

Long and Sedley, Hellenistic Philosophers, "Gods"

Post by "Godfrey" of November 26, 2020 at 4:10 PM

I haven't yet read the full Sedley piece so I might be repeating something in there or in Jackson. But for the full context of this and similar discussions we've got to keep in mind that Epicurus was considering a very specific notion of gods, which of course was the Greek idea. I think that that's part of the difficulty in that it's very tempting for people today to intermingle a variety of conceptions of gods and god and "spirituality" with the Greek conception of gods. Similarly with the physics: part of the beauty of Epicurean physics is how relevant they are to today's physics. This can beguile us into conflating our ideas with his. Taken together this makes for a very tangled web: modern notions of physics can confuse Epicurean notions of gods, and vice versa.

Regarding the prolepses, I've no problem with a prolepsis of justice (fairness?) as it does seem to be something seen in children and some animals. Plus the PDs are quite specific on how to work with that prolepsis. A prolepsis of the gods is more difficult to sort out: is this prolepsis supposed to be the same in all cultures?