

PD01 - Blessed and Imperishable?

Post by "Cassius" of March 2, 2020 at 8:17 AM

Dewitt makes the comment in EAHP that while other Epicureans did, he did not believe that Epicurus *himself* called the gods immortal, only having the *capacity* to continue to live if they so choose.

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The new theology that resulted is astonishing. Some of the findings are as follows:

The gods are not by nature **deathless**. They were never called immortal by Epicurus himself, though they were by his followers.

The gods are animate creatures, resembling human beings, that is, atomic in composition and structure. As such they are theoretically not immune to the contingency of dissolution but in practice this event is avertible. Thus they may be styled incorruptible in the sense that they are subject to a contingency that need never occur.

I think this issue of deathlessness of an individual god would also be related to the question of whether an individual god has also existed for eternity, or became "godlike" through some process which had a beginning. While the universe itself would need to be eternal under the atomistic theory, no individual thing within the universe would be subject to that same eternality requirement, and the reverse is probably true - all things that are composed of atoms *at some point came together from the atoms*. I don't myself have an opinion on when or how, but I presume this is a function of the eternal universe that Epicurus said to consider.

As to this:

[Quote from Eugenios](#)

Epicurus was adamant that philosophy had to be practical and to improve one's life. Re-examining the connotations of ἄφθαρτος allows us to see that that idea doesn't have to be a mystical imperishability but one rooted in the here and now

Now here I would be reluctant to go so far. I think that especially in an issue like the nature of divinity, Epicurus might consider that an attribute of divinity such as deathlessness (for the gods) might have application to us as reassurance of the overall doctrine that the gods do not interfere with us, even if we as humans are never able to achieve deathlessness ourselves.