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Edited by Joseph B. Mayor and J. H. Swainson

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# Cicero, De Natura Deorum Libri Tres

*With Introduction and Commentary*

VOLUME 3

EDITED BY JOSEPH B. MAYOR  
CICERO  
AND J. H. SWAINSON



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M. TULLII CICERONIS  
DE NATURA DEORUM  
LIBRI TRES

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LIBRI TRES

*WITH INTRODUCTION AND COMMENTARY*

BY

JOSEPH B. MAYOR, M.A.

TOGETHER WITH

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By J. H. SWAINSON, M.A.

FORMERLY FELLOW OF TRINITY COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE.

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## PREFACE.

IN concluding a work which has cost me many years of labour, it may not be out of place to state why I first undertook it and what I have tried to accomplish. Believing that the entrance of Christianity into the world is the central fact of man's history, the key to all that preceded and all that has followed it, I have always esteemed it to be the highest office of classical scholarship to throw light upon the state of thought and feeling in the two great nations of antiquity at the time of the birth of Christ. It is as a contribution to such an inquiry that the treatise on the Nature of the Gods seems to me to possess a unique interest and value; not because Cicero was himself the most original, the most earnest, or the most religious thinker of his time; but because he, more than any other, reflects for us the best tone of his time, because he represents to us most truly its highest level of intelligence and morality. To what extent then do we find in his writings any

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anticipation of the religion which was to establish itself, not in Judaea alone but in Greece and Italy also, within a hundred years of his death? We find in the first place the way prepared for Christianity by the abandonment of the old polytheism. The arguments used against the later Paganism by such men as Minucius, Tertullian, Arnobius, Lactantius and even Augustine himself are largely borrowed from this very dialogue. Nor is it only in the negative direction that Cicero exhibits to us philosophy preparing the way for Christianity. That God is perfect in wisdom, power, and goodness, that men are his children, partakers of his Spirit, that his Providence overrules all things to the best end, that the only acceptable worship is that in spirit and in truth, that virtue is a Divine gift, that God is the animating Spirit of the universe and yet has his peculiar abode in the heart of the virtuous, who shall hereafter be partakers of eternal<sup>1</sup> blessedness in heaven,—this is the teaching of Balbus, as modified by the criticisms of Cicero, and this is also the foundation of the teaching of the New Testament; it is Bishop Butler's 'Natural Religion' in its purest form. That Christians themselves recognized a positive element of Christianity in the writings of Cicero is strikingly shown by the passage given as the motto of this volume, in which St Augustine describes the impression produced upon his own mind by the study of the *Hortensius*<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *N. D.* II 62, III 12.<sup>2</sup> *Confess.* III 4.



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But Cicero's treatise is not only interesting from a historical point of view. It gains a further practical interest when we see him contending on behalf of rational religion against superstition on the one side and atheism on the other; when we find him upholding the union of reason and religion, both against those who placed religion outside the bounds of reason, making it rest on authority alone, and against those who maintained that the belief in a Divine Governour of the world was contrary to reason and detrimental to virtue and happiness. And then when we look onward to the further development of this contest, and see how the agnosticism of Cicero's time, after it had served its purpose in purifying the religious idea from its incrustations, itself disappeared before the vast influx of a religion which satisfied heart and mind alike, may not this suggest a similar issue for the struggle in which we ourselves are engaged, and may we not recognize, under the materialistic and agnostic tendencies of the present, the hand of God's Providence clearing the way for a purer and more enlightened Christianity in the future?

While however my chief aim has been to illustrate and explain the general argument of Cicero, I have not knowingly passed over any minor difficulty without doing my best to clear it up. For this end I have carefully studied all that has been written by my predecessors in the same field, and I have incorporated in my own commentary whatever seemed of value in

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their writings. I hope that something has also been done for the improvement of the text in my critical notes, and something in the commentary and index to advance the knowledge of Ciceronian Latin. As regards the text I have always named the originator of any improvement; in the explanatory notes I have followed the example of Schömann, treating as common property all that had been collected up to the date of the last variorum edition (A.D. 1818), but naming my authority wherever I have borrowed from later writers, such as Allen or Schömann himself.

In conclusion I have only to repeat my thanks to Mr Roby and to my brother, Prof. J. E. B. Mayor, for looking over the proofs of this as of my former volumes, and to the Syndicate of the Cambridge University Press for undertaking the expense of publication.

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*Usitato jam discendi ordine perveneram in librum quendam Ciceronis, cujus linguam fere omnes mirantur, pectus non ita. Sed liber ille ipsius exhortationem continet ad philosophiam et vocatur Hortensius. Ille vero liber mutavit affectum meum et ad te ipsum, Domine, mutavit preces meas, et vota ac desideria mea fecit alia. Viluit mihi repente omnis vana spes et immortalitatem sapientiae concupiscebam aestu cordis incredibili, et surgere coeperam ut ad te redirem. AUG. Confess. III 4.*

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## INTRODUCTION.

## ON THE DESIGN AND EXECUTION OF THE DIALOGUE.

CICERO'S object in writing the *De Natura Deorum* was partly to complete his systematic exposition of Greek philosophy for the benefit of his countrymen<sup>1</sup>; but, as theology was in his opinion the most important as well as the most difficult branch of philosophy, determining the nature and even the possibility of religion, and thus involving the very existence of morality itself<sup>2</sup>, this speculative motive was reinforced by practical considerations of the most momentous character. The greater part of mankind seemed to him to be crushed under the weight of a degrading superstition, from which they could only be delivered by the propagation of more rational views on the subject of religion<sup>3</sup>. A few had been driven into atheism by the recoil from superstition; but religious belief was natural to man, and the real question at issue among thinking men generally was the nature and manner of life of those Divine Beings whose existence they were compelled to acknowledge. The Epicureans boasted loudly of what they had done to set men free from the fetters of superstition, but so far as they had succeeded in doing this, it was only by abandoning the belief in a providential government of the world and reducing religion to an empty form<sup>4</sup>. In fact their account of the Divine nature was so absurd that it was impossible to believe it could be seriously intended<sup>5</sup>. The Stoic doctrine was far more

<sup>1</sup> *Div.* II 3, 4 *ut nullum philosophiae locum esse pateremur qui non Latinis litteris illustratum pateret*, cf. *N. D.* I 9.

<sup>2</sup> *N. D.* I 1—4.

<sup>4</sup> *N. D.* I 3, 117, 121.

<sup>3</sup> *Div.* II 148—150.

<sup>5</sup> *N. D.* I 123, III 3.

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worthy of consideration. It rested on a large induction of facts and supplied a very noble theory of morals and religion<sup>1</sup>. Still the Stoics had laid themselves open to the criticism of the Academy, partly by their over-positiveness in doubtful matters, partly by their anxiety to find a justification for the popular belief in regard to divination and the multiplicity of gods. In his 3rd book Cicero states at length the Academic objections to the Stoic view, but concludes by avowing his own preference for the latter<sup>2</sup>.

If we compare this treatise with one which had appeared about ten years before, as a posthumous work, edited by Cicero himself after the death of its author, I think we cannot doubt that the later treatise was written with distinct reference to the earlier. I allude to the poem of Lucretius, of which Cicero speaks in such high terms in a letter to his brother Quintus written in Feb. 54 B.C., about four months after the poet's death, *Lucretii poemata, ut scribis, ita sunt, multis luminibus ingenii multae tamen artis*, and to which we find several allusions in this and other writings of Cicero<sup>3</sup>. The avowed motive of both writers is the same, to deliver

<sup>1</sup> *N. D.* i 4, 121, iii 4.

<sup>2</sup> *N. D.* iii 94, cf. *Divin.* i 9, ii 148.

<sup>3</sup> See Munro's *Lucretius Intr.* p. 93<sup>1</sup> foll. and compare *Lucr.* i 74 with *Fin.* ii 102, *Lucr.* ii 1092 with *Tusc.* i 48, *Lucr.* iii 983 with *Fin.* i 60, *Lucr.* iv 1070 with *Tusc.* iv 75, *Lucr.* vi 396 with *Div.* iii 44. The passage to Quintus (ii 10) is thus explained by Munro p. 108, "There seems to have been almost a formal antithesis between the rude genius of Ennius and the modern art. It is not then impossible that Quintus may so have expressed himself on this head, that Cicero may mean to answer 'yes, you are quite right in saying that Lucretius has not only much of the native genius of Ennius, but also much of that art which, to judge by most of the poets of the day, might seem incompatible with it'." I should gather from the words which follow (*sed, cum veneris, virum te putabo, si Sallustii Empedoclea legeris, hominem non putabo*) that Quintus had announced his intention of reading the *Empedoclea* on his return to Rome: Cicero says 'if you accomplish your purpose I shall admire your manhood (strength of will), but not think so highly of your humanity (feeling and taste)'. If we are to make any change in the reading, I very much prefer the emendation *sed, si ad umbilicum veneris, virum te putabo* (implying that Cicero, notwithstanding his admiration for the poet, shared the feeling of most moderns in regard to the technicalities of the Atomic System) to the emendation adopted by Mr G. A. Simcox in his *History of Latin Literature* (i p. 84) *multae tamen artis si eum inveneris, virum te putabo; si Sallustii Empedoclea legeris, hominem non putabo*, which he thus explains, 'Cicero gives his brother credit for recognizing Lucretius' genius in the many splendid passages of his poem, hopes he is man enough to recognize his skill as well, and tells

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## DESIGN AND EXECUTION OF THE DIALOGUE.

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mankind from the yoke of superstition. If Lucretius describes the state of the world, unenlightened by Epicurus, in the words *humana ante oculos foede cum vita jaceret in terris oppressa gravi sub religione, quae caput a caeli regionibus ostendebat horribili super aspectu mortalibus instans* (I 63 foll.), and again *faciunt animos humiles formidine divom depressosque premunt ad terram* (VI 52); we find Cicero (*Div.* II 148) deploring the evil in almost the same terms, *nam, ut vere loquamur, superstitio fusa per gentes oppressit omnium fere animos atque hominum imbecillitatem occupavit. . . . Instat enim et urget et quo te cumque verteris persequitur, sive tu vatem, sive tu omen audieris, sive immolaris, sive avem aspexeris, si Chaldaeum, si haruspicem videris, si fulserit, si tonuerit, si tactum aliquid erit de caelo, si ostenti simile natum factumve quippiam; quorum necesse est plerumque aliquid eveniat, ut numquam liceat quieta mente consistere. Perfugium videtur omnium laborum et sollicitudinum esse somnus. At ex eo ipso plurimae curae metusque nascuntur*<sup>1</sup>. If Lucretius speaks of the everlasting punishments of Tartarus as the climax of those terrors which kept men all their lifetime 'subject to bondage', Cicero makes his Stoic repudiate this as a superstition which was at length felt even by the vulgar to be no longer endurable<sup>2</sup>. It is true that Cicero does not in our dialogue go so far as to speak of crimes perpetrated in the name of religion, as Lucretius speaks of the sacrifice of Iphigenia: he is content here to show the folly and misery of superstition, and the inequity of the principles of action which it ascribes to the gods; but elsewhere he contrasts it with religion, as a spurious

him he will sink below humanity if he can read Sallust's *Empedocles*<sup>3</sup>. It is unnecessary to say more of this translation than that it loses the force of *tamen* and *virum*, as well as of the opposition between *virum* and *hominem*. I must caution my younger readers against trusting too implicitly to Mr Simeox where he touches on other points which concern our present treatise. The statement in I p. 80 that 'Panaetius had adopted the orthodox doctrines of omens and oracles instead of the consistent and simple fatalism of the earlier Stoics' is exactly the reverse of the truth, as may be seen from the passages cited in p. xxi of my 2nd volume and the notes on II 162, 163, III 93, 95; and Posidonius was not a Peripatetic (as is stated in vol. II 389) but one of the most famous of the younger Stoics.

<sup>1</sup> For *vates* cf. *N. D.* I 55 and *Lucr.* I 102 *tutemet a nobis jam quovis tempore vatium terroloquis victis dictis desciscere quaeres*; for *somnus* *Lucr.* I 132, IV 33; for *quieta mens* the *tranquilla pax animi* of *Lucr.* VI 78, the *suave mari magno* of II 1.

<sup>2</sup> *Lucr.* I 107 foll., *N. D.* II 5, I 86 n.

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imitation, bearing to it the same relation as rashness to fortitude, craftiness to prudence, and tending to blind and stupefy the conscience. The same idea seems to be implied in the phrase used (*N. D.* I 1) that a knowledge of theology is necessary *ad moderandam religionem*<sup>1</sup>. Again, as the evil deplored by both writers is the same, so is the remedy proposed, which is in a word the scientific theory of nature, *religio quae est juncta cum cognitione naturae* (*Div.* II 149), the *physica constansque ratio*, which is opposed to superstition in *N. D.* III 92, II 63, *Div.* I 126; in the words of Lucretius I 146 *hunc igitur terrorem animi tenebrasque necesses non radii solis neque lucida tela diei discutiant, sed naturae species ratioque*. Further we find both writers agreed as to the fact, that the Divine existence is not inconsistent with the scientific theory of nature, and as to the origin of religious belief among mankind from the awe-inspiring phenomena of nature and the orderly movements of the heavenly bodies<sup>2</sup>.

From this point however the two writers draw apart. Cicero accepts as valid the above-mentioned grounds of religious belief and adds to them the general consent of mankind, the traditional faith of Rome, the marks of intelligence and of benevolence visible in the universe; while he ridicules the solitary evidence on which Lucretius appears to build his theology, that of dreams, and shows how arbitrary and inconsistent is the Epicurean idea of the 'intermundian' gods<sup>3</sup>. To the fortuitous concourse of atoms and the *fortuna gubernans* of Lucretius he opposes the *providentia gubernans* of the Stoics<sup>4</sup>. Lastly, while it is *religio* which is the curse of mankind according to Lucretius, with Cicero it is *superstitio*; over and over again he distinguishes the one from the other, as the lawful from the unlawful, the rational from the irrational, the holy from the unholy, and sums up in the words, *ita factum est in superstitioso et religioso alterum vitii nomen, alterum laudis*. The way in which he introduces his distinction has the air of remonstrance against a misuse of the word *religio* (*N. D.* II 71), *non enim philosophi solum* (referring to

<sup>1</sup> Lucretius I 80 foll., *N. D.* I 42, II 70, *Part. Or.* 81 *religionem superstitio imitatur, Cluent.* 194 *nocturna sacrificia sceleratasque ejus preces et nefaria vota cognovimus; quibus illa etiam deos immortales de suo scelere testatur, neque intellegit pietate et religione et justis precibus deorum mentes, non contaminata superstitione neque ad scelus perficiendum caesis hostiis posse placari.*

<sup>2</sup> Lucretius v 1183—1240, *N. D.* III 16, *Div.* II 148.

<sup>3</sup> *Tusc.* I 30, *Leg.* I 24, *Div.* II 148, *N. D.* III 5, *Leg.* I 25, *Tusc.* I 68 foll., Lucretius v 1161 foll., *N. D.* I 76 foll.

<sup>4</sup> Lucretius v. 107. *N. D.* II 73, 93.



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the Greek distinction between εἰσέβεια and δεισιδαιμονία already established in the time of Polybius, who however does not altogether condemn the latter in vi 56), *verum etiam majores nostri superstitionem a religione separaverunt*; while at the same time the fact that he thinks it necessary to claim the authority of ancient usage for his own distinction, may perhaps be regarded as an indication that it was not yet fully recognized. It was apparently unknown to the author of the treatise *ad Herennium*, who couples *religio* with *ambitio* and other passions which impel to evil (ii 34); but it seems to have been observed by all later writers. Thus, while Lucretius always uses *religio* in a bad sense and never uses *superstitio* at all, his imitator Virgil reserves *religio* for what is laudable and speaks of *vana superstitio veterumque ignara deorum* (*Aen.* viii 187), and so Horace reckons *tristis superstitio* among the diseases of the mind (*Sat.* ii 3. 79). Perhaps it may be thought that the difference between Cicero and Lucretius is not a difference of meaning as to the word *religio*, but a difference of feeling and judgment as regards the facts denoted by the word. Such a view would be quite consistent with the supposition that Cicero's dialogue is intended in part as a protest against the doctrine advocated by Lucretius; but Lucretius himself asserts more than once that his doctrine is not hostile to religion, as Cicero would understand that word<sup>1</sup>. In either case it seems to me clear that, while agreeing with Lucretius as to the evils wrought in the name of religion, Cicero wished to make it plain to all men that these evils did not flow from religion rightly understood, but from its corruption, which he distinguished by the name of *superstitio*; and that an indiscriminate attack on all that went under the name of religion was even more injurious to society than superstition itself.

Assuming then that Cicero had this double practical aim in writing his treatise, first to eradicate superstition, second, to show the importance of a rational religion; and that he combines with this the speculative aim of completing his system and expounding to his countrymen the theological views of the leading Greek philosophers, we have next to consider how this design has been carried out? If we compare the impression produced upon us by reading the

<sup>1</sup> *Lucr.* i 80 *illud in his rebus vereor ne forte rearis impia te rationis inire elementa...quod contra saepius illa religio peperit scelerosa atque impia facta, v 1198 nec pietas ulla est velatum saepe videri vertier ad lapidem atque omnes accedere ad aras,...sed mage pacata posse omnia mente tueri, vi 75 delubra deum placido cum pectore adibis.*

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poem of Lucretius or the 10th book of Plato's *Laws* with the impression produced by the *Natura Deorum*, I think it cannot be denied that the latter is far less impressive than either of the former. Cicero is a man of extraordinary ability cultivated to the highest pitch by an excellent education, with the widest tastes and sympathies, and a mind open, as that of few Romans has been, to all impressions of beauty and sublimity. But, considered as a philosopher, he has the misfortune to be at the same time a lawyer, an orator and a man of the world: in his philosophical treatises we are too often conscious of the author holding a brief, appealing to the populace, writing against time and amidst countless distractions, far removed from the whole-hearted concentration of a Plato or a Lucretius. We must not wonder therefore if Cicero's wide scheme contracts itself to the paraphrase or adaptation of two or three contemporary writings, and the exposition and criticism of the Epicurean and Stoic theologies.

Contenting ourselves with this lower aim we ask again, how it has been accomplished? Is the exposition clear, accurate and methodical, observing due proportion throughout? Are the arguments well set forth, the criticisms just and fair? Is the dialogue, as a whole, a finished work of art, like the dialogues of Plato? Before attempting to answer these questions I will quote the estimate given of Cicero's physical or theological treatises by two writers of antiquity. The first is Velleius Paterculus, who says *dum hoc vel forte vel providentia vel utcumque constitutum rerum naturae corpus, quod ille paene solus Romanorum animo vidit, ingenio complexus est, eloquentia illuminavit, manebit incolume, comitem aevi sui laudem Ciceronis trahet* (II 66); the second Macrobius, or rather the captious interlocutor in his *Saturnalia* (I 24, § 4), who is probably intended to be the spokesman of others, when he says *Tullius, qui non minus professus est philosophandi studium quam loquendi, quotiens aut de natura deorum aut de fato aut de divinatione disputat, gloriam, quam oratione conflavit, incondita rerum relatione minuit*. Modern readers will probably side with the latter view. While allowing that we have in this treatise a great deal of excellent sense admirably expressed, and that it is hardly possible to exaggerate its historical importance as contributing to our knowledge of the religious philosophy of the ancients, yet, regarding it as a whole, it is impossible to call it a work of art, it is impossible to say that the due proportions of the subject have been observed. Each of the three books is disfigured by an insertion which is foreign to the

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argument and of singularly little interest in itself. The 1st is the historical sketch of previous philosophy from the Epicurean point of view, which is of much the same value, as if a historian of modern religious thought were to take his account of German philosophy from Mansel's *Bampton Lectures*. The 2nd insertion is Cicero's own translation of the *Aratea*; the 3rd and the most incomprehensible of the three is the mythological section, in which he attempts to show that there were many separate deities confused under the same name. In speaking of these as insertions, I do not mean that the 1st and 3rd are exclusively due to Cicero and had nothing corresponding to them in the Greek original, but that in all three cases a very subordinate point has been allowed to swell out beyond all proportion, and that in order to make room for them, matters of real interest and importance have been either omitted or curtailed to such an extent as to become themselves unintelligible. Thus, how willingly should we have exchanged the first insertion, either for an intelligent and impartial review of the growth of religious philosophy, or for a fuller account of the life of the 'intermundian' gods; how willingly have dispensed with the *Aratea* in order to obtain more information as to the Stoic doctrine of the dealings of Providence with the individual, so cruelly cut down in the concluding paragraphs of the Second Book; above all how gladly should we have escaped from the futility of the mythological section, if we might thereby have secured space for a reply from Balbus, or even for a fuller statement of the Academic argument on such a question as the consistency of moral virtue with the Divine nature!

Taking the book however as it stands with its faulty proportions, what are we to say of the manner in which each separate part is done? The introduction, which gives the key-note to the whole treatise, is of special importance as expressing Cicero's own convictions in regard to the need of a true religious belief. 'A mere pretence of religion', he says (in reference to the Epicureans, but the same thing applies to an Academic like Cotta) 'is inconsistent with any true piety, and without piety faith and justice cannot exist and all society is subverted.' Piety is necessarily bound up with the belief in the providential government of the world; there can be no such thing as worship, unless we believe that the gods are interested in men and are able and willing to benefit them. But we must be able to give a reason for our faith, and not embrace an opinion without investigation, merely on the authority of others. While the Stoics have

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performed an important service in exhibiting the evidences of design in the outward universe, the Academy has not been without its use in forcing us to look at both sides of the question, and insisting on probability as the guide of life, since absolute certainty is unattainable owing to the limitation of the human faculties.

The 2nd portion of Bk I contains the Epicurean polemic against the orthodox theology, Platonic and Stoic. It touches on many interesting points, but it does no more than touch on them; its criticism is addressed as usual to the gallery, very much in the style of the *altercatio* with Clodius, of which Cicero writes with such complacency to Atticus (*Att.* I 3), and for the most part consists of a series of exclamatory questions, which are assumed to be unanswerable, though the answer may be distinctly given in the words of the treatise criticized<sup>1</sup>. The more rational objections, such as those which turn on the possibility of Creation at a particular moment of time, on the motives which could be supposed to influence the Creator, on the imperfection visible in the work of Creation, are never directly met by succeeding speakers. No one seems to pay any attention to them. Just as it is afterwards with the Academic criticisms on the Epicurean and Stoic systems, there is no right of reply, no judicial weighing of opposing arguments, no honest endeavour to carry out even the principle of Carneades and ascertain precisely to which side the balance of probability inclines.

The review of the history of religious opinions contained in the following sections (§§ 25—43) is, as I have already remarked, the great blot on this first book. It would be hardly going too far to say that, as regards the prae-Stoic philosophy, it does not contain a single strictly accurate statement or a single intelligent criticism. It may be said, this is the fault not of Cicero but of the Epicurean authority whom he follows; Cicero merely gives it as a specimen of Epicurean ignorance and prejudice. But if it was intended as an exposure of this sort, why is it that, so far from giving any hint to that effect, so far from correcting any of the blunders of Velleius, Cicero afterwards makes Cotta compliment Velleius on the accuracy of his sketch? The real fact is that Cicero himself was in all probability unconscious of the inaccuracies which fill the historical section, and that some at least of these inaccuracies (as may be proved by a comparison with the fragments of Philodemus) arose from his own

<sup>1</sup> See nn. on I 19 *illae quinque formae*, § 20 *quod ortum sit*.

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misunderstanding of his authority. See for instance my notes on the account of Thales § 25, of Anaximenes § 26, of Parmenides § 28, of Xenophon § 31.

The Epicurean exposition, contained in §§ 43—56, is far superior to the historical section, but it suffers from curtailment, just where full explanation was most needed. Unhappily Cicero had not time to think out a difficulty; so when he comes to one, he either omits, or satisfies himself with a rendering which is unintelligible to himself as well as to every one else; see especially what is said of the divine images in § 49 compared with §§ 105 and 109. In fairness it must however be allowed that he is writing for Roman readers and has to select or reject with the thought of what will be most in accordance with their taste, just as the late Dr Whewell did in his *Platonic Dialogues for English Readers*.

The Academic criticism which occupies the rest of the book contains much that is interesting, but, here too, flippant assertion not unfrequently takes the place of argument. Thus there is no pretence of arguing the question between a *plenum* and a *vacuum* (§ 65 foll.); the speaker dogmatically asserts his preference for the former, therefore the latter is wrong. The objections to anthropomorphism are well stated in §§ 76—102, but Cicero has either misunderstood or has confused the argument on the value of general experience, as a criterion of truth, and the possibility of a unique experience (see nn. on § 87). In §§ 103, 104 Cotta announces his intention to examine the Epicurean account of the habitation and manner of life of their gods, but in § 105 hurries on to a discussion of the theory of images. Possibly this change of plan may have arisen, as Schwencke suggests, from the discovery that the original treatise from which he is translating, travelled beyond the topics introduced in the speech of Velleius. In any case it is a fault in the construction of the dialogue, and deprives us of information, which would have been very welcome, as to the nature of existence in the *intermundia*. The question raised in §§ 105—110 relates to the possibility of distinguishing between objective and subjective images; what right have we to assume that the phantasms of divinities are more real than those of absent or non-existent persons or things? Even if we assume their reality, what right have we to attribute happiness to beings without virtue (since without action) and without the sensual pleasures which are allotted to man? Can they even be said to be free from pain, when they are in constant

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danger from the incoming and outgoing atoms? The remainder of the book is occupied in showing that the Epicurean notion of a deity, incapable of action and absorbed in his own pleasure, who has no feeling for men, and is altogether unconnected with them, is really atheistic and inconsistent with any kind of piety or holiness. It is to be noticed that the Epicurean defence (*at etiam liber est Epicuri de sanctitate*) meets a double rejoinder §§ 115, 123. Is this a sign that Cicero had before him two criticisms of Epicurus, one, say, by Philo (1 59), the other by Posidonius, or are they alternative summaries of the argument of the latter, which have both been inserted by mistake? We shall see other examples of the same sort of carelessness in the following books.

In the 2nd book we have perhaps the most important contribution to theological thought which has come down to us from classical antiquity. It wants the inspiration, the passionate earnestness of Plato, but it covers a wider range; it is a store-house in which are preserved the best achievements of Greek philosophy in this department from the time of Socrates to that of Cicero. The arrangement may be confused, many of the special theories advanced may be obsolete, many of the facts misunderstood or inaccurately stated, but the general proof here given of a rationally ordered universe, and of a providential care for man can never lose its interest or value. It holds good against all theories of evolution, whether ancient or modern, which would make mind posterior to matter. The main lines of the proof are that religious belief is natural to man; that it is confirmed by the signs of superhuman power, wisdom and goodness visible in the universe; that man cannot be the highest thing in the universe, as he would be if the universe were irrational; rather that it is from it he derives his reason as well as the gross elements of which the body is composed; that the common source of the reason of all men must far surpass the particles of reason dispersed in individual men; that the harmony and sympathy of all the parts of the universe proves it to be under the control of one guiding spirit; that mind or soul originates all motion. Then follows the argument from the Scale of Existence: we observe the gradual ascent from vegetable to animal, from animal to man, the last showing the potentiality of virtue and wisdom, hence we infer a higher stage, the divine, which is absolutely virtuous and wise. Nature strives after perfection in all its parts; this striving cannot be frustrated; there may be partial hindrances, but

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there is no external power to check the progress of the whole; therefore the universe as a whole must attain perfection.

The larger portion of the 2nd book is occupied with the subject of Providence. This is argued 1st from our idea of the Divine nature as active and benevolent, and 2nd from the skill manifested in the universe, which attests the wisdom of the great Artist, just in the same way as the orrery attests the wisdom of Archimedes. The skill of the Creator is then shown in detail, 1st as regards the earth and the heavenly bodies, 2nd as regards the adaptations visible in vegetable and animal life, 3rd and above all in the case of man. It is further shown that the universe exists for the sake of its rational inhabitants, and that all things tend to the good of man, that providential care extends even to individual men, that virtue and wisdom are divine gifts, that the philosopher is dear to God and can never experience what is really harmful.

So far I think we may be sure that Cicero would go along with Balbus. It is no more than he has repeatedly said in his own person elsewhere, except as to the Scale of Existence, to which we find resemblances, it is true, but no exact parallel in the passages quoted in my notes. There are other parts of his discourse which are less in harmony with what we know of Cicero's opinions from other treatises. Such are the identification of heat with intelligence, the ascription of life, thought and volition to the material universe and the heavenly bodies, the sanction accorded by the Stoics to the popular mythology as representing either the varied activity of the Supreme Being, the personification of abstract qualities, or the divinity of the human soul; to which we may add the belief in divination<sup>1</sup>.

When we go on to inquire into the arrangement of the 2nd book, there is much to find fault with. The main divisions are by no means clear. As is pointed out in Vol. II p. xxii, much that is placed under

<sup>1</sup> Cicero, speaking in his own person, asserts the existence and the immateriality of God, and ascribes to him the origin of all motion and the fatherhood of the human soul *Tusc.* i 66 (a quotation from his own *Consolatio*), *animorum nulla in terris origo inveniri potest...quicquid est illud quod sentit, quod sapit, quod vivit, quod viget, caeleste et divinum ob eamque rem aeternum sit necesse est. Nec vero deus ipse...alio modo intellegi potest nisi mens soluta quaedam et libera, segregata ab omni concretionem mortali, omnia sentiens et movens, ipsaque praedita motu sempiterno* cf. *ib.* i 30, 36, 60, 63 (the Creator is to the universe as Archimedes to his orrery), 68 foll., *Leg.* i 21, ii 15 foll., *Milo* 83, 84, *Harusp. Resp.* 19.



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the 1st head, would have come more naturally under the 2nd, and much that is placed under the 3rd would have come better under the 4th. In one place Cicero seems to have confused himself, and commences his 4th division out of its proper order in § 133, giving a second commencement in § 155. Then we have the superfluous Aratean section (§§ 104—114), and the omission of much interesting matter at the end of the book, in reference to the calamities of the good and the difficulties alleged against the moral government of the world. For faults of detail see my notes on *etenim* 16, *crassissima regione* 17, *cum alio juncta* 29, *absoluti operis effectum* 35, *ex utraque re* 49, *aetherios cursus* 54, *suis seminibus* 58, *vis major, regi non potest* 61, *dentes et pubertatem* 86, where particular arguments seem to be imperfectly stated. For mistranslations of the Greek original see on *obductus, cujus sub pedibus*, 110, *posteriore trahens* 113.

It is more difficult to take a general view of the 3rd book than of the preceding, as so large a portion, probably more than one third, has been lost. It will be seen from the analysis, as well as from the Essay which follows, upon the Sources of this book, that the arrangement of what remains is again unsatisfactory. Cicero is embarrassed throughout by having to meet a later Stoic argument out of an earlier Academic treatise, in which the topics are different and differently arranged. This explains why, after Cotta has announced his intention to treat several of the arguments adduced for the Divine existence under the 3rd head, instead of under the 1st, as Balbus had done (III 17, 18), he introduces them under the 2nd head without giving any reason for his change of purpose. We will take the different arguments in order with reference to the corresponding parts of the 2nd book. There is certainly some weight in the objections urged to the argument from universal consent, viz. that the object of popular belief is not the God of the Stoics, and that it is inconsistent in those who regard the majority as fools, to attach any importance to what the majority believe (§§ 10, 11); still these objections hardly apply to the arguments as stated in Bk II. *Consensus* is cited there as a proof not of any special Stoic doctrine, but of the existence of a Divine Governor; and a careful distinction is made between temporary opinion and fixed belief, especially where the latter becomes stronger with the advance in civilization. The Stoic arguments derived from recorded epiphanies and the practice of divination, are fairly met by denial of the facts and questioning the utility of a knowledge of the future; the self-devotion of Decius



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was prompted by policy, not by religion; to suppose otherwise would be to impute injustice to the Gods (§§ 11—15). This sets aside one of the grounds assigned for the prevalence of religious belief by Cleanthes; his 2nd ground, that of the terrible phenomena of nature, is allowed as a fact; the two others are deferred along with the arguments of Zeno and Chrysippus to the 3rd head. The 2nd branch of the discussion deals with the Divine nature. This begins in § 20 with a distinct reference to the corresponding part of the argument of Balbus (II 45). In both the question is *qualis eorum natura sit*; both refer to the stupefying influence of custom. Cotta then proceeds to challenge Balbus' assertion *mundum animantem esse et deum*, and the proof alleged for it *nihil mundo esse melius*. 'It no more follows from this,' he says, 'that the world must be possessed of reason than that the city of Rome is a reasoning creature, or that, if it is not, it must be reckoned of less value than the ant which is possessed of reason.' (Cf. II 45, 16.) But the same proof had been quoted as from Zeno in II 21, so Cotta recurs to that (III 22), in spite of his avowed intention of leaving it for the section on Providence, and replies that on the same principle we might argue that the world could read a book. In § 23 he deals with another argument of Zeno's given in II 22, putting it in a more general form (apparently with a reference to the Socratic argument in II 18) 'everything which exists is derived from the world, and the world can produce nothing unlike itself, therefore the human reason is a product of the world and resembles it.' 'On the same principle,' he says, 'we might maintain that the world could play the flute.' The next argument touched on by Cotta is that which deduces the divinity of the stars from their regular motions, apparently referring to II 54 foll. 'Similarly we might argue for the divinity of quartan fevers' (III 24). For an examination of these objections see nn. on the particular passages. In § 25 Cotta goes back to Chrysippus (II 16, 17). His 1st argument is that 'if there is anything in the world beyond man's power to make, he who made it must be God'; the 2nd that 'if there were no Gods, man would be the best thing in the universe, which it would be the extreme of arrogance to suppose'; the 3rd that 'the world is too beautiful to have been built simply for the habitation of man.' Cotta's answer to the 1st is that it ignores the distinction between nature and reason (which of course has no force against the Stoics who identified nature with reason, and does not in the least degree affect the inference that there is a superhuman power at work in the

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universe); to the 2nd that it is not arrogant for man to recognize that he has reason and that the stars are without it (shirking the question and also assuming what the Stoics denied); to the 3rd that the world was not built but formed by nature (what nature forms *is* built, according to the Stoics; but this argument, like the others, is equally true, put into its most general form: the beauty of the universe is only very partially explained by the pleasure or utility which it affords to man). In § 27 Cotta proceeds with the argument quoted from Xenophon (II 18), 'whence did man obtain reason if it did not exist in the world?' to which he makes the same frivolous answer as he had done to the similar questions of Zeno. Then comes (in § 28) an approving reference to the sympathy which unites all the parts of the universe, but it is denied that this affords any ground for believing that the universe is pervaded by a divine spirit or breath; it is all the unconscious operation of nature. Here again we have simple assertion on the part of the Academics. The vague term nature was explained by the Epicureans, from the analogy of material objects, to mean atoms moving in a vacuum according to the laws of gravitation modified by the individual *clinamen*, by the Stoics, from the analogy of the soul, to mean the reason and will embodied in the universe; the Academics, clinging to their unanalysed conception of nature, opposed their simple denial to both.

There is more weight in the argument by which Carneades endeavoured to show that if the world is an animal it must be liable to destruction and therefore not divine. As corporeal it is discernible; as a compound of contrary and perishable elements, it is liable to fly asunder and perish; as animated and therefore capable of feeling, it is liable to sensations of pain and susceptible of death (§§ 29—34). It is partly met by the Stoic doctrine of the cyclic renovation, partly by denying that the capacity of pleasure involves the possibility of pain and that this latter involves the possibility of death. In §§ 35—37 Cotta has no difficulty in showing that fire is not more divine than the other elements.

After this follows an interesting argument on the compatibility of the ideas of virtue and divinity (§ 38). As we may see by comparing Sextus, this has been very much cut down by Cicero. The quotations in the notes will show with what limitations it holds good. The subordinate deities of the Stoics are subjected to a severe criticism in §§ 39—64. It is shown that Stoic allegorization is purely arbitrary, that it is impossible to draw the line between the human and divine

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in the popular theology, which they take under their protection, and that it is impossible to say what is believed about each deity. It is here that Cicero inflicts upon us the tedious mythological section, of which Sextus was satisfied to give one or two extracts as specimens. I have spoken sufficiently of this in the Essay on the Sources and in the Appendix.

After this, many chapters are lost till we come to the answer to the Stoic proof of Divine beneficence as shown in the gift of reason. In the speech of Balbus this was treated under the general head of Providence (II 147, 148), here it is treated as a part of the argument to prove a special providential care for man (III 66—78). Cotta shows by examples taken from the stage and the law-courts the ill effects of reason, and argues that, if it is a divine gift, the Giver is responsible for effects, which he must have foreseen, and against which he ought to have secured man. There is a disarrangement in these paragraphs which was perhaps caused by the mistaken insertion of two alternative versions or abstracts of the Greek original. It is a defect in Cicero's exposition of the Stoic argument in the previous book that the difficulties urged by the Academic under this last head are not touched on by Balbus. In all probability they formed part of the cargo thrown overboard by Cicero (in §§ 164—167) in order to save his *Aratea*. Other arguments alleged against a providential ordering of human affairs are the universal lack of wisdom deplored by the Stoics, and the unrighteous distribution of prosperity and adversity. The Stoics have depreciated the importance of these gifts of fortune in comparison with the qualities of the soul, but Providence has nothing to do with the latter; each man must achieve them for himself. Besides, whether important or unimportant, nothing should be neglected under the rule of Providence. It has been attempted to eke out the case for providential government by pointing to the misfortunes which befall the descendants of the guilty, but what sort of justice is this? Is it even consistent with the Stoic idea of God, that he should exact punishment at all? The Stoics themselves allow that his care does not extend to individuals, what reason have we for supposing that it extends to mankind? (III 79—93).

Speaking generally the Academic objections under this head are well and clearly stated by Cicero, but here and there obscurities arise from too great conciseness, see note on § 91 (*D c. 9*), § 92 *aut nescit quod possit*. There are also several inaccuracies,

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arising apparently from over-haste in translating the original, see notes on *fanum Proserpinae* § 83, *ad Peloponnesum* ib., *Epidauri* ib., *mensas argenteas* § 84, *ne Delio quidem Apollini* § 88. As to the manner in which these objections were met by the Stoics see my notes on each passage. In some instances they may be directly answered from the speech of Balbus, e.g., the assumption that virtue is allowed by all to be independent of Divine grace, is contradicted in II 79; the assertion that, according to the Stoics, Providence does not extend to individuals, is contradicted in II 165. In both these cases it is probable that the elder Stoics held the doctrines impugned, but this want of correspondence between the exposition and the criticism spoils the verisimilitude of the dialogue.

As to Cicero's own feeling with regard to the questions at issue, we find him dissenting from the Academic view in regard to the misfortunes of the good and the prosperity of the bad, in the passages cited in my notes on § 80 *Reguli*, § 84 *percussit*; on conscience as the voice of God § 85 *sine ulla divina ratione*; on virtue as the gift of God § 87 *quis quod bonus vir esset*. But none except the extremest partisans could pretend that the Academic difficulties were entirely cleared up by such considerations as were available on the other side. Then, as now, the Divine government was a matter of faith, not of certainty. Now, as then, in spite of the added light of Christianity, we must confess that, logically speaking, the religious view of the order of the world is only the more probable; that Cicero in fact is right, as against the Stoics, when he refuses to say more than that the argument of Balbus appeared to him to be *ad veritatis similitudinem propensior*.

Lastly, provokingly inconsistent as is the Academic view which at one time professes to be guided by reason alone, irrespective of authority (I 10), and at other times, in the person of Cotta, accepts without inquiry whatever has come down to us on the authority of our ancestors (III 5, 9); which sneers at the sacred legends and the practice of divination, and does its best to show that the very idea of God is self-contradictory and impossible, and yet insists on retaining all the externals of religion as a duty obligatory on every Roman citizen; still the Academic pontiff is a person of genuine historical interest. He is the Trajan who, allowing that there is no harm in Christianity and that Christians are not to be hunted out, yet ordains that if a man is accused of Christianity before a magistrate and refuses to abjure his faith, he is to be put to death. In later times

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he is the unbelieving statesman who fights against liberty of conscience and uses the arm of the secular power to prevent Church reform; he is the Christian apologist who, insisting on the acceptance of every letter of the creed, forbids all thought as to its meaning under the name of rationalism or dogmatism.

#### WAS THE NATURA DEORUM PUBLISHED DURING THE LIFE-TIME OF CICERO?

In the preceding essay indications of hasty composition have been pointed out, and it has been remarked that some passages present the appearance of having been made up of two alternative versions of the same original, both of which have been inserted by mistake. If this is so, it would seem that the book must have been published without the author's revision. Are there any facts which would confirm this suspicion?

The conclusive proof that the book did not receive the finishing touches from the hand of its author, is to be found in the inconsistent allusions to the time occupied in the discussion. Thus, in II 73 we find the conversation of the 1st book alluded to in the words *a te ipso hesterno die dictum est*, and in III 18 the 2nd book is alluded to in the words *omnia quae a te nudius tertius dicta sunt*; from which we should infer that the whole discussion must have occupied four days, giving one day to each speech. But if we look back to the beginning of the 2nd and 3rd books (*quae cum Cotta dixisset tum Velleius* II 1, *quae cum Balbus dixisset tum arridens Cotta* III 1), we find no hint of any break in the conversation. The only reference to time is in III 94 *quoniam advesperascit dabis nobis diem aliquem ut contra ista dicamus*, which certainly implies that the conversation had occupied only one day. There is no difficulty of this kind in other dialogues. In the *Tusculans* (I 8) Cicero distinctly says *dierum quinque scholas in totidem libros contuli*, and there is a formal notice of the close of one day and the beginning of another in I 119, II 9, 10, II 67, III 7, III 84, IV 7, V 1, 11, with a separate dedication or preface to each book. In the *De Finibus* the first two books are supposed to be spoken continuously at Cicero's villa at Cumae, the 3rd and 4th on a different occasion at Lucullus' Tusculan villa, the 5th in Plato's Academia at Athens.

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## INTRODUCTION.

But does not Cicero himself speak of the *De Natura Deorum* as already published at the time of his writing the *De Divinatione*, and the *De Fato*? Compare *Div.* I 8, where Quintus says *perlegi tuum paulo ante tertium de natura deorum in quo disputatio Cottae, quamquam labefactavit sententiam meam, non funditus tamen sustulit*, to which Marcus replies *Optime vero, etenim ipse Cotta sic disputat, ut Stoicorum magis argumenta confutet quam hominum delectat religionem*. Quintus regards this protest as a matter of form *dicitur quidem istuc ne communia jura migrare videatur; sed studio contra Stoicos disserendi deos mihi videtur funditus tollere: ejus rationi non sane desidero quid respondeam; satis enim defensa religio est in secundo libro a Lucilio, cujus disputatio tibi ipsi, ut in extremo libro scribis, ad veritatem est visa propensior*. Again in *Div.* II 3 *quibus rebus editis* (i.e. the *Hortensius*, *Academica*, *De Finibus*, *Tusculans*), *tres libri perfecti sunt de natura deorum*; to which he adds others afterwards. It may be thought that these quotations settle the question and that Cicero himself is responsible for the book in its present state whether finished or unfinished. But is it not permissible to draw a different conclusion from the opposition of the words *editi* and *perfecti* in the last passage? The *Hortensius* and other dialogues were published, the *Natura Deorum* was what we should call ready for the press. So in *Fat.* I 1 we find a distinction made between *quod in aliis libris feci qui sunt de natura deorum*, and the books *quos de divinatione edidi*. We are not bound to take literally the statement that Quintus had read the book of which he is supposed to speak in *Div.* I; even if he had done so, it might have been from having access to the original ms. We know that other works of Cicero were published after his death, such as the *Epistles* and probably some of the *Orations* by Tiro, and, among his philosophical works, the unfinished *Leges*. If the *Natura Deorum* was still unpublished at the time of Cicero's murder, and if the ms was as much altered and emended as that of the *De Gloria*, of which he says to Atticus (xvi 3) *misi ἀρχέτυπον ipsum crebris locis inculcatum et reffectum*, this would go far to explain the existing roughnesses and inconsistencies of the dialogue.