

Socrates / Plato - The Pursuit of Pleasure as "cookery" or "flattery"

Post by "Cassius" of September 24, 2016 at 3:28 PM

[Cassius Amicus](#)

[September 13 at 12:46am](#)

"Flattery." Akin to "cookery." That's what we're doing, according to Socrates/Plato. We've touched on [Philebus](#) before, but the name "Callicles" from "Gorgias" is going to start appearing here regularly. Here is one source from which we can link as we discuss a text which it is likely every ancient Epicurean had to be prepared to respond - Plato's attack on pleasure as the good:

<https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Gorgias>

There are many arguments against pleasure here which deserve to be laid out one by one, and Callicles' errors in giving in to Socrates dissected and refuted.

Just one excerpt of ***many*** that we need to examine, all of which set up arguments to which Epicurus had to respond and which provide context to Epicurean texts which are otherwise obscure:

"Socrates Then pleasure, like everything else, is to be sought for the sake of that which is good, and not that which is good for the sake of pleasure?

Callicles To be sure.

Socrates But can every man choose what pleasures are good and what are evil, or must he have art or knowledge of them in detail?

Callicles He must have art.

Socrates Let me now remind you of what I was saying to Gorgias and Polus; I was saying, as you will not have forgotten, that there were some processes which aim only at pleasure, and know nothing of a better and worse, and there are other processes which know good and evil. And I considered that cookery, which I do not call an art, but only an experience, was of the former class, which is concerned with pleasure, and that the art of medicine was of the class which is concerned with the good....."