistic justification.\textsuperscript{43} It is suggestive that πρώτα, ‘first things according to nature’ are also deemed in the Antiochean passages ‘principles’ and ‘elements’.\textsuperscript{44} The grounding of the ethical ‘primitives’ in a rich conception of nature which includes the notions of function and telos is again suggested by the use of the expression κατὰ φύσιν in relation to the fundamental objects of desire; as with the ‘strong’ sense of the oikeion, the locution kata physin suggests that what an organism desires from the beginning of its life corresponds to the species-form of the particular organism, and not merely to mechanistic, psychological desires. Extensive use of this strong notion of κατὰ φύσιν is made notably in the first book of Aristotle’s Politics.\textsuperscript{45} There, it is explicitly stated that nature is an end (τέλος), ‘since what we say the nature of each thing is, is what it is when its coming-into-being is perfected’.\textsuperscript{46} The expression kata physin qualifies in Peripatetic texts as well objects of desire which correspond to the ‘natural state’ of an organism. Thus, in the Historia Animalium (589a10) we read that all animals are said to pursue the pleasure appropriate to their nature (διότι δὲ πάντα τὴν κατὰ φύσιν ἠδονήν). Evidence for this use of the expression with regard to objects of desire is also found in one fragment of Theophrastus from Didymus’ Summary of Peripatetic ethics which states that one extreme opposed to the virtue of temperance is someone who ‘like a stone does not desire even things which are natural’ (τὸν μὲν γὰρ λίθον δίκην μηδὲ τὸν κατὰ φύσιν ὀρέγεσσαί),\textsuperscript{47} pointing to a kind of desire which precedes the development of character and is shared by all humans alike.

On the basis of an existing teleological structure, the representation of an oikeion constitutes for organisms capable of locomotion a ground for action, being able to ‘attract’ one’s impulse towards it. In a passage from the Lucullus which conveys

\textsuperscript{43}In this sense, starting points of the ethical discourse resemble the first principles of an Aristotelian scientific syllogism being more ‘knowable’ than the conclusion which is derived from them, and themselves non-demonstrable, see e.g. An. Post 72a7-8: ἀρχὴ δ’ ἐστὶν ἀποδείξεως πρῶτος ἀμικός, ἀμικός δὲ ἢς ἢς ἐστὶν ἄλλη προτέρα. The knowability of the first premises involved is that of a knowability ‘in relation to us’ and not simpliciter, s. ibid. 72a1-4: ἡμᾶς μὲν πρῶτα καὶ γνωριμίᾳ τὰ ἐγγύτερα τῆς αἰσθήσεως, ἀπόλυτο δὲ πρῶτα καὶ γνωριμίᾳ τὰ παρερχόμενα. For the terminological identification of ‘primitive’ and ‘principle’, s. ibid. 72a6-7: ταῦτα γὰρ λέγει πρῶτον καὶ ἀρχήν; cf. NE 1.1098b2-3: τὸ δ’ ὅτι πρῶτον καὶ ἀρχή.

\textsuperscript{44}See Fin. 5.43: sunt enim prima elementa naturae, quibus auctis virtutis quasi germen efficitur.

\textsuperscript{45}It is used in that sense for example in the first book of the Politics (1.2), where we find the notions of κατὰ φύσιν οίκος and κατὰ φύσιν κόλας.

\textsuperscript{46}Pol. 1.1252b32-33.

\textsuperscript{47}Stob. Eclog. 2 p. 141.6-7 W.= Theophrastus Fr. 449A FHS&G.
Antiochean epistemology, the representation of the oikeion is granted a particular role in the explanation of action. In a line of argument that Lucullus uses in order to combat Academic skepticism (Luc. 23-26), the ability of reason to grasp true impressions is defended in the domain of ethics. The activation of impulse upon which action follows requires grasping an impression of something as ‘appropriate to our nature’ (naturae accommodatum), that is as an appropriate object of desire;\(^\text{48}\) concomitantly, apprehending something as ‘inappropriate to our nature’ moves us to avoid it or to suspend action. Receiving thus the impression of something as oikeion and experiencing an ensuing desire to ‘make it our own’ acts as an evaluative fact, a first principle (initium) which makes action possible in the first place.\(^\text{49}\) Antiochus takes action on the basis of the representation of an oikeion object of desire to belong to the first, inchoate stage of ethical development which again follows upon an initial stage of mere instinctual reactions towards survival:

1. Every animal loves itself (se ipsum diligit), and upon its birth (simul et ortum est), it acts for its self-preservation; (...) At the beginning (initio) this disposition (institutionem) is vague and uncertain so that (ut) it merely preserves itself as whatever kind of being it is (qualemcumque sit), as it doesn’t comprehend (intellegit) what it is or what it can become or what its own nature is (quid ipsius natura sit).  
2. But when it has grown somewhat older (cum processit paulum) and begins to grasp (perspicere) to what extent anything affects and relates to it (se attingat ad seque pertineat), then it gradually (sensim) begins to progress (progredi) and know itself (seseque agnoscere) and to comprehend for what reason (intellegere quam ob causam) it has the desire of the mind (animi appetitum) we referred to, and finally it begins to strive after (appetere) the things that it perceives to be suited (apta) to its nature and to repel their opposites. Therefore (ergo) for every animal its object of desire (illud quod appetit) is to be found in what is appropriate to its nature (naturae...accommodatum). Cic. Fin. 5 24-25

The impulse (appetitus) towards self-preservation is further explained in the Antiochean account as a mechanism ‘given by nature’ (a natura datur) aiming at the

\(^{48}\) Ibid. 25: nam aliter adpetitio (eam enim volumus esse ὁριζὴν qua ad agendum impellimur et id adpetitus quod est visum) moveri non potest, illud autem quod movet prius oportet videri eique credi; quod fieri non potest, si id quod visum erit discerni non poterit a falso. Quo modo autem moveri animus ad adpetendum potest, si id quod videtur non percipitur accommodatum naturae sit an alienum?  
\(^{49}\) Ibid. 24: Atque etiam illud perspicuum est, constitui necesse esse initium quod sapientia cum quid agere incipiat sequatur, idque initium esse naturae accommodatum.
achievement of the organism’s best possible natural condition (\textit{ut optime secundum naturam adfectum esse possit}); this latter expression may well be the Greek equivalent of a κατὰ φύσιν ἔξις, of a ‘condition according to nature’:

Every animal loves itself (\textit{se ipsum diligit}), and upon its birth (\textit{simul et ortum est}), it acts for its self-preservation; for (\textit{quod}) this impulse is given to it from the beginning by nature (…) for the sake of the protection of its whole life (\textit{ad omnum vitam tuendam}) and in order for it (\textit{ut}) to preserve itself and to be able to be in the best condition in accordance with nature (\textit{ut optime secundum naturam adfectum esse possit}).

2.1 The Objects of ‘Aristotelian’ \textit{oikeiōsis}

The fundamental objects of desire are discussed in both Antiochus’ and Didymus’ accounts according to a \textit{threefold} division of goods into bodily, psychic and external. In Didymus’ account, this distinction appears in the presentation of \textit{oikeiōsis} at the beginning of the summary: starting with the bodily domain, Didymus connects a fundamental \textit{oikeiōsis} towards oneself with the desire for the exercise of life functions including an interest in the preservation of a healthy state and the attainment of pleasure.\(^{50}\) Such goods are both κατὰ φύσιν and <δί’> αὖθ’αἱρετά (choiceworthy for their own sake), whereas their opposites are accordingly παρὰ φύσιν and ‘to be avoided for their own sake’ (δί’ αὐτὰ φευκτά):

Καὶ πρῶτον μὲν ὄρεγεσθαι τοῦ εἶναι, φύσει γὰρ ὡκειώσθαι πρὸς ἑαυτὸν· διὸ καὶ προσηκόντως ἀσμενὶς μὲν ἐν τοῖς κατὰ φύσιν δυσχεραίνειν· ἐπὶ τοῖς παρὰ φύσιν. Τὴν τε γὰρ ὑγείαν περιποιεῖσθαι σπουδάζειν καὶ τῆς ἥδων ἔφεσιν ἔχειν καὶ τοῦ ζῆν ἀντιποιεῖσθαι τῷ τυφλῷ μὲν εἶναι κατὰ φύσιν καὶ <δί’> αὖθ’αἱρετά καὶ ἀγαθά, κατὰ δὲ τ’ἂναντία τὴν νόσον καὶ τὴν ἀλγηδόνα καὶ τὴν φθορὰν διακρούεσθαι καὶ παρακλίνειν τῷ παρὰ φύσιν ὑπάρχειν καὶ δί’ αὐτὰ φευκτά καὶ κακά. Didymus ap. Stob. Eclog. 2.118.13-20 W.

And first of all, they desire existence as they are familiarised towards themselves by nature; that is why they experience a suitable enjoyment among things according to nature and are annoyed by things which are against nature. For they take care to preserve their health and they desire pleasure and strive for life, these things being according to nature and for their own sake choiceworthy and good. Conversely,

\(^{50}\) Cf. also Varro’s account in Cicero’s \textit{Academica} 1.22 which transmits Antiochean doctrine: communis haec ratio, et utrisque hic bonorum finis videbatur, adipisci quae essent prima in natura quaeque ipsa per sese expetenda aut omnia aut maxima.
they reject and avoid illness, suffering and destruction as they are against nature and in themselves undesirable and evil.

To health, pleasure and the vital functions, the more specific aims of strength, and good functioning of the senses are added in a further catalogue which includes generally the ‘bodily virtues’. In addition to these, beauty is presented in the Peripatetic doxography of Didymus as one of the major ‘bodily goods’ towards which we experience an oikeiōsis; this ‘familiarisation’ towards beauty finds its correspondence in that avoidance of ugliness appears as a ‘reasonable’ course of action independent of its utility (καὶ δίχα τῆς δυσχρηστίας εὐλογον φυγὴν φαίνεσθαι τοῦ αἴσχους). In line with Didymus’ account, the πρότα κατὰ φύσιν in the Antiochean theory encompass the parts and faculties of a human being as a compound of body and soul; in the bodily realm, things which are sought from the moment of birth are the exercise and conservation of the limbs and the senses, health and beauty. More specifically, what is sought from the moment of birth, according to Antiochus, in the bodily domain is the proper natural motion and use (naturales motus ususque) of bodily parts and their unimpeded function according to the precepts and ‘will’ of a teleological nature. Piso refers also to a certain movement and stature of the body which may be deemed kατα phisyν and is sought for by all human beings, whereas he notes that occasionally a bodily stance which is contrary to nature (contra naturam) might reflect a perverted character. In line with this natural teleology, the ‘virtues’ of the senses which are desired from birth onwards consist in the fulfilling of their function by perceiving sensible objects without impediment. 

---

52 Ibid. 123.10-11 W.: πάντας γονὸν ψυχικῶς οἰκειοδοθεῖται τοῖς καλοῖς χωρίς πάσης χρέιας καὶ γὰρ πρὸς τὸ εἴδους αὐτοῦ καὶ εὐφροσύνης ἐξουσίας.
53 Ibid. p. 123.1-14 W.: Καὶ γὰρ ἄλλος οὐδεὶς τὸν ἐν τῇ διαφορᾷ αἰτίᾳ τῆς δυσχρηστίας τοῖς πάρα πάντα ἐπικολούθωσαν διὰ τὴν τιναῦδαν εὑρέθησαν. ΄Όστε καὶ δίχα τῆς δυσχρηστίας εὐλογον φυγὴν φαίνεσθαι τοῦ ἀίσχους. Εἰ δέ δι’ αὐτὸ ποιητῶν ἐστὶ τὸ ἀίσχος καὶ τὸ κάλλος ὡς μόνον ἀφ’ τῆς χρέιας αἰρέτα, ἀλλὰ καὶ δι’ αὐτὸ ὅτι γὰρ ἐξ αὐτοῦ προκλητικῶν ἐξεῖ τὸ κάλλος ἐμφανεῖ τοῖς γονὸν ἐν τοῖς καλοῖς χωρίς πάσης χρέιας καὶ γὰρ πρὸς τοὺς εἴδους εὐφροσύνης καὶ εὐφροσύνης ἐξουσίας ἐχει ὅθεν δὲ καὶ δοκεῖν εἶναι αὐτοῖς παρασκευαστικῶν. ΄Όστε καὶ κατὰ τὸν τότον τὸν λόγον, τὸ μὲν κάλλος τὸν δὲ αὐτὴν αἰρέταν ὑπάρχειν, τὸ δὲ ἀίσχος τῶν δι’ αὐτὸ ποιητῶν.
54 Fin. 5.35.
55 Ibid.: est autem etiam actio quaedam corporis quae motus et status naturae congruentis tenet.
56 Fin. 5.36: atque in sensibus est sua cuiusque virtus, ut ne quid impediat quo minus suo sensus quisque munere fungatur in ipsis rebus celeriter expeditoque percipiendis quae subjectae sunt sensibus. A reference to ‘virtues of the body’ can be found also in Stob. Eclog. 2 p.122.19 W.
and walking with our bodies in upright position all count as things which we value automatically from the moment of birth. The same applies to health as the ideal state of one’s body.  

Piso refers also to ‘natural goods’ pertaining to the soul, focusing on its rational part. He thereby draws a distinction between the so-called ‘non-voluntary’ (non voluntariae) virtues and the ‘voluntary’ ones (in voluntate positae). The former comprise congenital cognitive capacities (quaer ingenerantur suapte natura) which are inherited and do not depend on learning and experience, as for example the aptness for learning (docilitas) or memory (memoria). This category of intellectual virtues receives the generic name ingenium and translates in all probability the Greek term ἐνέργεια (‘a good natural endowment’). This again corresponds to the catalogue of πρότα κατὰ φύσιν offered in Didymus’ doxography of different τέλη in Stobaeus’ Eclogai 2: there is a reference there to dispositions like that of memory which, as the doxographer notes, do not yet have the character of expertise (ὅν οὐδέποτε τεχνοειδὲς οὐδέν) but are rather congenital dispositions (σύμφυτον δὲ μᾶλλον) of the soul. The former are to be differentiated from the psychic virtues which imply perfected reasoning manifested in deliberation and choice. That there exists an oikeiōsis towards these virtues as well becomes clear from a passage in Didymus’ summary which illustrates the inherent value of psychic virtues with an ‘internal turning about of the soul towards itself’ before stating their supreme value and primacy in comparison with the other foundational goods (ὅστε παρὰ πολὺ τιμωτέρας εἶναι ὑπάρχοντας τῆς ψυχῆς ἀρετάς).

The object of oikeiōsis in this case is not perceived

---

57 Cf. also Stob. Eclog. 2 p. 118.15 W.
58 Ibid.: animi autem et eius animi partes quae princeps est quaeque mens nominatur plures sunt virtutes.
59 The same classification of psychic goods is repeated by Varro in Acad. 1.20, whereby the differentiation is drawn between congenital virtues (in naturam) and those which pertain to moral character (mores): animi autem quae essent ad comprehendendum ingenis virtutem idonea, eaque ab his in naturam et mores dividebantur.
60 Cf. Acad. 1.20 where things like aptness to learn and memory are reckoned among the ‘natural’ goods of the soul. In Stob. Eclog.2 p.131.17 these fall under the category of ‘imperfect’ virtues.
61 In Didymus’ account we also found the classification of virtue into ‘perfected’ and ‘imperfect’, the latter comprising the natural cognitive endowments (ἐφορφυῖα) and that of moral progress (προκοπῆ), see Ibid. p. 131.15-17 W.: τῶν ἀρετῶν τὰς μὲν ἔλεγον εἶναι τελείας, τὰς δὲ ἀτελείας· τελείας μὲν τὴν τε δικαιοσύνην καὶ τὴν καλοκαγάθρων· ἀτελείας δὲ τὴν ἐξουλωσιόν καὶ τὴν προκοπῆν.
62 Ibid. p. 123.21-27 W. Τὴν γὰρ ἱσοδομὴν ἢ ἀρετὴν λαμβάνον, καθάπερ ἑπιστήμων, ἀπὸ τὸν σωματικὸν καὶ τῶν ἐξουλωσει ἀμφότερων καὶ πρὸς ἀμφότερα ἔπιστημον καὶ διεξαγαγόμενα, δύο καὶ ταῦτα τὸν κατὰ φύσιν πολὺ μᾶλλον τὸν τοῦ σώματος ἀρετῶν ἀκεραία πρὸς ἀμφότερας ὡς ὑπό τῆς ἐκείνης καὶ μᾶλλον γα ἀμφότερας ἡ πρὸς ἂμφοτερὰς τῶν σώματος ἀρετῶς ὡστε παρὰ πολὺ τιμωτέρας εἶναι ὑπάρχοντας τῆς ψυχῆς ἀρετάς.
externally but is inherent in reason itself. This applies for example to the pursuit of (scientific) truth which is discussed in Antiochus’ account as well by the use of exempla and an allegorical interpretation of Ulysses’ journeys.

Other passages in the Antiochene account suggest that there is a natural oikeiōsis towards both theoretical and social virtue (in conjunction with a ‘natural’ attraction towards other human beings): thus, the starting-point of a good person’s relationship towards others is identified in Fin. 5.65 with the natural affection that parents experience towards their offspring, a feeling rendered in Greek with the word φιλοστοργία. This affection extends gradually (serpit sensim foras) to relationships with other kin, friends, fellow-citizens and other human beings. This scheme of extended circles of sympathy is taken to ground the virtue of justice which is defined as a state of mind ‘which assigns to each person their due’ extending, according to Piso’s account, beyond the boundaries of the polis and encompassing humanity as a whole:

This state of mind (animi adfectio) which assigns to each person their due (suum cuique tribuens) and preserves with generosity and equity (munifice et aequo) this association of human bonding that I am talking about is called justice. Connected with it are piety, kindness, generosity, courtesy, friendliness and all of this kind. And while these belong especially to justice, they are common to the rest of the virtues as well. Fin. 5.65

The grounding of social virtues in pre-rational inclinations receives more attention in Didymus’ summary. In the relevant text, the recognition of the inherent choiceworthiness of other human beings and the corresponding actions that ensue from such a recognition are grounded in an objective relatedeness (οἰκειότης) and the ‘social and altruistic’ nature of human beings (φιλάλληλον γὰρ ἑναι καὶ κοινωνικὸν ζῷον τὸν ἀνθρωπον); this seems to provide an inchoate perception of the fact that there are reasons to act ‘philanthropically’:

If there is such a love towards the children because of their being choiceworthy for their own sake (κατὰ τὸ <δι> αὖθ' αἱρετόν),

63 See ibid. 126.6 ff. W.: Ἐπειδὴ γὰρ πρὸς ἑαυτὴν ὀκειοῦται μάλιστα πάντων ἀρετήν, δὴλον ὡς καὶ πρὸς τὴν τῆς ἄλληθες ἐπιστήμην ἀναγκαῖον ὀκειοῦσθαι φυσικῶς αὐτῇ.
65 This became the standard Stoic definition of justice (e.g. Stob. Eclog. 2. p.59.9-10, 84.15-16 W.) but it appears also in the pseudo-Aristotelian Virt. et. Vit., see 1250a12: δικασσίσθη δ' ἐστὶν ἀρετὴ νυχῆς διανεμητικῆ τοῦ κατ' ἀξίον.
necessarily also parents and brothers and one’s wife and relatives and other close persons and fellow-citizens are loved for their own sake (ὡς δὲ ἀντί Φίλως τυγχάνειν); for we have by nature certain kinds of relatedness with them too (ἐξειν γὰρ ἐκ φύσεως ἡμᾶς καὶ πρὸς τούτως τινὰς οἰκειότητας), since humans are social living beings with love for each other (φιλάλληλον εἶναι καὶ κοινωνικὸν ζῶν τὸν ἄνθρωπον). (…) If love towards one’s fellow citizens is choiceworthy for its own sake, then so must be that towards people of the same nation or race, and therefore also that towards all human beings (ὅστε καὶ τὴν πρὸς πάντας ἄνθρωπος). For also all those who save (someone) have manifestly such a disposition towards their neighbors as to act in most of the cases not according to the merit (of each person) (κατ᾽ ἀξίαν) but according to what is choiceworthy for its own sake (κατὰ τὸ δὲ αὐθ᾽ αἱρετὸν). For who wouldn’t rescue, if one could, someone who is seen being violated by a beast? Who wouldn’t indicate the way to someone who is lost? Who wouldn’t assist someone who is dying through lack of means? (…) Didymus apud Stobaeus Eclog. 2 p.120.8-121.6 W.

That particular commitments which are grounded in pre-rational affections come to constitute grounds for appropriate and virtuous actions is made plausible in the above-mentioned text by means of rhetorical questions (e.g. ‘Who wouldn’t help someone in need?’). The virtue of φιλανθρωπία dictates for example helping people in need even without considerations of utility (expressed with the word χρεία in the account) or the worth (ἀξία) of the recipient of the virtuous action; accordingly, the virtue of φιλοστοργία grasps on the basis of a congenital affection towards offspring corresponding reasons for appropriate actions with regard to one’s own children, for example leaving testimonies for them. There is no special argument in both texts to support the recognition of the value of particular ‘circles of affection’ and corresponding appropriate actions, but it seems that both Antiochus and Didymus take these successive affective relationships to be grounded in natural inclinations which differ in their range and intensity.67

A last remark with regard to what Peripatetics in the First century BCE postulate as the foundational object(s) of desire is in order. The reluctance to include pleasure among the things to which we are attracted by nature is a characteristic feature of the

66 This is the reading that I propose against the mss. reading τὰς πράξεις and Wachmuth’s πρὸς ἀξίαν.
67 See for example the remark in ibid. 121.21-22 W. that ‘the choiceworthy for its own sake is much more obvious when it is directed towards intimate friends’: πολὺ μᾶλλον πρὸς τοὺς ἐν συνηθείᾳ φίλους τὸ δὲ αὐθ᾽ αἱρετὸν φανερώτερον.
Antiochean account in *Finibus* 5; the ambivalent stance towards the inclusion of pleasure in the catalogue of *prima naturae* marks a clear departure from the Peripatetic tradition which Antiochus attempted to resurrect. Such a desire for the pleasant is found according to *EN* 3.1119b5-7 primarily in children. Again in the summary of Peripatetic ethics from the *Epitome* of Didymus, pleasure belongs to the ‘first natural things’ which are desired, like health and life itself, for their own sake. Instead of highlighting the connection between the *oikeiōn* and the ήδόν, the Antiochean spokesman dismisses the role of pleasure in his exposition of *oikeiōsis* as something which makes no difference to the general argument: according to him, either pleasure does not belong at all to the catalogue of the first natural goods, which is presented in Cicero’s account as the position favoured most by Antiochus, or, if it does, it should be reckoned merely as one of the bodily goods with no privileged place among them; this, as Piso claims, does not alter the gist of the Peripatetic theory of the *summum bonum* as it is presented in *Fin.* 5. The dialectical context against which Antiochus proposed his reconstruction of Aristotelian ethics might play a role here: a stress on pleasure would have to face the criticisms addressed to the Epicurean school, or could invite a comparison with later members of the Peripatos who included pleasure in their conception of the final end alongside virtue, like Callipho and Dinomachus. Most importantly, it would make the (polemical) project of the assimilation of Stoicism into the ‘Old Academy’ more difficult.

### 2.2 Empirical examples of children’s behavior in Antiochus’ account

---

68. At *Fin.* 4.20 Cicero wearing his Antiochean hat chooses the more cautious vacuitas dolorum.

69. See especially *De Anima* 3.431a8-14 where the pleasant is discussed as the most fundamental object of pursuit: τὸ μὲν οὖν αἰσθάνεσθαι ὅμων τῷ φάναι μόνον καὶ νοεῖν· ὅταν δὲ ήδυ· ή λυπηρόν, οἷον καταφάσατα ή ἀποφάσα διώκει· καὶ φεύγει· καὶ ἔστι τὸ ήδονθαι καὶ καταφέρει τῷ ἑνεργείς τῇ αἰσθητικῇ μεσοτητὶ πρὸς τὸ ἁγιάν ἡ κακόν, ἡ τουτά, καὶ ἡ φυγὴ δὲ καὶ ἡ δρέξεις ταυτό· καὶ κατ᾽ ἐνεργείαν, καὶ συν ἐπερνόν τῷ ὀρεκτικόν καὶ τῷ φυσικόν, οὐτοὶ ἄλληλον οὔτε τοῦ αἰσθητικοῦ· ἄλλα τὸ εἶναι ἄλλο.

70. κατ᾽ ἐπιθυμίαν γὰρ ζώσι καὶ τὰ παιδία, καὶ μάλιστα ἐν τούτοις ή τοῦ ήδος ὀρέξεις; cf. ibid. 2.1105a1-2.


73. *Fin.* 5.45.

74. See *Fin.* 5.21.

75. Antiochus for polemical purposes attempted to underplay the originality of the Stoic school and argued that the Stoics repeated the doctrines of the ‘ancients’ with altered terminology, see e.g. *Fin.* 5.74: ei quidem non unam aliquam aut alteram <rem> a nobis sed totam ad se nostram philosophiam transluterunt; atque ut reliqui fures earum rerum quas ceperunt signa commutant, sic illi ut sententias nostris pro suis uterentur nomina tamquam rerum notas mutaverunt. On the dismissive attitude of the Stoics towards pleasure, see *Fin.* 3.17: in principis autem naturalibus plerique Stoici non putant voluptatem esse ponendum.
It has been suggested that the rise of a developmental approach to ethics, with its emphasis on the non-rational stages of life, was linked to the empiricist methodology of the Epicurean school which put an emphasis on evidence delivered immediately to the senses and drew from such evidence conclusions about ‘thick’ notions of practical goodness or virtue. In the case of ethics, the primary observable (psychological) fact was identified on the part of Epicureans with the pursuit of pleasure and the avoidance of pain. In order to secure that the value of pleasure is not only a belief among others but grounded in nature herself, Epicurus suggested that new-born infants should be the domain where one should look for in order to observe the ‘primitives’ of human behavior. The impact of culture and education may corrupt this ‘undisputable’ starting point, and lead to the formation of false beliefs which would not be appropriate as foundational premises of the ethical theory. That is why the testimony of infants and animals plays an important role in the Epicurean defense of pleasure as the ultimate aim of action. In a passage from Sextus, the example adduced to make this point is that of the propensity of infants to cry as soon as they are separated from the womb by virtue of the pain they feel when coming in contact with the cold air in the environment. On the basis of this alleged infallible evidence from the senses, some Epicureans concluded that pleasure is a thing ‘to be chosen’ (αἱρετῶν).

Antiochus’ contribution to the reconstruction of an Aristotelian thesis on oikeiōsis is perhaps manifested best in his use of ‘cradle arguments’; the Antiochean spokesperson even argues in Fin. 5 that ‘all old philosophers, and most of all those of our school, visit the cradle with the belief that in childhood one can most easily discern the will of nature’. Such examples come to support Aristotelian assumptions about the existence of inherent desires for appropriate objects, corresponding to the

76 See Fin. 1.71: si infantes pueri, mutae etiam bestiae paene loquuntur magistra ac deuce natura nihil esse prosperum nisi voluptatem, nihil asperum nisi dolorem, de quibus neque depravate neque corrupse. Cf. S.E. M 11.96: ἀλλ’ εἰόθεν τοὺς τὸν ἀπὸ τῆς ἑπικούρου αἱρέσεως πρὸς τὰς τούτως ἐσπορίους ὑπαντῶντες λέγειν, ὅτι φυσικῶς καὶ ἀδιάκτως τὸ ζῆνον φεύγει μὲν τὴν ἀληθήν, διόκει δὲ τὴν ἡδονὴν γεννήθην γοῦν καὶ μηδέποτα τοῖς κατὰ δόξαν μουλεῖν ἀμα τὸ ῥαπτοθήναι ἀσυνήθην ἄρος νύξει ἐκλαυσέ τι καὶ ἐκκόκυσεν. τί δὲ φυσικῶς ὀρμᾶ μὲν πρὸς ἡδονήν, ἐκκλεῖ δὲ τὸν πόνον, φύσει φεύκετον τί ἀστίν αὐτῷ ὁ πόνος καὶ αἱρετῶν ἡ ἡδονή.

77 See especially Fin. 5.55: omnes veteres philosophi, maxime nostri, ad incunabula accedunt quod in puertia facillime se arbitratur naturae voluntatem posse cognoscere. For an early example of a ‘cradle argument’ in Plato, see for example Rep. 441a-b, where the behavior of children is invoked in order to prove the existence of a special part of the soul, namely thymos.

78 Tamen omnes veteres philosophi, maxime nostri, ad incunabula accedunt, quod in puertia facillime se arbitratur naturae voluntatem posse cognoscere.
division of goods into goods of the body, externals and psychic goods. In contrast to
the Epicurean school, such empirical examples do not serve as ‘proofs’ but as mere
indications of values which are perceived by the rational agent as reasons for
action. The choice of the examples, as also their separation from the observable
behavior of children which is not authoritative for the ethical theory, depends on
further premises about human nature (for example the understanding of human nature
as a compound of soul and body and the priority of the former over the latter, the
stipulation of the inherent social nature of human beings or, ultimately, a teleological
understanding of nature), premises which in both texts receive (at best) only a
‘dialectical’ defense.

Antiochus supports with the use of empirical examples the plausibility of the
tripartite division of the ‘primary things according to nature’ by discussing for
example the way children are drawn towards the use and preservation of their bodily
parts. For example, at Fin. 5.31 both children and animals are taken to manifest the
fundamental feeling of fear of destruction and the innate desire for survival, whereas
by the fact that children, even though they do not function rationally, are still afraid
when one threatens to throw them down from a height, Antiochus shows that fear of
destruction is not dependent upon a judgement. In another passage at Fin. 5.42
children along with animals are taken as examples to show how an initial vague stage
of ‘first familiarisation’ gives way through experience to a more developed stage
whereby the organism learns the use of the parts of its body and experiences an
impulse for things perceived as suited and related to itself. This is accompanied at
Fin. 5.55 by a desire to be active (cupiditas agendi), manifest in the way children
desire games and other sorts of activities for their own sake without being deterred by
punishment.

---

79 It is suggestive that the Peripatetic spokesperson uses for arguments based on observations the word
argumentum (e.g. Fin. 5.31) which suggests probability, in contrast to the word ratio which suggests
conclusive necessity on the basis of reasoning.
80 See for example Didymus’ appeal to ἐνάργεια (if we accept Wachsmuth’s reading against the ms.
reading ἐνέργεια) in order to show that children are choiceworthy for their own sake and not only ‘out
of necessity’, see Didymus ap. Stobaeus, Eclog. 2.119.21 W. ff.: Ὄτι γὰρ οὐ μόνον ἀιρετὰ τὰ τέκνα
tοις γοναμβέλοις ἐστὶ διὰ τὰς χρείας ἄλλα καὶ δὴ ἐκεῖ ἐνάργημα ἐκ τῆς ἐναργείας οὐδένα γονὸν ὀφεῖς
ἐμὸν εἶναι καὶ θηριώδη τὴν φύσιν, ὡς οὐκ ἐν σπουδάζω μετὰ τὴν ἐπιστήμης τελευτην εἰς ἀναμνησθείν τὰ
tέκνα καὶ καλὸς ἑπισκενθήσας μᾶλλον ἢ τούτον.
81 See for example with regard to the superiority of the soul over the body ibid. 125.11-14 W.: Ὅστε
tρία γένε τῶν ἁγαθῶν ὅθεν ἀιρετά ὑπάρχουσι, τὰ τε περὶ ψυχῆς καὶ τὰ περὶ τὸ σῶμα καὶ τὰ ἔκτος· καὶ
μακρὰ ἀιρετέτερα τὰ περὶ ψυχῆς τῶν ἄλλων ἐπείδη καὶ ἡγεμονικότερον καὶ ἀιρετότερον ψυχή
σώματος. Cf. Fin. 5.34.
The recognition of the value of psychic goods such as knowledge is linked to the idea of the existence of ‘seeds of virtue’ in children which are available from the moment of birth and ‘without teaching’ (sine doctrina); thus, according to the Antiochean account, children not only seek things related to their bodily integrity and survival, but show clear signs of social behaviour, engaging in games and other collective activities with their peers; they thereby show, as stated at Fin. 5.42, signs of both ‘altruistic’ values, like generosity, by ‘desiring to bestow upon others something out of their own abundance’ (deque eo quod ipsis superat aliis gratificari volunt), and a desire to excel, be praised and win contests with others. They furthermore show clear signs of a desire for knowledge, not only by exhibiting a curiosity for things in their immediate environment but also by valuing spectacles and games for their own sake, sometimes neglecting thereby even the desire for food or the fear of punishment.

The recognition of ‘protovirtues’ in children seems prima facie to contradict Aristotle’s remarks on the irrelevance of children’s behavior for the ethical discourse and specifically for the understanding of virtuous action: children for example are excluded from the discussion on eudaimonia in NE 1 since they are not able to perform virtuous actions which are the primary constituents of a happy life. The idea of semina virtutum may, however, be linked to Aristotle’s remarks about φυσικὴ ἄρετη in the last chapter of NE 6 (ch. 13), a text which may well have inspired Antiochus. There, Aristotle rejects ascribing the praiseworthy character of virtuous action to actions done out of a natural virtuous inclination manifest in children and

---

82 See Fin. 5.18 and, especially, 5.43 where we find also the metaphor of sparks (igniculi or scintillae) of virtue: sunt enim prima elementa naturae quibus auctis virtutis quasi germen efficitur. nam cum ita nati factique simus, ut et agendi aliquid et diligendi aliquos et liberalitatis et referendae gratiae principia in nobis contineremus atque ad scientiam, prudentiam, fortitudinem aptos animos haberemus a contrariisque rebus alienos, non sine causa eas quas dixi in pueris virtutum videmus e quibus accendi philosophi ratio debet ut eam quasi deum ducem subsequens ad naturae perveniat extremum; cf. Fin. 4.17 (iustitiae semina) and Didymus’ Eclogai 2. p. 116.22 W. which equates ‘principles’ with ‘seeds’: οὐκ γὰρ ἐκ φύσεως ἁρχῆς ἔχομεν καὶ σπέρματα. The biological metaphor suggests the understanding of human ethical development as an organic process akin to the development of a plant from a seed.

83 Fin. 5.42.
84 Fin. 5.48.
85 See NE 1.1100a1-3.
86 A text from the Aristotelian corpus which conveys the idea of ‘seeds of virtue’ is HA 7. 588a31-b3: φανερώτατον δ’ ἐστὶ τὸ τοὐτὸν ἐπὶ τὴν τῶν παιδιῶν ἡλικίαν βλέπασθαι· ἐν τούτοις γὰρ τῶν μὲν ὕστερον ἔξων ἐκπεμνόν ἐστιν ὄλον ἵκη καὶ σπέρματα, διαφέρει δ’ οὔδὲν ὡς εἴπερ ἢ ψυχὴ τῆς τῶν θηρίων ψυχῆς κατὰ τὸν χρόνον τούτον, ἀστ’ οὔδὲν ἄλογον εἰ τὰ μὲν ταῦτα τὰ δὲ παραπλῆσια τὰ δ’ ἀνάλογαν ὑπάρχει τοῖς ἄλλοις ζῴοις.
even some animals.\textsuperscript{87} Even though, children (at least those gifted with a ‘good endowment’) value appropriate actions for their own sake, they do not employ a reasoned principle in doing so, and, accordingly, their actions might even produce damaging effects. Aristotle concludes that virtue should be ascribed to them in a loose sense and not \textit{sensu stricto} and contrasts the under-developed abilities of children with those of a virtuous agent. Still, this idea never develops in Aristotle into an argument which could serve as a foundation for the understanding of advanced, moral behaviour. Antiochus treats, by contrast, natural virtuous inclinations as the (necessary) basis of ‘moral’ action and takes such inclinations to be universal dispositions towards the perfected state of the virtuous agent.

2.3 The transition from the \textit{oikeion} to other types of normative goods (the \textit{kathēkon} and the \textit{kalon}) in the Aristotelian accounts of the First century BCE

The assumption about \textit{oikeiōsis} in Carneades’ refutational scheme entails that the foundational objects of desire are (or \textit{should} be) reflected in the way reason forms normative concepts about what is ‘good’ and ‘bad’.\textsuperscript{88} The normativity found in the rational stage of our development presupposes the capacity of perceiving \textit{reasons} for action. This suggests that, when humans acquire rationality, the objects of initial desire are grasped as the ends of action. In Piso’s account, the transition from a justification of the inherent value of ‘appropriate’ objects of desire by way of \textit{oikeiōsis} to their defense as inherently valuable objects of \textit{choice} is marked in \textit{Fin. 5.46}; there, Piso refers to another way of arguing for the Peripatetic \textit{telos} (\textit{aliud argumentandi genus}), according to which the bodily and psychic parts of human nature are chosen by virtue of their own distinctive power (\textit{sua quaeque vis sit}) and not (merely) as an outcome of \textit{oikeiōsis}. The power signified here is that of something as ‘choiceworthy for its own sake’, i.e. as meriting rational approval by virtue of its

\textsuperscript{87} Aristotle presents the idea that (moral) character is manifest from the moment of birth as a ‘common opinion’, see \textit{NE} 6.1144b4-6: πάση γάρ δοκεῖ ἐκατὰ τῶν ἠθῶν ὑπάρχειν φύσις πας· καὶ γὰρ δίκαιοι καὶ σωφρονικοί καὶ ἀνδρείαι καὶ τάλα ἔχουσιν εὐθὺς ἴκ γεννητές.

\textsuperscript{88} Carneades bases his refutation of the Stoics on an attempt to show that what they postulate as the ‘first principles of action’ does not tally with their conception of the \textit{telos}. This is also reflected in the anti-Stoic polemic of Plutarch in \textit{Com. Not.} 1069e-f: πάση δ’ Ἀριστοτέλης, ὁ μικάρις, καὶ Θεοφραστος ἄρχοντας· τίνας δὲ Ξενοκράτης καὶ Πολύμαχος λαμβάνουσιν ἀρχάς; οὐχὶ καὶ Ζήνων τούτοις ἡκολούθησαν ὑποτιθεμένοις στοιχεῖ τῆς εὐδαιμονίας τὴν φύσιν καὶ τὸ κατὰ φύσιν; ἄλλ’ ἐκείνοι μὲν επὶ τούτοιν ἐμεῖσαν ὡς αἰρέτων καὶ ἀγαθῶν καὶ ὁφελῶν, καὶ τὴν ἀρετὴν προσλαμβάνετε σεκέντρον, καὶ τοῦτο τοῦτον καὶ ὀλοκληρον ἄνοιξαν συμπλήρων βίον καὶ συμπεραινεῖν, τὴν ἀληθῆς τῇ φύσει πρόσφορον καὶ συνωδόν ὀμολογίαν ἀποδιδόντες.
own nature. This signals the transition from talking about naturally desirable things (on the basis of *oikeiōsis*), to things ‘chosen for their own sake’, i.e. to them being objects of rational deliberation.

In Didymus’ account, the desire (όρη) for *κατὰ φύσιν* goods pertaining to both the body and the soul belongs to a first, pre-cognitive stage of development (the proper domain of *oikeiōsis*) which functions as the basis for the subsequent stages addressing the reasoned agent; these stages are identified with 1. the stage of the grasping of καθήκοντα and 2. the stage of ἄρετή. The account suggests that the rational agent comes to view the *κατὰ φύσιν* objects of desire as forming the content of καθήκοντα, i.e. of ‘appropriate actions’. Finally, the perfected agent or the so-called φρόνιμος comes to judge appearances with respect to an acquired concept of ‘practical beauty’ or the καλὸν. This may be understood as equivalent in Didymus’ doxography to a motivation which is ‘according to reason’ (κατὰ λόγον), whereby we may understand ‘right reason’ (ὀρθὸν λόγον).

In both cases, one is moved by the thought of a practical principle grasped by reason, whether it is that of an ‘appropriate action’ or that of a ‘noble’ one. Our ‘Aristotelian’ sources from the First century BCE stress thereby the correspondence between the knowledge which forms the basis of action for the wise (and, more generally, the reasonable) agent and the representations of suitable objects of desire inciting our impulse at the beginning of our lives, as an outcome of a natural, teleological structure. This correspondence is reflected in the vocabulary used by both authors: in one passage from the doxography of Didymus, ‘a natural goodwill and affection towards everybody’ is taken to reflect (ἐμφαίνουσα) a proper reason for action, i.e. what is according to ‘right reason’. Such views correspond to what is ascribed to Lucullus in the homonymous Ciceronian dialogue as well: in line with Piso’s presentation of Antiochean ethics in *Fin.* 5, the Antiochean

---

89 In *Fin.* 5.61 the phrase *suapte natura per se esse expetenda* is used to convey the same meaning.
90 See the identification of the three stages of ethical development in Didymus ap. Stobaeus, *Eclog.* 2.118.20ff. W: Φάνερον γὰρ εἶναι ἡμῶν τὸ σῶμα, φύλην δὲ τὴν ψυχὴν, φύλα δὲ τὰ τούτων μέρη καὶ τὰς ὑδάμας καὶ τὰς ἐνέργειας· ἀν κατὰ τὴν ἀρχήν τῆς συνορίας τὴν ἀρχήν γέγονεν τῆς ἀρχῆς καὶ τοῦ καθήκοντος καὶ τῆς ἄρετής·. Cf. also ibid. 119.15-20: Τὰς γὰρ πράξεις ἀπὸ τῆς τοῦ κατὰ φύσιν ἐκλογῆς καὶ τῆς ἀποκλογῆς τῶν παρὰ φύσιν τὰς ἀρχὰς ἔχειν συμβεβήκε καὶ τὰ λεγόμενα καθήκοντα. Διὸ καὶ τὰς τε κατορθόσεις καὶ τὰς ἀμαρτίας ἐν τούτος καὶ περὶ τούτα γέγονα, where the three stages are identified with a. the ἐκλογή τῶν κατὰ φύσιν b. τὰ καθήκοντα and c. the κατορθώσεις (being also the domain of ἀμαρτία).
91 Cf. ibid. 121.18-19: Φανέρον οὖν ὅτι πρὸς πάντας ἔστιν ἡμῶν εὐνοϊα φυσική καὶ φύλα τὸ δι’ αὐτὴν ἐκλογήν ἐκμετάλλευσα καὶ τὸ κατὰ λόγον.
92 Ibid. 121.17-19: Φανέρον οὖν ὅτι πρὸς πάντας ἔστιν ἡμῶν εὐνοϊα φυσική καὶ φύλα τὸ δι’ αὐτὴν ἐκμετάλλευσα καὶ τὸ κατὰ λόγον. Cf. also the way virtue is deemed συννόδος...τῇ φύσει in ibid. 119.12-13 W.: τὴν τῆς ἐπικρίσεως βέβαιον εὐδοκιμίαν ἐπεισετησάμεν, ἢ καὶ συνοδόν εὔρομενον τῇ φύσει, διὰ τῆς ἐνεργείας μεγαλοπρεπεὶς ἀρετῆς προσηγορεύσαμεν.
spokesperson in the Lucullus conceives of the grasping of ‘natural appropriateness’ as a necessary step towards the performance of appropriate actions (καθήκοντα or officia). The latter stand halfway between actions triggered by a perceived ‘familiarity’ or attractiveness and those resulting from a virtuous disposition. Thus, perception of natural appropriateness forms the basis for (practical) reason to perceive ‘right’ reasons for action leading ultimately to the constant and irrefutable cognition characteristic of the virtuous agent (virtutum cognition). Such cognition is taken to explain the self-sacrificial behavior of virtuous people, since Lucullus implicitly defends the view that no one would choose to act against his or her immediate expediency by, for example, enduring pain or torture, unless on the basis of certainty about what is appropriate and virtuous. Thus, even though pre-rational inclinations are for both Antiochus and Didymus not sufficient for the development of virtuous reasoning, they provide the necessary orientation for the functions of reason and are thus intrinsically linked to our capacity to act ‘morally’. We may infer that without this basis, reason on its own would lack the appropriate orientation (and corresponding material) to reflect upon and would, by virtue of this, fail in finding reasoned principles of action. This idea sets the first period of our lives into a positive light making it the ideal starting point for ethical development, without at the same time compromising the role of reason as the primary locus of human agency. Accordingly, the kata physin reactions towards ourselves and the surrounding environment are seen as fully realised in the reasoning capacity of the virtuous agent who grasps the inherent value of the initial aims of action and comes to view them as the constituents of σώδαμονia.

93 The criterion of truth for practical reasoning lies in Aristotle in the rightness of a choice (προαιρεσις). Aristote states that practical reasoning in the form of choice is concerned both with true beliefs and right desires, since beliefs are unable on their own to move to action, see NE 6.1139a17-30: Τρία δὴ εστὶν ἐν τῇ γυαλί τὰ κόρα πράξεως καὶ ἀλήθειας, ἀσθένειας νοῦς ὑπέρ. Τούτων δὴ ἡ ἀλήθεια, εἰς ἄρχη πράξεως· δήλων δὲ τῇ τῇ ἀλήθεια ἀσθένειαν μὲν ἔχουν πράξεως δὲ μὴ κοινωνεῖν. Εἰσὶ δὲ ὅσπερ ἐν διανοίᾳ κατάφασις καὶ ἀπόφασις, τοὔτοις ἐν ὑπόσχεσι διώξεις καὶ φυγῇ· ἐστὶν ἐπανάντων ἡ ἡμικλή ἀρετὴ ἔξω προοριστική, ἡ δὲ προοριστικὴ ὑπόσχεσι βουλευτικῆ, δεῖ δέ ταύτα μὲν τὸν τὸ λόγου ἀλήθη εἶναι καὶ τὴν ὑπόσχεσιν ὑπόσχεσιν, ἐπανάντων ἡ προοριστικὴ συζυγία, καὶ τὰ αὐτὰ τὸν μὲν φάναι τὴν ἐνδείκνυται· αὐτὴ μὲν ὁνὸν ἡ διάνοια καὶ ἡ ἀλήθεια πρακτικῆ. (…) τοῦ δὲ πρακτικοῦ καὶ διανοητικοῦ ἀλήθειας ὄμολογος ἔχειν τῇ ὑπόσχεσιν τῇ ὑπόσχεσιν εἰς τὸν τὸν συζυγίαν.
94 Lucullus refers to the irrefutable knowledge characteristic of ethics as sapientia but also as ars vivendi, see Luc. 23.
95 Ibid.: quero etiam, ille vir bonus, qui statuit omnem cruciatum perferre, intolerabili dolore lacerari potius quam aut officium prodalt aut fidem, cur has sibi tam graves leges imposuerit, cum quam ob rem ita oporteret nihil habet comprenhensii percepti cogniti constituiri.
3.1 The debate on foundational desires in the Peripatos after the First Century BCE

The dissemination and more systematic study of the so-called ‘esoteric’ Aristotelian treatises in the second half of the First century BCE had as a consequence new interpretations on a number of philosophical issues, including ethics, on the part of Peripatetic philosophers. Alexander of Aphrodisias’ Mantissa (or Supplement to On the Soul) contains good examples of the school debates within the Aristotelian school of this era.96 The discussions referred to in the essay Τὸν παρὰ Αριστοτέλους περὶ τοῦ πρὸτου οἰκείου97 give testimony to the idea that the methodological starting point of the oikeion was still relevant around Alexander’s time and was approached by means of a new attention to Aristotle’s ipsissima verba.98

Three main views are discussed in a row: First, a group of Peripatetics in the late First Century BCE identified with the ‘associates of Xenarchus and Boethus’ (οἱ περὶ Ξέναρχον εἰς καὶ Βοηθόν)99 held the view that one’s own self is the foundational object of desire (151.3-4: πρὸτον οἰκείον ἡμῖν ἡμᾶς αὐτούς) on the basis of the primary meaning of the oikeion as what is ‘one’s own’, understood as ‘what relates to oneself’. The view was supported by the use of Aristotelian passages on philia from Books 8 and 9 of the Nicomachean Ethics whereby the object of philia is associated with oneself. These Peripatetics subsequently understood the oikeion analogously to the ‘object of friendship’; the association with oneself relates in the case of Book 8 to a reference to the φιλητὸν as the object of desire for a particular person, i.e. as what seems to one to be good or pleasant.100 Departing from the idea of oneself as the subject of every desire, these Peripatetics seem to have concluded that the most

---

98 The phrase τῶν παρὰ Αριστοτέλους (‘from Aristotle’s opinions’) suggests perhaps a conscious attempt to relate an answer to the topic with the Aristotelian text itself.
99 As Sharples (2004, n. 520) notes, this need not mean more than Xenarchus and Boethus themselves.
100 NE 8.1155b17-27: Τάχα δ’ ἄν γένοιτο περὶ αὐτῶν φανερῶν γνωρισθέντος τοῦ φιλητοῦ. δοκεῖ γὰρ οὗ πᾶν φυλεσθῇ ἄλλα τοῦ φιλητοῦ, τοῦτο δ’ εἶναι ἄγαθὸν ἢ ἱδον ἢ χρήσιμον· δόξας δ’ ἄν χρήσιμον εἶναι δ’ οὗ γίνεται ἄγαθον τι ἢ ἴνων, ἀπὸ ἄγαθον τε καὶ τὸ ἱδον ὡς τέλει. πότερον οὖν τάχα ἄγαθον ἢ τὸ αὐτοῦ ἄγαθον, διαφορεῖ γὰρ ἐν τούτῳ ταῦτα, ὡμοίος δ’ καὶ περὶ τὸ ἱδον. δοκεῖ δ’ τὸ αὐτή ἄγαθον φιλέων ἐκκαθος, καὶ εἶναι ἀπλῶς μὲν τάχα ἄγαθον φιλητῶν, ἐκάκτῳ δὲ τὸ ἐκάκτῳ· φιλέω δ’ ἐκκαθος, οἷο τὸ ὁ ἄγαθον ἄλλα τὸ φαινόμενον. διοίκει δ’ οὐδὲν· ἔσται γὰρ τὸ φιλητῶν φαινόμενον.
fundamental object of desire is indeed one’s own self; according to this reasoning, ‘it is by reference to ourselves’ (κατὰ τὴν ἑφ’ ἡμᾶς ἀναφοράν) that we lay claim to other things and love others. In the case of the quotation from Book 9, the ideal friendship is likened to the relationship that (virtuous) persons enjoy with themselves, since in such a relationship one wishes good things for one’s own sake to the highest degree. Our own self seems then to possess the highest inherent value in comparison with any other object of desire.

It is suggestive that both quotations do not relate explicitly to the first stages of our lives but are used ad hoc by the Peripatetics at hand in order to construct an ‘Aristotelian’ position on the foundational object of desire. The position is rejected by Alexander as ‘lacking distinctions’ (ἀδιάδοροντικος). The critique consists in saying that the idea of our own self as a proper object of desire suggests that our own self is something separate from us (ὁσπερ πραγμά τι ἄλλο ἄλλου κεχωρισμένον ἡμῶν), and not something already implicit in all our desires. An alternative (offered by Alexander) is to say that we desire not ourselves simpliciter but our existence (τοῦ ἐναν αὐτοῦ ἡμᾶς) which would amount to saying that the proper object of desire is self-preservation. Alexander attempts to refute this view as well by suggesting that we may exist even in a bad or painful state; few would say however that we desire to be in such a state. If that holds, then we need further specifications with regard to the sort of existence we desire from the beginning of our lives.

Further, some of the later Peripatetics assumed that pleasure is the foundational object of desire; this is a topic that did not receive attention in Antiochus, probably, as already suggested, under the influence of the dismissive attitude of Stoicism against pleasure. The members of the Peripatos who opted for this understanding of the foundational object of desire sought again support in Aristotle’s text, prompted by the Aristotelian division of the object of desire into the noble, the expedient and the

---

101 NE 9.1168a35-b10: τοὺς λόγοις δὲ τούτοις τὰ ἔργα διαφωνεῖ, οὐκ ἄλογος, φασὶ γὰρ δεῖν φιλεῖν μάλιστα τὸν μάλιστα φίλον, φίλος δὲ μάλιστα ὁ βουλόμενος ὃς βούλεται τάγαθα ἄκινον ἔννοια, καὶ εἰ μηδέδα εἴσησθαι ταῦτα δὲ ὑπάρχει μάλιστ' αὐτῷ πρὸς αὐτόν, καὶ τὰ λοιπὰ δὴ πάνθ' οἷς ὁ φίλος ὄργεται ἐφρητα γὰρ ότι ἢ' αὐτοῦ πάντα τὰ φιλικά καὶ πρὸς τοὺς ἄλλους διήκει. καὶ αἱ παραρμίζει δὲ πᾶσα ὁμογενεμονοδούσην, οἷον τὸ ‘μὴ ψυχή’ καὶ ‘κοινὰ τὰ φίλων’ καὶ ἱσότης φιλότης καὶ ‘γόνον κήμης ἐγγυον’ πάντα γὰρ ταῦτα πρὸς αὐτὸν μάλιστ' ἂν ὑπάρχον μάλιστα γὰρ φίλος αὐτῷ καὶ ψυχής δὴ μάλιστα ἀμαλτὼν.

102 151.17-18: καὶ μνημήρος ἄρα καὶ λυπηρός, καὶ γὰρ ἐν τούτοις ὄντες ὡμοίουσιν.

103 151.18-20: εἰσὶν δὲ οἱ λέγοντες ἡδονήν εἶναι κατὰ Αριστοτέλη τὸ πρῶτον οἰκεῖον, κινούμενοι καὶ αὐτοὶ εἰς ὅν ἐν Ἡθικοῖς Νικομηχείοις λέγει.
pleasant, those Peripatetics argued that, among these options, only the pleasant may be motivating from the beginning of our lives, since the other two descriptions presuppose one’s reasoning faculty. The pleasant then is identified with the *prōton oikeion*, the first thing towards which we experience a ‘familiarisation’. The same view is supported according to a differentiation of the ‘good’ into the good *simpliciter* and the ‘seeming good’; whereas what is ‘truly good’ (τὸ ὡς ἄληθῶς ἄγαθόν) is constitutive of the end, the pleasant is only the ‘seeming good’ (φαινόμενον ἄγαθόν) and, thus, such as to be desired from the beginning of our lives. This is a view that is deemed also as ‘lacking distinctions’ (ἀδιαρθρότως λέγεται) on the part of the writer of the essay; Alexander argues that we desire the pleasant not without qualification but ‘in some way’, since pleasant objects of desire are such ‘with respect to something further’ which qualifies them as appropriate objects of desire, i.e. as *prōta oikeia* (s. 151.28–29: ἥδεος γὰρ ὅρισεμέθα ἢ τοῦ ἀπλῶς ἢ τοῦ πῆ, ὅ κατὰ τι ἢδο ἔστιν, ἀπλῶς μηδὲν ἔχοντες οἰκεῖον πρὸς αὐτό, ἵνα ἡμῖν περιγένεται).

The third position on the *prōton oikeion* associated with the later philosophers Verginius Rufus and Sosicrates (1st century AD?) focuses upon the (metaphysical) concepts of activity (ἐνέργεια) and perfection (τελειότητις); according to this view, every (living) thing wishes its own perfection and being active (ἐκαστὸν ὀρέγεσθαι τῆς τελειότητος καὶ τοῦ ἐνέργεια εἶναι) with regard to the activities which are according to nature. Perfection as a goal is further specified as a desire to actualise inherent potentialities specific to the kind of living being one belongs to. Desiring being ‘in activity’ is then equivalent to desiring one’s peculiar perfected state (ὅρεγόμενος ἄρα τοῦ ἐνεργεία εἶναι ὀρέγοιτ' ἃν τῆς οἰκείας τελειότητος). In the case of humans, the perfected state equals to being active with one’s *nous* which presupposes an *oikeiosis* towards a corresponding noetic potentiality. It is further specified that being in a state of ἐνέργεια is associated with ‘unimpeded’ activity,

---

104 See e.g. NE 2.1104b30–31.
105 151.21-24: ἀλλὰ τοῦ μὲν καλοῦ καὶ τοῦ συμμέροντος ἀντιλαμβανόμεθα προϊόντας τῇ ἡλικίᾳ, τοῦ δὲ ἥδεος εὐθὺς. εἰ σὺν μόνι μὲν ταῦτα ὀρκετά τι καὶ οἰκεῖα, πρότερον δὲ τούτων τὸ ἢδο, καὶ πρότερον ἄν ἡμῖν οἰκεῖον ἐπὶ τοῦτο.
106 151.24-27: ἔτι εἰ ὀρεξὶς μὲν πάσα ἀγαθοῦ ἢ φαινόμενον ἀγαθοῦ, ἀλλὰ τὸ μὲν ὡς ἄληθῶς ἄγαθόν τελικῶν, τὸ δὲ φαινόμενον ὡς τουτοῦτον, φαινόμενον δὲ ἄγαθόν τὸ ἢδο, προῖστον ἄν ἡμῖν τοῦτο ἐπὶ ὀρκετὸν κατὰ φύσιν.
107 152.1-2: τελειότητις δὲ τοῦ δυνάμει παντὸς τὸ ἐνεργεία γενέσθαι τοιοῦτο ἢ τὴν δύναμιν, καὶ ἐστὶν τὸ ὡς οὐκ ἐν τῷ ἐνεργεῖν, ἀλλ' ἐν τῷ δύνασθαι.
108 152.7-10: τὸ γὰρ ἐνεργεῖν κατὰ τὸν νοῦν καὶ τὸ ἐνεργεία νοητικὸν ἐντὸς ἢ τὸ τέλος ἢστιν, ὅ ἦρθη τῇ τοῦ οἰκείωθαι ἡμᾶς πρὸς τὸ κατὰ δύναμιν. τελειωθέσθαι δὲ τὸ θάνατος ἐν τῷ νοητικῷ ἐναι τὸ ἐναί ἔρχον.
activity that implies pleasure. Alexander concludes that for the Peripatetics at hand the *prōton oikeion* may be identified both with living ‘in activity’ (*κατ' ἐνέργειαν*) and with pleasure. Again, this view is criticized ‘as wanting further distinction and definition’ (δεῖται δὲ τὸ λεγόμενον διαρθρώσεως καὶ διορισμοῦ); specifically, the critique addresses the developmental aspect of the idea of fundamental desires. Alexander accordingly asks whether we experience the desire to be active with all (human) capacities from the beginning of our lives or whether ‘familiarisation’ excludes the highest (rational) capacities which pertain to the *telos*. As an alternative formulation, he suggests the idea that the activity that constitutes the object of *oikeiōsis* corresponds to ‘the proper condition’ (*oikeia ἔξις*) of oneself, which may vary in the course of one’s life. This is further supported with a quotation from Aristotle’s *Nicomachean Ethics*.

Finally, Alexander offers a ‘subtle’ Aristotelian opinion on the topic of the *prōton oikeion* by elaborating on the views of his predecessors. His answer consists in two steps: he first qualifies the opinions of the first two groups of thinkers, and then integrates his results into the most ‘elaborate’ view which centres on the notion of ἐνέργεια (favoured by the third group). The elaboration on the first view which identified the first *oikeion* simpliciter with oneself consists in saying that the first object of desire has a ‘double’ nature which consists on the one hand in it being an (external) object or goal and on the other hand in it referring to the beneficiary of action i.e. on oneself. This composite nature of the first object of desire corresponds to the double aspect of the *telos* (our goal is happiness but our aim is to be happy ourselves). Accordingly, we desire external objects of desire *for our own*

---

109 151.30-34: Βεργίνης δὲ Ἄριστος καὶ πρὸ αὐτοῦ Σωκράτης φησιν, ἢκαστόν ὤργεσθαι τῆς τελείαιτης καὶ τοῦ ἐνέργεια εἶναι, δηλονότι ἀνεμπόδιστος ἐνεργοῦντα. διὸ καὶ ἢμν ἰθαν ὀρκότον εἶναι τὸ εἶναι ἐνεργεία, τούτεστιν τῷ ἵν καὶ τῷ ἵν τῶν ἐνεργείας οὕτως ἢδειας. οἷς γὰρ τούτων ἐνεργείαι κατὰ φώσιν, ὡς ἢν ὅσιν ἀνεμπόδιστοι, ἢδεια. This view draws on NE 7.12-13, e.g. 1153b9-12.

110 152.5-6: ἀκολουθεῖ δὲ τοῖς τιθεμένοις πρῶτον οἰκεῖον τὸ εἶναι καὶ ἐνεργείαν καὶ τὸ ἡδονήν εἶναι λέγει τὸ πρῶτον οἰκεῖον καὶ τὸ ἄγαθόν.

111 152.10-13: πότερον γὰρ ὡς πᾶσιν τῆς ἢν τοῦ ἐνεργείας ἢδειας οὕτως εὐθύς τὸ γενέσθαι ὀρχεσμοῦσα αὐτῆς ἡμεῖς, ἢ ὡς πᾶσιν, ἴσος γὰρ ὡς κατὰ ἀριστείας, ἢσθαν γὰρ τελικῇ τῇ ἐσχάτῃ.

112 152.14-15: ἐν δὲ τὸ δεκάτῳ τῶν Νικαμπριάδης λέγει· ἢκαστὸν ἢ κατὰ τὴν οἰκείαν ἢν αἰρετεύτη ἐνεργείαν. In accordance with this, there is in Aristotelian writings the notion of a ‘natural state’, as in the definition of pleasure as ‘unimped activity of the natural state’ (Ἀνεμπόδιος ἐνεργεία τῆς κατὰ φώσιν ἔξις) at EN 7.1153a12-15.

113 152.24-26 ἔστων οὖν αὕτων καὶ τὸ πρῶτον ὀρκότον σύνθετον. ἢμεῖς τε γὰρ ἢμῖν αὐτοῖς ἐσμένι οἰκείωτα καὶ οὐχ ἀπλῶς πρὸς ἀνεμπόδιος οἰκείωσθα, ἀλλὰ τοῦ αὐτοῦ ἢμῖν παρεξεπέσθαι τὰ ἄγαθα.

114 152.17-22: ἢπει γὰρ δίπτον τὸ τέλος, ὡς φησιν Αριστοτέλης, τὸ μὲν ὁ, τὸ δὲ ὁ, τὸ μὲν ὁ ὡς ἐνδεικνύει (τοῦτο γὰρ πάντων ἐγχειν καὶ μέγιστον τῶν ἄγαθων καὶ σκοποῦ), τὸ δὲ ὁ ἢμῖν
sake. The external object of desire which we wish to procure for ourselves at the beginning of our life is further identified with the ‘apparent good’ i.e. with the pleasant (for us).\textsuperscript{115} Through the combination of the views of the first two groups, the commentator believes to have formulated a more ‘sound’ view on the topic at hand.\textsuperscript{116} The points about the self-referentiality and the pleasant character of the \textit{pròton oikeion} are finally supplemented by the idea of \textit{énérgeia} leading to the formulation of the view that is mostly favoured by the commentator. According to this, the first \textit{oikeion} consists in activity in accordance with one’s being (\textit{ἐὰν καθό τὸ εἶναι ἄστιν ἄνα ἐνεργείαν, 153.1}). This allows for a developmental perspective: children at the beginning of their lives are active with the senses and the nutritive part of their soul but not with the faculty of \textit{logos}.\textsuperscript{117} The parameter of pleasure is added as well with the idea that desire for the unimpeached activity of the natural condition one is found in equals to a pleasant state.\textsuperscript{118} It is specified, however, that in this case pleasure follows upon, or supervenes on the activity (\textit{ἐχεῖ ἐπομένην ἄστιν τῇ ἐνεργείᾳ}), rather than being an independent goal of action in its own right.\textsuperscript{119} Both aspects of activity and pleasure are finally qualified as things which have beneficiaries: the \textit{oikeion} is meant to show that it is one’s own personal activity (and, for that matter, one’s experienced pleasure)\textsuperscript{120} that is desired as a first object of appetite.

Since both activity and pleasure are included in the conception of the \textit{pròton oikeion}, Alexander takes his last ‘elaborate’ distinction to be able to show (according to the Carneadean requirement) the continuity between the first \textit{oikeion} and the Aristotelian \textit{telos} (which is identified with ‘activity in accordance with virtue’).\textsuperscript{121} The idea that
activity corresponds to the state of being one is found in allows for the development in the course of one’s life of desires for activities, i.e. virtuous activities, that are not present at the beginning of one’s life. Pleasure follows upon such activities and ‘perfects’ them: the virtuous person accordingly takes the highest pleasure in virtuous activity and by choosing to be active in accordance with virtue he or she aims at pleasure as well.\textsuperscript{122}

\textsuperscript{122} This is lent support by a quotation from \textit{NE} 10.1175a10-17: \textit{λέγει δὲ ἐν τῷ δεκάτῳ τῶν Νικομαχίων Ἡθικάν καὶ Ἀριστοτέλης οὔτες περὶ τούτων ἃ ὀρέγεσθαι δὲ τῆς ἴδιανς οἰκείας τις ἄν ἀπαντάς, ὅτι καὶ τῷ ζην ἄπαντες ἐφίππεται. ἡ δὲ ζωὴ ἐνέργεια τίς ἐστι, καὶ ἀκακίος περὶ ταῦτα καὶ τούτως ἐνεργεῖ, ἢ μάλιστα ἀγαπᾶ. ἡ δὲ ἴδιαν τελείοι τάς ἐνεργειῶς, καὶ τὸ ζην δὲ, οὐ ὀρέγονται, εἰδῶς οὖν καὶ τῆς ἴδιανς ἐφίππεται· τελείοι γὰρ ἐκάστῳ τῷ ζην ὃπερ ἐστίν αἰρετόν'.

32