

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

Post by “Joshua” of February 17, 2026 at 2:21 AM

Quote

How familiar do you think More might have been with Epicurus?

Thomas More (1478-1535) published *Utopia* in 1516; for reference, here are some of the relevant texts from antiquity by first Latin translation, first Latin printing, and the first Aldine press edition of the Greek text:

Text	Earliest Latin Translation	First Latin Printing	First Aldine Press Edition (Greek Text)
Diogenes Laertius, <i>Lives</i>	c.1430		1472 1497
Cicero, <i>De Finibus</i>	N/A		1471
Cicero, <i>De Natura Deo</i>	N/A		1471
Lucretius, <i>DRN</i>	N/A (rediscovered 1417)		1473
Lucian, <i>Luciani Opusculi</i>	see note	see note	1503

Note: A collection of works by Lucian referred to as the *Luciani Opusculi* were translated collaboratively by Thomas More and Desiderius Erasmus between 1505-1506

No matter to what humanists he may be indebted, More uses certain classical sources in common with them. He shows familiarity with such standard treatises on statecraft as those by Isocrates, Xenophon, Aristotle, and Dio Chrysostom; but the most evident influences are Plato, in both the *Republic* and the *Laws*, and Plutarch, particularly in the life of Lycurgus of Sparta. Nor should one overlook the content and style of the *Germania* of Tacitus. For ethical and philosophical doctrines, particularly Stoicism and Epicureanism, the main sources are Diogenes Laertius, Cicero, and Seneca. The tone of

ia commenting on More's sources;

So to answer your question, he appears to have been quite familiar with the standard texts on Epicureanism!