

Which (Epicurean) God ...?

Post by “Pacatus” of May 28, 2023 at 5:30 PM

In Hinduism, there is the concept of “Ishtadevata”: your personally chosen or preferred god for devotion/worship/contemplation. Since the gods don’t tend to be jealous, that doesn’t mean you cannot honor other gods as well.

Given the Greek (and Greco-Roman) polytheism of Epicurus’ time – which really does not support relating to just an ambiguous, abstract notion of “divinity” (natural or supernatural) – and Epicurus’ encouragement to honor the gods ... which might you choose as your “ishtadevata”? (Not that I think you have to be limited to the Greco-Roman pantheons.)

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I am generally drawn to Dionysus: god of wine and song, dance and ecstasy (etc.).

But, on reflection, I think I’ll go with **Gaia**: goddess of the earth – a primordial Greek divinity that represents all the gifts of the earth in which we live. And, I think, a goddess who personifies the naturality (and nature) in which we exist. Perhaps not so distant as the gods that might dwell in the cosmic interstices of distant worlds ...

As for some contemplative ritual or practice – I need to work on that.

Looking forward to seeing others’ thoughts ...



Image of The Earth Goddess at the Atlanta Botanical Gardens.

Post by “Don” of May 28, 2023 at 6:29 PM

I'd have to think about me, but I seem to remember DeWitt writing about Epicurus's connection to Apollo.

And Philodemus throws in the occasional "By Zeus!" into his prose.

And, of course, we have the literal Hymn to Venus from Lucretius.

I don't think they'd necessarily fall under a "personally chosen or preferred god" or not, but those individual gods peppered throughout Epicurean texts are intriguing.

Post by “Pacatus” of May 28, 2023 at 6:37 PM

[Don](#)

One would think that Hedone/Voluptas would be natural options.

But -- you're Apollo all the way! 😊

Post by “Root304” of May 30, 2023 at 5:10 AM

I've yet to be drawn to any particular God that made sense for me to set up a votive image of and think about in terms of Epicurean veneration. I've thought about it, maybe even desired it, and probably given it too much thought. But for me the Heroic figure of Epicurus and his Friends are enough for me to get the job done in terms of votive images to set up or figures to think about while reciting passages, remembering or otherwise reflecting on the teachings. I wouldn't know exactly what I would be doing with a hunting Goddess like the Finnish Mielikki or the Saint of Hunting in Saint Hubert, for examples of figures I've thought about venerating, beyond toying with abstract concepts about the practice of hunting has had on my life and humankind. I'd be better off having an image of my father who was quite the hunter-gatherer when he was alive. Bringing abstract concepts back to memories, relationships, Friendships, seems more Epicurean to me. Let photographs and other objects that remind me of my Friendships, be my votive images.

Post by “Pacatus” of May 31, 2023 at 12:17 PM

This makes perfect sense, and I think is quite in sync with Epicurean tradition.