

Episode 262 - He Who Says "Nothing Can Be Known" Knows Nothing

Post by "Cassius" of December 29, 2024 at 12:06 PM

Welcome to Episode 262 of Lucretius Today. This is a podcast dedicated to the poet Lucretius, who wrote "On The Nature of Things," the most 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 we discuss this and all of our podcast episodes.

This week we are continuing our review of the key doctrines of Epicurus that are featured here at Epicureansfriends on the front page of our website.

This week we will address ["He Who Says 'Nothing Can Be Known' Knows Nothing"](#)

Discussion Outline (work in progress!) - ["He Who Says 'Nothing Can Be Known' Knows Nothing"](#)

<https://www.spreaker.com/episode/63613127>

Post by "Cassius" of January 8, 2025 at 9:47 AM

Episode 262 of the Lucretius Today Podcast is now available: "He Who Says 'Nothing Can Be Known' Knows Nothing."

<https://www.spreaker.com/episode/63613127>

Post by "Cassius" of January 8, 2025 at 9:48 AM

I want to really commend Joshua for his first segment here in this episode. Going back into Diogenes Laertius Book 9 for information on Pyrrho and his relationship with Epicurus is really helpful for understanding this issue.

Post by “Don” of January 8, 2025 at 8:51 PM

The case for laying emphasis in the episode on "lower case s 'skepticism' vs upper case s 'Skepticism'" is a good one. *BUT* there's one thing to note about Lucian's *Alexander the Oracle Monger* when the translation says "It was an occasion for a Democritus, nay, for an Epicurus or a Metrodorus[1], perhaps, a man whose intelligence was steeled against such assaults by **scepticism and insight**, one who, if he could not detect the precise imposture, would at any rate have been perfectly certain that, though this escaped him, the whole thing was a lie and an impossibility."

The Greek doesn't use the word for skeptic (σκέψις skepsis, "inquiry") or a similar word. The word used is ἀπιστέω. The whole phrase is:

ἢ καὶ αὐτοῦ Ἐπικούρου (Erikourou) ἢ Μητροδώρου (Metrodorou) ἢ τινος ἄλλου ἀδαμαντίνην πρὸς τὰ τοιαῦτα τὴν **γνώμην** ἔχοντος, ὡς ἀπιστήσαι καὶ ὅπερ ἦν εἰκάσαι, καὶ εἰ μὴ εὐρεῖν τὸν τρόπον ἐδύνατο, ἐκεῖνο γοῦν προπεπεισμένου, ὅτι λέληθεν αὐτὸν ὁ τρόπος τῆς μαγγανείας, τὸ δ' οὖν πᾶν ψευδὸς ἐστὶ καὶ γενέσθαι ἀδύνατον.

The key words are:

- ἀδαμαντίνην (adamantinen) = adamantine, of steel
 - For those of you who are Marvel superhero fans, yes, that's like Wolverine's adamantium skeleton. So Epicurus and Metrodorus aren't simply "steeled" they have knowledge like adamantium 😊
- γνώμην (gnomen) = knowledge, intelligence, judgement
- ἀφροσύνη (aphrestexo) = disbelieve, distrust; doubt; to be incredulous

PS. I want to add (to be clear) that the skeptic/Skeptic distinction is valid and an important one due to the idiosyncrasies of English. Lower case skeptical is a decent translation of ἀφροσύνη, but looking at the ancient Greek itself - from my perspective - always provides additional nuance.

Post by “Eikadistes” of January 9, 2025 at 3:45 PM

[Quote from Don](#)

PS. I want to add (to be clear) that the skeptic/Skeptic distinction is valid and an important one due to the idiosyncrasies of English.

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Most "*skeptics*" I know are actually conspiracy dogmatists. 😊