

Reasoning through the Letter to Menoecus' On the Gods

Post by “Eikadistes” of October 21, 2025 at 4:08 PM

[Quote from Patrikios](#)

we have an innate predisposition to form these divine images, but not because gods actually exist.

Is this a correct understanding of how to interpret how Epicurus referred to 'god(s)'?

In general, and from my humble perspective, I think this is right on the money.

I also think this creates coherence for Epíkouros to use both the plural ("deities") and the masculine, accusative, singular pronoun ("him") in the same paragraph. Each of us can create our own "him", so to speak, and the collection of our "hims" are the "they". I then think that the appearance of each of "them" can be conceived of as a reflection of "it" ("the divine nature").

I don't want to distract from your point because I think that you nailed it, but I'd add the caveat that I think ancient Epicureans would say that the gods *are* real, they just aren't massive animals.

This also provides coherence with the idea that the gods are infinite, not necessarily because the universe is physically infinite and there are infinite god-animals in infinite void, but because there are infinite animals capable of each conceiving of their own deity or collection of deities.

I'm also, personally coming to the conclusion that, internally, in Epicurean documents written from one Epicurean to another, within the context of their own, frank speech, when they wrote *theos* ("deity"), they may have always implied *theon morphes* ("the **form** of a deity") even if they didn't spell out "form" each time. If it were the case that they meant "the appearance of animal-beings" and not "literal super-animals", writing "form" may have been rhetorically redundant for them.