

New Sedley Chapter On Ancient Greek Atheism

Post by "Don" of March 22, 2022 at 11:36 PM

[Quote from Cassius](#)

I've never felt that the "gods" issue is the hill to die on (so to speak) in working toward a reconstituted Epicurean philosophic school

Agreed... But I still maintain we should understand *why* Epicurus placed such a high priority in having a correct understanding of the nature of the gods in the PDs, writing to Menoikeus, plus a book written on the topic, plus Philodemus's illustrations of his piety in On Piety, plus Diogenes Laertius's statement that "His piety towards the gods ... no words can describe." (DL X.10)

Plus we need to understand what his correct understanding was and possible applications of that for us today.

I believe a big part of Epicurean piety is knowing that the gods (regardless of their ultimate nature):

- do NOT concern themselves with humans
- do NOT bestow blessings or punishment
- - (although it appears "blessings" or benefit can accrue to the Epicurean "worshipper" of the gods... See below)
- do NOT have any part in the creation or maintenance of the cosmos
- enjoy the "highest possible" happiness (ευδαιμονία) that can be conceived, which cannot be augmented (literally, having no increase in intensity [tightening or slackening])
- can be "worshipped" (in the widest possible sense) within traditional/cultural rites and practices as long as the other characteristics above are adhered to.

Thoughts on that?