Article on Connections between Leonardo Da Vinci and Lucretius / Epicurus

Post by “Cassius” of May 20, 2021 at 2:12 PM

I have just skimmed the article. Doesn't sound like there are many connections, but the article seems well worth reading.

https://www.academia.edu/1004978/Leonar...work_card=title

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LEONARDO AND LUCRETIUS*

E se che 'il pensiero parla de' cieli, agli e le astrologie e filosofie e teologie fondando della cosa di natura e di dio.
Leonardo, *Quaderni di anatomia*, fol. 19v

Context and Text

The study and identification of the sources used by Leonardo da Vinci has always posed a difficult problem. The rare and tantalizingly vague references by the artist to the works he had read, his highly original style, and the complex relationship between the written word and its graphic representation in his secrets presented scholars beginning in the second half of the 19th century to construct an image of Leonardo as the self-taught universal genius. This historiographic approach (which in Italy had distinct nationalist connotations) was challenged at the beginning of the twentieth century by Pierre Duhem who, in *Etudes sur Leonard de Vinci*,[1] suggested that medieval authors may have provided the source for theories and notions that had up to then been considered the fruit of the artist's prescient genius. In addition to its philological contribution, the *Etudes* profoundly influenced subsequent studies on Leonardo's sources, leading to a divergence between scholars who, like Duhem, believed in the composite nature of the artist's formation and others who maintained that in his studies of natural history Leonardo relied primarily on his own creative genius.

To this dilemma must be added another. By insisting on the importance of

* In the majority of cases, my citations from the works of Leonardo have been drawn from the Ar ziende editions published by Giunti Editore. Where I have not been able to identify the original source, I have cited either the anthology compiled by Richter, The Literary Works of Leonardo da Vinci, compiled and edited from the original manuscripts by J. P. Richter, commentary by C. Pedretti, 2 vols. (Oxford 1977), hereafter cited as Richter and followed by the volume and paragraph number, or the anthology by Solmi (*Leonardo da Vinci, Frammenti letterari e filosofici*, a cura di E. Solmi, Firenze 1979). For the citation of Lucretius, unless otherwise indicated, I have used The Lucretius Cycle (6 vols. series (five are edited) with Prolegomena, critical Apparatus, translation, and commentary by C. Bailey, 3 vols., Oxford 1947. I would like to thank Andrea Bernardoni, Stefano Casati, Francesco Cesio, Paolo Galluzzi, Ivan Gentile, Domenico Laurenza, Daniela Mapesa and Carlo Pedretti for their invaluable suggestions.

[1] P. Duhem, *Etudes sur Léonard de Vinci: ceux qu'il a lus et ceux qui l'ont lu*, 3 vols, Ha