

Article: The Ethical Implications of Epicurus' Theology by Stefano Mecci

Post by "Joshua" of September 26, 2023 at 6:37 PM

Unfortunately the subject of the gods is the one about which we have the greatest lack of source material. DeWitt (the Great Hypothesizer?) suggested that Lucretius' "lost" seventh book dealt with the gods at length. Epicurus wrote a scroll on the same, which really is lost, and we have two books from Philodemus on the [Epicurean gods](#).

Diogenes Laertius does not record that Metrodorus wrote on the question specifically, but he did write a response to Plato's *Euthyphro*, a dialogue in which Socrates attempts to understand the meaning of Piety.

Lucretius, meanwhile, does give us in Book V a definition of *Pietas* which he contrasts with the *Religio* of Agamemnon in Book I;

Quote

O unhappy race of men,
when they ascribed such actions to the gods
and added to them bitter rage! What sorrows
they then made for themselves, what wounds for us,
what weeping for our children yet to come!
There is no piety in being seen
time and again turning towards a stone
with one's head covered and approaching close
to every altar, and hurling oneself
prostrate on the ground, stretching out one's palms
before gods' shrines, or spreading lots of blood
from four-footed beasts on altars, or piling
sacred pledges onto sacred pledges,

but rather in being able to perceive
all things with one's mind at peace.

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