

Why Tranquility Should Not Be the Main Goal for an Epicurean

Post by "Cassius" of December 8, 2021 at 8:41 AM

I think I will just insert this random thought here:

I think some people who start out in reading Epicurus read so much about the word "ataraxia" that they conclude from sheer dominance of discussion that ataraxia was the focus of Epicurus' work.

It would probably help them to lose their fixation on ataraxia to realize that the entirely separate word "aponia" was used for "absence of pain." It seems to me intuitively that if someone wanted to go off in the wrong direction and fixate on one of these words as the goal rather than pleasure, it would make more sense to fixate on "aponia" than "ataraxia." And that would also be more accurate from the point of view of the measurement of quantity and canonic aspect since - given that pain and pleasure are the only two passions - in terms of quantity "absence of pain" and "fullness of pleasure" would mean the same thing.

Once you realize that there is not one but two Greek words that are used in this context, maybe it becomes more understandable that it's necessary to look deeper - back to the original word of pleasure - than to take these other statements about tranquility and absence of pain in isolation.