

Sunday February 14, 2026 - Zoom Meeting - Lucretius Book Review - Starting Book One Line 159

Post by “Joshua” of February 15, 2026 at 3:17 PM

Quote

Those two Joshua along with the material on Archimedes we need to come back to next week on the podcast

From the same work of Plutarch linked above:

Quote

And yet Archimedes possessed such a lofty spirit, so profound a soul, and such a wealth of scientific theory, that although his inventions had won for him a name and fame for superhuman sagacity, he would not consent to leave behind him any treatise on this subject, but regarding the work of an engineer and every art that ministers to the needs of life as ignoble and vulgar, he devoted his earnest efforts only to those studies the subtlety and charm of which are not affected by the claims of necessity. These studies, he thought, are not to be compared with any others; in them the subject matter vies with the demonstration, the former supplying grandeur and beauty, the latter precision and surpassing power. For it is not possible to find in geometry more profound and difficult questions treated in simpler and purer terms. Some attribute this success to his natural endowments; others think it due to excessive labour that everything he did seemed to have been performed without labour and with ease. For no one could by his own efforts discover the proof, and yet as soon as he learns it from him, he thinks he might have discovered it himself; so smooth and rapid is the path by which he leads one to the desired conclusion. 6 And therefore we may not disbelieve the stories told about him, how, under the lasting charm of some familiar and domestic Siren, he forgot even his food and neglected the care of his person; and how, when he was dragged by main force, as he often was, to the place for bathing and anointing his body, he would trace geometrical figures in the ashes, and draw lines with his finger in the oil with which his body was anointed, being possessed by a great delight, and in very truth a captive of the Muses. And although he made many excellent discoveries, he is said to have asked his kinsmen and friends to place over the grave where he should be buried a cylinder enclosing a sphere, with an inscription giving the proportion by which the containing solid exceeds the contained.