

Welcome Ontologix!

Post by "Cassius" of September 3, 2025 at 8:53 AM

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I took the liberty of pasting here your response to my post 6 above (which you wrote on my wall). Unfortunately the forum software does not do a good job of searching walls when someone is looking for something, and I want your very interesting post to be findable. Thanks for the reply!

Quote from Ontologix on Cassius' Wall

Yes, my first language is German. No, I do not have a favourite English translation of Lucretius. I read Lucretius either in German or in the Latin original which is not als difficult to read as e.g. Livius or Tacitus.

There are two translations of Lucretius into German. Both are by a publisher called Reclam, one in West Germany and the other in former East Germany.

I do not like the older West German translation. The title "Die Welt aus Atomen" (The World Made of Atoms") is misleading because Epicure was an atomist but not only an atomist, by far not. Also the translation is not so easy to read stylistically.

The East German translation in the Aufbau-Verlag is much more readable and also the title is much more appropriate "Vom Wesen des Weltalls" (On the Nature of the Universe) This is suprising since Latin was practically not taught in East German secondary schools.

Epicure was a favourite with East German ideologues since he was rightly seen by Marxists as one of the precursors of Marx whose doctoral thesis was on The Difference Between the Democritean and Epicurean Philosophy of Nature.

After the fall of the Berlin wall everything East German was sold off at ridiculously low prices and I bought a heap of their Lucretius edition and gave them to my students.

So, I am afraid, I do not know any English translations of Lucretius.

What I may add is my gratitude to Cicero whom we owe the edition of Lucretius' poem although Cicero, a devotee to the Academy, was anything but a follower of Epicure. Materialist thinking was definitely not Cicero's cup of tea. Without Cicero's edition however Lucretius' whole poem might have been lost.

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