

HENRY DAVID JOCELYN

URANIA'S DISCOURSE IN CICERO'S POEM *ON HIS CONSULSHIP*:
SOME PROBLEMS

It was between March and December of the year 60 that Cicero wrote three books of epic hexameters in the manner of Ennius on the domestic events of 63 (1). This was a period when Cicero had withdrawn from the centre of the political stage and when he felt his past services to the state undervalued. The figure of Pompey no longer filled him with enthusiasm. He also produced around the same time an account of the same events in Greek prose (2) and a text of twelve speeches which he had delivered while consul (3). His youthful translation of Aratus' *Φαινόμενα* had perhaps gained him some public esteem as a poet (4). The consular epic destroyed this esteem. L. Calpurnius Piso, cos. 58, exploited the poem's failure in a speech which he made to the Senate in the summer of 55 (5). The failure was not forgotten and M. Antonius exploited it again in September of 44 (6). The text of the poem was preserved for some centuries after Cicero's death (7) along with works whose reputation suffered little challenge, but its reputation remained

(1) *Att.* 1, 19, 10 (written 15 March 60) shows that the work was then only an idea in Cicero's mind. *Att.* 2, 3, 4 (written in the second half of December 60) shows it complete and, one would think, known at least among the author's friends. *Q. fr.* 2, 7, 1 (written in mid-February 55) gives no grounds for supposing that the material was incorporated in the poem referred to in this letter, in *Att.* 4, 8a, 3 (written in mid-November 56) in *Q. fr.* 2, 15, 5 (written in August 54), in *Q. fr.* 3, 1, 24 (written in September 54) and in *epist.* 1, 9, 23 (written in December 54).

(2) See Cic. *Att.* 1, 19, 10; 1, 20, 6; 2, 1, 1-2. Cf. Plut. *Crass.* 13, 4; *Caes.* 8, 2.

(3) See Cic. *Att.* 2, 1, 3.

(4) On this translation see Cic. *nat. deor.* 2, 104. Plutarch, or his source, must have it in mind at *Cic.* 2, 4.

(5) See Cic. *Pis.* 72.

(6) See Cic. *Phil.* 2, 20.

(7) Nonius Marcellus' two quotations seem to come from distinct secondary sources, that at p. 202. 20 (*Cicero in consulatu suo...*) from one glossary, that at p. 204. 5 (*M. Tullius ... consulatus sui lib. II ...*) from another. Lactantius' quotation at *inst.* 3, 7, 12 cannot derive from *diu.* 1, 19. It looks however to be at second hand. The origin of those in Servius' commentary on Virgil (*Aen.* 1, 1; *Buc.* 8, 105) is uncertain.

low (8). Cicero himself never bowed to the criticisms made of it (9). He even made his brother Quintus, the proponent of Stoic views in the dialogue on divination which he composed around the time of Caesar's assassination, cite seventy-eight verses from the second book (10).

The poem's title is usually given in modern works of reference as *De consulatu suo*. This depends on Paolo Manuzio's restoration of the introductory sentence to the quotation at *diu.* 1, 16-17 as *sed quo potius utar auctore aut teste quam te, cuius edidici etiam uersus et lubenter quidem, quos in secundo < de > consulatu Vrania Musa pronuntiat?* (11). Manuzio probably had in mind the way Cicero refers to the comparable work by Q. Lutatius Catulus, cos. 102, at *Brut.* 132: *quae perspici cum ex orationibus eius potest tum facillume ex eo quem de consulatu et de rebus gestis suis conscriptum molli et Xenophontio genere sermonis misit ad A. Furium poetam, familiarem suum* (12). Here however it is plainly a question of the subject matter rather than the actual title of Catulus' work. Lactantius and Nonius Marcellus cite verses of Cicero's work on the basis of copies which must have borne the title *Consulatus suus* (13). Copies of Sulla's autobiography were similarly inscribed *Res suae* (14) and copies of Agrippa's *Vita sua* (15). Jan Gulielmus rightly therefore, in my view, restored the sentence at *diu.* 1, 16-17 as... *quos in secundo consulatu < s > Urania Musa pronuntiat?* (16).

The remnants of the poem which I should like to see called the *Consulatus suus*, or better still the *Consulatus*, have a large scholarly bibliography attaching to them (17). There have been many attempts since Renaissance times to modify the harsh judgment which the ancients passed upon Cicero's

(8) See Ps. Sall. *In Tull.* 5-7; Quintil. *inst.* 9, 4, 41; 11, 1, 24; Juvenal 10, 122-6; Plut. *Cic.* 51, 1; schol. Bob. Cic. *Planc.* 74, p. 165. 4-9 Stangl. For the general discredit of Cicero's poetry see Sen. rhet. *Contr.* 3. *praef.* 8; Sen. phil. *dial.* 5, 37, 5; Tac. *dial.* 21, 6; Mart. 2, 89, 3-4; Plut. *Cic.* 2, 4; schol. Bob. Cic. *Sest.* 123, p. 137. 11-13.

(9) See *Pis.* 72-5; *de orat.* 3, 167; *off.* 1, 77; *Phil.* 2, 20. Friends could flatter him by making allusions (cf. Cassius, ap. Cic. *epist.* 12, 13, 1).

(10) 1, 17-22.

(11) See the 'Scholia' in the edition published at Venice in 1541 (in partem II 83).

(12) Cf. 112: *huius* (i.e. *M. Scauri*) *et orationes sunt et tres ad L. Fufidium libri scripti de uita ipsius acta sane utiles.*

(13) See above, n. 7.

(14) See Priscian, *Gramm. Lat.* II 476. 4: *Sulla in uicesimo primo rerum suarum.*

(15) See Serv. Dan. *georg.* 2, 162: *Agrippa in secundo uitae suae.* The autobiography of P. Rutilius Rufus on the other hand is regularly cited as *De uita sua* (Charis. p. 154. 5-6 Barwick, et al.).

(16) See the edition of Cicero published after Gulielmus' death by J. Gruter at Hamburg in 1618-1619. Gulielmus' restoration is accepted by R. Giomini in his recent Teubner edition of the *De diuinatione*, Leipzig 1975. (*M. Tulli Ciceronis scripta quae manserunt omnia*, fasc. 46).

(17) The most important recent discussion is to be found in Professor Traglia's *La lingua di Cicerone poeta*, Bari 1951 (see also *M. Tullio Cicerone, I frammenti poetici* in *Tutte le opere di Cicerone*, vol. 18, Verona 1962) and Professor Soubiran's *Cicéron: Aratea; fragments poétiques*, Paris 1972.

poem (18). This paper has three purposes: the first is to consider what factors may have underlain the ancient judgment, both in regard to the verses and episodes ridiculed by Cicero's political adversaries and in regard to the seventy-eight verses cited by himself; the second is to question the modern notion that the style of these seventy-eight verses is somehow «rhetorical» in character; the third is to suggest that our tradition has done more damage to these verses than is commonly supposed.

It could be thought that the negative remarks which survive in our record do not reflect individual aesthetic judgments made over a long period of time on various of Cicero's poems, but rather descend from a single judgment, made on two verses and two or three episodes of the *Consulatus* soon after its publication in circles hostile to the person and policies of the author, a judgment made on the political assertions rather than on the literary qualities of the poem (19). Now certainly many of the recorded remarks refer to two particular verses and these verses could theoretically be the basis of the other more general remarks. Whatever Cicero's intentions, the *Consulatus* was bound to have looked at the time of its publication like an attempt to call in question the common view of Pompey's achievement (20). The down-grading of military success in *cedant arma togae, concedat laurea laudi* and the individualism in *o fortunatam natam me consule Romam* were repulsive to the ethos of the Roman aristocracy and certainly offered a handle to the poet's political enemies. The idea of a Roman talking face to face with Minerva and Iuppiter (21) was an impious one (22) and offered yet another handle. I should point out, however, that Quintilian condemned *o fortunatam natam me consule Romam* for the jingling repetition of terminations as well as for its unseemly boastfulness, that for Juvenal this was simply a ridiculous verse, and that the grammarian responsible for the Bobbio commentary on the *Pro Plancio* claimed to base his adverse judgment on a reading of the whole *Consulatus*.

(18) Cf. J.C. Scaliger, *Poetices libri septem*, Lyons 1561, IV 41, 204, A. Turnebus, *Aduersariorum tomus primus duodecim libros continens*, Paris 1564, VII 19, A. Schott, *Tullianarum quaestionum libri IIII*, Antwerp 1610, 89-92, *Cicero a calumniis uindicatus*, Antwerp 1613, 76-82.

(19) Cf. Traglia, *La lingua*, 42-5.

(20) Cicero's attempt to deny Piso's suggestion (*Pis.* 73-5) is far from convincing.

(21) There was certainly a *concilium deorum* in the poem which Cicero composed after his return from exile (see *Q. fr.* 2, 7, 1; 3, 1, 24). It took place at the end the second book. Ps. Sall. *in Tull.* 3 refers to a *concilium* which could have taken place only in the first book of the *Consulatus*. Editors refer *quem Minerva omnis artis edocuit, Iuppiter Optimus Maximus in concilio deorum admisit, Italia exulem humeris suis reportauit* at §7 (cf. Quintil. *inst.* 11, 1, 24) to the second poem. Minerva and Jupiter would, in my view, be better referred to the previously mentioned *Consulatus*, and broad-shouldered Italy to Cic. *P. red. in sen.* 39 (cf. W. Allen, in «Trans. Am. Phil. Ass.» 87, 1956, 135 n. 21).

(22) The behaviour of the elder Scipio in visiting the Capitoline temple every morning is reported in our sources as peculiar (Liv. 26, 19, 5-6; Gell. 6, 1, 6). The statesman's enemies would have pointed out that Jupiter made his will known less directly to mortal men.

What Piso said about *cedant arma togae, concedat laurea laudi* in 55 and Antony in 44, is hard to disentangle from the rhetoric of Cicero's replies but it does look as if Piso was taking up something already said rather than saying something completely new. The verse was open to a number of purely literary criticisms. The figure of speech used in *cedant arma togae* left the statement ambiguous and permitted associations of thought damaging to the dignity of epic poetry. Even if Cicero had in mind the dress of a citizenry at peace hearers could readily think of a consul wearing the *toga praetexta*. And not only did magistrates and male citizens doing formal business wear a *toga*; so too did a certain sort of female doing another sort of business (23). Metaphor and allied figures could be used more freely by the poet than by the orator (24) but clarity and appropriateness to the circumstances and the class of poem being written were still required (25). The kind of jingle of sound produced by *concedat laurea laudi* (26) was perhaps no longer as much admired in the middle of the first century B.C. as it had been earlier. Homer's *Iliad* did not have such things. But even a critic willing to admire the syllabic homœoarchon in *concedat laurea laudi* would have been unhappy about the way regular verbal usage had to be bent in order to produce it. The concrete *laurea* was something particularly associated with victorious generals. Abstract *laus* on the other hand was not something restricted to successful politicians (27).

We can leave to one side the question whether the invective piece attributed to Sallust was delivered in the Senate during Cicero's lifetime or was rather concocted in some first century A.D. rhetorical school. Whoever wrote it had access to material lost to ourselves. He cites items from the *Consulatus* as examples of the ridiculously false claims made by Cicero about himself. In the course of doing so he suggests that the form as well as the substance of the items was offensive to reasonable men (28).

And indeed it is not difficult to guess what contemporary critics of poetry would have said about them.

Modern editors of Cicero's fragments do not give enough of the indirect

(23) See Afran. *Tog.* 182; Hor. *serm.* 1, 2, 63; 82.

(24) See Cic. *de orat.* 1, 70; 3, 153; *orat.* 202.

(25) For the ridicule that befell Furius Bibaculus' *Iuppiter hibernas cana niue conspuit Alpes* see Hor. *serm.* 2, 5, 40-41; for the criticism made in grammatical circles see Porph. ad loc. and Quintil. *inst.* 8, 6, 17.

(26) There can be no doubt that by 55 Cicero intended *concedat laurea laudi* rather than *concedat laurea linguae*, the form of the phrase often cited by enemies (Ps. Sall. *in Tull.* 6; Quintil. *inst.* 11, 1, 24; Plut. *Cic.* 51, 1). It is arguable that he had originally intended the latter (cf. Sc. Mariotti, in «Parola del Passato» 9, 1954, 371-2) but *laurea* and *lingua* did not present a very pointed antithesis. The tongue was normally set against some sort of offensive weapon (cf. Naev. *trag.* 1: *ne mihi gerere morem uidear lingua, uerum lingula*).

(27) For *laus* bestowed on the warrior see Plaut. *Amph.* 642; *Cist.* 201; Cic. *Manil.* 8; 20.

(28) Cf. 6: ... *etiamne molestissimis uerbis insectabere?*

citation of the first item: *atque haec cum ita sint, tamen se Cicero dicit in concilio deorum immortalium fuisse, inde missum huic urbi ciuibusque custodem absque carnificis nomine, qui ciuitatis incommodum in gloriam suam ponit. quasi uero non illius coniurationis causa fuerit consulatus tuus et idcirco res publica disiecta eo tempore, quo te custodem habebat* (§3). The whole context makes clear that a meeting of the gods was described early in the poem (29). This would have been modelled on the famous meeting which preceded the deification of Romulus in Ennius' *Annales*. The similarity of «Sallust»'s *missum huic urbi ciuibusque custodem* to a phrase of the people's lament for Romulus at *Ann.* 111-14

*o Romule Romule die,
qualem te patriae custodem di genuerunt.
o pater, o genitor, o sanguen dis oriundum,
tu produxisti nos intra luminis oras*

suggests that it reflects a verbal imitation by Cicero of Ennius. The Ciceronian verse which «Sallust» cites directly in the next section of the invective

o fortunatam natam me consule Romam (§5)

was intended not so much to recall the honorific title *pater patriae* bestowed on Cicero by Q. Lutatius Catulus in 63 (30), as to make even more explicit the link with the *Annales*: Cicero claimed to be a second Romulus, acting with a similar kind of divine guidance and support, fathering the city for a second time. By imitating a famous episode from the most admired poem in the contemporary literary syllabus Cicero thought to ennoble his own work. The reminiscence would have had the opposite effect. Critics could point out that Ennius set his divine council in the heroic age, just as Homer did his several councils (31), that sophisticated persons did not think the gods any longer held direct converse with mortals (32). The only genuine epic models for the Ciceronian episode were in Greek poems which had won no esteem even among the Greeks (33). The old Athenian comedians had

(29) See above, n. 21.

(30) See Cic. *Sest.* 121; *Pis.* 6.

(31) It has been suggested that *concilia deorum* preceded the wars with Pyrrhus and with Hannibal but see S. Timpanaro in «Stud. It. d. Filol. Class.» n.s. 23, 1948, 37-41, *Contributi di filologia e di storia della lingua latina*, Roma 1978, 642.

(32) Cf. Catull. 64, 396-408.

(33) Cf. Quintil. *inst.* 11, 1, 24: ... *quae sibi ille secutus quaedam Graecorum exempla permiserat*. Quintilian probably had in mind some of the epic poems written about the deeds of Ale-

made stories of intercourse between the Olympians and ordinary mortals irresistably funny for all who knew their plays (34). Lucilius' satirical account of the gods discussing the person of L. Cornelius Lentulus Lupus, cos. 156 (35), also stood squarely in the way of anyone taking seriously a deliberation on Mount Olympus about the political situation at Rome in 64. The comparison with Romulus was an unfortunate one to suggest among literate men of the middle of the first century. Ennius had indeed made the first king an honourable figure, esteemed both in heaven and on earth, but others painted him a tyrant justly slain by his victims (36). While it may be doubted whether the jingle of *fortunatam natam* grated as much on the ears of Cicero's contemporaries as it did on those of Quintilian, the emphasis of *natam* on the physical aspect of the metaphor in *o pater o genitor ... tu produxisti nos intra luminis oras* would surely have seemed inappropriate to the dignity of epic poetry.

Let us now consider the verses of the *Consulatus* which Cicero thought worth learning by heart, the seventy-eight verses spoken by the Muse Urania in the second book and cited by Quintus Cicero at *diu.* 1, 17-22. They have, I submit, features which no objective first century critic of poetry could have praised.

It is now often said that Cicero narrated the revelation of the Allobrogan envoys towards the end of the second book and then had himself transported in a dream to Mount Helicon, where all nine Muses confronted him and Urania tendered the advice that he should deal firmly with the conspirators whom he had arrested (37). If this is true Cicero was guilty of yet another breach of first century B.C. epic conventions. The Muses talked to poets but they did not talk to heroic warriors, much less to contemporary politicians. If Jupiter wanted to make his will known by means of something other than an atmospheric phenomenon he sent Mercury with a message. The daughters of Memory were simply entertainers. The seventy-eight verses quoted of the Ciceronian Urania's discourse do not, moreover, contain advice about any particular political problem and it is difficult to see how their actual content could be a prelude to such advice. In any case it would have been utterly ludicrous either for a Roman consul to talk to the Muses while

xander and the successor kings. For the evil reputation of Choerilus see Hor. *epist.* 2, 1, 232-4 and Porph. and loc.

(34) Cf. Aristophanes' *Peace*.

(35) See Serv. Virg. *Aen.* 10, 104.

(36) See Liv. 1, 16, 4; Dionys. Hal. *Ant.* 2, 56, 3-5; Ov. *fast.* 2, 497; Val. Max. 5, 3, 1; Plut. *Rom.* 27, 6; *Num.* 2, 3-4; Appian, *B.C.* 2, 476. The story must go back to one of the Republican annalists.

(37) The theory was proposed by E. Koch, *Ciceronis carmina historica restituta atque enarrata*, Diss. Greifswald 1922, 19. It has enjoyed an almost universal acceptance.

the city was threatened with fire and sword or for a Muse to advocate resort to the *carnufex*.

There is in fact no need to put Urania's discourse in December 63. Vv. 30-35

*atque ea, quae lapsu tandem cecidere uetusto,
haec fore perpetuis signis clarisque frequentans
ipse deum genitor caelo terrisque canebat.
nunc ea, Torquato quae quondam et consule Cotta
Lydius ediderat Tyrrhenae gentis haruspex,
omnia fixa tuus glomerans determinat annus*

should be read as one unit of argument. Urania has finished detailing the portents of the year 63 itself (vv. 11-29) and goes on to deal with those of preceding years. *atque ... canebat* picks up *nam ... uidisti* (vv. 11-15) rather than *oracula ... fundebant* (vv. 28-9). The *fulmen* of v. 24, if not the other portents listed in vv. 11-29, was a clear sign from the father of the gods himself. Vv. 30-32 made no effective climax to the series (38). V. 30 *atque ea quae lapsu tandem cecidere uetusto* can hardly refer to anything except the final taking up of arms against the state in 63 (39). This act was believed to have forerunners and causes going a long way back in time (40). The *perpetua signa claraque* of v. 31 were a series of portents culminating in the lightning storm which struck the Capitol in 65 (41). Vv. 33-4 declared that the Etruscan *haruspices* had given advice about the significance of the portent and what should be done to placate Jupiter's wrath; v. 35 that events of the year of Cicero's consulship proved the *haruspices* entirely right. Vv. 60-65.

*haec tardata diu species multumque morata
consule te tandem celsa est in sede locata,
atque una fixi ac signati temporis hora
Iuppiter excelsa clarabat scepra columna,*

(38) The parallelism between vv. 2-32 and *Catil.* 3, 18 (*nam ut illa omittam, uisas nocturno tempore ab occidente faces ardoremque caeli, ut fulminum iactus, ut terrae motus relinquam, ut omittam cetera quae tam multa nobis consulibus facta sunt ut haec quae nunc fiunt canere di immortales uiderentur*) ought not to be pressed too hard.

(39) A.S. Pease's attempt to argue, in «Class. Phil.» 14, 1919, 175-7, that the verse refers to Sulla's crushing of a previous revolution does not convince. Even in 60 Cicero had no desire to associate himself with the memory of Sulla (cf. *Catil.* 3, 24).

(40) At *Catil.* 1, 31 he talks of a *furor uetus*, at *Sull.* 67 of a *furor biennio ante conceptus*. P. Cornelius Lentulus Sura, the leader of those arrested on 3 December, drew encouragement from an oracle allegedly connected with the burning of the Capitol in 83 and the suspicions raised against the Vestal virgins in 73 (Cic. *Catil.* 3, 9; Sall. *Catil.* 47, 2).

(41) They could have included the memorable portents of the year 87 (cf. Cic. *nat. deor.* 2, 14; *diu.* 1, 4), by which time dissipation had doubtless already taken hold of Catiline.

*et clades patriae flamma ferroque parata
uocibus Allobrogum patribus populoque patebat*

make clear that, where the speaker was concerned, vv. 33-5 referred to the past, not to the present or immediate future. *nunc ... determinat* presented an important event of the past in a vivid way (42). We may therefore imagine Urania and her sisters confronting Cicero sometime in 60, when he is composing his poem and in need of instruction, not about the facts of his narrative, as Homer living centuries after the Trojan war had been, but about the significance of some of these facts. The *curae anxiferae* of v. 77 would be those prompted by the behaviour of Pompey, Caesar and Crassus in the years after 63. Taught as he had been by Academics and Peripatetics of the first century rather than by those of the fourth (43), he could not recognise unaided a divine purpose in thunderbolts and the like. Perhaps he had asked: «do the gods really know what men plan? do they really give signs of their knowledge?» In answering Urania behaved like one of the Muses worshipped in Plato's Academy rather than like those addressed in the *Iliad*. One could speak of a development of an epic convention but not of a breach (44).

Although it was appropriate for an epic poet of the first century to make a Muse talk about the nature of divination, the particular statements designed by Cicero for Urania nevertheless did not achieve an epic dignity. Homer had made the sun see and hear all things (45) but left it unclear how Zeus, dwelling on Mount Olympus, knew what he did about men. Later poets alluded to the philosophical theory which identified Zeus with the αἰθήρ or the ἄήρ (46). Philemon even brought onto the comic stage an omniscient prologising Ἄήρ (47). Few however, if any, tried to explain in any depth how the mental processes of a divinised element might have functioned. Cicero's attempt to do so in vv. 1-5.

*principio aethero flammatus Iuppiter igni
uertitur et totum conlustrat lumine mundum
menteque diuina caelum terrasque petessit,
quae penitus sensus hominum uitasque retentat,
aetheris aeterni saepta atque inclusa cauernis*

(42) The pluperfect *ediderat* in v. 34 is to be noted.

(43) The writings of Plato left obscure what he believed in regard to things like divination. Hence men as different as Carneades and Antiochus could claim him as a spiritual ancestor.

(44) For advice of a general kind given by Muses see the verses of the third book of the *Consulatus* cited by Cicero at *Att.* 2, 3, 4 and *Hor. carm.* 3, 4, 41-2.

(45) *Il.* 3, 277.

(46) Cf. Eurip. fr. 941 and Ennius, *Trag.* 302.

(47) Fr. 91.

would have seemed absurdly over-detailed. Ennius had often described the revolving sphere of the outer heaven and perhaps made Iuppiter the cause of the revolution (48). Combining a verse like

uertitur interea caelum cum ingentibus signis (49)

with a philosophical passage like ὁ μὲν δὴ θεός, ὡσπερ καὶ ὁ παλαιὸς λόγος, ἀρχὴν τε καὶ τελευτὴν καὶ μέσα τῶν ὄντων ἁπάντων ἔχων, ἐυθεία περαίνει κατὰ Φύσιν περιπορευόμενος. τῷ δὲ αἰεὶ συνέπεται δίκη τῶν ἀπολειπομένων τοῦ θείου νόμου τιμωρός (50), Cicero has the chief god, whom he later refers to in traditional terms as *ipse deum genitor* (51) and *pater altitonans* (52), catch alight in the fiery upper air and perform a revolution, sending rays of sentient light into the souls of mortal men as he does so. Significantly, no later Latin poet took up the idea. Certain philosophical notions might be impressive in their own context but were not necessarily so in epic verse.

The events referred to in Urania's discourse were all of a kind frequently described in epic poetry. Cicero dressed them in the figurative language created by Ennius for his *Annales*. Cicero's metaphors, however, often have an obscurity foreign to the style of the surviving fragments of the *Annales*. The *annus glomerans* of v. 35 and the *moles uirtutum* of v. 76 were in all probability as mysterious to readers of 60 B.C. as they are to ourselves. Some phrases would have seemed to violate natural usage in the same way as did *concedat laurea laudi*. To a knowledgeable reader of v. 15 who declared that comets put out a steady, not a flickering, light it was no answer to claim a catachrestic usage for *tremulus*. A good poet employing this figure took care the context permitted no ambiguity (53). Other phrases would have bordered as much on the absurd as did *cedant arma togae* and *o fortunatam natam me consule Roman*. The stock phrase *crescente luna* (Varr. *rust.* 1, 37, 1 et al.), if not a special knowledge of the circumstances of lunar eclipse, was the starting point for the description of the full moon in v. 18: *concreto lumine luna*. The reader, however, could not help thinking a humble thought about some congealing liquid. One of the various explanations of the cause of seismic disturbances offered by philosophers perhaps lay behind the description of the earth in v. 25: *grauido ... corpore tellus*. The reader could not but

(48) Cf. *ann.* 29 *qui caelum uersat stellis fulgentibus aptum*; 211 *uertitur interea caelum cum ingentibus signis*; Lucret. 5, 510 *magnus caeli si uertitur orbis*; 1209-10 *nequae forte deum nobis immensa potestas sit, uario motu quae candida sidera uerset*.

(49) *ann.* 211.

(50) Plat. *leg.* 4, 715 e - 716 a.

(51) V. 32 = Virg. *Aen.* 7, 306. There was probably a common Ennian source.

(52) V. 36. Cf. Enn. *ann.* 541: *templum ... Iouis altitonantis*.

(53) Cf. Cicero's own *tum fixum tremulo quatietur frigore corpus* (*Arat.* 68).

think of some pregnant animal. One is tempted to say that the author of the *Consulatus* had read too much philosophy and too little poetry.

Cassius Severus opined that Cicero's oratorical eloquence deserted him when he wrote poetry (54), but many modern students like to assert practically the opposite, namely that in his poems Cicero remained an orator. Gordon Williams has said of Urania's discourse: «it is fine rhetorical verse» (55). And indeed one can discover in it many of the figures of speech which the great rhetor Gorgias was said to have invented in the fifth century (56), figures of speech unknown to Homer and either avoided or used very sparingly by Virgil and Ovid, in particular the play with sound at the beginnings of associated words (5 *aetheris aeterni*, 14 *laeto ... lacte Latinas*, 16 *multaque misceri*, 18 *lumine luna*, 24 *lumina liquit*, 27 *motusque monebant*, 37 *tumulos ac templa*, 44 *rore rigabat*, 54 *fixa ... fato ac fundata*, 58 *cernere conatus*, 64 *flamma ferroque*, 65 *patribus populoque patebat*, 77 *requiete relaxas*), in the middles (2 *totum conlustrat lumine mundum*, 9 *lapsu spatiaque*, 11 *uolucris te consule motus*, 12 *stellarum ardore micantis*, 23 *percussus fulmine*, 36 *altitonans stellanti*, 47 *monumenta uolutans*) and at the ends (6 *motus cursusque*, 11-12 *motus concursusque*, 14 ... *lustrasti ... mactasti*, 27-9 ... *monebant ... fundebant*, 31 *perpetuis signis clarisque*, 50 *ingentem cladem pestemque*, 50-52 ... *monebant ... ferebant ... iubebant*, 53 *stragem horribilem caedemque*, 53-4 ... *uereri ... teneri*, 57 *populus sanctusque senatus*, 59-60 ... *tardata ... morata ... locata*, 78 *studiis nobisque*). Such figures however had long been employed in the higher genres of Latin poetry (57). Their origin is to be sought in ancient sacral and legal formulae rather than in the teachings of Greek rhetors. Significantly, they mass in the most solemn part of the Ciceronian Muse's discourse, the account of the response made by the *haruspices* in connection with the lightning strike on the Capitol in 65 and of the way in which events verified that response. They were beginning to seem intolerably naive in some circles by 60 but Lucretius felt able to use them and his poem won a critical acclaim denied to the *Consulatus* (58). Cicero did not use them very much at all in the collection of speeches he published at the same time as the *Consulatus*. It is reasonable therefore to put them with the non-oratorical vocabulary of the discourse (e.g. *flammatum*, *petessere*, *retentare*, *Graius*, *niualis*, *ferme*, *stellans*, *serenans*, *linquere*, *tremefacere*, *tellus*, *genitor*, *glomerare*, *altitonans*, *dios*, *Mauors*, *uber*, *tristificus*, *clarare*, *umbrifer*, *iuuenta*, *anxifer*), the cata-

(54) See Sen. *contr.* 3, *praef.* 8.

(55) *Tradition and Originality in Roman Poetry*, Oxford 1968, 722.

(56) See Cic. *orat.* 165; 175; Diodor. 12, 53.

(57) E. Norden, *Die antike Kunstprosa* II, Leipzig 1898, 839-40, pointed this out but made rhetoric the source of the older poets as well.

(58) See Nepos, *Att.* 12, 4.

chreses and the metaphors and to derive them from the same poetic source. Cicero saw a theoretical difference between the styles of poetry and oratory (59) and endeavoured to maintain this difference in practice.

The context of Urania's discourse was a temptation to Cicero to apply his rhetorical upbringing. He had to find words, phrases, sentences and sentence-groups for a deity instructing a mortal about the fact of divination. The situation was analogous to that of a philosopher instructing raw students and there is no need to point out how Cicero handled such situations in his dialogues. The only imaginably appropriate rhetorical style for Urania would have been the *ἰσχνὸς χαρακτήρ* but that style shunned the archaisms, neologisms, metaphors and sound play (60) which we have seen to mark the discourse which Cicero actually composed. Cicero in fact turned his face right away from rhetoric. He even neglected to provide Urania's argument with anything akin to a rhetorical structure and made no great effort to achieve the primary goal of the *ἰσχνὸς χαρακτήρ*, namely lucidity. There comes first a statement about how it is that Jupiter knows all things about the plans of mortal men (vv. 1-5). We should then expect a list of the various types of signs by which Jupiter displayed his knowledge, e.g. dreams, day-light visions, oracles, abnormalities in the entrails of sacrificial animals, deviant behaviour among birds, atmospheric and seismic phenomena, planetary conjunctions (61). We get, however, a reference only to the last mentioned type (vv. 6-10). Next comes a catalogue of signs observed by Cicero during the year of his consulship and proved by later events to be significant (vv. 11-29) (62). Nine sets altogether. Most are described clearly enough but what rhetor would have allowed a pupil to get by with Cicero's description of the first set?

*nam primum astrorum uolucris te consule motus
concursumque grauis stellarum ardore micantis
tu quoque, cum tumulos Albano in monte niualis
lustrasti et laeto mactasti lacte Latinas,
uidisti* (vv. 11-15).

The names of the planets in conjunction and that of the zodiacal constellation in the ascendant were surely required. The words describing the third set

(59) *de orat.* 1, 70; *orat.* 66.

(60) See Anon. *Herenn.* 4, 11; 14; Cic. *orat.* 20; 75-86.

(61) Cf. Cic. *diu.* 1, 2-5; 12; 2, 16.

(62) On the connection of vv. 30-32 with what follows rather than with what precedes see above, p. 45.

multaque misceri nocturna strage putasti (v. 16)

are extremely obscure to ourselves – I should guess they refer to the common prodigy of noise in the sky similar to the noise of warfare (63) – and must have been so to any ancient reader who had not been present at the *Feriae Latinae* of 63, perhaps even to one who had. The transition to the signs vouchsafed before 63 (vv. 30-65) is not at all clearly marked. Despite its length and attention to detail the account of the lightning-bolt of 65, the consultation of the *haruspices* and the fruitful result of taking their advice is marked by a considerable vagueness. The words *elapsae uetustae numine leges* (v. 40) get nowhere near the fact that the bolt liquefied certain bronze tablets carrying legal texts (64). Vv. 47-59 suggests an amateur perusal of Etruscan religious literature rather than the official consultation of the *haruspices* which actually took place (65). Urania's argument concludes with the naming of three authoritative groups of men who believed in divination: the ancient rulers of certain foreign lands, Cicero's Roman ancestors, and the philosophers of the early Academy and Lyceum (vv. 66-74). Here again details are enveloped in cloud. To what does *quorum monumenta tenetis* refer? to books of history? or to the tombs of kings in lands under Roman domination? What are the *clarae fecundi pectoris artes*? the teachings of the first century B.C. scholars? or the teachings of Plato himself?

Allied to the absence from Urania's argument of a rhetorical economy and of a concern for clarity of detail is, at least where the transmitted text is concerned, a degree of syntactical looseness not to be paralleled in any of Cicero's public orations or even in his philosophical dialogues. I should draw attention particularly to the long sentence filling vv. 11-19 and to the series of questions in vv. 20-25. What rhetor could have approved the clumsy anacoluthon at the beginning of v. 13? (66) or the failure to mark the logical re-

(63) For Cicero's expression cf. Virg. *Aen.* 2, 486-7: *domus interior gemitu miseroque tumultu miscetur*. For the prodigy see Cic. *diu.* 1, 97; Virg. *georg.* 1, 474-5; Tibull. 2, 5, 73-4; Ov. *met.* 15, 783; Val. Max. 1, 6, 12; Plin. *nat.* 2, 148; Jul. Obs. 14; 41; 43. Most translators have tried to make the words refer to Catiline's murderous plans. Soubiran, for example, produces «tu as songé à la vaste confusion d'une nuit de massacres». Both the tense of *misceri* and the case of *strage* are hard to explain on this interpretation. In any case the general implication of Urania's discourse is that Cicero had not fully comprehended the significance of the signs he observed.

(64) See Cic. *Catil.* 3, 19; Jul. Obs. 61; Dio 37, 9, 2.

(65) See Cic. *Catil.* 3, 19; Arnob. 7, 40.

(66) Where Cicero has the logical subject of an ablative absolute recurring in a clause (see the material collected in A. Draeger, *Historische Syntax der lateinischen Sprache* II, Leipzig 1878, 779-82, R. Kühner and C. Stegmann, *Ausführliche Grammatik der lateinischen Sprache* II i, Hannover 1912, 786-8) some special emphasis or concinnity seems to be sought. I can find no cases at all in the consular speeches. In general see J. Wackernagel, *Vorlesungen über Syntax* II², Basle 1928, 91-2, A. Szantyr and J.B. Hofmann, *Lateinische Syntax und Stilistik*, Munich 1965, 139-40.

relationship of the three clauses in vv. 16-19? or the large ellipse in vv. 20-22, difficult as it is to fill out from the context? (67).

There is thus no very meaningful way in which the style of the seventy-eight verses of Urania's discourse could be called «rhetorical». The elements which modern scholars call rhetorical would have been declared inappropriate to the discourse in an ancient school. Other elements present were barred from all three of the conventional styles of oratory. Neither these, however, nor the allegedly rhetorical elements would have been necessarily objectionable to those who found the *Consulatus* wanting as poetry. Ennius did not construct the sentences of the *Annales* in periodic fashion. And not only had he resurrected old words and coined new ones but he had also admitted from ordinary informal speech many words and syntagms which orators of the mid-first century chose to avoid. Cicero wrote the *Consulatus* in the tradition established by the *Annales* and made its style quite distinct from all the styles cultivated by orators.

I have spoken so far as if the transmitted text of the seventy-eight verses of Urania's discourse was comparatively sound. It must however be asked whether some of the phenomena I have been discussing come not from the poem as published by Cicero in 60 or 59 B.C. but rather from some later stage of the tradition. The text carried by the common ancestor of our witnesses of the dialogue which cited the verses was quite certainly corrupt in a dozen places. Emil Baehrens questioned it in a dozen more (68), without however persuading subsequent students. I do not propose to resurrect any old verbal conjectures or to canvass new ones (69). Some queries, however, can be raised against three fairly extensive passages which recent editors of Cicero's fragments have passed as sound.

My first query is whether Urania went straight on at v. 5 from her description of Jupiter's physical journeying and mental probing to an assertion that planetary movements are connected with the operation of the *mens diuina*. If, as many think, *notata* at v. 10 means something like *obseruata*, then vv. 6-10 would simply repeat the substance of vv. 3-5. Baehrens's *rotata* does

(67) After the marking of a new subject (*Phoebi fax*) another question was to be expected; cf. Cic. *Phil.* 1, 36: *populi quidem Romani iudicia multa ambo habetis, quibus uos non satis moueri permoleste fero. quid enim gladiatoribus clamores innumerabilium ciuium? quid populi uersus? quid Pompei statuae plausus infiniti? quid duobus tribunis plebis qui uobis aduersantur? parumne haec significant incredibiliter consentientem populi Romani uniuersi uoluntatem?* In any case I can find no cases of transitional *quid?* in the consular speeches. Whatever supplied so as to complete the sense of *quid uero Phoebi fax* would have also to be supplied in the following two sentences. Giomini supplies *ostendit* (app. crit. ad loc.), understanding *ciuis* as the subject in v. 23, and *tellus* as the subject in v. 25. This is far from elegant.

(68) *Fragmenta Poetarum Romanorum*, Leipzig 1886, 299-302.

(69) Baehrens's *uoluer* in v. 50 has convinced many but Giomini's *instare* (defended at length in *Studi di Poesia Latina in onore di Antonio Traglia*, Rome 1979, 323-32) seems at least as plausible.

not improve things; it would then be the substance of vv. 1-2 that was repeated. Vv. 11-29 detail not observations but the signs by which in the course of 63 Jupiter manifested the feelings his observations had aroused in him: *notae*, to use one of Cicero's own terms (70). *Notatus* in v. 10 would have, I suggest, the sort of sense *signatus* has in v. 62, i.e. marked with *notae/signa* (71). Planetary movements, however, did not provide the only set of *notae* illustrated in vv. 11-29. One seeks therefore for some general reference to the connection of the *mens diuina* with comets, unusual noises, lunar eclipses, atmospheric luminescence, thunderbolts, earthquakes, ghosts and oracular possession, phenomena which students of divination were wont to put into two distinct classes (72). Cicero himself may have abbreviated Urania's discourse when he made Quintus cite it or the paradosis may have suffered an accident.

My second query is whether Urania associated a certain planetary conjunction, the appearance of comets, unusual noises and a lunar eclipse all with the time of the *Feriae Latinae* of 63. I have already pointed out the clumsy anacoluthon at v. 12 and the unorganised pile of clauses in vv. 16-19. Perhaps we have no more than an extreme degree of poetic tolerance of loose syntax. Nevertheless the phrase *tu quoque* in v. 13 strongly suggests that some other mortal's observations had been reported previously (73). It would have been odd in any case for a Roman consul to observe a planetary conjunction. The *pontifices* did not concern themselves with the planets (74) and to observe a conjunction required a degree of training associated with the highly suspect Chaldeans. Likewise, more than a lack of periodic organisation affects vv. 16-19. The calendar was not seriously out of harmony with the seasons when Cicero entered his consulship (75) and the reference in vv. 13-14 to snow on Monte Albano shows that he celebrated the *Feriae Latinae* at the normal time, i.e. in March (76). No eclipse of the moon could have been observed at that time in Latium. By 3 May, when we know that a full eclipse occurred, the snow would have been gone from Monte Albano. The problem has been seen and met, either by postulating a fault in the calendar (with Cicero's consular year beginning on 14 March) and an unusually

(70) Cf. *diu.* 2, 47: *quam scite per notas nos certiores facit Iuppiter.*

(71) Cf. *Sen. epist.* 88, 15: *per stas uices remeant et effectus rerum omnium aut mouent aut notant.*

(72) Cf. *Cic. diu.* 1, 12.

(73) Koch, *op. cit.*, p. 19, observed this but made nothing of it.

(74) They recorded comets as *stellae cincinnatae* (*Cic. nat. deor.* 2, 14) or *crinitae* (*Plin. nat.* 2, 89).

(75) This is the conclusion of F.K. Ginzel, *Handbuch der mathematischen und technischen Chronologie* II, Leipzig 1911, 270. For an account of the various theories canvassed from the seventeenth century on see P. Groebe in the second edition of W. Drumann, *Geschichte Roms*, Leipzig 1906, 755-827.

(76) Cf. *Cic. Q. fr.* 2, 4, 2; *epist.* 8, 6, 3.

late snowfall on Monte Albano (77) or by attaching the clause *cum ... perempta est* to *tempus* rather than to *putasti* or to *cecidere* (78). Neither solution is satisfactory. If there had been any fault in the calendar it would have been due to failure to intercalate properly (as it was when Julius Caesar decreed his reform) and Cicero would have entered office before rather than after 1 January 63. Part of our problem would in fact be aggravated. If, on the other hand, the adverbial clause *cum ... perempta est* was intended to qualify *tempus*, we should have not only a grammatical oddity but great haziness about what actually happened in 63. For a speaker like Urania, describing events with hindsight, the *tempus dirum* had to be the whole period when Catiline and his followers were actively preparing to murder senators and burn the city. The eclipse lasted only a few minutes. It would have been a sign of the same character as that of the comets and that of the noise of fighting: a sign not to be buried in a subordinate clause. I suggest therefore that the account of the planetary conjunction in vv. 11-12 is incomplete, that the account of the signs accompanying the *Feriae Latinae* began at v. 13 with *tu quoque*, and that vv. 18-19 come from other context, either of the *Consulatus* or of some other poem.

My third query is whether Urania really placed in the year 63 the flight of the *fax Phoebi*. I have already pointed out how awkward the ellipses are in vv. 20-25. Now it is commonly held that in vv. 20-23.

*quid uero Phoebi fax, tristis nuntia belli,
quae magnum ad columen flammato ardore uolabat,
praecipitis caeli partis obitusque † petisset †?*

Urania describes the same phenomenon as Cicero in his own person does at *Catil.* 3, 18: *nam ut illa omittam, uisas nocturno tempore ab occidente faces ardoremque caeli ...* (79). Unless, however, *petisset* is even more corrupt than is usually thought, the *fax* could not have originated in the western part of the sky. The mention of *Phoebus*, moreover, indicates that it was observed during the hours of daylight, like the *fax* of 101 (80). It clearly made a most unusual sight (81). We must accordingly either grant the poet in Cicero an

(77) Cf. L. Ideler, *Handbuch der mathematischen und technischen Chronologie* II, Berlin 1826, 110-111, Koch, *op. cit.*, 24.

(78) I think this is the implication of A.S. Pease's note ad loc. Soubiran translates vv. 16-19 as «tu as songé à la vaste confusion d'une nuit de massacres, car les Fêtes Latines sont tombées à peu près au moment où la lune ... n'offrit plus qu'une lueur brouillée ...».

(79) Cf. Dio 37, 23, 2: λαμπάδες ἀνεκὰς ἐς τὸν οὐρανὸν ἀπὸ τῶν δυσμῶν ἀνέδραμον, Iul. Obs. 61: *trabis ardens ab occasu ad caelum extenta*.

(80) See Jul. Obs. 41: *Romae interdiu fax sublime uolans conspecta*.

(81) If *magnum ad columen* is sound, it can only mean « *ad instar magnae columnae* ». For pillar-like meteoric phenomena see Heraclides Pont. fr. 116 Wehrli (Aetius 3, 2, 5); Manil. 1, 840; Sen. *nat. quaest.* 7, 20, 2.

extraordinary degree of licence in reporting facts or suppose that the verses describe a prodigy from some other year and have no place where they at present stand. If, however, these verses go, they leave the next three verses, which describe signs reported in 63 but signs of a type by no means unusual, quite without syntactical support.

I have expressed my queries and suggestions in a deliberately tentative way. Many will want to attribute the syntactic and factual oddities which worry me to the conscious design of Cicero himself rather than to the hazards of the tradition. Certainty is unobtainable. Eighty-seven verses do not provide a sufficient sample from which to determine the stylistic possibilities of a poem of perhaps as many as four thousand. Likewise, what we have of Cicero's model, the *Annales* of Ennius, leaves many doubts about the range of this poem's style. Furthermore, we know that ancient readers who admired the *Annales* did not admire the *Consulatus*. There is not available the vast quantity of material which permits the critic of the text of Cicero's orations to move with some sureness. The stylistic range of the youthful *Aratus* can be more firmly marked out, so much of the poem does survive, but this was a translation of a Greek poem, a poem on a didactic rather than a heroic theme, a poem in the tradition of Hesiod rather than that of Homer. To argue from what Cicero did in the *Aratus* to what he could or could not have done in the *Consulatus* would be very unwise. All, therefore, I can hope to have achieved would be the unsettling of those who think that the adjustment of a dozen individual words and the transposition of a single verse will restore to us what Cicero intended Urania to say.