

A Great Summary With References Of The Epicurean Affirmation Of The Existence of "Gods"

Post by "Cassius" of July 7, 2018 at 7:07 AM

Wow MK, that post was dense with information, articulate, insightful, and gathers together in one place a great list of evidence that anyone thinking about this subject needs to consider. Thank you for taking the time to write that - I am going to make a note of it so when this subject is discussed again your comments can be referenced! This is Facebook and we don't expect every post to meet this kind of standard, but citing references and addressing controversial subjects courteously and professionally - can't say enough good about it.

Also:

Those last three paragraphs in particular ("To call all of this....") is really thought-provoking and in my view is right. Many people seem to want to conclude that Epicurus was being a coward and just protecting himself from the religious crowd exercising the "Socrates solution" on him, but it seems clear to me that there was no need for the Epicureans to have been so "over-the-top" in insisting on the existence of their version of gods if they were just trying to escape laws against atheism. As Martin points out "Epicurean pronouncements on the gods were more self-assured than most of the other schools" and they seemed to exhibit no hesitancy to go into detail speculating on the attributes of Epicurean divinity. Cicero documented this in "On the Nature of the Gods": "Hereupon Velleius began, in the confident manner (I need not say) that is customary with Epicureans, afraid of nothing so much as lest he should appear to have doubts about anything. One would have supposed he had just come down from the assembly of the gods in the intermundane spaces of Epicurus! "I am not going to expound to you doctrines that are mere baseless figments of the imagination....."

We may not agree with all the conclusions that the Epicureans reached, but I don't doubt for a minute that they were serious about them and that we can gain a lot of insight and value from taking their arguments seriously.