

Epicurus and the Pleasure of the Stomach

Post by "Kalosyni" of August 16, 2022 at 10:08 AM

The first two-thirds of this chapter (link in the above post) is very good, and highly recommend it -- it brings forward the idea that food, the table, and social eating was of primary importance in Epicureanism. Some excerpts:

Quote

Plutarch would describe the Garden as sharing "common meals" or *trapezai*, literally, "tables" (Clay 2009, 23). A typical meal of this time and place might open with tasty small dishes, resembling modern *mezedes* (appetizers). A main course combined *sitos* (the staple of wheat bread, barley mash, or a pulse) with *opson* (the relish of fish, meat, vegetable, cheese, or just olive oil). *Oinos* (wine) was the universal drink, famously taken after the food in a drinking party or symposium.

But our interest is not particularly the food so much as its central importance...

...Radically, Epicurean meals were the deliberate reason and means for philosophizing...

...With the stomach foundational, Epicurus gave integrity to the individual. We shall keep finding, nonetheless, that the individual requirement to eat, and to labor to achieve that, necessitates conviviality...

...Epicurus was irrepressibly social, advising: "You must reflect carefully beforehand with whom you are to eat and drink, rather than what you are to eat and drink." He went on: "For a dinner of meats without the company of a friend is like the life of a lion or a wolf" (Bailey 1926, 101)