

Where Is Epicurus In The "School of Athens"?

Post by "Cassius" of May 18, 2021 at 8:55 AM

[Quote from JJElbert](#)

a significant work by an important figure was hidden away in perfect secrecy.

I grant you that it is a poor idea to impute efficiency to the core church leadership. However I don't hesitate for a moment to impute power-lust and corruption to them, so there's that aspect as well. And I am not sure that our alternatives are mutually incompatible - they apparently wrote over lots of early manuscripts and there could be some combination of issues - obviously Lucretius did escape their worst efforts, and apparently the works of Cicero and Diogenes Laertius were too widespread to be eliminated entirely.

The main part of this aspect that concerns me is that in my view I see over and over examples of where individual "rebels" get stamped out by the central orthodoxy, and the lesson I take from that is that no countervailing force can hope to succeed for long unless it too "organizes" so as to perpetuate itself. As brilliant as Epicurus was, his works barely survived, and then likely only because they penetrated the culture so far initially that the views were picked up by others elsewhere and perpetuated.

I'm no Nietzsche expert but my understanding is that a similar observation (that nature does not provide that the "strong" always survive over the "weak" who have superior numbers) was behind much of Nietzsche's critique of some of Darwin's views. Regardless of that, I don't think we should underestimate what Epicureans in history have always been up against, and I don't at all think that those forces of opposition are gone. In fact, I see them again, at present, gathering strength for another offensive.