

Annotated Menoikeus Project: First Draft

Post by “Don” of October 14, 2020 at 7:36 AM

Made an interesting discovery in verse 126 this morning:

126c and 126d exemplify why it's important to look at the words Epicurus used and not just modern English translations. Take a look at the final phrases of each: 126c. ...ἀλλὰ τὸ ἥδιστον αἰρεῖται, "choosing that which brings the greatest pleasure" 126d. ...ἀλλὰ τὸν ἥδιστον καρπίζεταί. "enjoying the fruits of that which brings the greatest pleasure." Both of these use the word ἥδιστον = hēdiston which is the superlative of ἡδύς = hēdus "pleasant" which is related to ἡδονή = hēdonē "pleasure". By variously translating these two occurrences of the same exact word as "most pleasing/brings the greatest joy," "most delicious/happiest," "nicest/most agreeable," or "most enjoyable" (for both), the fact that Epicurus used the same word is lost. Only Yonge uses "most pleasant" for both. Epicurus teaches that pleasure is the greatest good, and by refusing to translate words like ἥδιστον more literally as "(that which) brings the most pleasure" it would appear that translators are consciously shying away from acknowledging that pleasure was Epicurus's goal. When Epicurus says pleasure, he means pleasure. Translators should not equivocate or obfuscate. They should strive to illuminate and communicate.

<http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/morph?l=h%28%2Fdiston&la=greek&can=h%28%2Fdiston1&prior=to>