

# Let's Make a List of 1) Major Causes of the Decline of Epicurean Philosophy after Lucretius and 2) The Obstacles to its Revival Through Today

Post by “Kalosyni” of August 24, 2023 at 7:36 AM

Another possible cause of the decline: neoplatonism

Quote

... the Roman religious revolution preceded Constantine the Great's rule, and it was not primarily about Christianity.

Historians' estimates for the number of Christians during Constantine's reign vary, but they tend to hover between less than 5% to 10% of the population at the most. The Christians up to this point had been a heavily persecuted group, particularly under Emperor [Diocletian](#). If Constantine's support of the Christian religion was a pragmatic choice, it cannot have been because Christianity was suddenly the largest religion.

It is popularly believed that Christianity spread primarily amongst the poor, the enslaved, and women first before it caught on with the Roman aristocracy. Jesus' belief that the downtrodden should be cared for was part of its appeal to various groups of disenfranchised people.

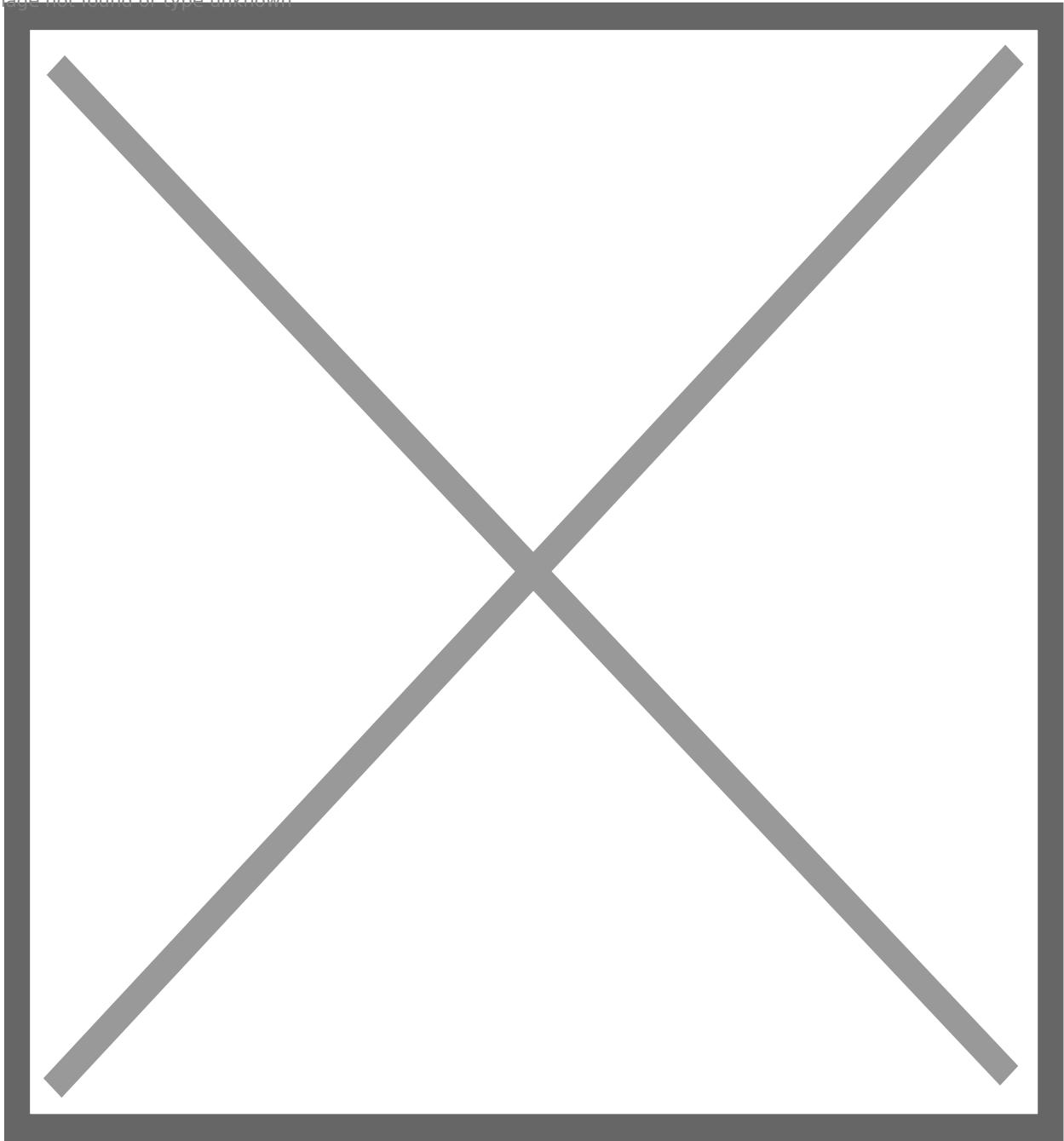
On the other hand, while the Christian religion was probably not yet massive, mystery cults and foreign religions were replacing traditional pantheism with lightning speed.

This was due in part to a philosophical movement called [Neoplatonism](#). **From the 3rd century onwards, this school of philosophy basically went unchallenged and supplanted all others. Traditional philosophical education for the aristocratic population of the late Roman Empire would often entail studying at the feet of one of the many Neoplatonist philosophers.**

This school is very important for understanding late Roman culture and religion. Its system of philosophy taught that, even if there are other Godlike beings, there is primarily one single all-encompassing ineffable Godhead, which is connected to the divine intellect. They were also concerned with the status of the soul of man in a divine hierarchy. These ideas were, in effect, a religious interpretation of [Plato](#).

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