

Bryan Harris Interlinear Translation Of Lucretius

Post by "Kalosyni" of May 25, 2026 at 9:14 AM

Here is a conversation moved over from private discussion of translation work:

Raphael Raul said:

Bryan, as I mentioned at today's Epicurean Friends meeting, the translation reads very smoothly in English.

It does not have that structural stiffness that older translations do... Also, your color coding and placing the translation below the Latin, so both are visible together, allows the reader to see your choices clearly... excellent work!... Bravo!

Bryan said:

Quote from TauPhi

start learning Latin

Gratias tibi ago, TauPhi-- I really appreciate that!! I have greatly benefited from your encouragement over the years.

Quote from Raphael Raul

does not have that structural stiffness

Thank you, Raphael Raul-- it is a balance. I have also tried, where possible, to use English words that are etymologically related to the Latin. Sometimes, this requires using less common English words...

For example:

"*ómnis énim Cólör omnínō mūtātur ín ómnīs*"

...for every Color is altogether changed into every [color]

However, given Lucretius uses "*mūtātur*," the word "mutated" is a direct descendant:

...for every Color is altogether mutated into every [color]

Even though "mutated" carries some baggage in English, it pairs better with the Latin, and is technically not incorrect as "mutated" just means "undergoing alteration or change." There are many such cases!

Occasionally, I feel as though I have no choice but to use an uncommon word... I am not too happy that the first word of the entire work is "Ancestress."

Most translators just use "mother" -- but Lucretius consistently uses a different word that means mother, and "Génetrīx" clearly means "a female ancestor from whom a person is descended"

Don said:

Bryan Fantastic work! Very impressive.

Bryan said:

Quote from Don

work

Thank you, Don. As you know, the text of *De Rerum Natura* is very stable compared to our Greek sources. There are only a few locations where the two main manuscripts leave us with lacunas. We are on solid ground here... [] ...in contrast to the P.Hercs., which leave us drowning in a pool of papyrus dust.

This is my cheeky but sincere apology for what comes next: a standalone *On Nature*, *Περὶ Φύσεως ΑΖ*.

Don said:

Quote from Bryan

in contrast to the P.Hercs., which leave us drowning in a pool of papyrus dust.

Well put. That's a bit of nice wordsmithing there On a serious note, I remain excited about the opportunity and potential of the "read without unrolling" technology. I just hope whatever comes out of that is made publicly available.