

# Letter to Menoikeus translation by Peter Saint-Andre

Post by "Elli" of June 4, 2023 at 1:18 PM

## [Quote from Don](#)

Letter to Menoikeus 132

and ἀπολαύσεις (enjoying) boys/slaves and women

(enjoying the benefits of boys/slaves and women??)

Well, please replace the word "benefit" with the word "self-interest" and you will conclude what is going in such kind of relationships, and what Epicurus had in mind, as this issue is timeless (see my epilogue as a conclusion).

IF there is a self-interest without the existence of a common enjoyable benefit....that is in this enjoyment there is only one EGO who is NOT united with another EGO essentially and in the basis of human values, and this means also that both use each other in the basis only of the self-interest, i.e. the one uses/manipulates the other one for the purpose to gain something, and both believe that this is enjoyable...but, this enjoyment is not real and pure pleasure, it is not eudaemonia, it's just ephemeral, fake and illusionary enjoyment, indeed.

Since when the self-interest is lost any relationship is lost too and any enjoyment. And this is something that brokes also and the social coherence.

So Epicurus in a way, in the basis of his ethics, yes, he is doing and politics. Because he makes us wondering: who are those that approaching each other in the basis of a self-interest? Only STRANGERS that the mean among both of them is the money or things, and not real feelings of friendship or any kind of virtues. So the prudence that is the root of all virtues does not exist between such kind of relationships as well as any pure pleasure does not exist.

In the opposite "παίδες" as "boys" or slaves as you name them, and women as "hetairai" were maintaining and some strong bonds with their masters i.e they became as friends, since and between them the human values were existing and these feelings were exist after the familiarity. And this is what Epicurus wants to point out too OR to remind to Menoecus to not loosing his credence in the real relationships/friendships OR whatever he saw in his society as an invasion of strangers maybe (?) why not since after the great Alexander, the invasion of strangers was a real fact.

However, imo Epicurus does not want to speak disparagingly for persons i.e. boys as "slaves" and women as "hetairai", but for situations that is the exploitation of man by man, when there is only a self-interest and the mean is - in the majority of these relationship - is the money, the

waste of money and a mania for high-living.

So dear friend Don, yes, we do not disagree actually, but keep also in mind, that the relationships that Epicurus points out here is in accordance with the motive which is: "the sexual intercourse", and the gun which is: "the money" and the offender that is: "the profligate".

Since Epicurus has not any interest to mess up with the laws, and the masters, because he was a master too. As he had "παίδες", boys i.e. servants and women "hetairai" who lived next to him all of their life in the Garden. So, the only thing that he mentions here is the consequence of a choice that is "ασωτεία" i.e. "debauchery". Since, he speaks for the one that he is not the master of himself, and if someone is not the master of himself, he has no self-temperance or self-sufficiency, so he is the one that does not deserve to have servants and hetairai or a woman as a real companion in life, and real friendships in general.

Conclusion: So, here Epicurus describes a situation - as a choice - out of limits. He describes the opposite of prudence, self-sufficiency and sober reasoning. He describes situations of the powers and such kind of leaders, in the basis from historical facts (see the passage with Demetrius the Besieger). He describes what means to have an ephemeral "enjoyment" with boys and women and spending money for having company and sleeping i.e. have intercourse with them due to the fears. Since making sex (and not love/eros) in such a way is when someone wants to cover his fear of death. So, again here, the great Epicurus points out the cause of the causes that is fear of death. And of course Epicurus thoughts hide and politics, because he describes common affairs/relationships and narcissistic phenomena that exist in our era, which are timeless and painful.

Dear friend Don, my sincere thanks because, you gave me inspiration for making more fruitfull thoughts on what exists between the lines and Epicurus thoughts in his LTM. 🤗