

# Prolepsis Citations from Long & Sedley

Post by “Little Rocker” of July 4, 2024 at 7:27 PM

Don, you are amazing! There's a lot happening here:

## [Quote from Don](#)

Col.31: Epicurus, in a letter to Polyaeus, writes: "(It is necessary for us) to conceive of their nature as accurately constituting the notion of benefit according to the epistemological standard (kriterion). Let us sacrifice to those gods devoutly and fittingly on that proper days, and let us fittingly perform all the acts of worship in accordance with the laws, in no way disturbing ourselves with opinions on matters concerning the most excellent and august of beings. Moreover, let us sacrifice justly, on the view that I was giving. For in this way it is possible for mortal nature, by Zeus, to live like Zeus, as it seems. And concerning obeisance (προσκυήσεις) in [Epicurus's] On Lifecourses [Περὶ βίωv]"

Here's an attempt at rendering its content: Divine nature (its blessedness and indestructibility) constitutes (either fully or partially) the *kriterion* of benefit. So expressing some form of reverence to that nature benefits us. For that reason, we can comply in good faith ('devoutly'/'justly') with the acts of worship required by law. However, we Epicureans will make such sacrifices free from the disturbing opinions of the many about what it means to 'benefit' from the gods.

So on my take, the question Polyaeus has asked is: 'is it impious to comply with the laws requiring sacrifices, given that we don't think the gods reward people in exchange for sacrifices?' Because surely, there was a question about whether they participated simply to avoid breaking the law or with some measure of sincerity.