

## Bread and Water: Debunking the Idea of Epicurean Asceticism

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Words have meaning, and one word that often gets attached to Epicurus is *ascetic*. Doing a Google search for [Epicurus ascetic] quickly provides numerous examples, including phrases like:

- ...it is too often forgotten that **Epicurus himself was an unimpeachable ascetic** ...
- **Epicurus' position was to establish an ascetic detachment** from material conditions...
- Epicurus' hedonism has **strong stoic or ascetic tendencies**.
- ...despite his hedonism, **Epicurus advocates a surprisingly ascetic way of life**.

And finally this from Friedrich Nietzsche:

- *Epicurus has a sophisticated and idiosyncratic view of the nature of pleasure, which leads him to recommend a virtuous, **moderately ascetic life** as the best means to securing pleasure.*

These examples are from only the first few sets of results in that Google search.

So, did Epicurus advocate for an “*ascetic way of life*” or not? My contention is that he did not. Using that term - ascetic - distorts what Epicurus taught and attempts to shove his philosophy into a box in which it does not fit. This presentation will attempt to provide a more accurate picture of the way of life that Epicureanism offers and to encourage people to leave behind the label of “ascetic.”

To begin, we need to define what we mean when we say someone is an “**ascetic**.”

The **Oxford English Dictionary** defines an “**ascetic**” as: **One who is extremely rigorous in the practice of self-denial, whether by seclusion or by abstinence from creature comforts.**

The official **Merriam-Webster** website provides a more expansive explanation: *Ascetic comes from askētikos, a Greek adjective meaning “laborious,” and its earliest meaning in English implies the labor involved in abstention from pleasure, comfort, and self-indulgence as a spiritual discipline. These days, ascetic is also used to describe anyone or anything demonstrating marked restraint, plainness, or simplicity, even when no appeals to the divine or spiritual are attached, making it not unlike another adjective with connections to ancient Greece: spartan.*

An “ascetic” then is someone who:

- Practices self-denial rigorously
- Abstains from pleasure, comfort, and self-indulgence
- Lives a “spartan” existence

However, **Merriam-Webster's** watered-down connotation of an “ascetic” as exhibiting “restraint, plainness, or simplicity” seems too broad as to be almost meaningless. To me - and I would suspect to many others - the words “ascetic” and “spartan” convey self-denial, abstemiousness, and purposefully denying oneself comfort and pleasure. That’s the meaning we’ll be exploring in this presentation. As we’ll see, Epicurus may have exercised restraint, but he was far from living a life of self-denial.

So, where does the idea of “**Epicurus was as ascetic**” come from?

Well, the **Oxford English Dictionary** mentions the ascetic characteristic of self-denial by seclusion, and there is a **very durable** myth that Epicurus’ Garden was in a secluded location and that Epicureans lived cut off from society. I debunked this myth previously with a paper posted last year to EpicureanFriends.com entitled *Where was the Garden of Epicurus?* If you’re interested in having that aspect of Epicurus’ supposed asceticism debunked, I recommend taking a look at that paper and the accompanying impromptu presentation I gave at an online 20th celebration.

This presentation is going to look at the ascetic characteristic of self-denial in eating, particularly the myth that Epicurus allowed himself only the most meagre of meals. How did this myth get established?

Most people start and end with Epicurus’ own words from his letter to his student Menoikeus:

**καὶ μᾶζα καὶ ὕδωρ τὴν ἀκροτάτην ἀποδίδωσιν ἡδονήν, ἐπειδὴν ἐνδέων τις αὐτὰ προσενέγκηται.**

...bread and water give the highest pleasure when someone in need partakes of them.  
(Saint-Andre translation)

And this indeed seems to be where many people stop, including scholars: Epicurus’ diet = bread + water. One huge problem with this formulation is that we modern readers often see “bread and water” as being the stereotypical punishment fed to those arrested for crimes. In fact, the U.S. Navy used **three-days of bread and water confinement** for various low-level infractions until 2019! When someone reads consistently that Epicurus only lived on “bread and water” they see it as Epicurus basically demanding

that he and his students punish themselves. How could that be an attractive way to live one's life?

**Let's take a closer look at what "bread and water" means within the culture in which Epicurus actually lived.** Epicurus was not obligated to align with our preconceived notions of the punitive connotations of "bread and water." So, let's explore what the ancient Greeks were eating before we try to stereotype Epicurus's so-called "ascetic" diet.

Let's start with "bread."

It has been estimated that cereal grains - primarily wheat and barley - provided up to **70% of the caloric intake** of the ancient Greeks. In fact, Homer's Odysseus says he far excels *"every one else in the whole world, of those who still eat bread upon the face of the earth..."* (Odyssey, 8.220-224)

"Still eat bread" refers to the fact that there still alive, the ones that still are eating their bread. Homer uses the word σῖτον, referring to food made out grain whether wheat (πυρός) or barley (κριθή). Barley, however, was more plentiful than wheat, making the raised loaves of wheat bread more of a luxury item.

**Barley** is one of the oldest grains known in antiquity and was drought tolerant, making it especially suited to Greece. The barley was also often roasted to make **ALPHITA** which could be ground into meal and kneaded with water, milk, or oil. Since the grain was already cooked, it didn't need any additional baking and could be eaten wet or dry, making these barley-cakes or **maza** very convenient and not requiring any great skill or clay ovens to make, unlike the risen loaves of wheat bread. **Maza** could also be made into a porridge.

It's barley that Telemachus takes with him on his ship when he sets out to find information about his father Odysseus.

It's **maza** that Hesiod extols in **Works and Days** when describing the good life:

*At this time, at long last,  
let there be a shady place under a rock, wine from [Thracian] Biblos,  
barley-cake (maza) soaked in milk, the milk of goats that are reaching the end of their  
lactation,  
and the meat of a cow fed in the woods, one that has not yet calved,  
and of first-born kid goats. That is the time to drink bright-colored wine,*

*sitting in the shade, having one's heart sated with food,  
turning one's face towards the cooling Zephyr.*  
(translated by Gregory Nagy)

So, **bread was THE staple of the ancient Greek diet, with maza being very common.** In fact, a 6th c. BCE law of Solon required Athenian brides to bring a φρύγτρον or barley-roaster with them to their new household!

Meat - especially roasted meat - was only eaten during elaborate feasts or at festivals, the sacrificial animals being roasted on the altar with the meat being shared then with the celebrants.

Fish, either salted or fresh, appears to be seen as a delicacy.

Fruits eaten by the ancient Greeks included grapes, figs, apples, pears, and dates, with wildly-harvested nuts also being consumed. These latter included almonds, walnuts, hazelnuts and chestnuts.

Vegetables that were popular included cabbages, asparagus, carrots, radishes, and celery, along with onions, garlic, and olives eaten in large quantities.

The primary source of fat was olive oil as butter was seen as a barbaric food. No butter on bread for the Greeks!

So, that gives us a look at what the common (and some elite) ancient Greeks were eating. I want to emphasize again that the estimate is that 70% of calories were coming from grains in the form of breads and porridges.

Turning back to Epicurus's letter to Menoikeus: What kind of "bread" was Epicurus mentioning when he writes "bread and water give the highest pleasure when someone in need partakes of them." The word translated "bread" is, in fact, **μᾶζα** (maza): The most convenient and common cake or porridge made from roasted barley.

And **barley seems to have been the favored grain in the Garden** according to a number of sources across the centuries. Seneca, writing a little over 300 years after Epicurus death, uses the Latin word **polenta** which was used to translate the Greek **maza** in the form of barley-porridge when he wrote his letters to Lucillius about Epicurus's Garden:

*The caretaker of that abode, a friendly host, will be ready for you; he will welcome you with barley-meal (polenta), and serve you water also in abundance...*

Around 100 CE - just a little later than Seneca, Plutarch throws us a little curve when he writes in his essay entitled “That Epicurus Actually Makes a Pleasant Life Impossible” what appears to be an additional dish in the diet of the Garden. Plutarch is complaining, as he does, that Epicurus’ definition of pleasure makes no sense and he writes:

*...for the pleasures of the body our nature requires costly provision, and that the most pleasant enjoyment is not to be found in barley-cake and lentil soup, but that the appetite of the sensualist demands succulent viands and Thasian wine and perfumes...*

The barley-cake is our familiar **maza**; the other dish mentioned out-of-the-blue is **φακέα**, a lentil soup. So, maybe we can add lentil soup to the menu of the Garden since Plutarch is using both maza and phakea to say the pleasure-seekers’ desires can’t possibly be satisfied by barley-porridge and lentil soup!

Around a century after Plutarch, Diogenes Laertius composed his seminal work, *The Lives of the Eminent Philosophers*, to which we owe the preservation of Epicurus’s letters. In addition to those letters, Diogenes says that Epicurus “himself mentions that he was content with plain bread and water.” In that “bread and water” phrase, Diogenes uses the phrase ἄρτος λιτός. We’ll see λιτός again, as it means “frugal, simple, plain, inexpensive.” ἄρτος, on the other hand, refers to a cake or loaf specifically made of wheat. ἄρτος is the better quality stuff, and not the quick and easy maza. So, maybe the Epicureans did eat some of the good stuff every once in a while. The important thing is: They’re still eating bread as a major component of their diet... just like everyone else.

Porphyry, writing in the 3rd century CE in his *On Abstinence from Eating Animals*, writes:

*For most of the Epicureans, starting with their leader, appear to be satisfied with barley-bread and fruit, and they have filled treatises with arguments that nature needs little and that its requirements are adequately met by simple, available food.*

Here again, we find **maza**, but now we’ve added **fruit** to the Epicurean table. But what kind of fruit? The word used is ἀκρόδρυα or fruits produced in the upper boughs of trees. Various interpretations of this word have included pomegranates; wild nuts and almonds; possibly apples and pears; and even edible acorns.

Lactantius, in his *Divine Institutes* written around the late 3rd or early 4th century CE, includes:

*One who is too stingy learns [from Epicurus] that life can be endured on water and barley.*

*(Qui nimium parcus est, discit aqua et polenta vitam posse tolerari.)*

Here again, we have Latin **polenta** referring barley-porridge.

The last source I'll mention, written 600 years after Epicurus died, is a letter entitled "To the Uneducated Cynics" by the Roman Emperor Julian (sometimes called the Apostate by Christians) we find:

*Epicurus says that if he has bread enough and to spare, he is not inferior to the gods on the score of happiness.*

That word translated as "bread" is once again **maza**.

Before we go further, I feel I would be remiss in not addressing briefly the "water" in "bread and water." Bread and water - either in Greek or in Latin - is often seen in the sources talking about Epicurus. But water was readily available. The Garden was a garden after all - actually more of an orchard or small farm - and so likely had a spring or steady source of water within it. Why not take advantage of that? However, Diogenes Laertius does write:

*Diocles in the third book of his Epitome says "They were content with a small cup of light wine, and all the rest of their drink was water."*

But let's dissect that a little:

The "small light wine" translates οὐρίδιον which I take to simply be analogous to "small beer." That just means its young wine with a lower alcohol content. So, it could very well be referring to freshly-pressed grapes with little time to ferment. The "small cup" translates an ancient Greek measurement that was around ½ pint. So, really not a lot different than the all other inhabitants of ancient Athens.

The reason for that in-depth look at barley, bread, maza, polenta and a quick look at wine is to show that bread and wine featured in Epicurus declaration **not because it was punitive, not because he was denying himself**, but because that was the regular daily meal of the average ancient Greek. There was nothing special about it. One's hunger need not be satisfied with a feast or fancy food or delicacies. Epicurus is telling us to pay attention to our regular meal right in front of us. As long as it satisfies our hunger and quenches our thirst, our **everyday meal** - which can be as simple as nourishing, hearty barley porridge and cool spring water - that meal is worth paying attention to and that it can satisfy our hunger and thirst as well as any costly or hard-to-prepare feast.

You may remember that Epicurus also made a request in another letter for some cheese, which people seem to imply was some sort of secret guilty pleasure Epicurus allowed himself to have:

**"πέμψον μοι τυροῦ κυθριδίου, ἵν' ὅταν βούλωμαι πολυτελεύσασθαι δύνωμαι."**  
 "Send me a little pot of cheese, that, when I like, I may fare sumptuously." (R.D. Hicks translation)

The cheese there is τυρός "sheep or goat cheese."

So, our Epicurean table has been set with an abundance of barley bread or barley porridge, as much spring water as you like, a little low-alcohol wine every once in a while, goat cheese, some wheat bread, a lentil stew, and fruits and nuts. That doesn't sound too bad to me.

I find it somewhat amusing that the word in Epicurus' request for the cheese (πολυτελεύσασθαι) translated as sumptuously also has the connotation of "lavishly or extravagantly" and, according to Liddell & Scott, can be coupled with ἄσωτος which is the word often translated as "profligate" and used by Epicurus when he says that *"whenever we say repeatedly that 'pleasure is the goal (τέλος),' we do not say the pleasure of those who are profligate."* This seem significant since Epicurus is saying that he enjoys cheese every once in a while, which to me sounds like a natural but unnecessary desire... Is Epicurus saying we can enjoy those desires, too, and not just the natural and necessary desires!! Oh my, how can that be! I thought he said we can ONLY partake of the natural AND necessary! Clutch your pearls!

I think that's exactly what this and other passages imply.

Part of the "ascetic myth" associated with Epicurus is that people say he taught that his students could ONLY follow the "natural and necessary" desires. For a VERY quick refresher, Epicurus categorized desires – DESIRES NOT PLEASURES – into four broad categories:

*Among desires, some are natural and necessary, some are natural and unnecessary, and some are unnatural and unnecessary (arising instead from groundless opinion).*

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The prevailing position among scholars and popularizers of Epicurean philosophy has been to filter this through a Stoic lens and say that Epicurus ONLY fulfilled the Natural And Necessary. I contend this is fundamentally wrong. From my perspective, Dr. Emily Austin got this exactly right in her book, *Living for Pleasure: An Epicurean Guide to Life*, published in 2023. Her terms:

Necessary Desires

Extravagant Desires

Corrosive Desires

I'm not going to belabor this topic, and I recommend you read her book. But her contention, and mine, is that Epicurus did not condemn or deny or disallow "extravagant desires." Epicurus says that "Those who least need extravagance enjoy it most." That doesn't strike me as a prohibition. He said he couldn't conceive of "the good without the joys of taste, of sex, of hearing, and without the pleasing motions caused by the sight of bodies and forms."

Did the Epicureans follow a simple, plain, frugal lifestyle? Yes, from all descriptions they appeared to live a simple, plain, frugal lifestyle... NOT unlike other average ancient Greeks of the time. Not "spartan," not "ascetic," not a life of self-denial! Simple, plain, frugal. Frugal doesn't mean self-denial.

Words and phrases along these lines often associated with the school were:

- Simplici victu = They led a simple, plain way of life
- οἱ τε λιποὶ χυλοὶ = They had simple, inexpensive, frugal flavors and tastes
- Καλιᾶδα = a simple cottage (Philodemus' description of his apartments in the lavish estate of Piso)
- εὐτελέστατα καὶ λιπότατα διαιτώμενοι = lead one's life in a manner that was easily paid for and simple, inexpensive, and frugal.

To me, this doesn't sound like self-denial or asceticism. It sounds like common sense! It sounds like Epicurus is reminding people to live within their means!

Translating this into a modern sense: Can a modern Epicurean go out to dinner once in a while to a fancy restaurant? Of course, as long as you're not neglecting your overextending your budget?

Can you drink that quality IPA or fancy wine offered you at a dinner party? Sure! Just don't drink to excess and make a fool of yourself.

One passage from Seneca that gets overlooked in my opinion is:

*Even Epicurus, the teacher of pleasure, used to observe stated intervals, during which he satisfied his hunger in sparingly fashion; he wished to see whether he thereby fell short of full and complete happiness, and, if so, by what amount he fell short, and whether this amount was worth purchasing at the price of great effort. At any rate, he makes such a statement in the well known letter written to Polyaenus in the archonship of Charinus.[7] Indeed, he boasts that he himself lived on less than a penny, but that Metrodorus, whose progress was not yet so great, needed a whole penny.*

This passage could have a whole presentation on it, including looking at what ancient Greek or Roman currency is being translated as "penny" and "half-penny"!



But the phrase I want to emphasize in closing is:

“Stated intervals”

In Seneca’s Latin: Certos dies “certain days”

From this, it would appear that Epicurus tested himself - on “certain days” - to see how much food would REALLY satisfy his hunger. We so often mindlessly eat our meals - scrolling our phones, talking with others, snacking on the basket of taco chips and salsa - that we don’t even know how much we’re eating. Then we end the meal rubbing our bellies and groaning! Epicurus KNEW how much would satisfy IF the need arose, and so did not have anxiety or fear around food and drink.

That does NOT mean he denied himself pleasure.

That does NOT mean he felt guilty for indulging in wine and cheese.

That does NOT mean he went around hungry and living a spartan existence.

That does NOT mean he lived like an ascetic.

Epicurus calls us to a life of common sense, to taking responsibility for our actions, and to living life to its fullest through the use of prudent choices.

So, go ahead... live a little and enjoy those extravagant pleasures when you can. Trust me, Epicurus would smile on you.

## NOTES

“Ascetic.” Merriam-Webster.com Dictionary, Merriam-Webster,  
<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/ascetic> Accessed 11 Jan. 2025.

Dave Philipps. “No More Bread and Water: U.S. Navy Scraps an Age-Old Penalty.” New York Times. Dec. 25, 2018  
<https://www.nytimes.com/2019/01/04/magazine/navys-bread-water-punishment-newsletter.html>

### **Epicurus as Ascetic Quotations, citations:**

*Epicurus was an ‘unimpeachable ascetic who taught that “genuine pleasure” was not “the pleasure of profligates,” but rather the simple satisfaction of a mind and body at peace’* (McMahon, [2004](#), p. 11). McMahon, D. M. (2004). From the happiness of virtue to the virtue of happiness: 400 b.c.– a.d.1780. *Daedalus*, 133(2), 5–17.

Parducci ([1995](#), pp. 17–18) comments: *Epicurus’ position was to establish an ascetic detachment from material conditions so as to minimize the pain of their loss.* Parducci, A. (1995). Happiness, pleasure and judgment; The contextual theory and its applications. Mahwah: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Epicurus’ hedonism has strong stoic or ascetic tendencies. Bergsma, A., Poot, G. & Liefbroer, A.C. Happiness in the Garden of Epicurus. *J Happiness Stud* **9**, 397–423 (2008). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10902-006-9036-z>

Epicurus has a sophisticated and idiosyncratic view of the nature of pleasure, which leads him to recommend a virtuous, moderately ascetic life as the best means to securing pleasure. <https://iep.utm.edu/epicur/>

...despite his hedonism, Epicurus advocates a surprisingly ascetic way of life. Although one shouldn’t spurn extravagant foods if they happen to be available, becoming dependent on such goods ultimately leads to unhappiness. Ibid

KSA 9:3[53]: ‘One thinks of asceticism as something superhuman, forgetting that an asceticism belonged to every ancient morality, even to Epicureanism.’ Nietzsche *KSA Friedrich Nietzsche: Sämtliche Werke*. Kritische Studienausgabe.

## Ancient Textual Sources

*This section includes citations used within the presentation as well as several other to provide additional context.*

### Philodemus, On Property Management

COLUMN V

... (it is his practice) [to call] (the one person rich) and the other, emphatically, poor, but (he speaks in that manner) as a matter of opinion, not preconception in accordance with ordinary usage. Surely, Socrates always had the characteristic of impracticality. Besides, as regards his claim that five minae seem to him sufficient for the necessary and natural needs of men,<sup>16</sup> that prosperity in life [is something empty], and that he does not need anything more in addition to those, it is impracticable and conflicts with reason. But indeed also, judging from the written record of what has

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 industrious, are acceptable. However, it is a harsh claim of his that a drink of wine in general, and not just of too much wine, makes even free men insolent (and that this is why many nations abstain from it), and to say that for these reasons it is obvious that one should distribute wine to the slaves either not at all or very seldom, whereas the obvious thing is rather that a certain quantity of wine strengthens the spirit and is in ready supply among those who work most. The instructions concerning their [tasks], nourishment, and punishment are commonplace and

Col IX, p 37

See also <https://www.epicureanfriends.com/thread/2897-the-art-of-frugal-hedonism/>

### Philodemus, Epigrams

[11.44] { G-P 23 } G

To-morrow, dearest Piso, your friend, beloved by the Muses, who keeps our annual feast of the twentieth \* invites you to come after the ninth hour to his simple cottage. If you miss udders and draughts of Chian wine, you will see at least sincere friends and you will hear things far sweeter than the land of the Phaeacians. But if you ever cast your eyes on me, Piso, we shall celebrate the twentieth richly instead of simply.

αὔριον εἰς λιπὴν σε καλιάδα, φίλτατε Πείσων,  
 ἐξ ἐνάτης ἔλκει μουσοφιλῆς ἔταρος,  
 εἰκάδα δειπνίζων ἐνιαύσιον: εἰ δ' ἀπολείψεις

οὔθ' αὐτὰ καὶ Βρομίου χιογενῆ πρόποσιν,  
 ἀλλ' ἑτάρους ὄψει παναληθείας, ἀλλ' ἑπακούσῃ  
 Φαιήκων γαίης πουλὺ μελιχρότερα:  
 ἦν δέ ποτε στρέψης καὶ ἐς ἡμέας ὄμματα, Πείσων,  
 ἄξομεν ἐκ λιπῆς εἰκάδα πιότερην.

<https://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Anth.+Gr.+11.44&fromdoc=Perseus%3Atext%3A2008.01.0475>

### **Seneca, Letters to Lucilius, 21.10:**

Go to his Garden some time and read the motto carved there: "Dear Guest, here you will do well to tarry; here our highest good is pleasure." The caretaker of that abode, a friendly host, will be ready for you; he will welcome you with **barley-meal**, and serve you **water** also in abundance, with these words: "Have you not been well entertained? This garden does not whet your appetite; but quenches it. Nor does it make you more thirsty with every drink; it slakes the thirst with a natural cure – a cure that requires no fee. It is with this type of pleasure that I have grown old."

10] Cum adieris eius hortulos et inscriptum hortulis legeris Hospes, hic bene manebis, hic summum bonum voluptas est, paratus erit istius domicilii custos hospitalis, humanus, et te polenta excipiet et aquam quoque large ministrabit et dicet: " Ecquid bene acceptus es ? " " Non inritant," inquit, " hi hortuli famem, sed extinguunt. Nec maiorem ipsis potionibus sitim faciunt, sed naturali et gratuito remedio sedant. In hac voluptate consenui."

**et te polenta excipiet et aquam** = peeled barley, pearl-barley

### **Seneca, Letters to Lucilius, 25.4:**

Let us return to the law of nature; for then riches are laid up for us. The things which we actually need are free for all, or else cheap; nature craves **only bread and water**. No one is poor according to this standard; when a man has limited his desires within these bounds, he can challenge the happiness of Jove himself, as Epicurus says.

**Panem (a loaf of bread) et aquam**

### **Seneca, Letters to Lucilius, 18.9 (also [ U158 ]):**

The great hedonist teacher Epicurus used to observe certain periods during which he would sparingly satisfy his hunger, with the object of seeing to what extent, if at all, one thereby fell short of attaining full and complete pleasure, and whether it was worth going to much trouble to make the deficit good. At least so he says in the letter he wrote to Polyaeus in the archonship of Charinus {308 - 307 B.C.}. He boasts in it indeed that he is managing to feed himself for less than a half-penny, whereas Metrodorus, not yet having made such good progress, needs a whole half-penny!

9] Certos habebat dies ille magister voluptatis Epicurus quibus maligne famem exstingueret, visurus an aliquid deesset ex plena et consummata voluptate, vel quantum deesset, et an dignum quod quis magno labore pensaret. Hoc certe in iis epistulis ait quas scripsit Charino magistratu ad Polyaeum; et quidem gloriatur non toto asse <se> pasci, Metrodorum, qui nondum tantum profecerit, toto.

PS: According to some websites I found:

(1st Century A.D.)

1 one pound loaf of bread = 2 asses

1 sextarius wine (~0.5 liter) = 1 - 5 asses

Remember that it is Seneca using the as as the coin in question, and he lived 4 BC – 65 AD. So, technically according to Seneca's quotation of a letter by Epicurus, Epicurus didn't need a whole "as" to live on for per day. However, Epicurus wouldn't have used the "as" coin since that was a Roman currency. Without the original text, there is NO way of knowing how much money Epicurus was referring to. However, even if we take Seneca's anachronistic currency, if Epicurus were "experimenting" with eating bread and drinking water, he could have bought a 1 pound loaf of bread for 2 asses and it would have lasted him two days. A pound of bread is a pretty good-sized loaf.

In his *Coinage and History of the Roman Empire* (vol. 2, p. 21), Vagi reports that "around the time of its destruction in A.D. 79 the average pay of a laborer in Pompeii was about 8 asses (half a denarius) per day, though actual salaries ranged from 5 to 16 asses per day. Skilled miners in rural Dacia earned wages of 6 to 10 asses, which were supplemented by free room and board values at 2 to 3 asses per day, bringing their true salaries more in line with the workers at the resort town of Pompeii."

See also:

**Plutarch, That Epicurus actually makes a pleasant life impossible, 3, p. 1088C (also [ U417 ]):**

Epicurus has imposed a limit on pleasures that applies to all of them alike: the removal of all pain. For he believes that our nature adds to pleasure only up to the point where pain is abolished and does not allow it any further increase in magnitude (**although the pleasure, when the state of painlessness is reached, admits of certain unessential variations**). But to proceed to this point, accompanied by desire, is our stint of pleasure, and the journey is indeed short and quick. Hence it is that becoming aware of the poverty here they transfer their final good from the body, as from an unproductive piece of land, to the soul, persuaded that there they will find pastures and meadows lush with pleasures.

<https://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A2008.01.0394%3Astephpage%3D1088c>

καὶ πέρασ αὐταῖς κοινὸν Ἐπίκουρος τὴν παντὸς τοῦ ἀλγοῦντος ὑπεξαίρεσιν ἐπιτέθεικεν, ὡς τῆς φύσεως ἄχρι τοῦ λῦσαι τὸ ἀλγεινὸν αὐξούσης τὸ ἡδύ, περαιτέρω δὲ μὴ ἐώσης προελθεῖν κατὰ τὸ μέγεθος, **ἀλλὰ ποικιλμοὺς τινὰς οὐκ ἀναγκαίους**, ὅταν ἐν τῷ μὴ πονεῖν γένηται, δεχομένης ἢ δ' ἐπὶ τοῦτο μετ' ὀρέξεως πορεία, μέτρον ἡδονῆς οὔσα, κομιδῇ βραχεῖα καὶ σύντομος '

**Plutarch, That Epicurus actually makes a pleasant life impossible, 15, p. 1097C (also [ U183 ]):**

One cannot ignore the man's absurd inconsistency: he treads under foot and belittles the actions of Themistocles and Miltiades and yet writes this to his friends about himself: "The way in which you have provided for me in the matter of sending **the grain** was godlike and magnificent, and you have given tokens of your regard from me that reach to high heaven." So if someone had taken that **corn ration of his bread-stuff** from our philosopher's letter, the expressions of gratitude would have conveyed the impression that it was written in thanksgiving for the freedom or deliverance of the whole Greek nation or of the Athenian state.

<http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A2008.01.0395%3Asection%3D15>

Σῖτος = grain, comprehending both wheat (πυρός) and barley (κριθή); food made from grain, bread, opp. flesh-meat

Σιτάριον = a little corn or bread, a bit of corn or breadstuff

**Plutarch, That Epicurus actually makes a pleasant life impossible, 16, p. 1097D:**

Now the point that even for the pleasures of the body our nature requires costly provision, and that the most pleasant enjoyment is not to be found in **barley-cake and lentil soup**, but that the appetite of the sensualist demands succulent viands and Thasian wine and perfumes ... and not only this, but young and attractive women ... this point let us waive.

<http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A2008.01.0395%3Asection%3D16>

**Μάζη** - the regular word used throughout for barley cake/bread/porridge

**Φακή** = "lentil-dish", contracted of φακέα (phakéa, "lentil-dish"), from φακός (phakós, "lentil").

**Another translation:**

We will now forbear to mention that Nature requires very large and chargeable provisions to be made for accomplishing the pleasures of the body; nor can the height of delicacy be had in **barley bread and lentil pottage**. But voluptuous and sensual

appetites expect costly dishes, Thasian wines, perfumed unguents, and varieties of pastry works,

*And cakes by female hands wrought artfully,*

*Well steep'd in th' liquor of the gold-wing'd bee;*

and besides all this, handsome young lassies too, such as Leontion, Boidion, Hedia, and Nicedion, that were wont to roam about in Epicurus's philosophic garden. But now such joys as suit the mind must undoubtedly be grounded [p. 182] upon a grandeur of actions and a splendor of worthy deeds, if men would not seem little, ungenerous, and puerile, but on the contrary, bulky, firm, and brave. But for a man to be elated with pleasures, as Epicurus is, like tarpaulins upon the festivals of Venus, and to vaunt himself that, when he was sick of an ascites, he notwithstanding called his friends together to certain collations and grudged not his dropsy the satisfaction of good liquors, and that, when he called to remembrance the last words of Neocles, he was melted with a peculiar sort of joy intermixed with tears,—no man in his right senses would call these true joys or satisfactions.

**Plutarch, Against Colotes, 6, p. 1109E & F (also [ U58 ]):**

Consider the discussion that Epicurus holds in his Symposium with Polyaeus about the heat in wine. When Polyaeus asks, "Do you deny, Epicurus, the great heating effect of wine?", he replies, "What need is there to generalize that wine produces heat?" Further on, he says, "For it appears that it is not a general fact that wine produces heat, but a given quantity of wine may be said to produce heat for a given person." Again, after assigning as one cause the crowding and dispersal of atoms, and as another, the mixture and alignment of these with others, when the wine is mingled with the body, he adds in conclusion, "Thus, one should not generalize that wine is productive of heat, but only say that a particular amount produces heat for a particular body in a particular condition, or that such an amount results in chilling for another. For in an aggregate such as wine there are also certain natural substances of such a sort that coolness might be formed of them, or such that, when aligned with others, they would produce a real coolness. Hence, deceived by this, some generalize that wine is cooling, others, that it is heating."

**Plutarch, Table Talk, III 6, 1, p. 653B (also [ U61 ]):**

Certain young men with no long experience in the ancient literature were attacking Epicurus on the ground that he had introduced in his Symposium an unseemly and unnecessary discussion about the proper time for coition. For an older man to talk about sex in the presence of youths at a dinner-party and weigh the pros and cons of whether one should make love before dinner or after dinner was, they claimed, the extreme of indecency. At this, some of our company brought up Xenophon, who, so to speak, took his guests home after dinner, not on foot, but on horseback, to make love to

their wives. And Zopyrus the physician, who was very well acquainted with the works of Epicurus, added that they had not read Epicurus' Symposium with attention; for Epicurus did not propose the problem as one involving a principle or a settled procedure and then proceed with his discussion of it; but he took the young men for a walk after dinner, conversed with them for the purpose of moral instruction, and restrained them from their lust on the ground that intercourse is always precarious and harmful, and affects worse those who engage in it when they have been eating and drinking. "Indeed," said he {Zopyrus}, "even if intercourse were the chief topic of his inquiry, would it be to the philosopher's credit to have refrained entirely from all consideration of the right time and hour for coition? Would it not be better for him to engage, at the proper moment, in rational discussion of such matters? And would it be to his credit that he consider this stage of his discussion not inappropriate to any occasion except drinking and dining, and there shameful?"... This put the young men out of countenance, and they sat in silence. The rest of the company asked Zopyrus to give them an account of what Epicurus had to say about this matter, and he replied that he did not remember the particulars accurately, but thought that the man feared the afflictions resulting from coition, due to the disturbance caused by our bodies entering into the tumult and turmoil of such activity. For wine is generally a brawler, an instigator of tumult, and unsettles our body from its base; and if tranquility and sleep do not take possession of our body when it is in this condition, but the new disturbances of coition supervene, the forces which naturally tie together and cement the body are crushed and dislodged, and there is danger that the body be unseated, like a house shifted from its foundations – for the seed does not flow easily at this time, repletion blocking it, but with effort it is extracted in a clotted mass. Consequently our man says that we must engage in such activity when the body is quiet and ended are the assimilations and fluxes of the nourishment which traverses and quits the body, and must do so before the body is again in need of further nourishment. 654B: Let us consider, if you will, whether it is proper and fitting, or contrary to all justice, for Epicurus to deprive Aphrodite of night ... 655A: Surely the body would not suffer greater harm by coition after dinner, as Epicurus thinks it does, provided a man does not make love when he is over-burdened, drunk or stuffed full to the point of bursting. For of course, if that is the case, the thing is precarious and harmful. But if a man is sufficiently himself and moderately relaxed, his body at ease and his spirit disposed and if then after an interval he makes love, he neither causes his body great disturbance, nor does he bring on any morbid excitement or unsettling of atoms, as Epicurus claims.

### **Plutarch, Epicurus makes a good life impossible**

<http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus:text:2008.01.0395:section=4&highlight=feast>



Neither doth it befit men of continence and sobriety to exercise their thoughts about such poor things, or to do what one twitted Carneades with, to reckon, as out of a diurnal, how oft they have lain with Hedia or Leontion, or where they last drank Thasian wine, or **at what twentieth-day feast they had a costly supper**. For such transport and captivatedness of the mind to its own remembrances as this is would show a deplorable and bestial restlessness and raving towards the present and hoped-for acts of pleasure. And therefore I cannot but look upon the sense of these inconveniences as the true cause of their retiring at last to a freedom from pain and a firm state of body; as if living pleasurably could lie in bare imagining this either past or future to some persons. True indeed it is, 'that a sound state of body and a good assurance of its continuing must needs afford a most transcending and solid satisfaction to all men capable of reasoning.'

### Plutarch, Against Colotes:

<http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus:text:2008.01.0397:section=31&highlight=eat>

No sufficient praise therefore or equivalent to their deserts can be given those who, for the restraining of such bestial passions, have set down laws, established policy and government of state, instituted magistrates and ordained good and wholesome laws. But who are they that utterly confound and abolish this? Are they not those who withdraw themselves and their followers from all part in the government? Are they not those who say that the garland of tranquillity and a reposed life are far more valuable than all the kingdoms and principalities in the world? Are they not those who declare that reigning and being a king is mistaking the path and straying from the right way of felicity? And they write in express terms: **'We are to treat how a man may best keep and preserve the end of Nature, and how he may from the very beginning avoid entering of his own free will and voluntarily upon offices of magistracy, and government over the people.'** And yet again, these other words are theirs: **'There is no need at all that a man should tire out his mind and body to preserve the Greeks, and to obtain from them a crown of wisdom; but to eat and drink well, O Timocrates, without prejudicing, but rather pleasing the flesh.'**

‘οὐδὲν οὖν ἔτι δεῖ τοὺς Ἕλληνας σώζειν οὐδ’ ἐπὶ σοφία στεφάνου παρ’ αὐτῶν τυγχάνειν, ἀλλ’ ἐσθίειν καὶ πίνειν, ὡς Τιμόκρατες, ἀβλαβῶς τῇ σαρκὶ καὶ κεχαρισμένως;’

Alternative translation: **"We are not called to save the nation or get crowned by it for wisdom; what is called for, my dear Timocrates, is to eat and to drink wine, gratifying the belly without harming it."**

<https://archive.org/details/moraliainfiftee14plut/page/95/mode/1up?q=timocrates>

Ἀβλαβῶς = not harmingly

Κεχαρισμένως = accordingly; to say or do something agreeable to a person, shew him favour or kindness, to oblige, gratify, favour, humour; gratify or indulge a humour or passion

**Plutarch, Against Colotes:**

<http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus:text:2008.01.0397:section=6&highlight=wine>

See now to this purpose, what discourse and debate Epicurus makes Polyaeus to have with him in his Banquet (συμπόσιον) concerning the heat of wine. For when he asked, 'Do you, Epicurus, say, that wine does not heat?' someone answered, 'It is not universally to be affirmed that wine heats.' And a little after: 'For wine seems not to be universally a heater; but such a quantity may be said to heat such a person.' And again subjoining the cause, to wit, the compressions and disseminations of the atoms, and having alleged their commixtures and conjunctions with others when the wine comes to be mingled in the body, he adds this conclusion: 'It is not universally to be said that wine is endued with a faculty of heating; but that such a quantity may heat such a nature and one so disposed, while such a quantity to such a nature is cooling. For in such a mass there are such natures and complexions [p. 344] of which cold might be composed, and which, joined with others in proper measure, would yield a refrigerative virtue.

Wherefore some are deceived, who say that wine is universally a heater; and others, who say that it is universally a cooler.' He then who says that most men are deceived and err, in holding that which is hot to be heating and that which is cold to be cooling, is himself in an error, unless he should believe that his assertion leads to the doctrine that one thing is not more of one nature than another. He farther adds afterwards, that oftentimes wine entering into a body brings with it thither neither a calefying nor refrigerating virtue, but, the mass of the body being agitated and disturbed, and a transposition made of the parts, the heat-effecting atoms being assembled together do by their multitude cause a heat and inflammation in the body, and sometimes on the contrary disassembling themselves cause a refrigeration.

**Athenaeus, Deipnosophists, V (with mention of the *Symposium* of Epicurus):**

177B: Epicurus, however, portrayed a symposium solely of philosophers.

179B: But with Epicurus there is no libation, no preliminary offering to the gods; on the contrary, it is like what Simonides says of the lawless woman: "Oftentimes she eats up the offerings before they are consecrated."

182A: In the Symposium of Epicurus there is an assemblage of flatterers praising one another, while the symposium of Plato is full of men who turn their noses up in jeers at one another.

**Athenaeus, Deipnosophists, 3.60:**

<http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus:text:2013.01.0003:book=3:chapter=60&highlight=epicurus>

But one may well wonder at Archestratus, who has given us such admirable suggestions and injunctions, and who was a guide in the matter of pleasure to the philosopher Epicurus, when he counsels us wisely, in a manner equal to that of the bard<sup>1</sup> of Ascra, that we ought not to mind some people, but only attend to him; and he bids us eat such [p. 170] and such things, differing in no respect from the cook in Damoxenus the comic writer, who says in his *Syntrophi*—

A. You see me here a most attentive pupil  
Of Epicurus, wisest of the Greeks,  
From whom in two years and ten months or less,  
I scraped together four good Attic talents.

B. What do you mean by this I pray thee, tell me,  
Was he a cook, my master? That is news.

A. Ye gods! and what a cook! Believe me, nature  
Is the beginning and the only source  
Of all true wisdom. And there is no art  
At which men labour, which contains more wisdom.  
So this our art is easy to the man  
Who has drunk deep of nature's principles;  
They are his guides: and therefore, when you see  
A cook who is no scholar, nor has read  
The subtle lessons of Democritus,  
(Aye and he must remember them besides,)  
Laugh at him as an ass; and if you hire one  
Who knows not Epicurus and his rules,  
Discharge him straightway. For a cook must know,  
(I speak the words of sober truth, my friend,)  
How great the difference is in summer time  
Between the glaucisk of the winter-season;  
He must know all the fish the Pleiades  
Bring to us at their setting; what the solstice,  
Winter and summer, gives us eatable—  
For all the changes and the revolutions  
Are fraught with countless evil to mankind,  
Such changes do they cause in all their food.  
Dost thou not understand me? And remember,  
Whatever is in season must be good.

B. How few observe these rules.

A. From this neglect  
 Come spasms, and the flatulence which ill  
 Beseems a politic guest;-but all the food  
 I give my parties, wholesome is, and good,  
 Digestible and free from flatulence.  
 Therefore its juice is easily dissolved,  
 And penetrates the entire body's pores.

B. Juice, say you? This is not known to Democritus.

A. But all meats out of season make the eater  
 Diseased in his joints.

B. You seem to me,  
 To have studied too the art of medicine.

A. No doubt, and so does every one who seeks  
 Acquaintance with his nature's mysteries.  
 But see now, I do beg you by the gods,  
 How ignorant the present race of cooks are.  
 When thus you find them ignorant of the smell  
 [p. 171] Of all the varied dishes which they dress,  
 And pounding sesame in all their sauce.  
 What can be bad enough for such sad blunderers

B. You seem to speak as any oracle.

A. What good can e'er arise, where every quality  
 Is jumbled with its opposite in kind,  
 How different so ever both may be?  
 Now to discern these things is art and skill,  
 Not to wash dishes nor to smell of smoke.  
 For I do never enter a strange cook-shop,  
 But sit within such a distance as enables  
 My eyes to comprehend what is within.  
 My friends, too, do the same; I tell them all  
 The causes and results. This bit is sour,  
 Away with it; the man is not a cook,  
 Though he perhaps may be a music master:  
 Put in some fire; keep an equal heat.  
 The first dish scarcely suits the rest. Do you  
 Not see the form of th' art?

B. O, great Apollo!

A. What does this seem to you?

B. Pure skill; high art.

A. Then I no dishes place before my guests

At random; but while all things correspond  
 I regulate the whole, and will divide  
 The whole as best may suit, in fours, or fives;  
 And will consult each separate division-  
 And satisfy each party. Then again,  
 I stand afar off and directions give;  
 Whence bring you that? what shall you mix with this?  
 See how discordant those two dishes are!  
 Take care and shun such blunders. That will do.  
 Thus Epicurus did arrange his pleasures.  
 Thus wisely did he eat. He, only wise,  
 Saw what was good and what its nature was.  
 The Stoics seek in vain for such discoveries,  
 And know not good nor what the nature may be  
 Of good; and so they have it not; nor know  
 How to impart it to their friends and guests.  
 Enough of this. Do'st not agree with me?  
 B. Indeed I do, all things are plain to me.

**Athenaeus, The Deipnosophists,**

<http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus:text:2013.01.0003:book=5:chapter=pos=344&highlight=epicurus>

in Epicurus there is no mention of any libation to the gods, or of any offering of first-fruits. (i.e., at his banquets or symposia)

**Athenaeus, The Deipnosophists:**

<http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus:text:2013.01.0003:book=7:chapter=11&highlight=epicurus>

And about Epicurus, Timon, in the third book of his Silli, speaks as follows:—

Seeking at all times to indulge his stomach,  
 Than which there's no more greedy thing on earth.

For, on account of his stomach, and of the rest of his sensual pleasures, the man was always flattering Idomeneus and Metrodorus. And Metrodorus himself, not at all disguising this admirable principle of his, says, somewhere or other, “The fact is, Timocrates, my natural philosopher, that every investigation which is guided by principles of nature, fixes its ultimate aim entirely on gratifying the stomach.” For Epicurus was the tutor of all these men; who said, shouting it out, as I may say, “The fountain and root of every good is the pleasure of the stomach: and all wise rules, and all superfluous rules, are measured alike by this standard.” And in his treatise on the

Chief Good, he speaks nearly as follows: "For I am not able to understand what is good, if I leave out of consideration the pleasures which arise from delicately-flavoured food, and if I [p. 440] also leave out the pleasures which arise from amatory indulgences; and if I also omit those which arise from music, and those, too, which are derived from the contemplation of beauty and the gratification of the eyesight." And, proceeding a little further, he says, "All that is beautiful is naturally to be honoured; and so is virtue, and everything of that sort, if it assists in producing or causing pleasure. But if it does not contribute to that end, then it may be disregarded.

### **Athenaeus, Deipnosophists:**

<http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus:text:2013.01.0003:book=7:chapter=14&highlight=epicurus>

to the school of Epicurus; and, in consequence, Timon said of him, not without some point and felicity—

When it is time to set (δύνειν), he now begins  
 To sit at table (ἠδύνεσθαι). But there is a time  
 To love, a time to wed, a time to cease.

NOTE:

δύνειν - cause to sink, sink, plunge in

ἠδύνεσθαι - delight, coax, gratify; to sweeten, season, give a flavour or relish to a thing

Diogenes Laertius 10.7:

he spent a whole mina daily on his table, as he himself says in his letter to Leontion and in that to the philosophers at Mitylene.

### **Diogenes Laertius X.11:**

Diocles in the third book of his Epitome speaks of them as living a very simple and frugal life ; at all events they were content with **half a pint of thin wine** and were, for the rest, thoroughgoing **water-drinkers**. ...

Διοκλῆς δ' ἐν τῇ τρίτῃ τῆς ἐπιδρομῆς φησιν εὐτελέστατα καὶ λιτότατα διαιτώμενοι.

"κοτύλη γούνη," φησίν, "οἰνιδίου ἠρκοῦντο, τὸ δὲ πᾶν ὕδωρ ἦν αὐτοῖς ποτόν."

Οἰνίδιον = small wine, poor wine

Κοτύλη = liquid measure, containing 6 κύαθοι or a 1/2 ξέστης, i.e. nearly a 1/2 pint

In his correspondence he himself mentions that he was content with **plain bread** and **water**. And again : "Send me **a little pot of cheese**, that, when I like, I may fare sumptuously." [ U182 ]

αὐτός τέ φησιν ἐν ταῖς ἐπιστολαῖς, ὕδατι μόνον ἀρκεῖσθαι καὶ ἄρτω λιτῶ. καί, "πέμψον μοι τυροῦ," φησί, "κυθριδίου, ἵν' ὅταν βούλωμαι πολυτελεύσασθαι δύνωμαι."

Ἄρτω > ἄρτος = cake or loaf of wheat-bread; opp. μᾶζα (porridge)

Λιτός = simple, inexpensive, frugal

Τυρός = goat's and ewe's cheese

Κύθηρη = Ionic form of χύτρα (khútra); an earthen pot, pipkin; κυθριδίου connotes a "little" (ie, diminutive) pot

### **Diogenes Laertius X.131 (Epicurus: Letter to Menoikeus; also [ U181 ] )**

[131] while **bread and water** confer the highest possible pleasure when they are brought to hungry lips.

[131] **καὶ μᾶζα καὶ ὕδωρ** τὴν ἀκροτάτην ἀποδίδωσιν ἡδονήν, ἐπειδὴν ἐνδέων τις αὐτὰ προσενέγκηται.

WP: Barley was easier to grow than wheat, but more difficult to make bread from.

Barley-based breads were nourishing but very heavy.[56] Because of this, it was often roasted before being milled into coarse flour (ἄλφιτα álphita). Barley flour was used to make **μᾶζα** maza, the basic Greek dish. Maza could be served cooked or raw, as a broth, or made into dumplings or flatbreads.[49] Like wheat breads, it could also be augmented with cheese or honey.

In Peace, Aristophanes employs the expression ἐσθίειν κριθᾶς μόνας, literally "to eat only barley", with a meaning equivalent to the English "diet of bread and water".[57]

Ὑδωρ = spring water

Additional [ U181 ]

### **Porphyry, O Abstinence from Eating Animals, I.48 (also [ U466] ) :**

For most of the Epicureans, starting with their leader, appear to be satisfied with **barley-bread and fruit**, and they have filled treatises with arguments that nature needs little and that its requirements are adequately met by **simple, available food**. Riches in accordance with nature, they say, are limited and easy to get; riches in accordance with empty beliefs are unlimited and hard to get [= Principle Doctrine 15]. Disturbance caused to the body by want is well and sufficiently removed by things which are easy to get, which have the simple nature of fluid and dry.

<https://archive.org/details/rhoer-de-abstinentia-ab-esu-animalium-libri-quatuor-gr-lat-1767/page/81/mode/1up>

**μαζῆι** καὶ τοῖς ἀκροδρυοῖς ἀρκούμενοι φαίνονται τὰ

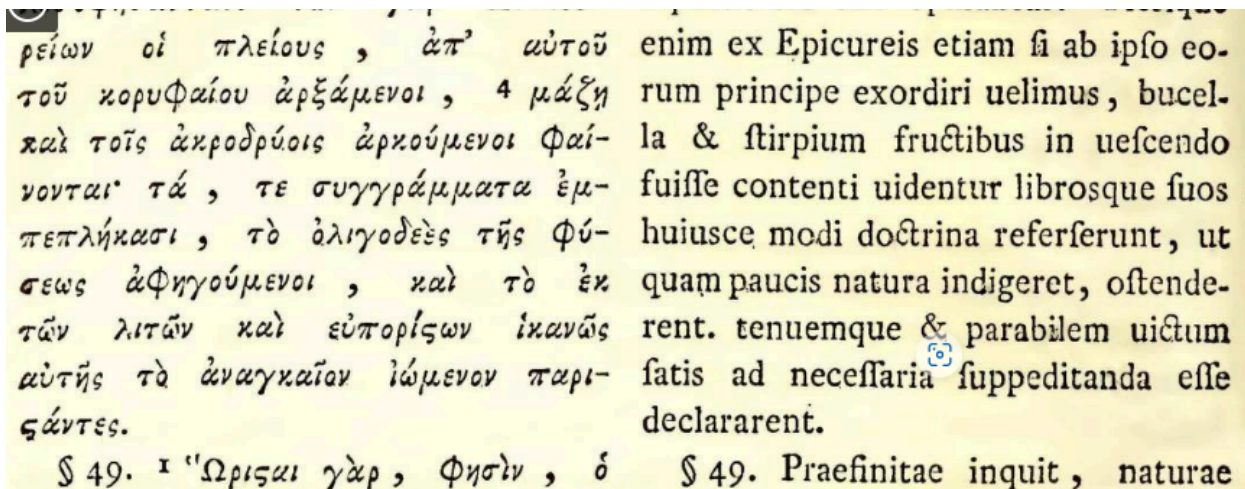
bucella & stirpium fructibus

Ἀκροδρυοῖς = ἀκρόδρυα , τὰ = fruits grown on upper branches of trees, esp.

hard-shelled fruits, opp. Ὅπώρα (autumn fruits); fruit-trees in general (incl. vine and olive);

Bucella > small mouthful of food; morsel; small bread divided among poor (L+S)





[ U467 ]

**Lactantius, Divine Institutes, III.17.5:** One who is too stingy learns [from Epicurus] that life can be endured on **water and barley**.

[https://www.documentacatholicaomnia.eu/02m/0240-0320\\_Lactantius\\_Divinarum\\_Institutionum\\_Liber\\_III\\_MLT.pdf](https://www.documentacatholicaomnia.eu/02m/0240-0320_Lactantius_Divinarum_Institutionum_Liber_III_MLT.pdf)

[U602]

**Flavius Claudius Julianus (Julian the Emperor), Orations, VI.195, "To the Uneducated Cynics," [p. 366 Pet.]:** Then does he {Diogenes of Sinope} not seem to you of no importance, this man who was "cityless, homeless, a man without a country, owning not an obol, not a drachma, not a single slave," nay, not even **a loaf of bread** – while Epicurus says that if he have **bread** enough and to spare he is not inferior to the gods on the score of happiness.

<http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A2008.01.0662%3Aorpage%3D195b>

ἄρα σοι μικρὰ φαίνεται ἀνὴρ Ἄπολις, ἄοικος, πατρίδος ἐστερημένος, οὐκ ὀβολόν, οὐ δραχμήν, ἔχων οὐδ' οἰκέτην, ἀλλ' οὐδὲ **μάζαν**, ἧς Ἐπίκουρος εὐπορῶν οὐδὲ τῶν θεῶν φησιν εἰς εὐδαιμονίας λόγον ἐλαττοῦσθαι, πρὸς μὲν τοὺς θεοὺς οὐκ ἐρίζων, τοῦ δοκοῦντος δὲ τοῖς ἀνθρώποις εὐδαιμονεστάτου εὐδαιμονέστερον ζῶν καὶ ἔλεγε ζῆν εὐδαιμονέστερον.

**St. Jerome, Against Jovinianus, II.11 t. II [p. 340C Vall.]:** Epicurus, the defender of pleasure, in all his books speaks of nothing but **vegetables and fruits**; and he says that we ought to live on **cheap food** because the preparation of sumptuous banquets of flesh involves great care and suffering, and greater pains attend the search for such delicacies than pleasures the consumption of them. Our bodies need only something to eat and drink. Where there is **bread and water**, and the like, nature is satisfied.

Whatever more there may be does not go to meet the wants of life, but are ministers to



vicious pleasure. Eating and drinking does not quench the longing for luxuries, but appeases hunger and thirst. Persons who feed on flesh want also gratifications not found in flesh. But they who adopt **a simple diet** do not look for **flesh**. Further, we cannot devote ourselves to wisdom if our thoughts are running on a well-laden table, the supply of which requires an excess of work and anxiety. The wants of nature are soon satisfied: cold and hunger can be banished with simple food and clothing.

<https://books.google.com/books?id=o0MGQ5XJihYC&pg=PA213#v=onepage&q&f=true>

**Oleribus et pomis** = Kitchen or garden herbs of any kind; vegetables, esp. cabbage, colewort, turnips, greens **and** fruit of any kind (apples, cherries, nuts, berries, figs, dates, etc.)

**Aqua et panis** = water and a loaf of bread

**Simplici victu** = simple, plain / living, way of life, lifestyle; nourishment, provision, diet, that which sustains life (Compare to the letter to Menoikeus: οἱ τε λιποὶ χυλοὶ “simple/inexpensive/frugal (λιποὶ) flavors/tastes (χυλοὶ (plural) < χυλόσ) ” However, another meaning of χυλόσ also means, according to LSJ “barley-water, gruel, having the barley or groats strained off.” So, when you see “simple flavors” think of something as “simple” as barley-water” or “inexpensive thin gruel.” That’s the kind of flavor being referred to here.

Qui autem simplici victu abutantur, eos carnes non requirere. *Those who take advantage of a simple diet, they do not require meat.*

bus et epularum deliciis asserit excitari. Quodque mirandum sit, Epicurus voluptatis assertor, omnes libros suos replevit oleribus et pomis et vilibus cibus dicit esse vivendum; quia carnes, et exquisitæ epulæ, ingenti cura ac miseria præparentur, majoremque pœnam habeant in inquirendo [.i. quærendo] quam voluptatem in abutendo. (Vid. *Loctantium* l. III, c. 17.) Corpora autem nostra cibo tantum et potu indigere. Ubi aqua et panis sit, et cætera his similia, ibi naturæ satisfactum Vid *Laertium* l. x: et *Senecam* l. III. *Epistol.* 2 et 25.) Quidquid supra fuerit, non ad vitæ necessitatem spectare, sed ad vitium voluptatis. Bibere, et comedere, non deliciarum ardorem<sup>4</sup>, sed sitim famemque restinguere. Qui carnibus vescantur, indigere etiam his quæ non sunt carniū. Qui autem simplici victu abutantur, eos carnes non requirere. Sapientiæ quoque **3.11** operam dare non possumus, si mensæ abundantiam cogitemus, quæ labore nimio et cura indiget. Cito expletur naturæ necessitas: frigus et fames, simplici vestita et cibo expelli potest.

**Johannes Stobaeus, Anthology, XVII.24:** From Epicurus: "I revel in the pleasure of my humble body, employing **water and bread**, and I spit upon the pleasures of extravagance, not for their own sake, but because of the difficulties which follow from them."

VS59. The stomach is not insatiable, as most people say; instead the opinion that the stomach needs unlimited filling is false. ἄπληστον οὐ γαστήρ ὥσπερ οἱ πολλοὶ φασιν, ἀλλ' ἡ δόξα ψευδῆς ὑπὲρ τοῦ <τῆς> γαστροῦ ἀορίστου πληρώματος.

[U181]. Living on bread and water, I rejoice in the pleasure of my body and spit upon the pleasures of extravagance, not for what they are but because of the difficulties that follow from them.

βρυάζω τῷ κατὰ τὸ σωματίον ἡδεῖ, ὕδατι καὶ ἄρτῳ χρώμενος, καὶ προσπιύω ταῖς ἐκ πολυτελείας ἡδοναῖς οὐ δι' αὐτάς, ἀλλὰ διὰ τὰ ἐξακολουθοῦντα αὐταῖς δυσχερῆ.

<https://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus:text:1999.04.0058:entry=xra/omai>

<https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/g5530/kjv/tr/0-1/>

***One problematic Vatican Saying, but this is for another paper!***

VS69. The **ingratitude of the soul** makes a creature greedy for endless variation in its way of life.

**τὸ τῆς ψυχῆς ἀχάριστον** λίχνον ἐποίησε τὸ ζῶον εἰς ἄπειρον τῶν ἐν διαίτῃ ποικιλμάτων.

Ἀχάριστον = thankless, ungrateful; ingratitude; Seems to be getting at "One who has an ungrateful attitude of mind"

Λίχνος = gluttonous

Ἐποίησε = makes; third-person singular aorist active indicative of ποιέω

Διαίτη = dative of διαίτη; way of living, way of life, mode of life, lifestyle

Ποικιλμάτων = generally, variety, diversity