

New Sedley Chapter On Ancient Greek Atheism

Post by “Pacatus” of March 22, 2022 at 4:10 PM

I’ve had to be gone awhile, and will mostly just need to hang out for now and absorb the wisdom of others.

But this recurring “argument” over Epicurus’ “real” understanding of gods struck a chord that made me want to think it out by writing. I think the question is simply unnecessary for following a living Via Epicurea. Though, as scholarly debate it may have some merit, even there it is likely to never be settled.

I tend to believe that all discourse is inescapably interpretive, viz: “I know you believe you understand what you think I said, but you should be aware that what you heard is not what I meant.”

Interpreting written discourse is more fraught when one is unable to enter into actual extended conversation and query. Also (outside of pure mathematics and deductive logic, perhaps) all human communication ought to be taken (to my mind) as imperfect: subject to all sorts of vagaries inherent in the human condition. [Well, certain supernaturalist religions might assert the perfection of certain utterances and texts; but I don’t.]

Cassius once (or more than once) said something to the effect that (my words, not his) there are no litmus tests here for who is or is not a “True Epicurean (TM).” I likely hold some “neo-Epicurean,” as opposed classical Epicurean, beliefs; and am happy to. I do not want to impose them here, and hope that I am not. If I am, I hope you will correct and forgive.