

Philodemus On Piety

Post by "Don" of December 16, 2020 at 7:37 AM

[Quote from Cassius](#)

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. And I can't make heads or tails of this first section on the arguments for the existence of the gods.

Don do you have a sense of how much of the confusion is due to the material itself being difficult vs how much is due to it being fragmentary?

A little of both. The papyrus is in bad shape in a lot of places; however, there's enough continuous text to confidently reconstruct a substantial portion of the author's work.

One issue is that there's a lot of technical, philosophical jargon in the original text. With the fragmentary nature of the papyrus, there's a lack of context for these terms. If we had the whole papyrus and a larger body of Epicurean texts there wouldn't be any question what is meant by similarities, "unitary entities," etc. As it is, it's like reading a textbook through Swiss cheese. Or trying to read a book with a strobe light for a desk lamp. Consider something like...

Quote

The unanimous Declar[----]n ... thirteen America, When in the Course..... events, it becomes necessary for..... dissolve bands..... with another, and to assume a[]g the of the earth, the separate and equal ..,..... Laws of Nature and of Nature's God..... a decent respect to the opinions of m[]kind requires..... declare the causes impel them to the s..... W[] hold these truths to be self-evi[]t, that..... equal, that they are endowed..... Creator with certain unalien[.] Rights..... Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Hap[]ess.