

Letter to Menoikeus translation by Peter Saint-Andre

Post by "Cassius" of June 2, 2023 at 4:53 PM

As someone totally ignorant of Greek I will just interject here that in my view, since no pleasure is bad in itself, the emphasis should always be on the "limitless" or "without limit" aspect in a discussion of why a particular pursuit at a particular time might be ill advised. I personally do not think the words fame, power, money, or any of the similar types of pleasures where it is tempting to pursue them as ends in themselves would ever be labeled as negative in and of themselves by Epicurus.

I would expect him **always** to say that the issue in any pursuit is whether that pleasure is pursued as an end in itself, without limit. The reason (and only reason) that the unlimited pursuit of an activity, even virtue, is the problem, is that when we do so we take our eye off of pleasure itself and therefore suffer pain or less pleasure than we would otherwise.

ANY activity in human life is to be praised if it indeed leads to more pleasure than pain. So I personally would judge my confidence in any translation as whether it reinforces that view, and if a translation tends to indicate that there is a "type" or category of pleasure that is to be avoided in itself, I would say that is wrong. The issue seems to me to always be in the "unlimited" pursuit of that pleasure.

And I would say this with the same confidence (even dogmatism) as I would say "the absence of pain is pleasure" or "the total absence of pain is the greatest pleasure" without a thought as to the specific activities involved, because I know from the premises with which we started out that "true reason" compels this to be the case, and therefore I do not **need** to know the particular desires or circumstances involved. And yes I know that Cicero will say that, like Velleius, I sound like I just visited the intermundia.