

Letter to Menoikeus translation by Peter Saint-Andre

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III. ΠΡΟΣ ΜΕΝΟΙΚΕΑ

4. *The character of true pleasure* (§§ 131, 132).

Having now explained clearly what in effect is meant by making pleasure the end of life, Epicurus is able to refute false conceptions. He is not encouraging gluttony or sensuality, which bring with them greater pains, but the higher pleasure of a simple life, which satisfies the needs of the body and keeps the mind free from trouble and therefore able to devote itself to the study of philosophy. It is interesting to see that even apparently among contemporaries there were calumnies abroad concerning the nature of 'Epicureanism'.

9. καὶ τὰς ἐν ἀπολαύσει κειμένας. The MSS. have καὶ τὰς τῶν : τῶν is rightly excluded by Usener and must have come from τὰς τῶν ἀσώτων just before.

ὡς τινες . . . νομίζουσιν : notice the three classes of persons who make misrepresentations (1) those who do not know the true doctrine ; (2) those who know it, but do not agree with it, philosophical opponents ; (3) those who cannot comprehend it—another piece of careful writing. Bignone points out that under (2) Epicurus is thinking primarily of the Cyrenaics who regarded ἀπονία as a purely neutral state ('the condition of the dead') and only the starting-point of true pleasure. The doctrine of the 'limit of pleasure' is the really essential feature of Epicurus' own theory.

§ 132. 1. ἀπολαύσεις : there seems no reason for Usener's change to the singular ἀπόλαυσις : it means individual acts of ἀπόλαυσις.

4. νήφων λογισμὸς, 'sober reasoning', a rather strong metaphorical use : cf. Arist., *Metaph.* 984 b 17 οἷον νήφων παρ' εἰκῇ λέγοντας. Notice that Epicurus is here surreptitiously introducing a new point. The characteristic pleasure of the mind, freed from fear, is philosophical study.

5. τὰς δόξας, 'opinions', are in particular of course mistaken opinions about the gods and about death : Epicurus is here working back to the two fundamental principles laid down at the outset of the letter.

ἐξ ὧν : preserved only by B : its omission in the other MSS. has led to the filling out of the construction by ἀφ' οὗ or ἀφ' ὧν in the earlier printed texts.

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