

Names of Bits of Reality

Post by “Eikadistes” of May 8, 2025 at 12:12 PM

I recently made a discovery I wanted to share:

The Hegemon never really refers to particles as the noun “atoms” or “uncuttables”. He only ever uses a form of word *átomos* as an adjective. As many times as he refers to “uncuttable” parts, he equally refers to them as “countless”, “microscopic”, and “primordial”. Just as easily as we have adopted the term “atom”, we could just as easily say “mikron”, “ametabolon”, or “apeiron”. Still, two words from this Epicurean vocabulary survived history and contribute to contemporary jargon; those two words are “proton” and “lepton”. Otherwise, Epíkouros properly refers to these bits of matter as σπερμά (*spermá*, “seeds”), ἀρχαί (*ārkháí*, “beginnings”), σώματα (*sómata*, simple “bodies”), ὄγκοι (*ónkoi*, “hooks”), τομαί (*tomaí*, “splinters”), λεπτομερής (*leptomerés*, “fine parts”), λεπτοί (*leptoí*, “cents”), μόρια (*mória*, “motes”), and, most frequently, as μέρη (*mérē*) meaning “parts” or “particles”.

Those are my translations of them, anyway. *Lepton* is particularly cool, because is it used when referring to particles of the soul, and lepton is also a small unit of Greek currency, so it lends itself to the phrase “cents of consciousness.” ❤️ (... get it?) 😊

Post by “Bryan” of May 8, 2025 at 1:04 PM

[Quote from Eikadistes](#)

ὄγκοι (ónkoi, “hooks”),

Although that exists, Epíkouros mostly uses:

["ὄγκος \(B\), ὄ, bulk, size, mass of a body"](#)

ὁ ὄγκος is really his main word for “particle.”

I fully agree with your point, even using this example I could see us being “oncologists” instead of “atomists” (*but that word was taken for other uses*).

Post by “Eikadistes” of May 8, 2025 at 1:21 PM

For sure, I just shared the nominative, plural for the sake of consistency.

Post by “Bryan” of May 8, 2025 at 1:28 PM

Oh, I was just pointing to the (1) specific meaning "hooked" vs. (2) merely meaning "bulk." I know he usually uses "bulk," but I am not sure if he uses "hooked."

Post by “Eikadistes” of May 8, 2025 at 1:31 PM

And, actually, just to piggy-back off of that, it has become a lot more clear to me why Lucretius chose the words he did (or coined them). He took the Hegemon's concepts and transposed them:

CORPORA — “first bodies” (Munro)

CORPORA MATERIALI — “elements of matter” (Munro)

CORPORA PRIMA — “first bodies” (Munro)

CORPORIBUS PRIMIS — “first bodies” (Munro)

CORPORIS — “first body” (Munro)

CORPVSCVLA MATERIALI — “the minute bodies of matter” (Munro)

ELEMENTA — “elements” (Munro)

ELEMENTAQUE PRIMA — “prime elements” (Munro)

ELEMENTIS — “elements” (Munro)

EXORDIA — “beginnings” (Munro)

EXORDIA PRIMA — “first-beginnings” (Munro)

EXORDIA RERVM — “beginnings of things” (Munro)

FIGVRAS — “elements” (Munro)

GENITALIA CORPORA — “begetting bodies” (Munro)

GENITALIA CORPORA REBVS — “begetting bodies of things” (Munro)

MATERIALI CORPORA — “bodies of matter” (Munro)

MATERIALI CORPORIBVS — “bodies of matter” (Munro)

MATERIEM RERVM — “matter of things” (Munro)

MATERIES AETERNA — “matter everlasting” (Munro)

MINVTIS PERQVAM CORPORIBVS — “exceedingly minute bodies” (Munro)

PRIMAS PARTIS — “primal parts” (Munro)

PRIMASQVE FIGVRAS — “primary elements” (Munro)

PRIMORDIA — “first-beginnings” (Munro)

PRIMORDIA CORPORE — “first elements” (Munro)

PRIMORDIA PRINCIPIORVM — “basic elements” (Humphries)

PRIMORDIA RERVM — “first beginnings of things” (Munro)

PRIMORDIAQVE — “firstlings” (Humphries)

PRIMORVM — “first things” (Munro)

PRINCIPIIS — “primary particles” (Smith)

PRINCIPIIS RERVM — “primary elements of things” (Smith)

PRINCIPIORVM — “primary elements” (Smith)

PRINCIPIORVM CORPORIBVS — “primary particles” (Melville)

PRINCIPIORVM CORPORIS ATQVE ANIMI — “the elements of the body and spirit” (Smith)

SEMINA — “seeds” (Munro)

SEMINA REBVS — “seeds of things” (Munro)

SEMINA RERVM — “seeds of things” (Munro)

SEMINAQVE — “seeds” (Smith)

SEMINE — “seed” (Munro)

SEMINIBVS — “seeds” (Munro)

SEMINIS — “seeds” (Munro)