

Pío Baroja, Spanish Novelist and Epicurean

Post by "Charles" of June 2, 2020 at 8:18 PM

I came across Bayle some time ago, I remember his Dictionary to be disappointing and his mentions of Epicurus is usually in response to religion, such as conflating his defense of Epicurus as a means to target Nicolas Malebranche, a theologian during his time (as well as his work on King David). It seems that when discussing Epicurean Philosophy from the Enlightenment, there are three categories: materialist physics, ethics, Epicurus as a living weapon against religion. The bulk of this comes from the 18th century, though less focused on the physics (England in the 19th century would take that route) and more so on ethics of pleasure and embracing atheism.

It's also very important to discern whether or not these authors throughout history were *actually* Epicurean. For a while I had been convinced that Jean Meslier had some Epicurean influences, as it was a common subject to learn about in France. But, I came across some papers and it was made clear that in his private bookshelf there had been no copies of Lucretius or of Laertius. The point is that we look at those who very clearly espoused Epicurean ideas before determining how useful their works are, though the micro-discoveries we make on here are enough to make it all worth it.

Pío Baroja seems promising, since I keep seeing Spanish translations of Epicurus all the time (Epicuro). I'm not familiar with Spain and its history with Epicurean Philosophy but I know a link exists, perhaps with writers during the time of Bourbon Spain. Nice find!