

Prolepsis / Anticipations As Epicurus' Answer to the MENO Problem

Post by "Cassius" of October 31, 2024 at 9:24 PM

Part of the Cyclops references, this in a quote from Sextus Empiricus

Quote

(Sextus Emp. AM IX 45-46)

The origin of the thought that god exists came from appearances in dreams, or from the phenomena of the world, but the thought that god is everlasting and imperishable and perfect in happiness arose through a process of transition from humans. For just as we acquired the thought of a Cyclops, who was not "like a corn-eating man, but rather a peak well-wooded High on the mountain-tops, when it loometh apart from its fellows" 50 by enlarging the common human being in imagination, so too having started to think of a happy human being, blessed with all the goods, then having intensified these, they thought of god as their highest point. (46) And again, having formed the impression of a long-lived human, the ancients increased their time-span to infinity by combining the past and future with the present; and then, having thus arrived at the notion of eternity, they said that god was eternal too.

If I recall correctly near the end of the article Gourinat extends this in regard to the gods in a way favorable to the Stoic "argument from design," which I think Epicurus would have rejected and would not be the best reading