

M. TVLLI CICERONIS

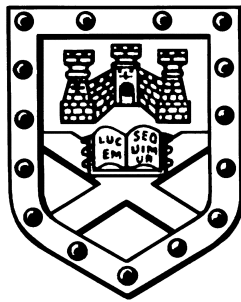
# TVSCULANARVM DISPVATIONVM

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DISSERTATIO  
QUAM  
AD SUMMOS IN PHILOSOPHIA HONORES  
AB AMPLISSIMO DOCTORUM ORDINE EXONIENSI  
RITE IMPETRANDOS  
SCRIPSIT

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other University.

Signature:

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## ANALYSIS OF BOOK I



The composition of this work was prompted partly by the interest Cicero had in philosophical topics, but more probably the serious thoughts that arose in this work stem from the morose climate in which Cicero was living; many of his friends, both personal and political, had been killed in the civil war, and most recently he was more grievously affected by the death of his daughter Tullia.

*Introduction*, §§1–9. Cicero's main aim in the preface is to examine the role of eloquence in philosophy, the topic of which immediately distinguishes it from the other prefaces in the *Tusc.*, whose purpose is generally limited to the praise of philosophy itself, for example, *Tusc.* 2.5 and 2.13. Cicero, claiming to be finally liberated from the labours of the forum, aims to show that Romans are capable of improving on Greek philosophy. He complains that their native literature show that Roman philosophers have fine sentiments, but that they are unable to adorn them with sufficient eloquence, either to clarify their thoughts or to attract new readers. Cicero intends to address this error which he finds to be one of the most widespread in Roman philosophy, §§1–6. He has held five days of lectures on five subjects at the suggestion of his friends. The first proposition, and the topic of the first book is the discussion whether *death is an evil*: both to the dead, since they are without life; and to the living, since while they are alive, they forever are doomed to die, and continue afterwards to suffer as the dead already do. But if the dead are not in Tartarus, where are they? They are nowhere at all, they are non-existent; if so, then how can that which does not exist suffer in its wretchedness? The paradox compels admission that the dead are not wretched; but the living remain so, since they must still die, §§7–14.

*Doxography*, §§ 10–17. In order to answer the question what the soul is, Cicero surveys a wide variety of philosophical schools, from the reputable and well-known, to the less credible and renowned. Strangely however, and quite surprisingly, in this arrangement of philosophers the foremost influences and figureheads of the schools are passed over. Some of those from the major schools are never mentioned by name: of the Academic school Carneades is not mentioned at all in book 1, although Cicero mentions him frequently elsewhere, *Tusc.* 3.54, 59; 4.53; 5.11, 83, 87, 88, 120; of the Stoic school Posidonius, who had significant influence on the *Tusc.* is never once mentioned.<sup>63</sup> Zeno is mentioned only once (1.19) and appears only as a source for the idea that the Stoics conceived the soul as fire; Chrysippus (1.118) too is mentioned once in passing, and slightly as a mere story teller. Finally Epicurus (1.82) is mentioned only once, merely in connection to Democritus and atomic physics. However, Socrates, Plato and Aristotle are the most often cited authorities. Cicero himself admits that he has a stronger inclination to the philosophical theories of the older generation of philosophers, such as Plato and Socrates, than he does to the more recent thinkers. Cicero appeals to Socrates more frequently here than in any other work, excepting *De Or.* 3.; Plato is mentioned by name more often than anywhere else in Cicero's writing. From this it should not be surprising to find much that is Platonic in character in this book.<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>63</sup>cf. LONG (Hellenistic Philosophy, p. 255)

<sup>64</sup>DOUGLAS (Tusculans, 110–111, n. 57).

*First Argument: The soul is immortal*, §28–81. (i) There is a naturally implanted belief in immortality. We have evidence for this in the earliest burial and religious practices of men, §28; and there is no society on earth so barbaric as not to bewail their dead so there is a *consensus omnium* that the soul must survive, §30. And why else would men and woman take any care in their posterity if they knew the soul would not survive? §§31–35. (ii) Philosophy tells us that the very nature of the soul would preclude its death, §§38–71. Plato gave many reasons for it, §38; we know that the fiery material which composes the soul will cause it to rise aloft after death and blend with the warm rarified air far above the earth, §§40–49. They who deny the existence of the soul apart from the body have difficulty imagining what it would be. However there are numerous arguments for its immortality after it leaves the body. (a) There is the self-moving argument from Plato, §§53–55; (b) the argument from the indivisibility of the soul; (c) the argument from the scale of existence based on the gradual ascent from vegetative growth up to the perfection of the divine soul, §56; (d) the powers of the soul, such as memory and invention, §§57–64; (e) the theory of *ἀνάμνησις* as discussed by Plato §71. The soul is superior to the body, and while we are alive, we are in a living death; but when the soul leaves behind all its earthly concerns, then it truly comes alive, §75.

*Second Argument: The soul is mortal*, §82–116. However, the doctrine of immortality is rejected by many philosophers. Therefore we must prove that when the soul dies, it perishes as completely as the body and that there is no evil in death. (i) In fact, frequently death has removed people from more misery than good in their life, §86. In every case, because there is no feeling in death, we cannot be said to miss anything of our former life nor can we even be conscious of this loss, §90. (ii) Sleep and Death were called brothers by the poets, and rightly so; for in sleep we see that there is no feeling, so it will be with death. (iii) We also have many examples of virtuous men who go to their deaths readily composed, such as Theramenes and Socrates; even lesser men and whole legions go to their death, §95–101. (iv) Concern for burial is really just superstition; we will not have any sense of death, so what does it matter what happens to our bodies?, §102–109. The man who led a virtuous life will have glory accompany him to his grave; therefore, he will meet it with calmness and understanding.

*Epilogue.* We have many poets who say that the gods granted death to man as the best thing; and dying for one's country will earn both great glory, but also happiness, §§112–16. We must not fear death; for it is either a departure which is greatly to be desired or our liberation from the misfortunes and miseries of life.