

Les Epicuriens (2010)

Post by “Don” of February 4, 2022 at 11:51 AM

I was able to get the French book *Les Epicuriens* through interlibrary loan. It looks to be a treasure trove including Arrighetti's work on the Herculaneum Papyri of Epicurus's On Nature volumes!!! I've also just discovered that I can use my phone to translate the French into English.... Page by page. It's a laborious process to translate on my phone then copy and paste each page on my phone to a Google doc on my phone. But it works!!

There's material here that isn't readily available anywhere in English.

I'll keep y'all updated on progress. I have the book until May 16.

Gotta admit, kind of excited here 😊

Post by “Joshua” of February 4, 2022 at 12:15 PM

Very good! The language requirements for being a good classicist are staggering. Not only Latin and Greek, but English, French, and German are essential for getting a handle on the bulk of the commentary. Then the scripts--Roman and Greek, Linear B, Demotic--and the particular forms that were standard in inscriptions and graffiti.

Post by “Don” of February 4, 2022 at 12:20 PM

So, here's my preliminary Google translation unedited of Epicurus's On Nature, Book 2:

BOOK II

[PHerc. 1010 [P1] and 1149 [P2]/993 [P3]: (24) Arrighetti]

[P3,62,2,3,5 (24.19-22)] [that the] cohesion of the outermost layer is of this kind also, while the internal layers, trapped inside, so that, without them colliding, or if they have not done so anymore, of only recently, their return to the places opposite to those towards which they had

initially transported [could not result] ... [t] ... (such) was the cause / of their rapid journey over great distances that, I affirm, as far as the simulacra are concerned , it is necessary that they have such a [velocity]...

(P3, 3,1: (24-23)... as I have said it. For why could not a type of form having this character be invented+...?

(P2, c. 16, 4-3 = (24.36-37)) We are now going to talk about the speed of movement that belongs to them. First of all, their finesse, which far exceeds the finesse revealed by the meaning, is an index of the unsurpassable speed of movement that belongs to simulacra... [This finesse makes them] excessively light, and if they are excessively light, it is clear that they are also excessively fast in their movements. if the atoms are perfectly equal in speed, and if it is possible to say

[P2, 17, J: (24-41)] position and arrangement, but only after approaching those whose anterior interval [lac. 1 word], and as if from the opposite [lac. 1 word the body [lac. 1 word] to split by nature, even when they have not yet struck the solid body [P3, 3,3]... in no way prevented, as by the gap which separates [from its surface [P2, c. 18, 13 (24.42)] against attestation from phenomena. have a speed of for unsurpassable displacements. And in a way of this type too, it will be possible to propose a kind of proof about the speed of simulacra. Because, since not only is fast what [has] the lightness (P3, 3, 4) quickly, to simulacra also belongs this power. In ... crossing effect, if the solid body alone had the power to move (Pr, c. 12, 1-2: (24-43)) by evictions, and if the simulacrum did not have it, according to the mode of expulsion the solid bodies would be the only ones able to have high speeds, then solid bodies that the simulacra would not have this power, at least according to the mode of expulsion, while having it with regard to what is immediately surrounded by an accessible void, thanks to their tendency to sink into a space of emptiness, finesse and smallness. Pr, 12, 2 But, since it is possible for many bodies to expel the simulacrum and the lines for any/ solid body to do this, how could one not have to consider, since they possess precisely the mode of rapidity, that this mode of expulsion also belongs to them?

P1, 12, 3 (24-44))... the [mode] of expulsion, being transported before all bodies (lac. 10 lines imperceptible displacements [P3, 3, 6]. making displacement easy to accomplish for them", but not easy to accomplish for solid bodies [Pr, c. 14, 1-2: (24.45)) ... and among the types of simulacra, there are some which are related portion with the solid bodies [lac. 4 lines] by virtue of [a] movement of expulsion, in which lac. 5 lines] embracing a great length (P3,.37] in their movements of expulsion, and unable, in either mode, to collide with the types [of compound bodies] which are solid.[P1, 14, 2-3: (24.46) Hence, in all the modes we are in the process of examining, we can easily see that the velocities which belong to all bodies are also velocities at which the simulations, too, can rapidly cover long distances [lac. 3 lines] by each pass, a issue through which the simulacra can escape, [lac. 1 word] not unreasonably ...

(P2, c. 19, 2: (24-47-48)]... to solid bodies, and which has the same intervals in depth, except that it is not because it was made up of many bodies in depth, but because it has the same internal vacuum interval, dare they say somewhat irrationally, "that [lac. 6 lines] [P3, c. 4,1] pass through the walls and the other compounds (P2, c. 19, 3] solid. And this the senses themselves attest. by its nature to something which does not contain much emptiness", passing through the walls, to preserve in their succession the position [which they had] in comparison with the solid [from which they come]" lake. 2 lines] of those which do not have a certain unique morphological configuration by nature, but in comparison with the lakes, 2 lines] [P3, c.4, 2] I mean, as if it were precisely the wind and s [modes] like this. Because the latter, [P2, c. 20, 1: (24-49-10)), owing to the fineness of their parts, are in a different mode from that in which substances which have cohesion outwardly, but contain much emptiness inwardly, are capable of ensure their passage through solid substances. What I am saying is that surely those who consider this precise question in the case of simulations are trying to form an unfavorable opinion of our doctrine) because of the ambiguity [P1, 17, 2) of the word of "fineness", without also considering the difference which separates the two cases [lac. a few words] [P3, c. 4, 31 it turns out that it is more possible for these things ¹⁸ to [pass] through solid substances than for resistant compounds [P2, 20, 2] to pass through these (substances/-there, to unless someone shows us that the mode of penetration of which we have spoken may belong to them. We must therefore, as I said, also examine the model which we have constructed" for the purpose of this section 20. For c is a llac. 1 succinct met to recognize....

[P3, 4,4 (24.51)] Thus, we have proved²¹ that there are simulacra; that it turns out that their generation happens at the speed of thought; and also that they possess movements of unsurpassable speed. In what comes next, we will set forth the subjects which it is appropriate to treat directly after these.

[Final title in P2]

Epicurus On nature book II23

BOOKS III-IX [Missing]

Post by "Don" of February 4, 2022 at 12:41 PM

So, it appears Book 2 addressed the production of simulacra/images/eidolon.

Post by "Cassius" of February 4, 2022 at 2:54 PM

(I should have known Don was going to to straight for the "images" material!) 😊

Post by “Don” of February 4, 2022 at 4:20 PM

[Quote from Cassius](#)

(I should have known Don was going to to straight for the "images" material!) 😊

😊 Just taking On Nature books in order.

I do find it interesting that Epicurus was covering images so early in his masterwork. He must have either seen it as important (like the gods being first in Menoikeus and the PDs) or fundamental to his physics.

I'm just ecstatic that the translation app worked as well as it did! Some clean up needed but overall 👍

Post by “Cassius” of February 4, 2022 at 6:02 PM

[Quote from Don](#)

He must have either seen it as important (like the gods being first in Menoikeus and the PDs) or fundamental to his physics.

I strongly think that Epicurus saw it as BOTH of those which you reference. It's a shame that his ideas on this have been dismissed they way they have. Once again, DeWitt is pretty good in taking Epicurus seriously, which apparently means considering the mind as a "suprasensory mechanism" able to receive and perceive these images directly without going through the eyes.

When we discussed this section of the podcast we really didn't dig into it too far, but even for those who reject the idea out of hand today, we need to keep in mind that this was important to Epicurus. It's even possible (and I am not advocating this at least at present) that this was tightly involved in the mechanism of "anticipations. "

Now that I write that, I do remember that when we were going over book 4 in the podcast that some of the panel thought that potentially the issue involved was that the receipt of images over time would imprint patterns that would be relevant to later thoughts, sort of like the citation in Diogenes Laertius, but instead of involving things we see, things that the "images" would imprint in the mind directly. It's very clear that Epicurus thought that these images were involved in our dream processes.

So at this point I would speculate that to the extent you are onto a good trail in regard to a teaching or therapy mechanism, the basis for it would be that Epicurus held that repeated exposure to images over time would imprint on the mind and affect later tendencies in thought processes.

It's a related point, but not the same point, to speculate that the receipt of these images is involved in anticipations, and that this is highly relevant (and may even "be") the third leg of the canon - the explanation for "intuition." I think we discussed in the podcast that the imprint of these images in the structure of the brain might be relevant to genetic transmission of dispositions across generations, since "something" is involved there, given that it strongly appears that Epicurus was not a fan of "blank slate" theory.

Regardless of whether either of these are fruitful to discuss or any particular users here think that they can be reconciled with modern science, it appears to me to be well founded that Epicurus himself thought something like this was true, so we should expect that he and his later school members attempted to follow these lines of thought to their logical conclusions.

Post by “Cassius” of February 4, 2022 at 7:32 PM

You know it's also pretty easy to connect keeping things in our minds and "on our radar screens" by having images of Epicurus on rings and portraits and busts around us

Post by “Don” of February 5, 2022 at 8:32 AM

I can see I'll have to read through these, compare the French and the machine-translated English, and correct some punctuation and obvious errors. I can also see that some sections are going to be difficult because of the fragmentary nature of the papyri. Lots of holes! That's the [lac. ...] in the texts: lacuna. Frg. = Fragment numbers. One bonus with these is that it gives the P.Herc. numbers, so I hope to *eventually* link to images of the papyri.

This project also reinforces how much we've lost! The tantalizing fragments start an idea, then it breaks off. An argument being made cuts off before its end. It's like Epicurus is giving a lecture over Zoom and the connection keeps freezing and dropping out. 😭

I'm not going to do this for everything, but I wanted to give everyone another taste of what I'm running up against. Here is Book 11 of Epicurus's *On Nature* discussing the nature of the cosmos and how the Earth stays at the center and how the Sun rises and sets. This is after one initial pass trying to correct the translation and transcription errors. It'll need a few more passes.

It *appears* Epicurus is making the argument for why and how the Earth is a sphere and why it is immobile in the cosmos:

BOOK XI

[PHerc. 1042, supplemented by PHerc. 154: (26) Arrighetti]

[Frg. 3, 2: (26.17)]...would be encompassed¹ because of the density or scarcity of what envelops it, so as to give²...

[Column of location uncertain: (26.18)] possible to secure...firmly. For the current question, regarding exactly this thing, which is whether it is possible or completely impossible for it to happen...

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Epicurus

Frg 1, 1: (26.19). and receive a swerve because of infinity, if at that [lac 1 mot] thousand times [lac. 25 lines approximately] (4 (26.20) to make visible the [lac. 1 word] of this one and also of this one, either sooner or later; so that the [lac. 1 word] corresponding to infinity at all...

Frg 6, 10 (26.21)] [whether infinite number of atoms] meet them, or else [atoms] of a non-infinite number. That non-infinite number of atoms meet them would be [lac. 1 word], just like the fact that [infinite number of atoms] meet them, so that like substances possess [infinity] [lac. 2 columns approximately) (4:(26.22)] that one. But that Earth's gravity should not be feared as opposing its staying in the air, when [lac. 2 words] rare substance...

(Frg. 7, 1: (26.23)] things in our environment that have some ability to float on air and stay aloft and [lac. 30 lines or so] [2: (26.24)].. [not this species] of angularity, but that which could belong to the primary substances [lac. 25 lines approximately] [3: (26.26)]...exerting a kind of flotation, but, as I have said before, as if the bounds and inviolable [lac. 1 words] provided them with some kind of protection [lac. 8 lines] drum...

[Frg. 8, 2: (26.27)] be such as to preserve what has formed as the drum section. Because some have conceived [the limits of the sky] as walls encircling the Earth, with a whirlpool like this [lac. 4 lines] movement of the stars above the head [lac. 3 lines] circular [lac. 10 lines] (3+ PHerc. 154, frg. 3, 1: (26.28)) [lac. 1 line] placing for this reason of all sides the circumferences before our eyes, as being analogical indices of the same [lac. 1 line] of the world [lac. 7 lines] and assuming that the Earth is in the middle of the [all] [lac. 15 lines] place [lac. 1 line] feet [lac. 2 lines] above the head [lac. 2 lines] say above lac. 20 lines] [4+ PHerc. 154, frg. 3.3 (26.30 -31)] in transferences, let's say, upwards; [and] what he recently had above his head, we would have, by virtue of the transference, [the impression of seeing him below] [lac. y lines] of the Sun and the Moon] [lac. 2 lines] above [lac. 1 word] interval [lac. 25 lines] above the head [lac. 1 word] below the feet [lac. 20 (+ PHer, 154, fig. 3, 4 (26.32)] appearing to him below [under the] feet, he will not think that what he came to have, when he ascended above, to have under his feet, he had previously had above his head when he descended below. Thus, I say, because of the location of the Earth in the middle of the [lac. 1] center line [lac. 3 lines] protections [lat. 2 lines] cause the world to become round with the Earth in the middle, like (lac 2 words) the arrangement of the limbs [lac. 2 lines] do not reach [lac. 1 line] aporia [lac. 1 line] below (lat. 2 lines). [6: (2633)] Arranging the walls in a circle in order to protect us against the whirlpool, in the belief that the whirlpool is in a position to whirl outside, they circularly rotate the stars above the heads of all men [lac. To lines] the causes...

[Frg. 9, 1: (26.34)] a firm perception concerning objective things could be acquired, when [lac. 1 line] such and such species of movement upwards or downwards [lac. 1 line] infinity [lac. 1 line] name [lac. 20 lines approximately] [2: (26.35)] of the Sun (lac. 2 words) transmitted visually becomes [lac. 25 lines] [2: (26.36)] [lac. 1 line] things [lac. 2 words] down [lac. 1 line] up [lac. 1 line] from the sphere we see [lac. 20 lines approximately] [3: (26.37)] lac. line] If we walk towards the place from which the Sun seemed to us] to rise, heading higher in continental zone, it seems to us to lie down where we had passed before, sometimes even when we have only moved a short distance in all. And, this time, we cannot blame it on the oblique movements. Why, after all, should you treat the estimate of the distance from here, or from there, or this from here, as a more reliable estimate of the distance from sunrises or sunsets? As a result, [Lac. 8 to 10 lines] [4 (26.38)] [they cannot hope to] form a (mental) model, nor deduce any solution on these matters.

For it seems to me that when they spend their time making a few of them - I mean their instruments and whirling themselves inside some other of those instruments. it is not surprising, considering not only the slavery which their doctrines impose on them, but also (as far as the appearances of the Sun are concerned) because of the indeterminates of its risings and its setting, that 'they cannot form a adequate mental model by means of their instruments, which produce no regularity. But their instruments are [lac. 8 to 10 lines]] [5 : (26.39) All that is left to them is pretense and forced argument, according to which the indications given by the instrument create an analogy which corresponds to what we see in the celestial regions. For someone who is in his right mind must, it seems to me, make a prior distinction: when he

argues about the world and about what appears to us in the world, he is arguing about a certain image which comes from certain accidental properties of things, properties transmitted, through the medium of vision, to a process of thought or a process of memory permanently preserved by the soul itself, [communicating to it certain] quantities, qualities, [etc.] [lac. few lines] [6+ PHerc. 154, Fig. 25, 2: (26.40)] [So when, as I see, he happens to look at the thing objective and fails to distinguish between an utterance based on the object and another based on what is co perceived through the object, and that the objective thing does not give rise to multiple representations [of the world] in miniature, and even less of the world (itself), it is not surprising that he is embarrassed by the sunrises and sunsets, of which I have already spoken in connection with the Sun. For hoping, presumably, that each of the appearances [lac. about 10 lines]. [If] we do not want to attach to them the image of an inverted rising and setting, an image invented from the objective thing, we must form a mental conception of a movement of the Sun and the Moon. towards their rising and setting, and we must not say of the movement which always takes place in this way, nor of anything which moves in this way, that it occurs in the opposite direction according to the intrinsic nature of the something objective, and that, from some point of view other than our own, these things are ordered according to various different patterns. This, then, is the distinction we must make with regard to this subject.

(Frg 10, 1 + PHerc. 114, fg 21.3(26.41)] As for the props that support the Earth below, of which we say that the rare substance (lac. 4 lines] [2 + PHerc. 154 , Fig. 25, 4: (26.42) being limited by some interval, for thus the mind will understand the stability of the Earth more surely and more in harmony with sensible appearances.

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As for the density it has below, it must be conceived in its continuity with that which it has above, so that these densities, which are good for providing a counter-support, maintain the appropriate analogical model for immobility. of the earth. For, on this account, we shall in no way be bothered by the rotation of the Sun, provided we bear in mind in how many ways each of these phenomena can be realized, and that in some cases their very equalities are the causes of the fact that they do not share [lac. 2 words] Earth [lake. 2 words] [+ PHerc. 154, fig. 26, 1: (26.43)] will need. For, being equidistant on all sides, they will not be able to weigh down in any direction. In fact, what belongs to it by virtue of the nature of the air, namely that, because it receives a similar pressure from all sides, it is on all sides equidistant from the circle which limits the world], as if he said that, being such, it rests at the center of the world (and it is not impossible either that it is such) - it is that, and not what produces that, which is the of its stability. For the pressure of the air, which is alike on all sides, has ensured equality as the strongest of the means by which, in assuring the [lac. 1 word] of the circle, [it caused] stable immobility [of the Earth under equal pressure... [4 + PHerc. 154, frg. 26, 2: (26.44). it was more [convincing to say that this, namely equality, is causally responsible, rather than to say that it is the very fact of the immobility of the Earth at the center of the world which is the cause of [lac. 2 lines] being immobile; and they are sometimes in agreement with this, since they created the

aerial stays because of the [lac. 2 words 307. These people there, even if by chance they have come to the correct conclusion, we should not consider them better than men who are in many matters, and in many matters completely, totally, many times better, and in some of them immeasurably ...

(Frg, 11, 1: (26.45)] For [these theories] have all perished, having been posited on the basis of their eccentric mode of connection [lac. a few lines].

ing the subject proposed at the beginning is enough for us. In what follows, in this book, therefore, what we have said concerning we will continue by providing some additional clarifications on these celestial phenomena.

Post by “Cassius” of February 5, 2022 at 8:58 AM

Don do you not find that "Les Epicureans" has less information in it that would help you determine how much confidence to put in the translation? I am thinking i remember that it's not heavily footnoted or referenced, so it's hard to know how much is reconstruction and how firm it is. Am I misremembering that?

Post by “Don” of February 5, 2022 at 9:19 AM

[Quote from Cassius](#)

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Oh, it is heavily footnoted and appears conservative in the translations with all the lacunae and fragments marked. I have no hesitation in seeing the translations as authoritative. Pages 1079-1469 are nothing but footnotes and commentary.

Post by “Cassius” of February 5, 2022 at 9:41 AM

Ok very good!