

"Lucretius on the Size of the Sun", by T.H.M. Gellar-Goad

Post by "beasain" of June 11, 2022 at 5:24 PM

Cassius 😊

I was in fact referring only to the case of astronomy. As far as I perceive Epicureans were not that that much interested in astronomy, maybe because it was very speculative, and that was a wise position, because there was very little that could be known about the nature of stars and planets without a telescope, etc.. Of course there were astronomical calculations of positions but they don't make us any wiser about celestial materials. The Epicureans don't seem to be very interested in calculations of celestial positions neither. I understand that for Epicurus the Earth was a flat disc and the centre of this cosmos, one amidst an infinite number of others. When we dig a bit in the Letter to Pithocles, we observe that Epicurus stresses that for the things above us we "

admit of more than one cause of coming into being and more than one account of their nature which harmonizes with our sensations."

In the letter indeed appears for each phenomena multiple explanations, that seems not very precise, and the main objective seems to be the demonstration that we can imagine for each phenomena numerous physical explanations that don't need any mythological input, and thus also the things above us follow 'normal earthly physics'. I hope to have explained myself better now.

[Quote from Letter to Pithocles](#)

[85]...

First of all then we must not suppose that any other object is to be gained from the knowledge of the phenomena of the sky, whether they are dealt with in connection with other doctrines or independently, than peace of mind and a sure confidence, just as in all other branches of study.

[86] We must not try to force an impossible explanation, nor employ a method of inquiry like our reasoning either about the modes of life or with respect to the solution of other physical problems: witness such propositions as that 'the universe consists of bodies and the intangible,' or that 'the elements are indivisible,' and all such statements in circumstances where there is only one explanation which harmonizes with phenomena. **For this is not so with the things above us: they admit of more than one cause of coming into being and more than one account of their**

nature which harmonizes with our sensations.