

Divinity - Primary Citations on Divinity

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Epicurus held that gods are totally natural. They are in no way supernatural, in no way omnipotent, in no way omnipresent. They are totally incapable of creating something from nothing. This is very different from modern use of the term. This is a very complex subject so [please see additional discussion here](#) and throughout this website.

1. Nature of the Gods

1.1. U386 Philodemus, On Piety, Vol. Herc. 2, II.76.1 (p. 106 Gomperz; Obbink I.27.754)

... he says that as being both the greatest thing, and that which as it were excels in sovereignty, it possesses everything: for every wise man holds pure and holy beliefs about the divine and has understood that this nature is great and august. And it is particularly at festivals that he, progressing to an understand of it, through having its name the whole time on his lips, embraces with conviction more seriously

2. Attitude of Humans Toward The Gods

2.1. From Philodemus "On Piety" 126 Gomperz (387 U, 114 A)

"Again: 'let us sacrifice to the gods,' he says, 'piously and well, as is appropriate, and let us do everything according to the laws, but [let us do so] not disturbing them at all with our opinions on the topic of those who are best and most majestic; again, we say that it is even right [to do this] on the basis of the opinion which I was discussing. For in this way, by Zeus, it is possible for a mortal nature to live like Zeus, as it appears."

2.2. From Philodemus "On Piety" 105 Gomperz (157 U, 86 A)

"Moreover, in his letter to Polyaeus he says that one should join in the celebration of the festival of the Anthesteria. For one must remember the gods as being the causes of many good things."

2.3. Philodemus, On the Life of the Gods, Vol. Herc. 1, VI col. 1

... to the gods, and he admires their nature and their condition and tries to approach them and, so to speak, yearns to touch them and to be together with them; and he calls Sages "friends of the gods" and the gods "friends of Sages."

2.4. Philodemus, On Music, Vol. Herc. 1, I c.4,6:

Now, these very important things may still be said at the present: that the divine does not need any honor; for us, nevertheless, it's natural to honor it, above all, with pious convictions, even through the rites of national tradition, each according to his proper part.

2.5. Philodemus, On the Life of the Gods, Vol. Herc. 1, VI col. 1:

... to the gods, and he admires their nature and their condition and tries to approach them and, so to speak, yearns to touch them and to be together with them; and he calls Sages "friends of the gods" and the gods "friends of Sages."

3. Attitude of the Gods Toward Humans

3.1. From Philodemus "On Piety", referring to Epicurus' "On Nature", Bk. 13. Translation from "The Epicurus Reader" by Brad Inwood

"In book 13 [he mentions] the congeniality which god feels for some and the alienation [for others]."