

Was Lucretius More "Anti-Religious" Than Epicurus Himself?

Post by "Cassius" of December 11, 2025 at 5:48 PM

Quote

It seems Epicurus himself would have done these and encouraged his school to do so. I'm certain Epicurus ascribed different motivations for bowing, sacrificing, etc than would the hoi polloi but he seems to have taken part in all that.

I'd like to see this part of the conversation be very clear. I suppose that it is possible but I am not convinced that it would make sense to tag Lucretius as being significantly different from Epicurus on this. I'd say it is very possible that they are both saying the same thing, that it is ok to engage in religious-associated practices so long as you don't take seriously in your mind what some are saying about those practices. In other words it's perfectly fine to talk about Venus and Mars and Neptune and Ceres as long as you don't take seriously the idea that those are truly supernatural gods who will respond to your prayers and intervene in human actions.

[Quote from DaveT](#)

So, clarify for me, please. Am I correct that neither author above was a true fan of Epicurus? If yes, then Lucretius is more correct? Or is Lucretius off base attributing to Epicurus, and imploring the reader toward either agnosticism or atheism?

There are a lot of ways to read Dave's question and we probably need to be very clear if someone is inferring that Lucretius' antipathy toward false religion is stronger than that of Epicurus. I see a lot of danger in that direction and very little reason to emphasize it without very strong evidence on which to do so. As far as I know we don't have a lot of specific information at all on Epicurus endorsing any specific mystical practices, and a lot of evidence that he opposed the mystical basis that was being used to justify them.