

The Closing Paragraph of the Letter to Menoecus

Post by "Don" of August 5, 2025 at 11:50 PM

A couple notes on some of the pivotal words in this paragraph.

διαταραχθήση (diatarakhthese)

Note the the breakdown: dia-tarakhthese. That second component is directly related to **tarakhe** and it's opposite **ataraxia** (*ataraksia*)

From διαταράσσω, to throw into great confusion, confound utterly. I'm taking the dia- to convey confusion throughout oneself, from one end to the other (i.e., consider English "diameter" measure across)

So, by using this word, Epicurus is referring back to the ataraxia that comes from contemplating the points in this letter and, from that contemplation and study, having a firm, unshakable knowledge of how the world works; a firm foundation upon which to fully experience every pleasure you choose to partake of and to weather every pain that comes your way. That unshakable foundation once firmly in place in your mind will be a part of you, whether sleeping or awake, day or night.

ἐν ἀθανάτοις ἀγαθοῖς. (en athanatois agathois)

[Kalosyni](#) is right to ask about these "immortal goods." It is a tricky concept, and one I'm still wrestling with myself. Here's one take I've come up with.

athanatos (a + thanatos) does mean "un-dying" but it has a wider connotation. [LSJ has some citations that are worth looking at](#), including Lysias, *Funeral Oration*. There the term used is ἀθάνατον μνήμην "have left behind an immortal memory arising from their valor. " So, what is left behind after someone dies is "undying," including the memories others have of you, the legacy you "leave behind" doesn't die with you. This idea seems relevant to me in that the friends and loved ones we leave behind allow us to "live on" to be "undying" (as long as our memory lives one... it's not technically immortal). The effect we have on people while alive is undying.

I still maintain that ἐν ἀθανάτοις ἀγαθοῖς is "among undying goods" means "among undying pleasures" as in good=pleasure. Thinking of other "undying pleasures" is a good exercise. What lives on after we die? What is it about our lives that, in the words of Maximus in *Gladiator*, "echo through eternity"?