

Discussion of the Society of Epicurus' 20 Tenets of 12/21/19

Post by “Hiram” of January 9, 2020 at 4:11 PM

[Quote from Oscar](#)

In O'Keefe, the author introduces the issue by stating that what the Epicurean god(s) are is unclear but discussed two theories about what Epicureanism proposed for the nature of the gods. The issue, Hiram, with SoFE tenets is that you declare there are three acceptable Epicurean positions when, for all we know, Epicureanism has only one position we just aren't certain which one it is.

Well, "Epicurean-ism" is not a person with a single mind and a single opinion on the matter. WE are the people who hold the label "Epicurean", and we hold a diversity of views.

What I AM saying is that members of SoFE are willing to accept as Epicureans people who hold these three positions, frankly, because there are good arguments for all three. All three are Epicurean, as far as I'm concerned, because they are part of our tradition.

The view that Epicurus held was clearly the realist view, but if we required all Epicureans today to hold this view, there would only be a handful of people who understand, much less accept this view, and we would almost all of us have to excommunicate ourselves from what we're doing.

The idealist and the atheist views are both not what Epicurus opined.

In fact, [Elayne](#) in particular is making claims of orthodoxy and then says that she adheres to the atheist view. If she were to follow the “only one interpretation possible” approach, she would have to exclude herself from epicureanism. Epicurus WOULD NOT HAVE ANYTHING TO DO with atheists in his day! 😊 In [the scroll on piety](#), Philodemus mentions an account of three atheists who are mentioned by name. In my commentary of the scroll, I wrote:

*It's ironic that so many atheists today consider Epicurus as one among their number. **Epicurus mentions the need to despise atheists, reproaches them as mad, Bacchic revellers and admonishes them “not to trouble or disturb us”, mentioning Critias, Doagoras and Prodicus by name.***

*The piety of Epicurus and his followers is mentioned frequently in the Philodeman scroll. It describes how **celebrations of the 20th were, originally, in part religious and Epicurus' "house was decorated piously" for the occasion. The oaths and invocations were, also, religious in nature and in his Epistle to Diotimus, Epicurus is said to have warned against "violating the covenant of the sacred festival table".***

...

Therefore, even if they are now in the majority, Epicurean atheist thinkers are part of the contemporary branch of the tradition and could not have emerged at the roots of our history. Epicurus would not have had it.

So we have to, at all times, humbly embrace the fact that what we are doing is a modern revival of Epicureanism.