

Episode 179 - "Epicurus And His Philosophy" Part 31 - Chapter 13 - The True Piety 02

Post by "Cassius" of June 16, 2023 at 3:08 PM

Welcome to Episode 179 of Lucretius Today. This is a podcast dedicated to the poet Lucretius, who wrote "On The Nature of Things," the only complete presentation of Epicurean philosophy left to us from the ancient world. Each week we walk you through the Epicurean texts, and we discuss how Epicurean philosophy can apply to you today. If you find the Epicurean worldview attractive, we invite you to join us in the study of Epicurus at EpicureanFriends.com, where you will find a discussion thread for each of our podcast episodes and many other topics. We are now in the process of a series of podcasts intended to provide a general overview of Epicurean philosophy based on the organizational structure employed by Norman DeWitt in his book "Epicurus and His Philosophy." This week we continue our discussion of Chapter 13, entitled "The True Piety."

Chapter XIII - The True Piety

- The Form of the Gods
- Gradation In Godhead
- Incorruptibility And Virtue
- Isonomy And the Gods
- The Life of the Gods
- Communion And Fellowship
- Prophecy And Prayer

<https://www.spreaker.com/episode/54832686>

Post by "Joshua" of June 16, 2023 at 9:55 PM

My recent comment in [this](#) thread on *pietas* (piety) may be relevant for this chapter.

Post by "Cassius" of June 18, 2023 at 11:04 AM

<https://www.epicureanfriends.com/thread/3127-episode-179-epicurus-and-his-philosophy-part-31-chapter-13-the-true-piety-02/>

In this episode (unless I decide to cut it out) I analogized at least some of the Epicurean speculations about the nature of the gods to the type of thing we do today, in speculating what life might be like in the future with great advances in medical technology and science.

And of course that brings to mind a cultural example of this, which some of us are old enough to remember. The specifics of this video are not at all Epicurean as to god "starting over" and so forth, but it does have a catchy tune:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N03Uoj6p9QA>

Post by “Joshua” of June 18, 2023 at 11:06 AM

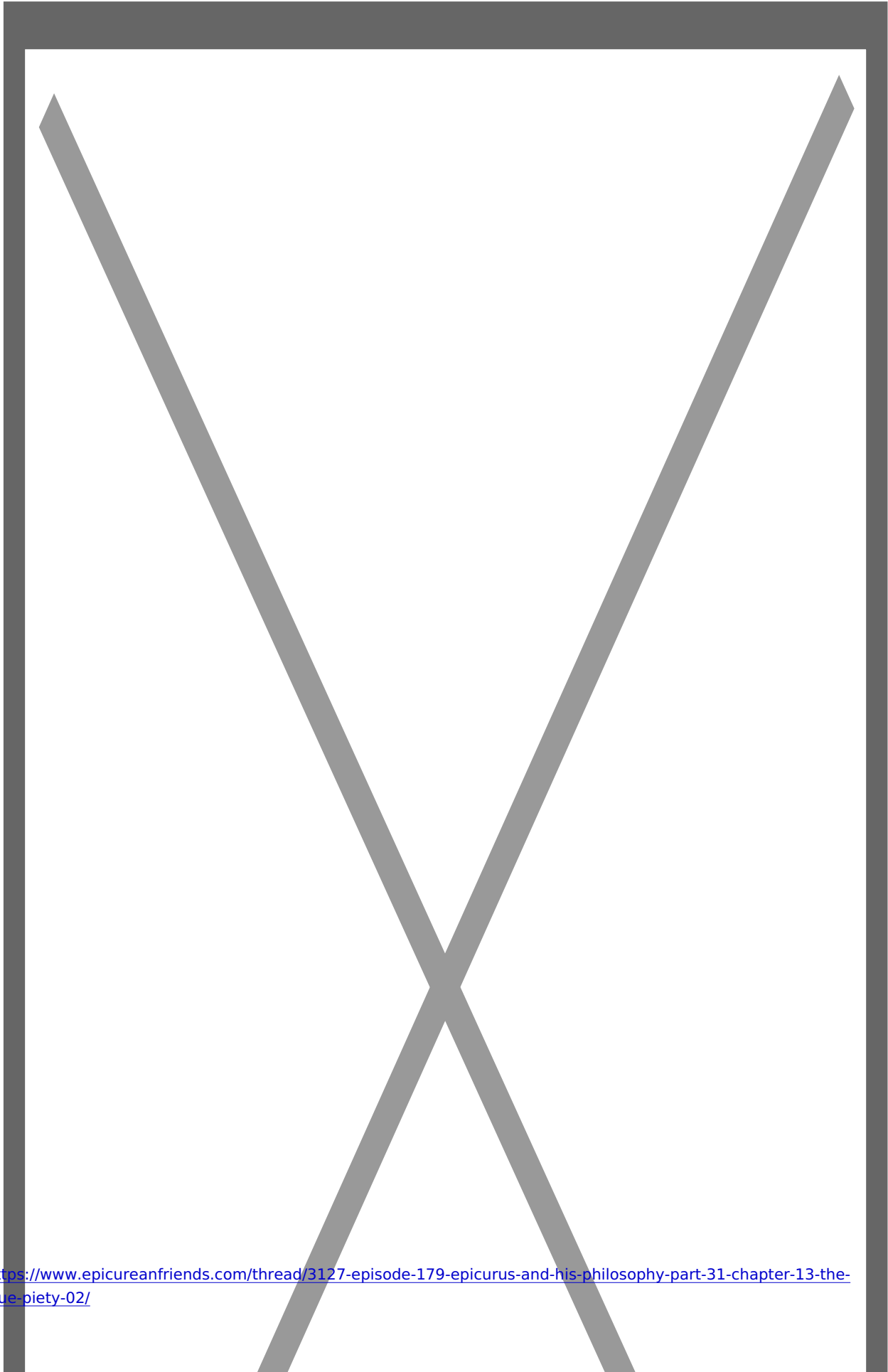
Show Notes:

Claudius Ptolemy, *Almagest*:

Quote

“I know that I am mortal by nature, and ephemeral; but when I trace at my pleasure the windings to and fro of the heavenly bodies I no longer touch the earth with my feet: I stand in the presence of Zeus himself and take my fill of ambrosia

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<https://www.epicureanfriends.com/thread/3127-episode-179-epicurus-and-his-philosophy-part-31-chapter-13-the-true-piety-02/>

[Ptolemy - Wikiquote](#)

en.wikiquote.org

John Tyndall, *Belfast Address*

Quote

Is there not a temptation to close to some extent with Lucretius, when he affirms that 'nature is seen to do all things spontaneously of herself without the meddling of the gods?' or with Bruno, when he declares that Matter is not 'that mere empty capacity which philosophers have pictured her to be, but the universal mother who wrings forth all things as the fruit of her own womb?' Believing as I do in the continuity of Nature, I cannot stop abruptly where our microscopes cease to be of use. Here the vision of the mind authoritatively supplements the vision of the eye. By an intellectual necessity I cross the boundary of the experimental evidence, and discern in that Matter which we, in our ignorance of its latent powers, and notwithstanding our professed reverence for its Creator, have hitherto covered with opprobrium, the promise and potency of all terrestrial Life.

[Address Delivered Before the British Association Assembled at Belfast, With Additions \(1874\)](#)

Philip Larkin, *Church Going*

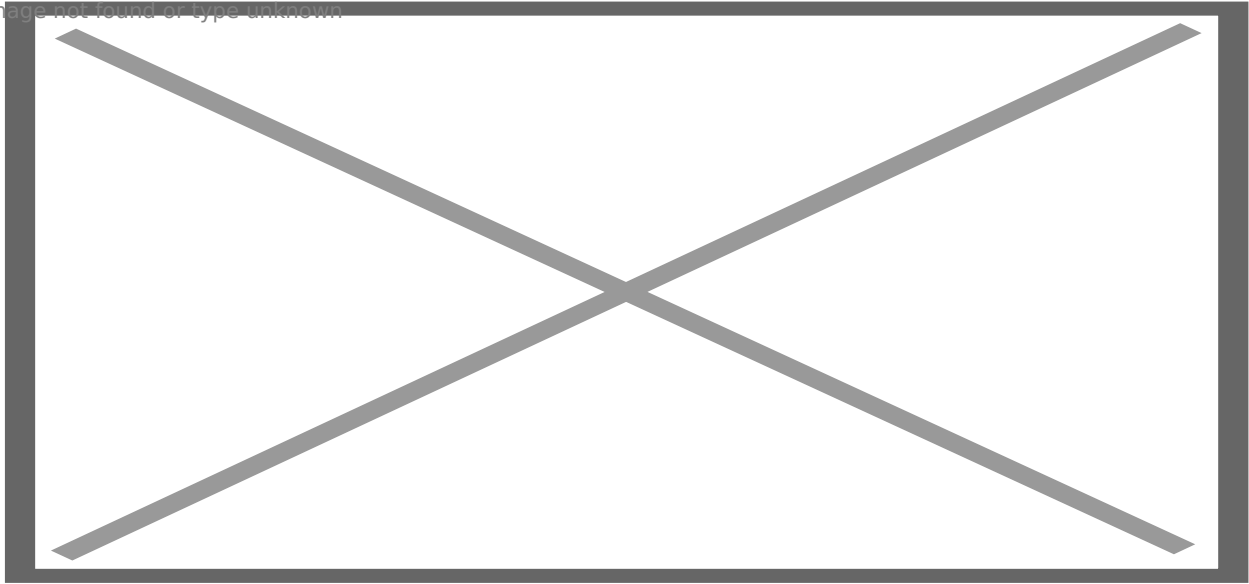
Quote

A serious house on serious earth it is,
In whose blent air all our compulsions meet,
Are recognised, and robed as destinies.
And that much never can be obsolete,
Since someone will forever be surprising
A hunger in himself to be more serious,
And gravitating with it to this ground,
Which, he once heard, was proper to grow wise in,
If only that so many dead lie round.

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[Church Going, by Philip Larkin](#)

Once I am sure there's nothing go... I step inside, letting the door th... Another church: matting,
seats, an... And little books; sprawlings of fl... For Sunday, ...
www.poeticous.com

Lucretius, Book V, Line 1200

Quote

nec pietas ullast velatum saepe videri
vertier ad lapidem atque omnis accedere ad aras
nec procumbere humi prostratum et pandere palmas
ante deum delubra nec aras sanguine multo
spargere quadrupedum nec votis nectere vota,
sed mage pacata posse omnia mente tueri.

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Bailey:

Quote

Nor is it piety at all to be seen often with veiled head turning towards a stone, and to draw near to every altar, no, nor to lie prostrate on the ground with outstretched palms before the shrines of the gods, nor to sprinkle the altars with the streaming blood of

beasts, nor to link vow to vow, but rather to be able to contemplate all things with a mind at rest.

William Shakespeare, *Hamlet*

Quote

There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio,
Than are dreamt of in your philosophy.

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[Act 1, Scene 5](#)

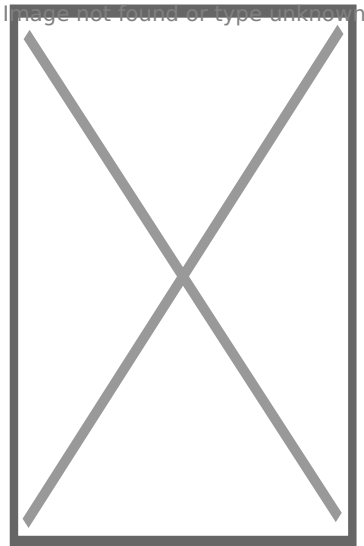
Love to learn it.

myshakespeare.com

Post by “Don” of June 18, 2023 at 11:07 AM

Having mentioned Long & Sedley again, I'll repost the link to Internet Archive. Highly encourage a free account there to "check out" books.

The section on gods begins on p. 139 with the commentary I summarized starts at the bottom of p. 144:



[The Hellenistic philosophers : Long, A. A : Free Download, Borrow, and Streaming : Internet Archive](#)

2 volumes : 24 cm

archive.org

Post by “Cassius” of June 18, 2023 at 11:22 AM

Great notes Joshua - thank you!!!

<https://www.epicureanfriends.com/thread/3127-episode-179-epicurus-and-his-philosophy-part-31-chapter-13-the-true-piety-02/>

Post by “Cassius” of June 22, 2023 at 7:12 PM

In the section of this podcast where Joshua cited John Tyndal's Belfast address, I drew attention to a question of whether John Tyndal was going further than Frances Wright in being willing to draw deductions about things beyond the senses from observations that the senses do allow us to make.

In editing that section it occurred to me to do a word search of "A Few Days In Athens" for "atoms," and the result surprised me. There is very little mention of atoms in AFDIA except brief mentions in Chapters 15 and 16. That to me would reinforce the question I was drawing out in the podcast - that the willingness to infer details beyond the physical evidence is an important topic in which the issues discussed by Epicurus and Philodemus in "On Signs / On Methods of Inference" present some pretty important questions for further thought. Something to come back to later.

#AFewDaysInAthens [#Canonics](#)

Post by “Don” of June 22, 2023 at 8:23 PM

[Quote from Cassius](#)

Philodemus in "On Signs / On Methods of Inference"

Maybe there's a podcast episode or two in the future?

Post by “Cassius” of June 22, 2023 at 9:00 PM

[Quote from Don](#)

Maybe there's a podcast episode or two in the future?

Oh definitely yes, we have not given that work nearly the attention it deserves. I will admit, however, that it's probably the most challenging of any that we might attack, and we'll definitely want to spend some time reading Sedley's analysis, and the extensive appendices by

DeLacey in his book, before we tackle it.

Right now my inclination is for us to go on the counterattack on ethics first, and deal with Cicero's "Book Two" of On Ends, so that we can begin to give Torquatus and Epicurean Philosophy the "last word" that they were denied in Cicero's rendition.

Post by “Cassius” of June 22, 2023 at 9:10 PM

Episode 179 of the Lucretius Today Podcast is now available!

<https://www.spreaker.com/episode/54832686>

Post by “Joshua” of June 24, 2023 at 8:54 PM

https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Great_chain_of_being.

The Wikipedia page for the *Scala naturae* or "Great Chain of Being" is worth glancing at as we continue to talk about the place of the gods in Epicurus' universe.