

# Discussion of Article: "Political Division In The Promotion of Epicurean Philosophy: A Prescription For Disaster"

Post by "Cassius" of September 29, 2019 at 7:42 PM

I just remembered another text that bears on this topic, from the famous opening of Lucretius' Book One.

Note that Lucretius is calling on Venus, the goddess of Pleasure, for aid in restoring peace to his country during troubled times, and that he is ALSO, at the same time, saying that Memmius, his intended target to convert to Epicurean philosophy, will NOT DESERT THE STATE in its time of trouble.

Lucretius joins his call to the philosophy of pleasure with a call to **\*\*action\*\***, but he does not presume to tell Memmius **\*how\*** to come to the aid of the state.

And someone correct me if I am wrong, but this would have been written during the period of the Civil War, so it would not have been a matter of presuming that Memmius would fight against a foreign enemy. It would have been a matter of hot dispute as to which side of the Civil War on which Memmius would fight, and Lucretius does not tell him which side to choose.

10 Book 1, ll. 27-30  
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helper in writing these verses, which I essay to trace on the nature of things for the son of the Memmii, my friend, whom thou, goddess, through all his life hast willed to be bright with every grace beyond his fellows. Therefore the more, goddess, grant a lasting loveliness to my words. Bring it to pass that meantime the wild works of warfare may be lulled to sleep over all seas and lands. For thou only canst bless mortal men with quiet peace, since 'tis Mavors, the lord of hosts, who guides the wild works of war, and he upon thy lap oft flings himself back, conquered by the eternal wound of love; and then pillow-ing his shapely neck upon thee and looking up he feeds with love his greedy eyes, gazing wistfully towards thee, while, as he lies back, his breath hangs upon thy lips. Do thou, goddess, as he leans resting on thy sacred limbs, bend to embrace him and pour forth sweet petition from thy lips, seeking, great lady, gentle peace for the Romans. For neither can we in our country's time of trouble<sup>n</sup> set to our task with mind undistressed, nor amid such doings can Memmius's noble son<sup>n</sup> fail the fortunes of the state.