

Epicureans and the Ancient Greek Gods (Imagery of "Gods" / "Gods Among Men")

Post by "Matt" of March 25, 2019 at 10:06 AM

Yes indeed, Lucretius does open his work with a hymn honoring Venus.

There is no question that the ancient Epicureans did in fact have reverence for the ancient Roman and Hellenic deities, at the very least in some allegorical or poetic sense. Basically that the deities represented forces of nature or human emotion.

Obviously an allegorical god is not the same thing as a real "atomic" god. The issue is that Epicurus himself posits that the gods are in fact real. Going as far to give them particular attributes and sensations. Yet without giving any evidence of their existence as specifically described.

Epicurus may have known his gods did not exist, but he promulgated a very specific theology that assured his followers that *they do in fact exist* only to avoid accusations of atheism. In this case, a person needs to be able to look past or justify a complete theological fabrication (an outright lie) by Epicurus himself, which in my opinion is an ethical dilemma that casts a very long shadow.

It's an interesting study.