

References on Motion in Lucretius and Diogenes Laertius

Post by "Cassius" of April 12, 2025 at 1:47 PM

As to examining the issue of "weight" more closely, Joshua has pointed out in Lucretius Today 275 that "gravitas" seems to be the word used by Lucretius for "weight," and [Don pointed out this as to the Greek:](#)

[Quote from Don](#)

Joshua asked about the Greek word for "weight" in the characteristics of the atom: βάρος (baros). From which we get words like barometric, barometer "instrument for measuring the weight or pressure of the atmosphere," barophobia "an abnormal fear of gravity."

Here is [another section from Lucretius](#) where "gravitas" is not the word used. Given that there is never in any of these statements that there is "something else" pulling the atoms "down," I presume a good case can be made that regardless of the terminology, Epicurus was clear that this force of "weight" was something within the atoms themselves, not a force that is separate and apart from the atoms themselves. That is, other atoms and groups of atoms arguably could exert a pulling motion, but there is no extra-atomic force that operates on the atoms. This is very important for closing the door to the argument that some people like to make that this "force outside the atoms" is "god."

5-181

Whence again was first implanted in the gods a pattern for begetting things in general as well as the preconception of what men are, so that they knew and saw in mind what they wanted to make? And in what way was the power of first-beginnings ever ascertained, and what they could effect by a change in their mutual arrangements, unless nature herself gave the model for making things? For in such wise the first-beginnings of things many in number in many ways impelled by blows for infinite ages back and kept in motion by their own weights have been wont to be carried along and to unite in all manner of ways and thoroughly test every kind of production possible by their mutual combinations; that it is not strange if they have also fallen into arrangements and have come into courses like to those out of which this sum of things is now carried on by constant renewing.

5-181

Exemplum porro gignendis rebus et ipsa
notities hominum divis unde insita primum est,
quid vellent facere ut scirent animoque viderent,
quove modost umquam vis cognita principiorum
quidque inter sese permutato ordine possent.
si non ipsa dedit speciem natura creandi?
namque ita multa modis multis primordia rerum
ex infinito iam tempore percita plagis
ponderibusque suis consuerunt concita ferri
omnimodisque coire atque omnia pertemptare,
quae cumque inter se possint congressa creare,
ut non sit mirum, si in talis disposituras
deciderunt quoque et in talis venere meatus,
qualibus haec rerum geritur nunc summa novando.