

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

Post by "Cassius" of March 25, 2019 at 11:37 AM

[Quote from Matthaesus](#)

Though the subject is endlessly discussed with no reconciliation, It represents an important critical analysis of a very important aspect of the philosophy.

I fully agree with that. Everyone who studies Epicurus needs to study this aspect of his thought, just as much as his thought on the size of the sun, which shows his approach.

[Quote from Matthaesus](#)

The problem is that he asserts their reality without evidence of any kind.

I think this is the heart of the dispute - the meaning and implications of the word "evidence." Maybe because of my legal occupation, I am fully comfortable with the idea that circumstantial evidence is fully as admissible in considering difficult issues as is "direct" evidence. While it would certainly be preferable to have "eyeball" /photograph evidence of a "god" in its native environment, we don't have that level of science available to us, just as we can't eyeball atoms but have firm confidence that they exist.

So in my world the issue is not that Epicurus did not have any evidence, but that some people don't accept his evidence as sufficient, and that in itself leads off into very important issues of debate over the nature of "evidence." Here we are at a terrible loss of texts, although I do think that Philodemus' "On Methods of Inference" is helpful, and other clear implications can be drawn in other texts that Epicurus was well aware of the issues involved in "circumstantial evidence."