

Episode One Hundred Twenty-Four - Letter to Herodotus 13 - Life On Other Worlds, Development of Language, And the Regular Motion of the Stars

Post by "Cassius" of May 29, 2022 at 11:04 AM

From our discussion:

An earlier post about Lucian's "Death of Peregrine"

Thread

[Lucian: The Death of Peregrine - Epicurean Commentary on Christianity](#)

Aside from the famous "What will this babbler say?" in regard to Paul of Tarsus, which was said by an Epicurean or possibly a Stoic, there are few if any texts representing the views of an ancient Epicurean on the early Christians. The only example other than Acts 17:18 which known to me is the commentary of Lucian (who was Epicurean either in reality or in spirit) in his "Death of Peregrine":

"It was now that he came across the priests and scribes of the Christians, in Palestine, and picked...



Cassius

March 28, 2019 at 3:37 PM

Full text: <https://www.sacred-texts.com/cla/luc/wl4/wl420.htm>

The fun part (best to read the full essay to get the full context, but this is the most salient commentary on the early Christians:

Quote

It was now that he came across the priests and scribes of the 11 Christians, in Palestine, and picked up their queer creed. I can tell you, he pretty soon convinced them of his superiority; prophet, elder, ruler of the Synagogue--he was everything at once; expounded their books, commented on them, wrote books himself. They took him for a God, accepted his laws, and declared him their president. The Christians, you know, worship a *man* to this day,--the distinguished personage who introduced their novel rites, and was crucified on that account. Well, the end of it was that Proteus was arrested and thrown¹² into prison. This was the very thing to lend an air to his

favourite arts of clap-trap and wonder-working; he was now a made man. The Christians took it all very seriously: he was no sooner in prison, than they began trying every means to get him out again,--but without success. Everything else that could be done for him they most devoutly did. They thought of nothing else. Orphans and ancient widows might be seen hanging about the prison from break of day. Their officials bribed the gaolers to let them sleep inside with him. Elegant dinners were conveyed in; their sacred writings were read; and our old friend Peregrine (as he was still called in those days) became for them "the modern Socrates." In some of the Asiatic 13 cities, too, the Christian communities put themselves to the expense of sending deputations, with offers of sympathy, assistance, and legal advice. The activity of these people, in dealing with any matter that affects their community, is something extraordinary; they spare no trouble, no expense. Peregrine, all this time, was making quite an income on the strength of his bondage; money came pouring in. You see, these misguided creatures start with the general conviction that they are immortal for all time, which explains the contempt of death and voluntary self-devotion which are so common among them; and then it was impressed on them by their original lawgiver that they are all brothers, from the moment that they are converted, and deny the gods of Greece, and worship the crucified sage, and live after his laws. All this they take quite on trust, with the result that they despise all worldly goods alike, regarding them merely as common property. Now an adroit, unscrupulous fellow, who has seen the world, has only to get among these simple souls, and his fortune is pretty soon made; he plays with them.

As I noted during the podcast, seems I have read commentators to say that this might be the earliest - and maybe only - example of an ancient Epicurean (if we consider Lucian to be one) commenting on Christianity.