

Happy 20th & Father's Day

Post by “Cassius” of June 20, 2021 at 9:18 AM

Great find, thank you!

VENUS OR THE MUSE AS “ALLY”
(LUCR. 1.24, SIMON, FRAG. ELEG. 11.20-22 W)

At *De Rerum Natura* 1.24 Lucretius says that he is eager for Venus to be his “ally” in the composition of his poem: *at studeo sociam scribendis versibus esse*. The word *socia* here has drawn little notice from commentators, but a recent suggestion by M. R. Gale and the publication of a papyrus containing portions of a poem by Simonides on the Battle of Plataea enable us to understand much more of the considerable resonance of this line in its context in Lucretius’ poem. Scholars working on the new Simonides poem should also take note of the Lucretian borrowing.

Gale, in a book based on a dissertation written before the Simonides papyrus was published, notes that the word Lucretius applies to Venus’ desired role here, *socia*, “ally,” would translate into Greek as *ἑταίρος*,³ and of course it will soon be apparent that the philosopher Epicurus or *Ἐπίκουρος* is the guiding spirit of the poem to a greater extent than is Venus. The resulting association of Epicurus with a deity, for anyone who notices the bilingual pun, is consistent with and to some extent foreshadows the language later in the poem that more explicitly claims a kind of divine