

Apion An Epicurean(?)

Post by “Eggplant Wizard” of January 21, 2024 at 12:04 PM

I would be avoid taking at face value any claims of Jewish ritual cannibalism or blood-drinking or inferring that the metzitzah b’peh is a vestige of this.

Anyway the attitudes of Greek philosophers to Judaism is an interesting subject. Their dogged adherence to their own traditions was a cause both of exasperation and admiration. Among some middle and late Platonists the Jews were numbered among the wise ancient peoples like the Egyptians, Babylonians, Brahmins, etc. Numenius of Apamea (a major influence for Plotinus and Porphyry) thought that Pythagoras learned from Moses and famously remarked that that Plato was Moses in Attic Greek. Porphyry was very familiar with the Jewish scriptures and one of his sharpest criticisms of the Christians is that they abandoned the venerable Jewish wisdom tradition for a ridiculous novelty.

I do wonder how later Epicureans might have appraised Jewish tradition. I imagine the initial assessment would have found little of value in it but they also initially rejected Homer and the Greek poetic heritage and I think later generations were reassessing that.