

# Primary Epicurean References Relevant To Life Elsewhere In The Universe

Post by “Don” of August 8, 2025 at 10:25 PM

## [Quote from Cassius](#)

Epicurus - Letter to Herodotus 45 (Bailey)

These brief sayings, if all these points are borne in mind, afford a sufficient outline for our understanding of the nature of existing things. Furthermore, there are infinite worlds both like and unlike this world of ours. For the atoms being infinite in number, as was proved already, are borne on far out into space. For those atoms, which are of such nature that a world could be created out of them or made by them, have not been used up either on one world or on a limited number of worlds, nor again on all the worlds which are alike, or on those which are different from these. So that there nowhere exists an obstacle to the infinite number of the worlds.

[45 *My own translation/emendation* of Hicks | Perseus Project] "The repetition at such length of all that we are now recalling to mind furnishes an adequate outline for our conception of the nature of things.

"Moreover, there is an *infinite number of cosmoi* (*κόσμοι ἄπειροί* "infinite kosmoi"), some like this one, others unlike it. For the atoms (being infinite in number (*ἄτομοι ἄπειροι οὔσαι* "atoms are infinite"), as has just been proved, are borne ever further in their course. For the atoms out of which a cosmos might arise or by which a world might be formed (*ἐξ ὧν ἂν γένοιτο κόσμος ἢ ὑφ' ὧν ἂν ποιηθείη*) have not all been expended on one or a finite number whether like or unlike this one. Hence there will be nothing to hinder an infinity of cosmoi ( *ὥστε οὐδὲν τὸ ἐμποδοστατήσόν ἐστι πρὸς τὴν ἀπειρίαν τῶν κόσμων.*).

[κόσμος](#) = "order; an ordered pocket of the universe (The All). The All is that in which these cosmoi which Epicurus posits exist without end.

One of the definitions in LSJ of κόσμος is : Herm. ap. Stob.1.49.44; **of the sphere whose centre is the earth's centre and radius the straight line joining earth and sun**, Archim.Aren.4; of the sphere containing the fixed stars"

ἄπειρος = translated "infinite"; From ἀ- (a-, "not") + πεῖραρ (peîrar), πέρας (péras, "end, limit"). so, "with no limit; with no end"

I am the broken record when I emphasize when translators use "world" for Greek kosmos or Latin mundus (a calque of Ancient Greek κόσμος), we need to see that not as talking about Earth or Mars or [any of the 5,972 confirmed exoplanets discovered by NASA](#). The conception of

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the **cosmos** that Epicurus was working under was the sphere containing Earth at its center with the fixed and wandering stars (what we call "planets" now) circling around it. Epicurus is positing an unlimited number of world-systems like the one we inhabit. You would have to travel through the metakosmos "the between-world-systems" (more familiar as the Latin translation intermundia "between the mundī) to get to another cosmos.