

New Sedley Chapter On Ancient Greek Atheism

Post by "Cassius" of April 11, 2022 at 3:05 AM

Don.: The key additional text regarding the images, where it is stated that they flow TO the gods, is the Velleius section of On the nature of the gods, so that needs review in this context.

Godfrey: just to be clear in terms of images I think the foundational observations about them is that images was a theory about *everything* and how we perceive them. So the first step in the process is to discuss the theory about things directly in from of us, not starting with gods long distances away.

Also I am not yet sure I find the "attestation" framework more helpful than confusing. The use of parenthetical explanations helps but I don't find those explanations clear enough at this point to be comfortable. Maybe the word "attestation" seems unnecessarily confusing. Does it add something more than the word "evidence?". Because just as in law and in dealing with atoms we are going to need to consider not only direct evidence but also circumstantial evidence, and "attestation" may appear to some to refer only to direct evidence. I think we would all agree that Epicurus embraces reasoning from circumstantial evidence, or else there would be no way to establish the existence of atoms. So it would be important not to let the "attestation" word obscure the complexities of evidence issues. (Maybe that is another way of saying "We really need to do a study of the surviving texts on Epicurean Reasoning so we can bring these issues out into the open - "before our eyes!"

Or maybe I should just say that I don't think item one in the second list to be established for a number of reasons, primarily because I am not sure we have established what the "this" even is which is under discussion. Do we have even any specific examples of a description of an Epicurean observation of a god with which to agree or disagree?