

Letter to Menoikeus translation by Peter Saint-Andre

Post by "Don" of June 29, 2023 at 11:54 AM

Okay, here is a sneak preview of my Menoikeus update. I still have a lot to do before posting the revision, but I thought this would stir up some controversy so here it is 😊

Quote

I am now of the opinion that τὰς ἐν ἀπολαύσει κειμένας should be interpreted as "those who are stuck in enjoying (only) those things which provide enjoyment from outside themselves." To me, this is a direct reference to the "incorrect" beliefs of the Cyrenaics and others in relation to pleasure. And, yes, the reader is correct that I'm referring to the kinetic and katastematic pleasures that Epicurus mentions. I realize this is considered controversial by some, but I believe this best explains Epicurus's being able to use ἀπολαύσει in both positive and negative senses.

Epicurus is on record for including both kinetic and katastematic pleasures within his definition of "pleasure." I have come to understand kinetic pleasures as those arising from factors and circumstances outside of ourselves; katastematic pleasures are those arising from within ourselves (such as tranquility, pleasurable memories, etc.). While Epicurus conveys (along with Metrodorus and Philodemus) that we can be more confident in katastematic pleasures, he clearly says that we should continue to "delight" in kinetic pleasures when they are available. It is the exclusivity of "getting stuck in" only seeing kinetic pleasures as pleasure that Epicurus is objecting to here with τὰς ἐν ἀπολαύσει κειμένας.

PS. I am MORE than happy to entertain other ideas. This one is the one (so far) that makes the most sense to me.