

Epigrams on Atomism

Post by "Joshua" of December 10, 2020 at 9:33 PM

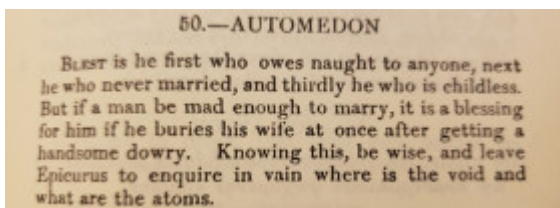
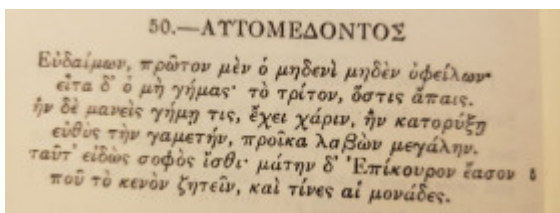
Book XI - Convivial and Satirical Epigrams

No. 50 - Automedon

Quote

"Blest is he first who owes naught to anyone, next he who never married, and thirdly he who is childless. But if a man be mad enough to marry, it is a blessing for him if he buries his wife at once after getting a handsome dowry. Knowing this, be wise, and leave Epicurus to enquire in vain where is the void and what are the atoms."

Translated W. R. Paton



Post by "Joshua" of December 10, 2020 at 9:40 PM

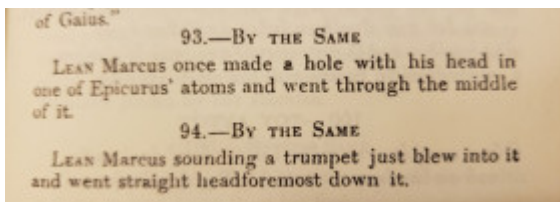
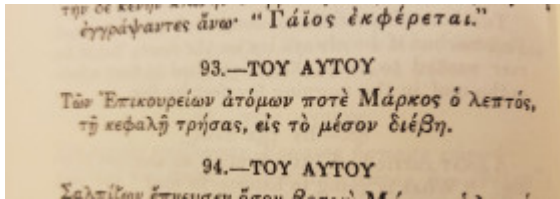
Book XI - Convivial and Satirical Epigrams

No. 93 - Lucilius

Quote

"Lean Marcus once made a hole with his head in one of Epicurus' atoms and went through the middle of it."

Translated W. R. Paton



Post by "Joshua" of December 10, 2020 at 9:48 PM

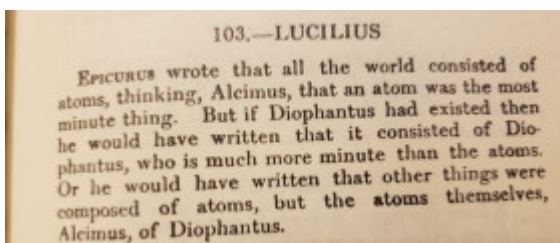
Book XI - Convivial and Satirical Epigrams

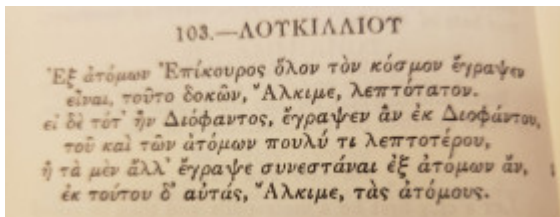
No. 103 - Lucilius

Quote

Epicurus wrote that all the world consisted of atoms, thinking, Alcimus, that an atom was the most minute thing. But if Diophantus had existed then he would have written that it consisted of Diophantus, who is much more minute than the atoms. Or he would have written that other things were composed of atoms, but the atoms themselves, Alcimus, of Diophantus.

Translated W. R. Paton





Post by “Joshua” of December 10, 2020 at 9:59 PM

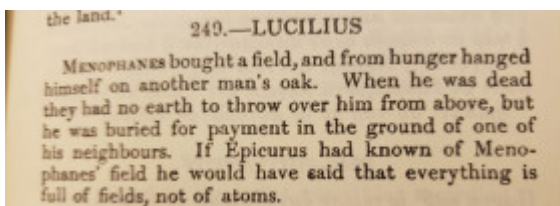
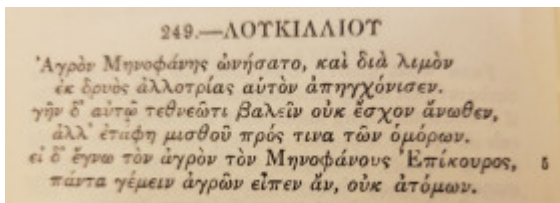
Book XI - Convivial and Satirical Epigrams

No. 249 - Lucilius

Quote

"Menophanes bought a field, and from hunger hanged himself on another man's oak. When he was dead they had no earth to throw over him from above, but he was buried for payment in the ground of one of his neighbors. If Epicurus had known of Menophanes' field he would have said that everything is full of fields, not of atoms."

Translated W. R. Paton



Post by “Cassius” of December 10, 2020 at 11:15 PM

Those are wild but I am not sure at all to make out of Book 10 number 249

Post by “Joshua” of December 10, 2020 at 11:30 PM

Apart from being merely ironic and satirical, I can think of one fact in connection with Menophanes' proverbially tiny field. The Ancient Greeks did not use primogeniture where the eldest son is awarded the estate. Instead they divided the land among all of the heirs. As the generations went by, each parcel was subdivided again and again with every successive death in the family, until they became so small as to be entirely unusable. The Greek solution to this problem was to pack a bunch of smallholders onto a ship and send them off to start a colony on empty land somewhere.

This was, in fact, the fate of Neocles and his family. Neocles was born in Gargettos seven miles outside of Athens, but was sent to the island of Samos where a colony was founded.

But I wouldn't read too much into any of these! Lucilius has dozens like these two, where he satirizes people's stature and appearance.

Post by “Don” of December 11, 2020 at 10:52 AM

[Quote from JJElbert](#)

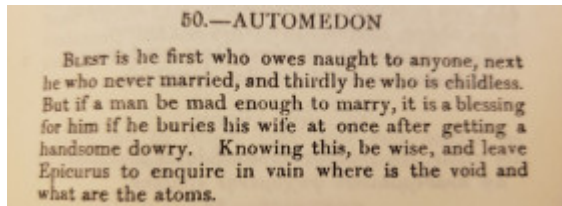
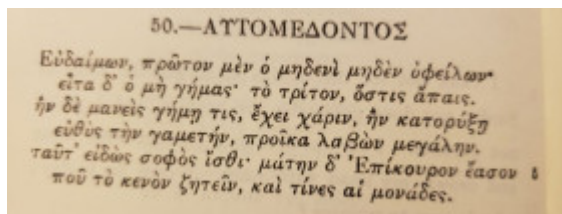
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While I don't endorse the overall sentiment in any way (for the record), I find it interesting that "blest" is used to translate the first word *Ευδαίμων* *Eudaimōn* (i.e., *Eudaimonia*).

Post by "Joshua" of December 11, 2020 at 1:00 PM

Quote

While I don't endorse the overall sentiment in any way

Ha! Certainly not. A lot of these epigrammatists were very sour. I'll start posting *Palladas* next week. He has a few good ones but most of his are even worse than this.

Post by "Joshua" of December 11, 2020 at 1:31 PM

Also for the record, by the words "enquire in vain" I'm inferring that *Automedon* was being dismissive of *Epicurus* and his philosophy.

Post by "Cassius" of December 11, 2020 at 4:22 PM

Yes it seems like the majority of these are anti Epicurean but that does not mean they aren't valuable. Maybe we need a warning in the first post or the thread