

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

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I wanted to share some additional material from *On Piety*, mixed in with some of my theological notes:

While scrutinizing these conjectures about **divine** “*beings surpassing* [ὑπερβαλλουσῶν or *hyperballousōn*] *in power* [δυνάμει or *dynámei*] *and excellence* [σπουδαιότητι or *soudaiótēti*], beings that “*excel* [ὑπερέχον or *hyperékhon*] *in sovereignty* [ἡγεμονίαν or *hegemonían*], Philodemus entertains the critical position that “*no one has been prolific in finding convincing demonstrations for the existences of the gods; nevertheless all men, with the exception of some [...] worship them, as do we*” (οὐδεὶς εἰκνουμένας περὶ τοῦ θεοῦς ὑπάρχει[ιν τὰς ἀπο]δείξεις εὐπ[όρησ]εν· ὁμῶς δε [σέβ]ονται πάντε[ς εἰ μὴ παρ]άκοποί τινε[ς αὐτοῦς, *On Piety*, Col. 23, 13-17). The conception of the **divine** nature “*is the best* [ἄριστον or *áriston*] *and most holy* [σεμνότατον or *semnótaton* or “*dignified*”], *most worthy of emulation* [ἄξιοζηλωτότατον or *áxiozēlōtótaton*, “*enviable*”], *having dominion over all good things, unburdened by affairs, and exalted* [ὑψηλόν or *hypsēlon*, “*sublime*”] *and great-minded* [μεγαλόφρονα or *megalóphrona*, “*noble*”] *and great-spirited* [μεγαλόψυχον or *megalópsykhon*, “*generous*”] *and ritually pure* [ἅγιον or *hágion*, “*sacred*”] *and purest* [ἁγιοτάτον or *agiótaton*, “*holiest*”] *and propitious* [ἴλεων or *hīleōn*, “*blameless*”]. *Therefore they say that they alone strive after the greatest form of piety* [εὐσέβειαν] [...] *the ineffable* [ἄφραστον or *áphraston*, “*inexpressible*” or “*marvellous*”] *pre-eminence* [ὑπεροχὴν or *hyperokhēn*, “*superiority*”] *of the strength* [ἰσχύος or *iskhúos*] *and perfection* [τελειότητος or *teleiótētos*, “*completeness*”] *of the divine* [τοῦ θεοῦ]. (*On Piety*, Col 45.2-30)