

New Sedley Chapter On Ancient Greek Atheism

Post by “Kalosyni” of March 24, 2022 at 12:34 PM

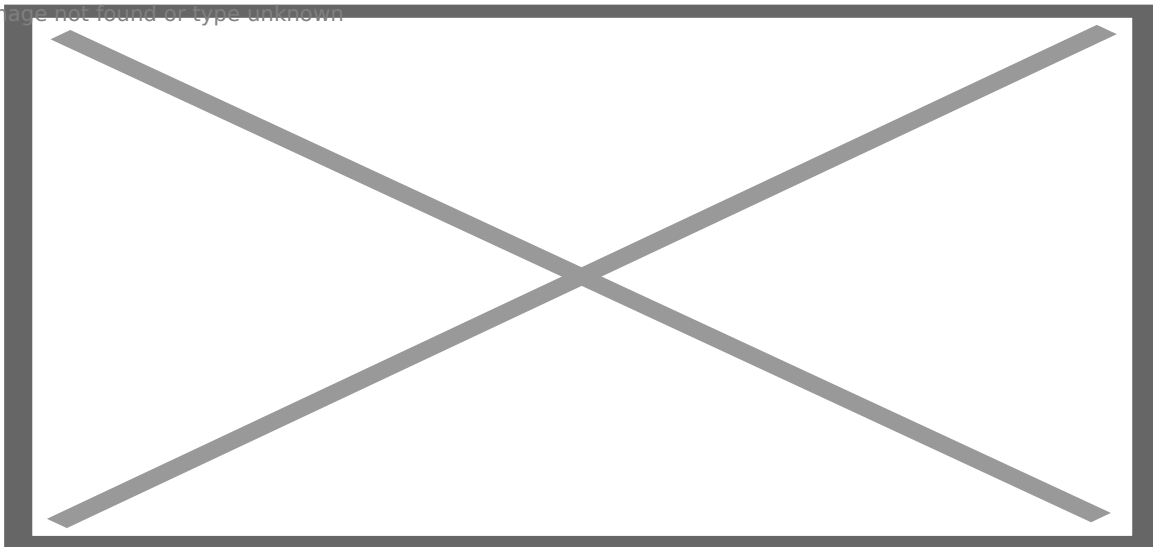
I hope to eventually get more of an understanding around Epicurus' ideas/beliefs about the gods. In the meantime I found this interesting article on impiety, but lots of Greek words (maybe [Don](#) might enjoy deciphering) and I have only read first few paragraphs of introduction.

Here is an excerpt:

Quote

Impiety is an offence, an ἀδικία - i.e., to put it crudely, a wrong that you might do and that is likely to be punished in some way.⁶ Imperative formulations used in preventive laws, such as ἀσεβῆς ἔστω, ἀσεβείτω and ἔνοχος ἔστω ἀσεβείῃ, categorize a given ἀδικία as an impiety, but also imply that from now on the culprit will be regarded as impious, and this status will legitimize the application of sanctions from other members of the community. In other words, ἀσεβῆς ἔστω, “let him be impious”, should be understood as a shorter version of “let him be punished as one who is regarded as impious”.⁷ Far from being a simple linguistic twist, the connection between committing an ἀσέβεια and being ἀσεβῆς has not insignificant consequences for how we should understand impiety and its implications in Greek society, as well as the Greek legal system in general.

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[Impiety in Epigraphic Evidence](#)

The concept of impiety (ἀσέβεια) in ancient Greek religion is complex. Firstly, definitions provided by ancient authors themselves point out, as potential...

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My idea right now is this: that it would not detract from my respect for Epicurus even if he was "not honest" in his piety -- and here is why: because the lying does not cause any harm or pain to any other person. But it seems we can't ever know whether he was "honest" or "dishonest".