

The Letter to Menoeceus - Translation By Cyril Bailey

Post by "Cassius" of December 18, 2021 at 8:52 PM

Camotero I think I need clarification on what you are asking.

My view is that Epicurus was very clear about at the very least a couple of things in this area:

(1) Epicurus was very clear that gods are physical beings and that the type of beings he is discussing really exist;

(2) The gods are so far away from us, and beyond our ability to perceive them through the five senses, and our only information about them comes from (1) mental processing of data about the nature of the universe and what we would expect it to contain, which involves anticipations. That's what I was referring to above. In addition as a source of knowledge is (2) the receipt of "images" directly by the mind, which are not registered through the five senses. There are lots of uncertainties about what (2) means, but it's very clearly in the texts, so if we are asking what Epicurus taught, information through "images" has to be part of the mix. I personally do not believe that the mind's direct receipt of images constitutes (is the same as) anticipations, but there's a lot of uncertainty about the nature of anticipations.

I realize that there are a lot of people, including some here, who think that [Epicurean gods](#) are simply mental constructs and that they don't really exist. That is not my position, because I think Epicurus was serious about what he wrote. I also think Epicurus thought that physical concepts such as isonomia and "nature never makes only one thing of a kind" plus "eternal universe" and "infinite universe" all compel the conclusion that deathless beings exist somewhere in the universe, so I think he was very comfortable with this conclusion and did not consider it to be a stretch or lacking in reason to be firm about it.

I am not sure if what I have written addresses your comment but I would be glad to expand further if there's part you would like to clarify.