

Episode 249 - Cicero's OTNOTG 24 - Are The Epicurean Gods Totally Inactive, And Are We To Emulate Them Through Laziness?

Post by "Bryan" of October 19, 2024 at 1:32 AM

[Quote from TauPhi](#)

column 34 seems to be a refutation of philosophers endorsing the four elements as building blocks of reality coming directly from Epicurus in his 'On Nature - Book 14'

Thank you for bringing this up! Here is one version of what remains from columns 33-35. This is very interpretive, the bracketed and rubricated version with comments is attached.

Epíkouros, Peri Phýseōs, Book 14, P.Herc. 1148, columns 33-35:

(about monism) ...for these situations are not generated from this one single underlying substance by its concentrating or by its dispersing – but rather, what situation prevails is produced out of the differences in the variations of the shapes...

(about Platonic solids) ...such is the case for those who define one particular shape for fire, or earth, or water, or air: since they are more ridiculous than those who do not define one particular shape for each element – given that, in their comparative juxtapositions, those who define shape for elements should have agreed, either willingly or unwillingly, that certain multiple particular forms of shapes are produced which can affirmatively be said to be substantial [i.e., really existing] in accordance with each compound: but some miss the mark regarding these component elements, and there is something more consistent to be said that pertains to these elements – speaking in this way, those who define one particular shape for each element could also wholly refer to the difference in the mixtures – but those people who... for the...

...how could someone perceive water or air or fire as solid and indissoluble, when one cannot even perceive earth as solid and indissoluble? not to mention the fact that those people representing these ideas of indissoluble elements do in reality divide them: given that each of these elements is not conceived as solid, then one could provide many and varied images of shapes according to the divisions of elements – and there will not be just triangles, or pyramids, or cubes, or any other finite shape specific to each element – for those who define a particular shape for each element would have nothing persuasive to say to convince us that it is more fitting to think that these four visible forms are apprehended by us according to their divisions of a specific shape for each element rather than the elements being varied in their specific

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class of shapes...