

Philodemus "On Gods" in translation (English or other)?

Post by "Robert" of October 12, 2025 at 11:53 AM

Hello!

I'm interested in studying this text but so far haven't been able to find an English translation (or even a translation into another modern language). The 1916 scholarly edition by Diels (in German) is available, but while Diels provided extensive commentary, he didn't include an actual translation of the text on the columns, as far as I can tell. The author of the [\[wentiers blog\]](#) has provided several translated extracts, from a paper by Essler, and I've read papers that cite this book by Philodemus--so it seems like a translation must exist somewhere.

It's odd that so little is available, as it seems like it could be one of our best sources available for understanding Epicurean theology, at least as interpreted by later Epicureans. It's interesting to pair it with Velleius's account in Cicero's "De Natura Deorum" as there are obvious points of alignment but also some interesting differences--Velleius, for instance, asserts that the gods do not engage in any activity, whereas Philodemus denies that they are without occupation (assuming I've understood both authors correctly).

Post by "Cassius" of October 12, 2025 at 12:12 PM

Great question.

Post by "TauPhi" of October 12, 2025 at 4:07 PM

[Robert](#) You may find this interesting:

<https://www.hcsjournal.org/ojs/index.php/hcs/article/download/123/112/216>

This paper will give you a general idea why so little is available in English (mostly because very little is available in general).

Right now, it appears there are only few unpublished columns for PHerc. 26 (which is 'On Gods - Book 1') and fragments of PHerc 152/157 (Book 3) which you've already found on Twentiers' site (an excellent place to look for Epicurean texts).

Post by “Don” of October 12, 2025 at 6:45 PM

FYI

[DCLP/Trismegistos 62382 = LDAB 3547](#)

[DCLP/Trismegistos 62384 = LDAB 3549](#)

[DCLP/Trismegistos 62386 = LDAB 3551](#)

These plus additional fragments:

[PN Search](#)

PS: I realize this is not a translation but I'm posting here to give us an idea of the amount of the text of On God's that has survived from the ancient world not counting any cited fragments quoted by other ancient authors.

Post by “Robert” of October 13, 2025 at 8:20 PM

Thank you, all! I have a clearer picture now of where things stand. Much respect to the scholars over the years who have put so much work into trying to piece this together!