

Welcome Beasain!

Post by “beasain” of June 5, 2022 at 6:20 PM

Salve Cassius!

I was browsing through all the material and it is like a gold mine. Thanks to everybody for their contributions. It is pure pleasure discovering all this!

Let's introduce myself. I am from Spain and was the worst student in Latin, although I adored ancient philosophy. I studied geology and specialized in geochemistry. A friend of mine who is a teacher of Latin and Greek, and Epicurist draw my attention some years ago on the *De Rerum Natura*, and when reading it I was so amazed that somebody in the first century B.C. was able to describe Brownian motion of dust in a sun beam with the exact explanation, as in the beginning of the 20th century was used by Einstein to definitively demonstrate the existence of atoms (and to approximatively calculate their radius).

The perfect explanation of smell, the way eyes works (although not with atoms but photons as elementary particles), and a few other things. But also the ethics seemed to me so modern, more or less the values that were taught to me by my liberal parents. I started quite intensely digging deeper and discovered that this was one of the principle Roman influences since the Renaissance. How is it possible that nobody told me about Lucretius - Epicurus at school, or at university?

In my 101 course of philosophy at the university it was the first half hour some name dropping of Pre-socratics, then Socrates-Plato-Aristotle-Augustinus and a lot of Descartes (never enjoyed him), Kant (I was not bright enough to get it), Hegel (how boring), some utilitarists etc., Nietzsche (I liked him, and discover now his texts on epicurism), some Marx (nobody told us about the PhD of Marx on Epicurus), a bit about Kierkegaard and some other melancholic continental philosopher, the enigmatic Heidegger (very important!), some existentialism. And still... if you open a one volume of the history of philosophy, it is remarkable that there are no women (Simonne De Beauvoir maybe) and no or almost nothing reasonable about Hellenism (and in each case almost nothing about Epicurism). I remember the remark of the professor that philosophy is basically the footnote to the work of Plato. This is the way you introduce young people to philosophy? it seems to me a kind of indoctrination, just the opposite of learn to think. What are the reasons of hiding Hellenistic philosophy, and especially Epicurism? The Plato mafia of Hegel? 😊

If even Erasmus Darwin, the grandfather of Charles Darwin, wrote a poem on Lucretius, and Lucretius makes some useful suggestions on evolution of better formed organisms, would it be too daring to think that there was some transmission here too? (I researched this a bit and nobody has demonstrated this yet, but it is far from unthinkable in my dilettante opinion).

But I come here especially to seriously learn and understand, and I fully support the claim to give publicity to an 'orthodox' epicurism, although I guess that there is no THE correct interpretation, and that this is an ongoing investigation, no?

I found Epicurean Friends through San Google (as we call it in Spain).

I have also a question. Maybe it is not exactly on its place here, but you will tell me where it would be more appropriate, I hope.

¿Is there somebody that has an opinion on the book of the French philosopher Pierre Vesperini "Lucrece : archéologie d'un classique européen?" For those who understand French there is a quite interesting interview here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gXqcu3BAAY>
Basically, he defends, based on a serious investigation (his PhD work) that Lucretius was in fact like Virgil a extremely talented professional poet that wrote on demand, as a supposed client of Gaius Memmius, (apparently a kind of corrupt senator - who was not at that time? - and according to a letter of Cicero the owner of the house of Epicurus in Athens, which he even wanted to destroy to build a new house for himself). The thesis of Pierre Vesperini, after closely investigating all the available evidence, and he discovered a lot of unknown evidences, is that Lucretius would be just a professional poet without links with Epicurism, which of course sounds as blasphemy to most of us. In each case the book is a treasure for new information about the circumstances and the early reception of this wonderful poem. (I have the impression that Vesperini excludes the thesis that Lucretius operated as a client and a professional poet, but indeed was passionate about epicurism and an expert too).