

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

Post by "Cassius" of March 25, 2019 at 7:27 PM

[Quote from Oscar](#)

I know this is asking a lot, post the specific attributes and sensations that Epicurus gives to his God(s)?

It would be interesting to try to address this specifically, although it is dangerous to tease too much out of isolated passages, single words, translations, etc.

1. Blessed
2. Immortal

We have then a preconception of such a nature that we believe the gods to be blessed and immortal. For nature, which bestowed upon us an idea of the gods themselves, also engraved on our minds the belief that they are eternal and blessed.

3. Human shape
4. Not corporeal, but resembling a bodily substance
5. Not containing blood, but the semblance of blood

"For the divine form we have the hints of nature supplemented by the teachings of reason. From nature all men of all races derive the notion of gods as having human shape and none other; for in what other shape do they ever appear to anyone, awake or asleep? But not to make primary concepts the sole test of all things, reason itself delivers the pronouncement. For it seems appropriate that a being who is the most exalted, whether by reason of his happiness or of his eternity, should also be the most beautiful; but what disposition of the limbs, what cast of features, what shape or outline can be more beautiful than the human form? You Stoics at least, Lucilius, (for my friend Cotta says one thing at one time and another at another) are wont to portray the skill of the divine creator by enlarging on beauty as well as the utility of design displayed in all parts of the human figure. But if the human figure surpasses the form of all other living beings, and god is a living being, god must possess the shape which is the most beautiful of all; and since it is agreed that the gods are supremely happy, and no one can be happy without virtue, and virtue cannot exist without reason, and reason is only found in the human shape, it follows that the gods possess the form of man. Yet their form is not corporeal, but only resembles bodily substance; it does not contain blood, but the semblance of blood.

Not part of description but of our perception of them

6. "...an endless train of precisely similar images arises from the innumerable atoms and streams towards the gods,"

7. In number, at least as many gods as there are humans:

From this principle it follows that if the whole number of mortals be so many, there must exist no less a number of immortals, and if the causes of destruction are beyond count, the causes of conservation also are bound to be infinite

8. How they spend their time:

... how they pass their days. The answer is, their life is the happiest conceivable, and the one most bountifully furnished with all good things. God is entirely inactive and free from all ties of occupation; he toils not neither does he labor, but he takes delight in his own wisdom and virtue, and knows with absolute certainty that he will always enjoy pleasures at once consummate and everlasting.

9. Somewhere it is stated that they speak Greek, or a language like Greek, but I am not sure of the cite for that.