

# Epicurean Isonomy In The Context Of Statements By Balbus As To Gradations In Life In Book 2 of "On the Nature of the Gods"

Post by "Eikadistes" of August 8, 2025 at 8:27 PM

I've been wondering lately if Cicero (or a translator) misrepresents the context of *isonomy* as a *theological* concept, where ancient Epicureans may have only meant it as a *physical* one.

I haven't looked yet ... just wondering.

(I need to scour our sources and answer *this* for myself: do we have any instances of *any* Epicureans *ever* employing this term, outside of the penmanship of Cicero? I'm always critical of him, though, he studied under an Epicurean scholar, so the misunderstanding may very well be my own.)

I'm considering that it makes less sense if "*immortals*" means "*deities*" rather than "*atoms/void*".

This idea of "*the balance of numerically distinct deities*" always puzzled me. So, it makes less sense when I read "*immortals*" as "*deities*" rather than "*particles and void*" or even "*laws of physics*".

Within the context of "cosmic maintenance", it makes *total* sense to me if "immortals" were a reference to the "*eternal, indestructible particles*" and the "*eternal, infinite void*". In the context of physical cosmology, *isonomy* might be conceived of as the principle that dictates the balance that "there are **p** particles for every **v** volume of void. If **p** were too high, there'd be no room to move. If **v** were too high, there'd be no *stuff*. But there's *stuff* that *moves*, so, *in principle*, we live in a goldilocks zone were the *metakosmíos* is imbued with a balanced ration of *particles-to-void; physical isonomy*.

Lucretius compliments this *physical* isonomy (I'm appropriating the word here) with *emotional* and *political* isonomies, dramatized as a balance between the powers of Venus and Mavor. We could go on, identifying different binaries that require balance for a healthy state (of world, mind, friendships, etc.). I'm just wondering if the *theological isonomy* is the only kind every mentioned.