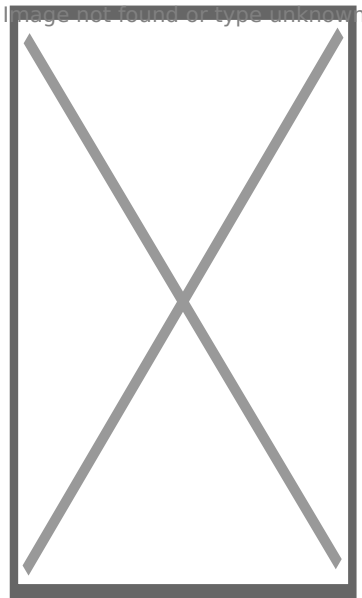


John Masson - "The Atomic Theory of Epicurus"

Post by "TauPhi" of March 10, 2025 at 9:16 PM

Recently, I came across a note in one of the books I was reading that listed 'Lucretius, epicurean and poet' in two volumes by John Masson as an important monograph on Lucretius. It got me curious because I've never heard about this author. I tried to find some information about him online and I got even more curious when I found absolutely nothing. I did, however, find the monograph on archive.org along one more book on Lucretius published in 1884 (all the links at the end of this post).

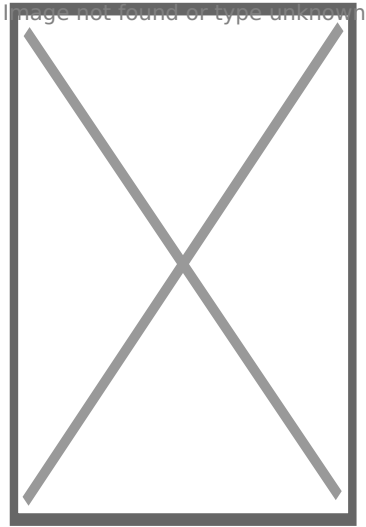
I don't know if the books are worth recommending because I've only skimmed through the tables of contents but at the first look, these works seem to be thorough and interesting studies on Lucretius. If anyone is familiar with these books, please let me know if they are worthwhile.



[The atomic theory of Lucretius contrasted with modern doctrines of atoms and evolution : Masson, John : Free Download, Borrow, and Streaming : Internet Archive](#)

xii, 249 p. 23 cm
archive.org

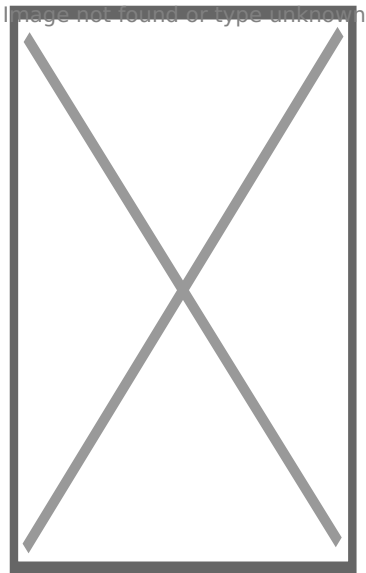
The atomic theory of Lucretius contrasted with modern doctrines of atoms and evolution (1884)



[Lucretius, epicurean and poet : Masson, John : Free Download, Borrow, and Streaming : Internet Archive](#)

Includes bibliographical references and index
archive.org

Lucretius, epicurean and poet - volume I (1907)



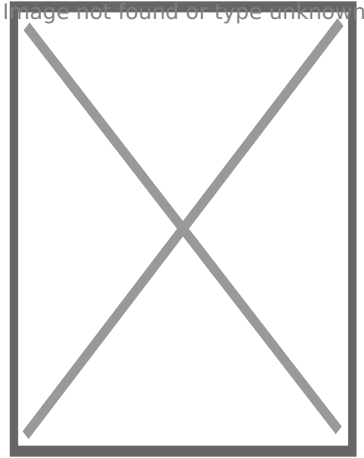
[Lucretius, epicurean and poet : Masson, John : Free Download, Borrow, and Streaming : Internet Archive](#)

Includes bibliographical references and index
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Lucretius, epicurean and poet - volume II (1909)

Post by "Cassius" of March 10, 2025 at 9:51 PM

Interesting name of the author - How could his name be so similar to this translator?



[The nature of things: a didactic poem : Lucretius Carus, Titus : Free Download, Borrow, and Streaming : Internet Archive](#)

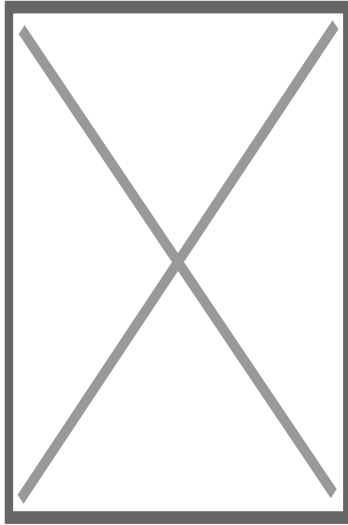
In blank verse
archive.org

Post by "Cassius" of March 10, 2025 at 9:54 PM

1 "s" versus 2 "s" , and eighty years apart. Must be pure coincidence. Never heard of the one you posted Tau Phi so thanks

Post by "Cassius" of March 10, 2025 at 10:10 PM

I note this on page 317 of "Lucretius, Epicurean and Poet," which may give an indication of the writer's perspective. Note the characterization of Epicurus as having "... a system hardly deserving to be called a philosophy."



[Lucretius, epicurean and poet : Masson, John : Free Download, Borrow, and Streaming : Internet Archive](#)

Includes bibliographical references and index
archive.org

Quote

In Democritus we recognize not merely a keener intellect, but also, in almost every way, a nobler, fuller, and stronger nature than that of Epicurus. It is only the passionate sympathy of Epicurus with the suffering, with the ignorant, and those who through their ignorance are deceived and terrified, with all who are sore beaten by the storms of life, which alone relieves a system hardly deserving to be called a philosophy.

Post by “Cassius” of March 13, 2025 at 9:39 AM

I've moved this thread into the general Books area so that it will be more findable. It does look to me like there is a lot of good material here on Epicurus' Atomism.

Post by “Eikadistes” of March 13, 2025 at 11:46 AM

[Quote from Cassius](#)

Quote

In Democritus we recognize not merely a keener intellect, but also, in almost every way, a nobler, fuller, and stronger nature than that of Epicurus. It is only the passionate sympathy of Epicurus with the suffering, with the ignorant, and those who through their ignorance are deceived and terrified, with all who are sore beaten by the storms of life, which alone relieves a system hardly deserving to be called a philosophy.

That's a bold statement about a historical figure for whom we have no original works.

Sounds like the author is projecting his own narrative onto history.

Post by “Cassius” of March 13, 2025 at 12:11 PM

yep!

"a nobler, fuller, and stronger nature"

Hard to say what that is even about, but it moves the book significantly down on my "to-read" list.

Post by “Joshua” of March 13, 2025 at 8:02 PM

of a new world, a wider and a greater Rome. Julius Caesar faced the chaos of the time without despair. If the nobles were corrupt, he knew from his officers and legionaries the stern virtues that were left in the race.¹ He set himself at first to carry measures securing better government, while preserving the constitution. The irreconcilable spirit of the nobles, determined to allow no reform whatever, made this impossible. In despite of them the great forces of the time, discerned and guided by his genius, carried him on to higher and higher power, and at last he was able to pass measures, the ‘Julian

That question mark in the margin is really doing it for me! 😄

Post by “Cassius” of March 14, 2025 at 6:17 PM

The discussion of teleology that previously was here has been split off into a separate thread:

Thread

[Epicurean Views of "Teleology"](#)

Admin Edit: This thread was split off from a discussion of a book by John Masson on atomism

[...]

Here's a sentiment I can fully endorse, and it might reveal a weakness of our presentation here at the forum. We need to find a way to clearly address Aristotle's teleology! If Lucretius' objection to what DeWitt calls "Purposiveness" in Nature is not of first-tier importance, as are those doctrines in the image below, then it certainly merits a place in any proposed second-tier list of doctrines.

[...]

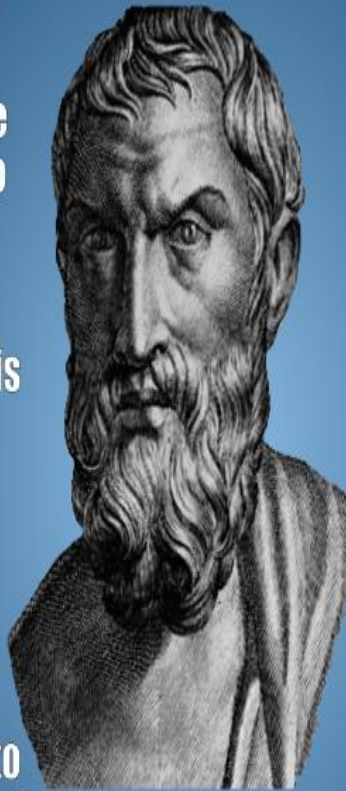
Nothing can be created from nothing.

The universe is infinite and eternal and has no gods over it.

The nature of gods contains nothing that is inconsistent with incorruption and blessedness.

Death is nothing to us.

There is no necessity to live under the control of necessity.



He who says "Nothing can be known" knows nothing.

All sensations are "true."

Virtue is not absolute or an end in itself - all good and evil consists in sensation.

Pleasure is the guide of life.

By "Pleasure" we mean all experience that is not painful.

Life is desirable, but unlimited time contains no greater pleasure than limited time.



Joshua

March 13, 2025 at 8:56 PM