

Fact-checking DeWitt's "St. Paul and Epicurus"

Post by "Cassius" of October 7, 2023 at 10:28 PM

Plus, other than the statement of Cicero about Epicurean philosophy taking Italy by storm in 50BC, I am not aware of much discussion at all about how popular Epicurean philosophy was in the Hellenized world by 50 AD. How much of the population of Greece ever was a blend of something that could be considered Epicurean? When Paul was complaining in general about the non-Christians, I have no idea how many in fact might have been Epicureans for these allusions DeWitt is drawing to be likely. Were the Epicureans always a small sect, or is it possible that in the relevant areas that we are talking about Epicurean views had in fact penetrated strongly. I am not sure I have read anything which even tried to project that. Is it possible that the Epicureans attained a level of popularity that no one today really suspects or admits? Is it possible that they far outnumbered the Stoics? I have no clue.

We have a tendency to think that Epicurean popularity somehow nosedived after Lucretius, but is it possible that that is not in fact the case and that it continued to be extremely popular, or perhaps even a majority, until the Christians took over?