

# Would Epicurus say: "Infinite Time contains no more pain than limited time when the limit of pain is measured by reason?"

Post by "Eikadistes" of July 21, 2024 at 12:33 PM

No-ish, but only over a few stylistic caveats in translation:

Usener and/or Arrighetti transcribe (what I read as) the reflexive pronoun αὐτῆς (autês), which is a feminine declension of αὐτός (autós). In my translation, I came up with the following:

**"Unlimited time contains the same pleasure as that which is limited, if a person herself measures the limits by reason."**

While I usually prefer to employ gender-neutral language (for example, preferring "Sage" to "Wise Man"), I note that Epicurus sometimes employs feminine declensions of words, and where he does, I think it is important to give it its due. (For example, throughout the Epistle to Pythokles, unlike the other letters, Epicurus refers to "the gods" (*theon*) in the feminine *theia* or "divine [nature]").)

(I'm also seeing *autês* as specifying the other, general pronoun τις meaning "someone", "who", "one", or "a person" ... though it may actually be describing or reinforcing something else.)

We also find the adjective ἴσην (*ísēn*), the feminine, accusative singular of ἴσος (*ísos*) which indicates that which is "equal" or "the same". Translating "no greater than" (even in a *mathematical* sense) does not express *the same* thing, but carries a slightly different connotation

With this in mind, I think that the sentence is comparing two instances of maximum sustained states of pleasure. Contextually, we are discussing two πέρατα (*pérata*) or "limits" of pleasure, one lasting less than 125 years, and one lasting forever [i.e. the pleasure of the gods]. Here is another instance, like KD1, of Epicurus mentioning a "god" without ever using the word for "god".)

It's a small caveat, but it does *slightly* change the meaning. For me, it indicates that our lives are not diminished due to the fact that we are not immortal. Achieving the goal of life is not reserved for godlike person; we can all enjoy the universal goal toward which all life is directed.

Stylistically, I also note that ἡδονήν (*hēdonēn*) is only used once by Epicurus in the original Greek. That is just an aesthetic choice, and does not affect the semantics of the sentence.

[Quote from Don](#)

I also think it's important to disregard the PD numbers.

Always this. 👍