

Sunday March 22, 2026 - Zoom Meeting - Lucretius Book Review - Starting Book One Line 265

Post by “Patrikios” of March 25, 2026 at 1:28 PM

[Quote from Cassius](#)

These week we will continue around section 1:265 of Lucretius and explore further the implications of the invisibility of atoms and **how we can have confidence in something that is not visible.**

[Cassius](#)

As we discussed today, there is a recent 2026 publication that deals with concepts, including anticipatory concepts; e.g. preconceptions (prolēpseis).

Quote

[Concepts in Epicurean and Stoic Philosophy](#)

Gábor Betegh and Voula Tsouna [2026]

Abstract:

Both of the main Hellenistic philosophical schools, the Epicureans and the Stoics, can be said to have an explicit theory of concepts. Their respective approaches can be characterized as empiricist. This characterization is, we believe, broadly correct, but requires analysis and clarification, for there are different ways in which one can be an empiricist about concepts. Ancient empiricists share at least the view that all concepts originate in experience and that there are no concepts that one is endowed with at birth. What complicates things in Hellenistic philosophy is that the Stoic and Epicurean accounts of concepts appear very similar but belong to different and in some ways opposite philosophical outlooks. They use overlapping terminology, but it is never clear whether they mean the same things by the same terms. **The Epicureans develop their views about the formation, nature and use of conceptions and concepts in the context of atomist physics a mechanistic world-view,** while the Stoics elaborate their theory within a framework in which physical corporealism is combined with a belief in divine providence and an all-pervading logos. We should bear in mind these widely diverging worldviews, for they will inform crucial aspects of our discussion.

As Epicurus taught, to know what is real or true, we must return to the "**Tripod of Truth**"—the senses, the feelings, and the preconceptions (*prolēpsis*). For things that are hidden, like the atoms or the void, we reason by analogy. We know they are **real** because their existence is required to explain what we can see, such as motion. This paper goes into depth on the Epicurean theory of concepts and preconceptions; and compares them with the Stoic views.