

ALLUSIONS TO HENOTHEISM AND MONOTHEISM IN CICERO'S BOOK II OF *THE NATURE OF THE GODS*

ALUSIONES AL HENOTEISMO Y EL MONOTEÍSMO EN EL LIBRO II DE
SOBRE LA NATURALEZA DE LOS DIOS DE CICERÓN

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RESUMEN ABSTRACT

A la luz de una profunda exégesis de la teología ontológica estoica, el libro II de *Sobre la naturaleza de los dioses* de Cicerón, constituye una investigación de la naturaleza de lo divino en términos de su existencia, sus funciones, y las bendiciones que confiere sobre la humanidad. Permite una comprensión sustancial de la tesis más amplia de una justificación teórica de la esencia de lo divino, conceptualizada en la forma de un ser supremo divino, el principio que gobierna un cosmos articulado de manera divina, al igual que una serie de arquetipos subsidiarios que emanan su iluminación eterna y simultáneamente. A pesar de la dificultad para detectar la extensión y los grados de los asuntos clave relacionados con los criterios de una verdad teológica en Cicerón i.e. la derivación de conceptos platónicos, la influencia de las modificaciones ortodoxas de los estoicos tardíos y los precursores del neo-estoicismo, Posidonio y su defensa metodológica que confirma las doctrinas estoicas en las que sobreviven alusiones a los conceptos religiosos acuñados apenas en el siglo XVII AD como henoteísmo y monoteísmo, este artículo explora los grados de reflexión de estos conceptos religiosos postulados en el marco teórico del libro II de *Sobre la Naturaleza de los dioses* (2. 1-3-2.167-168) al igual que su conceptualización teológica de lo divino.

PALABRAS CLAVE

Cicerón, henoteísmo, monoteísmo, lo divino, Posidonio, verdad teológica.

In the light of a profound exegesis of Stoic ontological theology book II of Cicero's *The Nature of the Gods* is an inquiry into the nature of the divine in terms of its existence, functions and blessings conferred upon humankind. It provides substantial insight into his wider thesis of a theoretical justification of the essence of the divine conceptualized in the form of a Supreme Divine Being, the governing principle in a divinely articulated cosmos, as well as a host of subsidiary archetypes who eternally and simultaneously emanate its illumination. Despite the difficulty in detecting the extent and degrees of key issues related to Cicero's criteria of a theological truth, i.e. derivation of Platonic concepts, the influence of orthodox modifications of later Stoics and precursor of Neo Stoicism, Poseidonius and his methodological defense confirming Stoic doctrines there survives allusions to religious concepts coined not before the 17th century CE such as henotheism and monotheism. This paper explores the degrees of reflection of these religious concepts postulated within the theoretical framework of book II of *The Nature of the Gods* (2. 1-3-2.167-168) as well as his theological conceptualization of the divine.

KEY WORDS

Cicero, henotheism, monotheism, Poseidonius, the divine, theological truth.

A brief assessment of the following concepts is a prerequisite for the evolution of Cicero's theological conceptualization of the divine.

Polytheism, monotheism and henotheism

The European scholarly dispute on the expression of religious concepts-polytheism, monotheism and henotheism is a hotly pursued subject and considerable amount of research is being conducted in this area addressing their specific dimensions-practical, theological and theoretical. The list could multiply but their primary meaning contributes to the apprehension of the proportional value of the sub division of the divine. Derived from the Greek *mono*, one and *monarchia*, single rule, monotheism entails exclusively the worship of a single ruling god (Barnes, 2001: 142-162) (MacDonald, 2004: 204-214) (Stark, 2001: 24-27) (Athanassiadi & Frede, 1999: 8-20). This apparently is in contradistinction to polytheism which presupposes a plurality of gods (Assman, 2004: 17) (Fowden, 1991: 119) (Maas, 2000: 166). The introduction of a broader premise, henotheism, transcends the rhetorical and functional limitations of monotheism and polytheism (Versnel, 1990: 35-36) (Gladigoco, 1993: 327) (Assman, 2004: 23). Despite the terminological variations and confusing inflations in the modern European academic context henotheism is an expression for a divine unity formed as not just an accumulation of hierarchic entities but a structured whole, a pantheon. Although its integration with monotheism is inevitable it cannot be deviated entirely from polytheism. From the extent and degrees of imposition of each of those religious concepts into the other they can no longer be compartmentalized strictly within the limitations of their primary character (Wallraff, 2003: 532-533). Notwithstanding the intellectual philosophical tendency of the 17th cen. BCE to introduce an array of terminology to appreciate the character of the divine within the contextual framework of the late antique religious milieu of the Roman east it would be a ground breaking project to apply them in order to understand Cicero's conception of the divine within his own articulation of a theological framework in book II of *The Nature of the Gods*.

Supreme divine being

Book II of Cicero's *The Nature of the Gods* is a virtual embodiment of Stoic ontological theology though the extent and degrees of his derivation of the cardinal teachings of the Stoics is difficult to assess. Cicero professes excellent knowledge of the particularly pantheistic observations of the

principle exponents of the Early and Middle Stoa, Zeno (2. 20-23) and Chrysippus (2.16-18) in terms of their contribution to the knowledge of the structure of the cosmos (2.1-3; 3-5). The transformation of the traditional pantheon in Homeric canon into perceptible cosmic forces sun, moon, stars, planets, seasons and the conflation of two concepts foundational to Platonic metaphysics, the World Soul and the Demiurge, and their eventual reduction into a single receptacle are foundational for the formation of Stoic twin principles, the active (Diogenes Laertius, 7. 135, 137, 147) and the passive (7.134). That the active imposes itself on the passive is accepted by the Stoics with reference to the conviction that the world is an ensouled organism (3.139) (Reydam Schilles, 1999: 52). Cicero applies this Stoic theory into his discussion in 2.29-32; 32-34; 37-40; 80-82 on account of the essence of the active principle conceptualized in the form of a supreme divine being.

The active is identified as God who acts upon the passive imbuing form and quality (Hahn, 1977: 137-205) (Betegh, 2003: 285-289). The passive comprises of transdimensional hypothetical secondary entities whose existence and functions in their entirety causes the unification of the cosmos (2.16-18). The active and passive are interconnected in such a manner that they can neither be separated nor be independent. The synthesization of this Stoic position is an epistemological criterion paramount for Cicero's presupposition of a perennial and exulted supreme divine being whose primary divine intelligence not only supersedes but also generates a conception of a secondary divine intelligence (2.20-23). This close affinity between Cicero's conceptualization of a perennial being whose presidency and governance is inviolable and the conception of a God who operates on formless matter is obviously a point of agreement between the Stoics and Cicero (Diogenes Laertius, 7.132, 134, 135, 137, 139, 180). It is plausible to maintain the assumption that within this contextual framework survives the germ of henotheism and monotheism. Cicero attributes acclamations alluding to a monotheistic endorsement of a supreme divine being in terms of its supremacy in the following potential areas: generation (2.32-34, 34-37), providence (2.72-74; 74-77), governance (2.77-80), perfection (2.34-37), goodness (2.32-34), regulation (2.29-32), rationality (2.77-80), motion (2.42-44; 60-62, 62-64, 64-66, 66-68, 116-118), wholeness (2.57-60), purity and subtlety (2.29-32; 2.74-77), wisdom (2.34-37; 26-29). The divinity of the universe can be understood in terms of this supremacy (2.18-20). The focal point of this supremacy is that it is devoid of any reference to imitation (2.80-82; 96-98). This allusion to monotheism,

however, can be questioned in relation to Cicero's attribution of a similar current of ideas running counter to the progeny or secondary intelligences whose possession of the following marks them off from the supreme diving being as separate entities: divinity, harmony, beauty, motion and eternity, rationality, excellence, guidance, intelligence, fire and motion (2.26-29; 29-32; 34-37; 37-40; 57-60; 60-69; 116-118). But nowhere does Cicero assert that this separation is an existential feature in his theoretical framework. This can be explained in terms of polytheism and henotheism. That certain noetic form as expressions of divine manifestations in the form of cosmic phenomena emanating from supra-rational sources of wisdoms throughout all ontological levels of reality permeating every strand of the cosmos is a major component of ancient polytheism (Assman, 1978: 132) Cf Porphyry, *De Abstinencia*, 2.37.1; 2.34.4; Plotinus, *Enneads*, 2.9.9; Plutarch, *On the Decline of Oracles*, 438c8-d5; 416d6-9; 416e1-4; Iamblichus, *On the Mysteries*, 3.16 (138.1-5); 3.15 (135.6-136.4). This derivation is consubstantial with Cicero's conceptualization of a supreme divine being whose illumination and infusion of lower levels of reality in the manner most appropriate for each respective realm forms a hierarchy in the cosmos. Existence of a hierarchy naturally designates the conception of higher and lower realms. The identification of the conflation of these realms culminating in syncreticism lends value to the conception of the descent and acquisition of the efficacy of the supreme divine being. That this being embodies an unmitigated universal law enshrining the entire celestial circuit can be traced elsewhere in Cicero (*Laws*, 2.35; 2.8; *Republic*, 1.39; 1.33; 3.30; *De Officiis*, 1.7-8; 3.11-17). But it is in book II of *The Nature of the Gods* that he postulates a context corresponding to henotheism notwithstanding its strong polytheistic implications. The universality of celestial governance, assuredly, transcends the narrow limitations of an idealized version of monotheism.

Single mind

The reflection of the divine at various levels of the graded cosmos throughout book II of *The Nature of the Gods* is suggestive of an inevitable hierarchization and a subsequent syncreticism. Balbus, mouthpiece of Cicero, represents this idea with clarity in one of his speeches:

The universe itself is the origin, seed and parent so to speak, of everything which is subject to the natural law. It nourishes and embraces all things as a body does its own limbs and parts (2.85. 87)

Cicero's contrivance of a single mind controlling the plurality of the divine -hierarchical and syncretistic- avowedly contains allusions to both monotheism and polytheism. In terms of monotheism this single mind, functions in the form of an 'origin', 'seed', 'parent' or simply as the primary divine force that causes the rise of all cosmic phenomena. It absorbs and envisages all secondary intelligences or 'limbs' and 'parts' so that this graded cosmos represents an unexplainable totality; wholeness; fullness. This can be understood in terms of popular Stoic analogy (2.80-82; 82-85; 86-87; 157-158). Cicero refers to 'navigation' ((2.82-85; 85-87), cultivation (2.82-85), the sun-dial (2.87-89) to confirm his theological standpoint within which survives scope for the understanding of this totality. But he almost unconsciously sheds substantial light on an idealized monotheism when he refers to this single mind as God, nature and providence (2.13-15; 20-23; 34-37; 57-60; 60-80; 80-82; 96-98; 114-116). Such terminology refers to a unique and preordained supremacy so that there remains no flaws; setbacks; discrepancies. (2.85-87; 80-82; 96-98)

In the form of a single mind the supreme divine being inflicts its far greater and superior propulsion in the form of cosmic sympathy (2.16-18; 18-20; 29-32; 35-37; 37-40; 44-47; 74-77). It is feasible to argue, at this juncture, that Cicero does in no way advocate's monotheism synonymous with the scriptural strictness representative of christianity. It is monotheistic in the sense that in the form of a single mind it rules each and every phenomenon of the divine hierarchy but with absolutely no overwhelming authority over them. After all the divine hierarchies are described as heavenly bodies who are

Created out of the purest and the most active elements of the aether, with no admixture of any baser substance, but are all heat and fire. So that they too may very properly be described as living beings, conscious and intelligent (2.37-40)

Inferior when compared to the superiority of the single mind, these 'conscious' and 'intelligent' noetic entities that are manifested as celestial forces within Cicero's conceptual framework are topographically confined to their respective domains. But they do depend on the single mind under whose presidency and governance they are expected to exist and engage in varied functions. This requires a virtual negotiation among transdimensional domains. Ratified and further justified with reference to geometry in 2.47-49 and the Stoic hostility to Epicureans

in 2.49-51 made by Quintus Lucilius Balbus, Cicero demonstrates the character of *sphaera* or sphere and *kyklos* or circle as a credible explanation for the equality of the distance from every part of the circumference, the model of perfect symmetry. Dubiously hypothetical as it may appear on a superficial level this is a perfect indication of the equality and symmetry of cosmic sympathy. This could be more specifically demonstrated in terms of the sunlight that falls upon the graded cosmos. Reference to the sun and sunlight is numerous in book II of *The Nature of the Gods*. Its fire (2.40-42); motion (2.47-49; 2.42-44), light (2.37-40); 49-51; 51-54; 54-57) engender an ineffable superiority analogous to the superiority of the single mind. (2.29-32). This astral phenomena occupying the highest ethereal plane represents the varied positions of light distilled from the highest source of light; the supremest source of radiance, the universal fire; perennial substance of cosmic illumination (2.49-51; 51-54; 54-57). 2.101-104 is illustrative of the varying positions of the moon and the planets conceived as positioned in the lowest strata of the graded cosmos, in relation to the sun which,

Reflects upon the earth the light shed on it by the sun, a light that varies with its own phases. When the moon is directly below and opposite the sun it totally obscures its radiance. Sometimes to the moon when it is opposite the sun passes into the shadow of the earth so that its own light is suddenly eclipsed. In the same courses the planets circle around the earth and in the same way they raise and set now quicker and now slower in their motions, and sometimes altogether still.

The lines reflect an affinity to henotheism designating a harmonious unitary pattern in the arrangement of heavenly bodies. The terminology used to describe the efficacy of the single mind in terms of its position and motion qualifies henotheism to a greater degree than it does monotheism. The definable and knowable deities, conceptualized as the moon and planets are often referred to in modern theological research as "*executors and manifestations of divine will rather than independent principles of reality*" (Athanasiasidi & Frede, 1999: 8). They collectively represent the divine will which apparently identify the supreme divine being only. These 'executors' only resemble the supreme divine being in miniature. Their functions do not disrupt the cosmic organization (2.34-37; 37-40; 54-57; 57-60; 82-85). Additionally Cicero excludes any reference to chance, from his cosmic construction (2.13-15; 54-57). This would be a deliberate measure taken to confirm the polytheistic legacy of the discussion within

book II of *The Nature of the Gods*. Its correspondence with henotheism becomes all the more obvious when Cicero acknowledges that it is the design of this fountain head of intelligence, this single unfathomable divine power embedded in the ontologically perceived region directing the course of phenomenal variations whose governance regulates periodic functions:

How else would it be possible for the earth to blossom at one time and to be a desert at another? Or how could the coming and going of the sun is signaled by such a variety of transformations by such a variety of transformations as winter comes and summer goes? Or how could the ocean tides and currents of the narrow seas is governed by the motions of the moon? Or how could the courses of the different stars be preserved within the mighty revolutions of the world creation? (2.18-20; 2.96-98; 98-101; 82-85).

Though not isolated from any secondary phenomena the single mind subsumes into a coherent unity (2.26-29; 29-32; 37-40). This coherence fulfills Cicero's requirement of a conception of a single mind on whom depends the functions and operations of the divine government in its totality, a body of constituents applicable to his own obsession of a universal legislation (*Laws*, 1.18, 2.8; 35; *Republic*, 1.29; 3.30; *De Officiis*, 1.78; 3.11-17).

Administration

The argumentation from 2.61-62 to 68-69 acknowledge an exulted supreme divine being, as a potential entity acquainting the traditional canonization of the divine imbuing denominations. The mutual correspondence between the single mind and subordinate ontological sources of reality reflecting a symbolical amalgamation between higher and lower divine hierarchies, throws much light on the conceptual operation among trans dimensional cosmic strands (2-85-87; 87-89). It also distinguishes *monarchia*, single rule from *ocholokratia*, rule of many. A rule under the prestigious supremacy of an *archegetas* or *kathegemon*, leader of a community represents a perfect jurisprudence, personally admired by Cicero as a solution to the challenges he himself faced in the Roman political arena, as a *homo novus*, a new man or a man without the much required aristocratic lineage (2.77-80; CF Powel and Patterson, 2004: 100-200; May 2005: 98-100). The theological conceptualization of the supreme divine being is a perfect substitute to fill up the lamentable

void in Roman legislation as well as the territorial expansion of the empire. The enforcement of a universal legislation concentrating on the cultivation of justice, compelling evil, as postulated within the theological framework of book II of *The Nature of the Gods* is indicative of Cicero's programmatic intentions.

He refers to an array of phenomena and incidents in nature: nourishment of vegetation and animals (2.128-130; 130-133); rearing of animals, birds and amphibians (2.128-130); climactic conditions (2.130-133); division of gender (2.126-128); curing diseases among animals (2.126-128); protection of vegetation (2.118-121); modes of postures of animals (2.121-124). Finally he arrives at the conclusion that "*everything in the world is marvelously ordered by divine providence and wisdom for the safety and protection of us all*"(2.130-133). Similar references to the care of the supreme divine being are also made at 2-118-121; 2.114-116; 2.116-118; 126-128. Such divine governance, then, is applicable for Cicero's legislative requirements provided that it eliminates all that is maleficent; evil; egoistic. It also brings to light a concurrence between the decidedly monotheistic and henotheistic position within book II of his *corpus*, in the sense that the former aligns to a strict single rule while the latter finds affinities with a harmonious rule of all the constituents of the cosmos thus forming a unity amidst the totality. The former is emphatically idealized while the latter deviates itself from any such limitations and functions more in accordance with Cicero's theological stand point giving rise to the conception of a common law generating a universal legislation for the cosmic progeny. This could be explained in terms of the administration of the single Mind and administrative devices designed as a totality of the governance manifested as its own expressions.

The archetypal principles residing in hierarchic levels of the cosmos as varying expressions of the supreme divine being fulfill their demiurgic roles assigned to them as a mark of submission to divine law (2.37-40; 57-60; 60-62; 62-64; 64-66; 66-68; 68-69). The assignation of duties is providentially done with the involvement of the supreme divine being conceptualized as nature (2.114-116; 126-128; 128-130). The kinship between the varied archetypal entities with the central divine power is preordained (2.114-116). This incidentally is a vital qualification of polytheism that lies at the root of henotheism. (Ustinova, 2002: 267-288; also Ion, 336b-d; Meno, 99c-d).

That the ciceronian archetypal principles who derive motion (2.47-49; 49-51), mind (2.54-57), order (2.54-57), power (2.57-60; 54-57; 51-54) from the highest ontological source of wisdom, reason and power conceptualized as a supreme divine being, collectively establish the perpetuation of the cosmos is adequate testimony for Cicero's henotheistic claims within book II of *The Nature of the Gods* (2.70-72; 72-74). In determining the degrees of allusions to henotheism within its theological framework it is necessary to examine the extent to which Cicero accepts the polytheistic pantheon: Jupiter, Juno, Kronos, Neptune, Persephone, and Vesta (2.60-62; 62-64; 64-66; 66-68).

Despite the terminological variations in their respective names they demonstrate their communication with the original source of generation and wisdom (2.114-116). This source is concealed though it perpetuates the cosmic structure (2.126-128). This can be clarified in terms of their absorption of the primordial fire (2.29-32). The names of the planets represent this absorption: Saturn is the shining one; Jupiter the blazing one; Mercury the gleaming one; Venus the light bearer (2.49-51; 51-54). This clarification lends support to the hypothesis that each planetary entity is drenched with the cosmic sympathy that evolves throughout the cosmic circuit in the form of fire and light.

Cicero proceeds to state that the names of polytheistic deities who represent the totality of the cosmos. They stand for several vital requirements: Ceres for corn; Liber for wine; Sol for sun (2.60-62); for celestial phenomena: Diana, Diana Omnivaga, Lucifera, Lucina are in charge of night and childbirth (2.68-69); for human qualities and emotions: faith, reason, hope, salvation, pleasure, desire (2.60-62). Subordinate though these entities deserve worship (2.70-72; 72-74; 74-77; 77-80).

No entity is in possession of an illumination in a greater degree than the other since each is assigned a certain amount of functions to perform. An exploration into 2.118-121 testifies that no planet is maleficent as its divine potency is intensified through the concentric spheres in varying degrees. These degrees do not represent a demarcation between higher and lower since Cicero's theological defense of the contextual framework within book II of *The Nature of the Gods* does not permit a strict polarization between the supreme divine being and the secondary intelligences. Derivation of cosmic luminosity is a most conspicuous feature of ancient polytheism and the degrees of its efficacy is most

vividly represented in modern scholarly research. Veteran scholar Angela Voss investigates Saturn's inmost potential for the discovery of intellectual genius as well as subsequent stages of divine reception (Voss, 2000: 45-49 2007: 151-159). The efficacy of the reception of divine symbols within a polytheistic context transcends all levels of reception of divine wisdom because it is an expression of the manifold prepositions of the ultimate celestial wisdom (Gamlath, 2007: 306). It also indicates that the derivation of cosmic efficacy is varied:

[...] the planets represent a symphony of different motions, wherein Saturn above freezes with cold, Mars flames with fire in the middle, and between them Jupiter sheds his genial light. Below Mars are two others which are satellites of the sun. The sun itself sheds its radiance over the whole world and the moon with its reflected light presides over pregnancies and births and brings all things to fruition in due season (2.118-121)

The order of precedence in enlightenment depends on the successive manifestations of the light of the sun (2.47-49).

Earth the lowest realm in the cosmic structure and farthest away from Cicero's supreme divine being (2.47-49; 49-51). The degree of reception of cosmic sympathy of those residing on earth is far inferior to that of the entities occupying the finer realms (2.51-54). Related literature provides invaluable testimony for those degrees of reception of cosmic illumination (Plutarch, 416d6-9; 41631-4; 41634-6; 417b6-417a; Porphyry, *De Abstinencia*, 2-38; Plutarch, *Concerning the face which appears in the orb of the Moon*, 944d-6) (Iamblichus, 3.5: 111.3-13). These degrees of reception endure the critique of non-pagan apologists like Augustine of Hippo from whose promotion of an extreme type of monotheism abiding by sacred scriptures is exactly the point of Cicero's departure (*City of God*, i-xix; *On Free Will*, I.2-6; II.2-6; I.6, 5, 11). Augustine's condemnation of divine hierarchies and the divine division of labor distinguish the cult of the one or the authority of a single mind from *opera die* or false gods (*City of God*, 7.14-22). He rejects the ciceronian conception of a single commonwealth with its claim on the welfare of the empire in terms of a monotheistic founder God whose divine authority ensures the rise of humankind from their deplorable earthly state and the worship of evanescent demons (2.21-22). God is unique in terms of its virtue and implication that the extreme type of virtue is none other than

the Christian (xiv.1-4). The monotheistic entity that Augustine accepts as the most sublime is by no means incompatible with that of the lesser entities (2.22). A point of agreement in close parallel to the emission of cosmic sympathy in the form of heat and light thus commingling divine hierarchies occupying higher and lower cosmic regions in a syncreticism is reached in Augustines' depolarization of monotheism and polytheism. This is clarified when he mentions of angelic entities that have access to and are adequately illuminated by the finest of divine light (11.9-12).

Only He and nobody else deserve sacrifice and veneration (x. 4-5). Augustine's admiration is confined to the almighty supreme creator who prevents the wicked to as (xix.12).

He rejects the constituent components of the cosmos. Still, he classifies two broad limitations in his monotheistic framework which are synonymous with henotheism and polytheism - the Creator or One God (City of God, 11.21; 7.30; 12.G; 12.9) and the Created or many gods (City of God, 12.1-4; 12-16). This classification engenders Augustine's attempt to minimize the contraposition between monotheists in late antiquity and neoplatonic pagans (Athanasriadi and Frede, 1999: 8). Whatever the programmatic designs of Augustine's are Cicero is no antagonist of polytheism. A detailed succession of duties, epiphanies, epithets and rewards conferred upon mankind by polytheistic deities from 2.6-62 and 2.68-69 confirms it. That he constructs his theological position into a coherent system associating both monotheism and henotheism upon the established axioms becomes clearer in his declaration of mythological and allegorical configurations of the divine:

So we ought to worship and revere these gods each in their own person and their own nature under the names which custom has bestowed upon them. Such worship of the gods is the best of all things, full of purity and holiness and piety, if our reverence is always true and whole and pure in word and thought. It was not only the philosophers but also our own ancestors who thus distinguished between true religion and the follies of superstition (2.70-72).

The distinction between 'true religion' and 'superstition' justifies the existence and function of the supreme divine being within a theological context. It transcends the existence and function of the congregation of polytheistic deities. By recognizing the definable and knowable gods who are represented as sun, moon, stars, seasons, planets, day and night

one is apt to honor the ultimate first cause, the *heis theos* or *heis hysistos* conceptualized as the supreme divine being (2.74-77; 77-80).

Rewards

The inter relation between Cicero's theological apprehension of a supreme divine being and the rewards conferred upon humankind, applies more to henotheism than to monotheism. The Cleanthean categorization of the four instances is testimony for divine presence: prognostications, amiable natural phenomena, terrifying movements of heaven and earth and the regularly of the movements of heavenly bodies (2.11-13; 13-15). The last is eminent in terms of its ontological genesis integrated into divination (2.3-5; 7-9; 13-15). Invaluable significance is awarded to divination in ancient sources. (Iamblichus, *On the Mysteries*, x. 4 (289.3-5); 1.3(7.11-8.5); 3.1(100.8-9-100.10-101.3); 3.5(111.3-13); Hermeias, *In Phaedrum*, fr 6; Proclus, *Elements of Theology*, 1.33 ; It has been the topic of discussion among scholars who notice its inspirational dimensions see Mazur, 2004: 29-45; Shaw, 1999: 121-143; 1995: 231-32 ; Barton, 1994: 41-49). Following a similar current of thought Cicero engages in a detailed discussion of the benefits conferred upon humankind from 2.118-121 to 2.148-151. He next draws attention to the position and structure of the human eyes that grant the possibility of observation of the beauty, order and propriety of the revolution of the cosmos, the medium of dispensing divination (2.140-141).

With positive allusions to Timaeus 46c-47b and 90 b-d Cicero appears to be virtually paraphrasing Plato as far as the significance awarded to human vision (2.154-158). A corollary appertaining to human vision is the contemplation of divine presence in the form of prophecy and revelations through the medium of divination (2.160-163). The study of astronomy as a form of divination is investigated within the context of 2.160-163 and 2.167-168. The following is indicative of his refutation of divine prophecy in terms of its sublimity; efficacy; superiority:

Many things have been revealed to seers and retold by prophets. Many events have been foreshadowed by oracles, sooth sayings, dreams and omens. Men have often derived benefit from knowledge of these arts and avoided many dangers. The power or art or natural gift of prophecy has been conferred upon Man alone by the immortal gods (2.160-163).

In relation to this point Cicero contends that divination is among means of acquiring ethical goodness distilled from the supreme divine being (2.151-154). As a providential and singular principle encapsulating even the lowest hierarchic entity, humankind, this supreme divine being permits synchronization of the soul so that *anagogic* union turns out to be a reality. The ascent of the human soul by means of divination is a benefit bestowed upon humankind. (2.131-154; 160-163) *Mantike techne*, divination and *hethēia mantike* or divine prophecy figure symbolically in *anagogic* stages (2.160-163; 163-167; 167-168). Reference to vision as a divine gift is made in *Timaeus*, 90c-d; 99 b-d; D-L 7.87-89; *Phaedrus*, 252c-253c). The divine gift of vision that providentially supplement communion with the perfect and finest sources of wisdom benefit the more contemplative minds whose nature transcend those whose material dispositions are prominent. Such minds are similar to philosophers or lover of wisdom (*De Mystries*, 3.1(138.1-5); 4.4(244.10-245.7; *Symposium*, 207c-209e; *Republic*, 613a-b, *Thaetetus*, 176b-c; *Timaeus*, 90c-d; *Phaedrus*, 252c-257c).

This communication is analogous to the Stoic conception of the life of the gods and the subsequent acquisition of happiness (2.167-168). After all man is in many respects imperfect (2.37-40). Perfection can only be accomplished through means of contemplation of the divine through the medium of divination (2.160-163; 163-167; 167-168). Divination is a vital enterprise that could be applied for the reduction of the inseparable gulf between the human and celestial realm (*Strumisa*, 1990: 26045; *Cornelius*, 2003: 110; *Shephard*, 1993: 130-140; *Athanassiadi*, 1993: 115-117). Cicero had elsewhere noted the sacred character of divination what could be effectively applied for this reduction (*De Divinatione*, II.xi.26-27).

There survives scope within the theological contextualization of the divine in book II of *The Nature of the Gods* for multifaceted and multidimensional entities who are awarded equal importance. This equality encapsulates a framework of thought in keeping with allusions to henotheism. This framework is interpreted so as to deny the hostile comments of Augustus whose virulent attack on Cicero is based on his own suspicion of anomalies: attribution of the chain of events to fate (*City of God*; 5-8); equation of fate or destiny to Jupiter who is presupposed as the supreme god (4.9; 7.10-11; 7-9); denial of superstition which on other occasions is admitted as religious truth (11.22); denial of stars containing celestial knowledge (4.12; 10.29).

All this, comments Augustine, contributes to Cicero's acknowledgement of the ignorance of secondary divine hierarchies. Augustine's derision of Cicero's representation of the divine is brought out in his apparent demonization of pagan deities (8.16-24). It is this misconception that severely contradicts Cicero's theological assessment of the divine which has allusions more to henotheism than to the type of scriptural monotheism advocated by Augustine.

The climax of the ciceronian conception of the divine which alludes to henotheism reflects a feature unique to its religious fermentation and this is none other than astral immortality or the ascent of the purified soul to its pristine origin (9-11; 11-13; 13-15; 151-154; 154-158; 158-160; 160-163; 163-167; 167-168; Cfr. *Dream of Scipio*, 24.26; 18.18). The attunement or synchronization of the human soul with the subtle realm of the psycho-physical domain thus literally enforming the totality of cosmic sympathy reflects Cicero's representation of the character of the divine in terms of the benefits and reward conferred upon humankind (2.1, 3-3-5). This care, this attention bestowed upon humankind is proof of the plausibility of the soul's syncretism with the highest divine source of wisdom, supreme divine being, its single mind and its administration and its gifts. All these contribute to the refutation of the divine more in relation to henotheism within book II of *The Nature of the Gods*.

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