

The End of the De Rerum Natura

Post by "Cassius" of August 9, 2018 at 7:41 AM

That's a great question that I am far from resolving to my own satisfaction.

Both the way it ends as the end of the chapter, and as the end of the book, seems questionable, but not so stark that the issue is clear. I'd have to go back and compare the details of the way the first five chapters close, but the way the details of the plague of Athens are recited without quite as much commentary seems to me to indicated it might have been intended to have a special impact fitting for the end.

On the other hand there seem to be references sprinkled in the poem to more discussion of the gods to come, which never seems to appear.

So at the moment I personally tend to think that while the chapter ends well enough as a chapter (in comparison with the way the other chapters end), I'm not convinced that Lucretius planned it to be the end of the book as a whole.

I too would be very interested in the reactions of others.