

Did Epicurus really oversell the power of science to diminish anxiety?

Post by “Little Rocker” of February 15, 2023 at 12:31 PM

Now that you mention it, I think that Epicurus might move if given the option (didn't Philodemus get kicked out of somewhere for impiety?), but I wonder what he would do if his only options were to recant or die.

Yeah, Socrates claims that he can't expect anyone else to tolerate his company if his own fellow citizens won't, so he refuses to propose exile as his penalty. He also claims that it would be cowardly and hypocritical after he says he would rather die than give up philosophy to give up philosophy to avoid death. He would be a laughingstock. It reminds me a bit of that part in Lucretius where he talks about how lots of people say that plenty of things are worse than death, then they willingly choose those things rather than die. Lucretius is like, 'and yet they live.'

The question about Socrates and the afterlife is super interesting because in Plato's Apology, he considers it equally likely that there could be no afterlife. I think Xenophon's Socrates never says anything about the afterlife. So the Socrates who cares about the afterlife could be colored through Plato's own Pythagorean commitments.