

# Episode 237 - Cicero's OTNOTG - 12 - Isonomia And The Implications of Infinity

Post by "Godfrey" of July 13, 2024 at 12:41 PM

## Quote

By this Velleius seems to mean a law of averages or chances; the law, namely, that of two alternatives equally possible, each will occur with equal frequency if an infinite number of cases be taken.

I finally realized what it is that I can't reconcile about isonomia, at least as presented by the great deceiver Cicero. As presented, it appears to depend on examining dichotomies. But, in general, I don't think that infinity implies dichotomies other than as described in Newton's laws. Take the gods, for example: I think that we all agree that there is the possibility of a spectrum of beings, some of which may be considered to be lower and some higher. But lower how? Higher how? And how do you compare theoretical quantities in a spectrum? Because Cicero (as Velleius) is comparing "an equal number" of mortals and immortals. How do you split a spectrum into a dichotomy?

Even thinking of "mortal" and "immortal" as possibilities sets up a logical fallacy. Since there is nothing immortal other than atoms and void (and you can't even accurately say that there is an equal quantity of atoms and void), using the word immortal is inaccurate as we've often discussed on the forum. So we're left with living things: how do you split living things into two categories? The only operation that seems to make sense is to chunk the spectrum into several categories, then say that there is an equal possibility of *each category* occurring. And one or more of those categories may have figured out how to live forever (give or take). But that isn't at all what Cicero (as Velleius) is saying. He's saying that for every mortal there is an immortal. More logically, I suspect that what he's really saying is that for everything natural there is something supernatural. That's his agenda here, that there's an earthly realm and a supernatural realm. And we have few if any other sources to compare his take on isonomia with, so as so often with Cicero, we're sent down a rabbit hole trying to make sense of his words.

In terms of isonomia, comparing forces such as creation and destruction makes intuitive sense to me. But comparing quantities of things does not, at least in the way that Cicero has done. And it must *always* be remembered that Cicero has an agenda, and that his agenda is not favorable to Epicurus.