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ALIQVANTO POST SUSPEXIT AD CAELVM ET INQVIT:
THE *ARATEA* AND *PROGNOSTICA* ACROSS CICERO'S WORKS

1. *Introduction*

Cicero's translation of Aratus' *Phaenomena*, in the two sections of the *Aratea* and the *Prognostica*, has attracted considerable interest over the years, but scholars have focused primarily on the work itself, its connections with Greek and Latin astronomical traditions or its importance within the context of Ciceronian poetry¹. However, I argue that one research path has not yet been fully explored: the study of the presence of Aratus' poetry and its Latin translation in Cicero's life – from Cicero's early years to his later writings. Thus, I intend to focus on the key moments of this relationship and reconstruct it through Cicero's works. In this way, it is possible to show that the astronomical content conveyed through Aratus' poetic work is inextricably linked to many aspects of Ciceronian culture and intellectual practice, including grammatical and rhetorical training, poetic and publishing activities, reflections on politics and Roman constitution, rhetoric, theology and the aspects of everyday life.

In particular, I analyse this problem from historical and literary points of view, choosing to follow a chronological order – as far as possible – to highlight the changes in using Aratus throughout Cicero's work. At the beginning of Cicero's intellectual journey, poetry, astronomy and translation from the Greek were essential components in education of the orator. Later on, Cicero went from being interested in the entire work of Aratus to the construction of its anthological selection, a move that depends on Cicero's specific concerns and different argumentative strategies.

¹ See Clavel 1868, 67-106; Malcovati 1943, 245-242; Soubiran 1972, 8-16, 157-234; Gee 2001; Siebengartner 2012; Gee 2013b; Pellacani 2015a; 2015b. More generally, on Latin *Aratea*, see Gee 2013a; Volk 2015.

However, the presence of Aratus and his work are a constant element in Cicero's biography and thought, as is evident through multiple levels of narrative construction. First, in Cicero's letters and treatises, Aratus appears in the daily life and the cultural activity of Cicero. Second, in the dialogues in which Cicero is among the characters, the presence of Aratus' poetry arises, taking the form of something between a biographical reconstruction and an argumentative function. In these works, however, the narrative has a strong need for verisimilitude because it deals with contemporary readers. Finally, in the dialogues set in the past, Cicero projects his interest in Aratus in an earlier time and seeks a balance between historical memory and the construction of traditional authority.

2. Liberal arts and translation from Greek in the rhetorical curriculum

Before reading the *Aratea* and *Prognostica*, along with Cicero's works, I wish to focus on a passage from the *De oratore*. In the first book (1, 150), Crassus expresses his opinion about the orator's training². Unlike those who rely on natural and innate qualities, Crassus argues that it is necessary to deliver the speech carefully after a moment of reflection (*sumpto spatio ad cogitandum, paratius atque curatius dicere*). Specifically, he claims that it is essential to write as much as possible (*quam plurimum scribere*) before recounting his personal experience (1, 154) and speaking about the daily exercises he did when he was a young man (*adulescentulus*).

The first exercise that he describes was also practised by his main enemy (*Gaius Carbo*); thus, Cicero informs the reader that this was a common exercise during the time of Crassus. This exercise is the extemporaneous recomposition of solemn verses or parts of famous speeches. However, Crassus himself criticises this exercise because it is impossible to use better words than Ennius (for poetry) or Gracchus (for oratory). In addition, it is not useful to repeat the exact words of these imitated authors. Crassus also discusses another exercise that he used when he grew older (1, 155); this exercise is the Latin translation of the Greek speeches of the greatest orators (*summorum oratorum Graecas orationes explicarem*)³. In this way, Crassus was able to employ the best expressions al-

² About orator's training in Cicero's *de orat.* see Fantham 2004, 78-101.

³ See Bloomer 2011, 44-46.

ready in use in Latin or to create new Latin words. A little later (1, 158), Crassus says it is necessary to read not only the poets, but also the teachers and writers of all the liberal arts (*omnium bonarum artium doctores atque scriptores*).

This passage is crucial for outlining the didactic and cultural backgrounds of Cicero's interest in Aratus' work. We see the importance of the knowledge of poetry and astronomy, which can be listed among the liberal arts, throughout Cicero's life. Moreover, from the point of view of Cicero/Crassus, the exercises of rewriting and translating Greek to Latin are essential⁴. It is easy to find all these elements in Cicero's use of Aratus' *Phaenomena*. The training of the future orator could have included the study of astronomy (in addition to rhetoric, philosophy and law). Furthermore, to develop good writing skills, the best exercise is the re-writing of prose (the cited speeches by the Greek orators) and poetry.

In the *De oratore*, Cicero projects his intellectual biography into the past and presents the traditional elements of rhetorical apprenticeship through the filter of his experiences and reflections. The translation from Greek and astronomy are elements that can enter into the vision of the *De oratore* because Cicero has already experienced them in person. Therefore, the author can conceive and present them as crucial components of an authoritative model. The intellectual experience of Cicero and his reinterpretation in the *De oratore* thus allow the conceptual development of Greek astronomical poetry in his later works.

3. Prognostica and Cicero's publishing activity (*Cic. Att. 2, 1, 11*)

As is well known, the first mention of the *Prognostica* in Cicero's works comes in a letter from the *Epistulae ad Atticum* (2, 1, 11)⁵. This letter was written in the summer (June/July) of 60 BCE in the form of a long text on literary and political issues, from which we know that Atticus had written a Greek work on Cicero's consulate. Cicero had also written a book in the Greek language on the same subject, which he had already

⁴ For Cicero's thoughts on translation see McElduff 2013, 96-121. For an example of Cicero's attitude towards translation see Raschieri 2013.

⁵ For the chronology of Cicero's works I used the *Ephemerides Tullianae*, edited by Ermanno Malaspina and available on the Internet site of the *Société Internationale des Amis de Cicéron* at www.tulliana.eu. This tool is the updated version of Marinone-Malaspina 2014.

delivered to Atticus. Cicero, who had read the work of Atticus, criticises it for its style. In particular, Cicero states that his own work, unlike that of Atticus, was embellished according to the teachings of Isocrates and Aristotle. Cicero sent his book to the philosopher Posidonius of Rhodes, requesting that the philosopher writes something more elaborate on this topic, but Posidonius refused. Cicero then asks Atticus, with a certain irony, to disseminate his book across Greece, in Athens and in other cities⁶.

At this point, Cicero promises to send his friend some speeches: the consular speeches according to the model of Demosthenes' *Philippics*. They are *De lege agraria I-II*, *De Othone*, *Pro Rabirio*, *De proscriptorum filiis*, *Cum provinciam deposuit*, *In Catilinam I-IV* and *De lege agraria III-IV*. This letter to Atticus is considered proof of the publication of these speeches – three years after the consulate of Cicero⁷. Then, Cicero explains the reasons for his request to Atticus to come back and informs him in detail about the Roman political situation. At the end of this long section, Cicero expresses his hope that his friend will soon receive the *Prognostica* and the speeches mentioned above; however, the cultural issues are still not over. Cicero writes that Paetus offered him the books left by Paetus' cousin; therefore, Atticus must preserve these books (in Greek and Latin) and bring them to Cicero⁸.

⁶ Cic. Att. 2, 1, 1-2, *Kal. Iun. eunti mihi Antium et gladiatores M. Metelli cupide relinquenti venit obviam tuus puer. Is mihi litteras abs te et commentarium consulatus mei Graece scriptum reddidit. In quo laetatus sum me aliquanto ante de isdem rebus Graece item scriptum librum L. Cossinio ad te perferendum dedisse [...]. Quamquam tua illa (legi enim libenter) horridula mihi atque incompta visa sunt, sed tamen erant ornata hoc ipso quod ornamenta neglexerant [...]. Quamquam ad me rescripsit iam Rhodo Posidonius se, nostrum illud ὑπόμνημα <cum> legere<t>, quod ego ad eum ut ornatius de isdem rebus scriberet miseram, non modo non excitatum esse ad scribendum sed etiam plane deterritum. [...] tu, si tibi placuerit liber, curabis ut et Athenis sit et in ceteris oppidis Graeciae. Videtur enim posse aliquid nostris rebus lucis adferre.*

⁷ Cic. Att. 2, 1, 3, *Oratiunculas autem et quas postulas et plures etiam mittam, quoniam quidem ea quae nos scribimus adolescentulorum studiis excitati te etiam delectant. Fuit enim mihi commodum, quod in eis orationibus quae Philippicae nominantur enituerat tuus ille civis Demosthenes et quod se ab hoc refractariolo iudiciali dicendi genere abiunxerat ut σεμνότερός τις et πολιτικώτερος videretur, curare ut meae quoque essent orationes quae consulares nominarentur.*

⁸ Cic. Att. 2, 1, 11-12, *Prognostica mea cum oratiunculis prope diem exspecta, et tamen quid cogites de adventu tuo scribe ad nos. [...] Paetus, ut antea ad te scripsi, omnis libros quos frater suus reliquisset mihi donavit. Hoc illius munus in tua diligentia positum est. Si me amas, cura ut conserventur et ad me perferantur. Hoc mihi nihil potest esse gratius. Et cum Graecos tum vero Latinos diligenter ut conserves velim.*

For our discussion, it does not seem necessary to examine the problem of translation in two moments of Aratus' *Phaenomena*, an issue that has been widely debated by scholars⁹. The interesting point here is to stress that the *Prognostica* are mentioned in the editorial relationship between Cicero and Atticus. Through this letter, Cicero announces the official release of a group of his works (the consular speeches) and the *Prognostica*. Thus, we know that Cicero was engaged in publishing his works, even his poems, at a crucial time in Rome's political life. At the same time, this letter testifies to Cicero's continued interest in writing and publishing works in Greek and Latin that are included in the broader context of the cultural relations between Greece and Rome¹⁰.

In this letter, Cicero underlines the centrality of the political analysis, in which the most important seats are held by Clodius, Metellus, Pompey and Cato. Starting from this analysis of reality, he establishes a cultural operation to build a public image for his consulate three years later. The historiographical works on the consulate (written by Cicero and Atticus in Greek) and the consular speeches of Cicero (in Latin) are inserted in this ideological framework. However, Cicero shows a particular concern for the style of these writings. On the one hand, he criticises the unadorned style of Atticus; on the other hand, he declares his superiority over the Greek writers, whom Posidonius represents here. Cicero claims to have written in Greek better than the Greeks themselves and wants to gain fame through the dissemination of his work in Greece. This political and cultural project is combined with a more strictly literary operation in which the comparison between the Greeks and Romans is always central. First, Cicero shows great interest in the bilingual library of Paetus. Second, he sends his *Prognostica* to Atticus together with the consular speeches. These works serve to entertain his

⁹ See Pellacani 2015a, 8-15. Pellacani 2015b, 12-13: «Sono state formulate diverse ipotesi: a) Cicerone tradusse l'intero poema di Arato nel 90/89, ma nel 60 preparò una nuova edizione della sola seconda parte, cioè dei *Prognostica*. b) Cicerone tradusse l'intero poema di Arato nel 90/89 e nel 60 si limitò a inviare ad Attico una nuova copia dei *Prognostica*, composti trent'anni prima. c) Cicerone tradusse nel 90/89 solo la sezione astronomica del poema di Arato, e nel 60 si dedicò invece alla sezione meteorologica, scrivendo i *Prognostica*».

¹⁰ See Gee 2013, 64: «What the reference to the *Diosemeiai* attests is (a) Cicero maintained enough of an interest in Aratus in 60 to send his poem to Atticus, and (b) that that interest would have seen aligned with that of the audience of any "published" work, and (c) Cicero's composition/revision of his *Prognostica* and the interest in any potential audience coincides with the period in which Lucretius can be presumed to have been writing the *DRN*».

friend, to stimulate literary pleasure and, in this way, to strengthen their cultural bond. At the same time, these works bring great fame to Cicero, both as a political orator according to the model of Demosthenes and as an astronomical poet.

4. *Astronomy: a matter of vacation* (Cic. rep. 1, 21-22)

The astronomical theme and, therefore, the reference to Aratus return broadly in *De re publica*, a dialogue dating back to the years 54-51 BCE. At the beginning of the first book (1, 17), the discussion is about an astronomical problem. Scipio had asked Philus his opinions of the appearance of two suns in the sky. In the next section (1, 18), Laelius arrives at Scipio's home with Spurrius Mummius, Gaius Fannius and Quintus Scaevola. Laelius (1, 19) then asks whether the friends have already discussed the house and the state because he sees them talking about astronomy. Philus' answer is clear: our real home is not confined within the walls of houses, but the whole world is our home that the gods have given us in common with them. At this point (1, 20), Laelius expresses his agreement to discuss astronomical topics because he and his friends are on vacation (*non inpedio, praesertim quoniam feriati sumus*).

Philus then begins his explanation (1, 21) and remembers an episode from the past, thus reconstructing a common cultural memory¹¹. He remembers a meeting with Sulpicius Gallus and Claudius Marcellus (consuls in 166 BCE). Specifically, Sulpicius Gallus was known as a mathematician and astronomer, according to Cicero himself¹², and he wrote a book about eclipses, according to Pliny the Elder (*nat.* 2, 9, 53). Using a narrative process that goes back in time, Philus remembers that in this ancient episode, Sulpicius Gallus demanded the celestial sphere that Marcellus' grandfather had taken after the Roman conquest of Syracuse. This was one of the two celestial spheres built by Archimedes, and Marcellus' grandfather had desired that sphere only as a prize of war because he thought it was very precious.

Here, Sulpicius Gallus explained the working principles of the sphere and made reference to the astronomical tradition of building celestial spheres. Thales had been the first to build one of them; then, Eudoxus

¹¹ On the concept of cultural memory for the study of ancient Rome see Galinsky 2016.

¹² Cic. *Brut.* 78; *Cato* 49.

divided the sphere into zones and added the shapes of the fixed stars. Specifically, Sulpicius Gallus cited the work of Aratus, who had described the sphere of Eudoxus in verse. Thus, we know that Aratus was aware of Eudoxus' astrological doctrine and that his verses are notable not for his astronomical knowledge but rather for his poetic ability¹³.

This passage is important for many reasons. First, Cicero explains that astronomical knowledge is fundamental for the Roman politician because it is preliminary to any discussion on the *res publica*, but he indicates that it is possible to deal with astronomy in his spare time. In addition, he projects knowledge of Aratus' work in Rome and passes positive judgement on Aratus' poetry in an authoritative past. In Sulpicius Gallus, Cicero finds a model, but at the same time, he differs from him because he distances himself from the technical knowledge of this discipline by using poetry. Finally, we know from these remarks that astronomy also had a physical dimension, both domestic and public, in the Roman Republic with the two celestial spheres of Archimedes.

We should not forget that the importance of the astronomical theme also returns at the end of the *De re publica*, in the sixth book with the *Somnium Scipionis*, and, in particular, during Scipio's contemplation of the whole universe from a new perspective in a dream – that is, from the celestial mansions (6, 16–17). From this vantage point, Scipio can even see stars not visible from the earth. At the same time, he can see the earth from above, and our planet appears to be minuscule compared with the vastness of the sky¹⁴. This vision implies the need for introducing a new astronomical explanation and, in particular, a description of the nine circles or celestial spheres surrounding the earth. The vision also requires an in-depth explanation of the sound produced by the harmonic movement of these spheres¹⁵.

In the *De re publica*, therefore, we observe this passage from astronomical specialism to a more general attention paid to celestial phenomena. Indeed, Cicero was never focused on the technical and mathematical aspects of science, as the case of his discussions on geography demonstrates¹⁶. In the *De re publica*, Cicero stresses the philosophical importance of the astronomical perspective, and he is able to connect his

¹³ Cic. *rep.* 1, 22.

¹⁴ Cic. *rep.* 6, 16. On the image of earth from the heavens see Caldini Montanari 2006.

¹⁵ Cic. *rep.* 6, 17-18.

¹⁶ Cicero collected the material for a geographical treaty but soon renounced the project; see Raschieri 2008.

early interest in Aratus' poetry with the political reflection. Furthermore, Cicero consciously constructs a Roman astronomical tradition and a cultural memory under the names of Eudoxus and Aratus. In this way, he presents astronomy as preliminary knowledge that is necessary for speculation on the government. Cicero imagines that the Greek astronomical tradition has enjoyed great cultural prestige in Rome for at least a century. In addition, there has been a close connection between technical and mathematical knowledge – embodied by Eudoxus – and poetic knowledge – represented by Aratus¹⁷. Thus, in this non-specialist perspective, Aratus' *Phaenomena* constitutes the privileged way to achieve astronomical knowledge within the Roman cultural context.

5. A Iove Musarum primordia (*Cic. leg. 2, 7*)

We shall now discuss the *De legibus*, a work that is difficult to date but has many thematic affinities with the *De re publica*¹⁸. The reference to the *Aratea* is at the beginning of the second book in the narrative framework of the dialogue. In the book, we are placed in a relaxed atmosphere in the Arpinum countryside, and we are shown Atticus, Marcus and Quintus Cicero quietly walking. The change in the book leads to a change of scene, and the friends are looking for a quiet place to continue their conversation. Specifically, the dialogue (2, 3) focuses on the topic of Arpinum as the common homeland of the Cicero brothers (*haec est mea et huius fratris mei germana patria*). Marcus and Quintus, as all provincials, have two homelands that are, in their case, Rome and Arpinum (2, 5). Finally, they arrive at a new landscape (2, 6) – an island formed by the Fibrenus river before it joins the Liri – described as a *locus amoenus*, a place with fresh water and shade.

Quintus urges his brother to begin the discussion (2, 7); they will devote themselves to it for the entire day. At this point, unexpectedly for his audience, Cicero quotes the first line of his *Aratea* (*a Iove Musarum primordia*). He immediately feels the need to explain the opening of this work through a poetic quotation. The ensuing discussion on law must start from Jupiter and the gods. In fact, Cicero continues (2, 8) with the

¹⁷ This bipolarity of astronomical knowledge, represented by Eudoxus and Aratus, reaches Avienus' *Aratea* (vv. 46-66) in the Late Antiquity.

¹⁸ About the date and the meaning of Cicero's *De legibus* see Grilli 1990.

statement that the law is something eternal that governs the universe to command and obey¹⁹. Heavenly law is the first and supreme law. It corresponds to god's mind, which allows or prohibits all. This law is also given by the gods to humans and corresponds to the reason and mind of the wise man who can command and forbid. The dialogue continues with a description of the nature of this divine law (2, 9).

Here, the quotation from the *Aratea* is not ornamental; it is linked closely to the context, from many perspectives. First, it is functional for this context because we have also seen in the *De re publica* that the poetry and astronomical theme fit well with the philosophical *otium*. Second, the quote from the *Aratea* is useful for the narrative structure because it introduces the discourse on divine law from a rhetorical point of view in an effective manner. Finally, the poetic quote works for the content of Cicero's speech because it introduces the topic of divine law. It is important to mention again that, in this case, the quote from the *Aratea* is introduced by Cicero himself, acting as a *persona loquens* in the dialogic *mise-en-scène*.

The presence of the *Aratea* in Cicero's *De legibus* is even more significant if we consider that the same quotation also appears in the central point of the *De re publica*. In this work, Laelius asks Scipio to express his opinion on the three forms of government (1, 54). At first, Scipio seems to show his preference for the monarchy, but he then lists the advantages of the different state systems: the *caritas* for the monarchy, the *consilium* for the oligarchy and the *libertas* for the democracy (1, 55). Scipio's subsequent treatment of the monarchy begins with quoting the first line of the *Aratea* (1, 56): *Imitabor ergo Aratum, qui magnis de rebus dicere exordiens a Iove incipiendum putat*. Laelius then explicitly asks Scipio about the ways in which Aratus' poem and Scipio's discourse on the monarchy are similar. Thus, Scipio refers to the belief that Jupiter is the king of gods and men, whether we consider Jupiter as the god of the traditional religion or whether we understand him, in a philosophical perspective, as the divine mind – the universal

¹⁹ Cic. *leg.* 2, 7-8, QUINTUS *Ordire igitur; nam hunc tibi totum dicamus diem. MARCUS «A Iove Musarum primordia» – sicut in Aratio carmine orsi sumus. QUINTUS Quorsum istuc? MARCUS Quia nunc item ab eodem et a ceteris diis immortalibus sunt nobis agendi capienda primordia. QUINTUS Optime vero, frater, et fieri sic decet. MARCUS Videamus igitur rursus, priusquam adgrediamur ad leges singulas, vim naturamque legis, ne, quom referenda sint ad eam nobis omnia, labamur interdum errore sermonis ignoremusque vim rationis eius quo iura nobis definienda sint.*

soul. As in the *De legibus*, we find, therefore, a thematic congruence between the quotation from the *Aratea* and the Ciceronian treatment, which, in this case, focuses on the topic of royalty. However, we cannot but notice an important change from the *De re publica* to the *De legibus*. The theme of royalty shifts to that of divine law. For the ancient and modern readers of Cicero, this conceptual evolution is even more evident precisely because of the uniqueness of the quotation used; the reference to the *Aratea* thus becomes the mediator of complex intertextuality. Cicero not only explicitly uses his poetic translation of Aratus' *Phaenomena*, but he also creates a link between his two works on political philosophy through the quotation of passages that are fundamental from an argumentation perspective.²⁰

6. Cicero's poetry and euphony (*Cic. orat.* 152)

We find another quotation from the *Aratea* in the *Orator*, a work written by Cicero probably during the summer of 46 BCE. Cicero begins chapter 45 (149) by addressing euphony in two ways: the euphony internal to a particular word and the euphony between different words. Regarding the first type of euphony, he suggests caution when creating a certain structure in each word (*quasi structura quaedam*). He also argues that it is necessary to avoid creating an endless and childish work (*cum infinitus tum puerilis labor*). Regarding the connection between different words (150), he argues that it is necessary to carefully avoid hiatus and cacophony. Indeed, even pleasing and deep thoughts (*suaves gravesque sententiae*) lose their effectiveness if they are expressed by unrefined words (*inconditis verbis*). He explains that this fact is related to the characteristics of Latin pronunciation, which tends to avoid the hiatus.

The discussion continues with examples from Greek authors (151), who, unlike Roman authors, allow the hiatus to occur more often. In particular, he cites Theopompus, Isocrates, Thucydides, Plato and Demosthenes. Therefore, he deals with this concept of the hiatus in Latin literature (152). He states that it is avoided in prose, even by authors like Cato, despite Cato's rugged style (*orationes illae ipsae horridulae*), and in poetry. He quotes two verses by Naevius²¹, a sentence by Ennius (*Scipio*

²⁰ See Dyck 2004, 265-266.

²¹ Naev. *trag.* 61-62 Ribbeck³.

invicte)²² and a line from his *Aratea* as examples of the hiatus in poetry²³. Then, he continues with the contractions (153), which are used for shortening words, for facilitating pronunciation, for convenience or for euphony (*non usus causa sed aurium*).

The reference to the *Aratea* in the *Orator* could be dismissed as Cicero's self-celebration of his poetic activity. However, this quotation fits into a critical discussion on the relationship between prose and poetry. At first sight, it seems that Cicero's opinion of the hiatus is extremely negative, but the ancient rhetorical tradition shows a more nuanced evaluation²⁴. There were many exceptions to the rule regarding the exclusion of the hiatus, and it was possible to solve the problem with the synaloepha and ecthipsis. Moreover, in the *Orator*, we read a certain ambiguity for the Ciceronian position regarding the Greek tradition. Cicero states that Isocrates, Theopompus and Demosthenes rejected the hiatus, while Thucydides and Plato used it. In any case, Cicero was aware of the critical debate that had been occurring in Greek schools of rhetoric.

Based on the authoritative model of Demosthenes, even Cicero seems to have found it necessary to avoid the hiatus altogether. However, Martianus Capella (5, 516) already noted that Cicero had used the hiatus for expressive purposes – for example, in the *Pro Milone* (2), a speech from 52 BCE and hence preceding the *Orator*²⁵. In fact, in this section of the *Orator*, Cicero overlooks Latin oratory and mentions Cato's *orationes horridulae* only. Cato excluded the use of the hiatus, despite his lack of sophistication. Cicero, instead, focuses on poetry and states that poets generally avoid the hiatus, but he subsequently presents significant examples of its use by Naevius and Ennius. Cicero's quoting of the *Aratea* is thus useful not only for inserting his work into a renowned poetic tra-

²² Enn. *frg. var.* 3 Vahlen².

²³ Cic. *orat.* 152, *Sed Graeci viderint; nobis ne si cupiamus quidem distrahere voces conceditur. Indicant orationes illae ipsae horridulae Catonis, indicant omnes poetae praeter eos qui, ut versum facerent, saepe hiabant, ut Naevius: «Vos qui accolitis Histrum fluvium atque algidam» et ibidem: «Quam nunquam vobis Grai atque barbari». At Ennius semel: «Scipio invicte» et quidem nos: «Hoc motu radiantis etesiae in vada ponti» (Cic. *Arat.* 23, 1 Soubiran). The hiatus represents an exception in Ennius (*semel*) as in Cicero (*quidem nos*); in the case of Cicero, the hiatus is also justified by the Aratean model (see *Arat.* 152, τῆμος καὶ κελάδοντες ἐτησίαι εὐρέϊ πόντῳ).*

²⁴ See Lausberg 1998, 431-432.

²⁵ Mart. Cap. 5, 516, *Hiulcae sunt, cum in ea parte, quam diximus, similes vocales ac similiter longae collisam hiantemque structuram faciant, ut si quis dicat suscepisse se liberos «secundo omine», et ut Tullius pro Milone ait «auctoritate publica armare»; quod quidem artem dissimulans plerumque appetit voluntate.*

dition and justifying the use of the hiatus in poetry, but also for functioning as an implicit self-justification for the use of the hiatus in prose. Cicero's poetic experimentation in his mature rhetorical works demonstrates the high awareness in his reflection on style. Furthermore, the self-citation justifies deviations from the norms of the Greek models and of Roman literary practice.

7. *A pretended tribute to the young Cicero (Cic. nat. deor. 2, 104-115; 2, 159)*

Indeed, most of the quotations from the *Aratea* in Cicero's works come from the second book of the *De natura deorum*, a dialogue written in 45 BCE²⁶. In the first book, Velleius explains the Epicurean doctrine and is then refuted by the Academician Cotta. In the second book, Balbus explains the Stoic doctrine on theological problems. It is noteworthy here that in the second book, Cicero uses poetry very extensively. First, he quotes Accius' *Medea* and cites Pacuvius (2, 89-92); then, he mentions Ennius' *Annales* (2, 93-94). Finally, he quotes long passages from his *Aratea* (2, 104-115). To understand the reasons for this last section, we must first analyse the previous two.

Balbus introduces Accius' *Medea* to explain the process of gaining philosophical knowledge (2, 89-90). When a man observes the universe, he feels unsettled, and this feeling leads him to look at the movement of the celestial objects more closely, eventually finding that they are determined and uniform (*motus [...] enim finitos et aequabiles*). The man realises that the universe has immutable stability; therefore, we must assume the existence of its governor, ruler and architect. This argument is introduced through a passage of Accius' *Medea* that describes the wonder and fear of a shepherd upon first seeing the Argonauts' ship, the first boat ever built²⁷. Further, Balbus describes the earth as being at the centre of the universe, which is surrounded by ether. He uses another poetic fragment here. This time, he quotes Pacuvius to affirm the possibility of using the Greek word αἰθήρ in Latin (*aether*)²⁸. In the following section

²⁶ See Gee 2013, 61: «Cicero's *Aratea* was a key test in the Roman reception of Aratus; it became, too, an exemplum of Roman Stoicism by its quotation in Cicero's later *De natura deorum*. This is evidence of the interest of the author, and by implication his audience, in his own work, over a period of more than twenty years, from c.89 to c.44 BC».

²⁷ Acc. *trag.* 391-402 Ribbeck³.

²⁸ Pac. *trag.* 90 Ribbeck³.

(2, 93-94), we read a new poetic reference. To refute the principle of randomness suggested by the atomic theory, Balbus argues that this theory is as absurd as if we had thrown a large number of the letters of the alphabet onto the ground and found Ennius' *Annales*.

After these three poetic citations, there is a passage (2, 104-115) that contains many quotations from the *Aratea*. The theme addressed by Balbus is the celestial system, describing the position of the fixed stars. In addition, he argues that men shaped the stars according to their similarity with known objects and that the names of the constellations are derived from these forms. The quotations from the *Aratea* are presented as a homage to the work of the young Cicero. Moreover, these verses are in Latin, and Balbus enjoys them because they are very memorable²⁹.

It is important to highlight the reasons behind why Balbus chooses these quotations. First, he points out that we continually see with our own eyes these heavenly realities that do not change³⁰. He offers that men wish to contemplate the stars and find the regularity of nature in them³¹. Moreover, he highlights that this show is admirable and beautiful, both overall and in detail while pointing out that the perfect arrangement of the stars shows divine ingenuity³². Finally, he returns to a theme explained earlier through the example from Ennius' *Annales*. The orderly arrangement of the stars does not arise from an encounter of causal bodies, nor is it the product of a nature devoid of mind and reason; rather, this ordered arrangement assumes the use of the intellect and cannot be understood without perfect reason³³.

Therefore, in all these cases, the use of poetic quotation is useful for the presentation and argumentation of the providential theory. The extensive quotations from the *Aratea* are consistent with this rhetorical structure. Indeed, they amplify and complete it. Through Balbus' words, this self-quotation helps Cicero elevate the stylistic tone of the

²⁹ Cic. *nat. deor.* 2, 104, «*Sequitur stellarum inerrantium maxima multitudo, quarum ita descripta distinctio est, ut ex notarum figurarum similitudine nomina invenerint*». *Atque hoc loco me intuens* «*Utar – inquit – carminibus Arateis, quae a te admodum adulescentulo conversa ita me delectant quia Latina sunt, ut multa ex is memoria teneam*».

³⁰ See Gee 2013, 62: «It is not, perhaps, by chance that Cicero surrounds his quotation of his own work in the *De natura deorum* with political metaphors denoting orderly divine government of the universe. [...] In the *Aratea*, Cicero holds up to Rome a template of cosmic order».

³¹ Cic. *nat. deor.* 2, 104-105.

³² Cic. *nat. deor.* 2, 106-107; 110.

³³ Cic. *nat. deor.* 2, 115.

discussion, allowing him to give the discourse more expressive strength. However, we must not forget that the book *De natura deorum* contains another quotation from the *Aratea*³⁴. In fact, Balbus explains that natural beings (plants and animals) are created for men (2, 157). Specifically, he focuses on oxen (2, 159); their rumps reveal that they are not shaped for carrying weight, but their necks are born to the yoke, and their shoulders are strong and broad for dragging the plough. The discourse goes far back in time to the mythical Golden Age when men were not violent toward the oxen and did not kill them for food. Balbus (and Cicero through him) contrasts this mythical situation and the violent reality of the Iron Age by quoting some verses from the *Aratea*. It was during this period that men invented the sword to kill oxen and to stand against the divine providence that had created the oxen to help men plough the soil³⁵.

In the *De natura deorum*, Cicero presents his *Aratea* as an authoritative source to support the astronomical theme. Moreover, from the beginning of the section, he underlines his long experience in this field, given that his interest in Aratus' work started when he was very young (2, 104, *quare a te admodum adulescentulo conversa*). At the same time, through the words of Balbus, Cicero points to the advantages of an astronomical treatment in Latin that distances the astronomical theme from the specialism and difficulty of Greek technical literature (*me delectant quia Latina sunt*)³⁶. A further advantage, then, is represented by the memorability of poetry (*multa ex is memoria teneam*). From these elements, we can conclude that Cicero, after the publication of his *Prognostica* in 60 BCE, as we read in the *Epistulae ad Atticum* (2, 1), proposes a new literary form for his translation of Aratus' work, fifteen years later. He prepares a selection of *excerpta* from the *Aratea* and inserts it into Balbus' argumentation that reuses these verses to highlight the regulari-

³⁴ Cic. *Arat.* 18 Soubiran.

³⁵ Cic. *nat. deor.* 2, 158-159, *Hominum igitur causa eas rerum copias comparatas fatendum est. nisi forte tanta ubertas varietas<que> pomorum eorumque iucundus non gustatus solum sed odoratus etiam et aspectus dubitationem adfert quin hominibus solis ea natura donaverit. [...] quid de bubus loquar; quorum ipsa terga declarant non esse se ad onus accipiendum figurata, cervices autem natae ad iugum, tum vires umerorum et latitudines ad aratra †extrahenda. quibus cum terrae subigerentur fissione glebarum ab illo aureo genere, ut poetae loquuntur, vis nulla umquam adferebatur: «ferrea tum vero proles exorta repentest / ausaque funestum primast fabricarier ense / et gustare manu iunctum domitumque iuven-cum»:* *tanta putabatur utilitas percipi e bubus, ut eorum visceribus vesci scelus haberetur.*

³⁶ The theme of the *delectare* is also present in Cic. *Att.* 2, 1.

ty of nature and the perfect arrangement of the stars – all demonstrating divine ingenuity. Cicero thus offers a providential orientation to the astronomical theme in contrast with other contemporary treatises on the same subject, such as Lucretius' *De rerum natura*³⁷.

8. Prognostica in a family background (*Cic. div. 1, 13-15; 2, 46-47*)

Another interesting case is that of the *De divinatione*, a dialogue that Cicero wrote in 45/44 BCE. At the beginning of the first book (1, 8), the author presents the dramatic frame: Marcus Cicero and his brother Quintus are in the villa of Tusculum. Quintus says that he read the *De natura deorum* and was very interested in Cotta's arguments against the Stoics. The problem is reconciling the refutation of Stoic doctrines and the defence of traditional religion. In the next section (1, 9), Quintus underlines that traditional religion had been defended by Balbus in the second book of the *De natura deorum*, and that Cicero apparently accepted Balbus' doctrinal position at the end of the same work (3, 95). However, according to Quintus, Balbus did not discuss an important point – namely, the problem of divination, which is defined as the prediction and presentiment of things that are considered the effect of chance.

This same statement is the theme for the discussion that occupies the entire *De divinatione*. Specifically, the problem is presented by Quintus as a syllogism: if divination is true, then the gods exist, and if the gods exist, then there are also people who can predict the future. Cicero immediately objects to these statements (1, 10). First, the future can be indicated by natural events that do not need the intervention of the gods. Moreover, even if the gods exist, they may not have given the ability of divination to men. Cicero also agrees discussing this subject and exploring the question (1, 11) because he is always ready to philosophise.

Quintus begins to address issues that are related to divination; specifically, he focuses on weather omens³⁸. To confirm his thesis, he cites the *Prognostica*, which were written by his brother³⁹. Quintus, always includ-

³⁷ On the relationship between Cicero and Lucretius on the astronomical theme see Gee 2013a, 81-109.

³⁸ See Pease 1963, 78-89; Kany-Turpin 2003; Wardle 2006, 132-139; Schultz 2014, 74.

³⁹ *Cic. div. 1, 13, Age ea, quae quamquam ex alio genere sunt, tamen divinationi sunt similia, videamus [...]. Atque his rerum praesensionibus Prognostica tua referta sunt.*

ing Marcus' verses in the discussion, continues by defining the problem as discovering the cause of omens but, at the same time, conceding that it is impossible to determine the probability of these facts (1, 14). It is true that we can find proofs that are seldom wrong, but it is impossible to understand the causes of the phenomena (1, 15), which are often incomprehensible to the human mind. In these cases, he states, we do not need to ask the reason behind them, because it is enough to note that the predictions came true. In this first section, we gain some interesting insights. First, we see a connection between poetry and philosophy, and this connection is what attracts Cicero. Second, the poetic quotations from the *Prognostica* are functional for the philosophical discussion. Finally, in this case, we are led into a family context of study and discussion, as proved by the fact that Quintus reads the *De natura deorum* and the *Prognostica* and draws his remarks from these works.

At this point, we must not forget that Quintus uses extensive excerpts from two other poetic works of his brother – the *De consulatu suo* and the *Marius* – in the same book⁴⁰. In fact, Quintus introduces the problem of the haruspicy (1, 16) through a famous anecdote: a lightning bolt struck the statue on top of the temple of Jupiter Optimus Maximus, and nobody could find the statue's head. The *haruspices* said that the head had fallen into the Tiber, and it was actually found at the spot they had indicated. Therefore, the next section (1, 17-22) is occupied by an extended quotation from the second book of Cicero's *De consulatu suo*, in which the muse Urania speaks about divination⁴¹. Thus, Cicero is summoned as a witness through his verses. Quintus also stresses that he knows the verses by heart and remembers them with pleasure (*lubenter*). The case of the quotation from the *Marius* is more complicated than the passage mentioned above. In fact, Quintus introduces the problem of the augurs and uses two poetic quotes (1, 105); one consists of a few verses from the *Marius*, in which the general explains the fight between an eagle and a snake⁴². The other quotation is a passage from Ennius' *Annales* in which Romulus and Remus decide on the name of the city and the right to rule it by a complex augury ritual⁴³.

Quis igitur elicere causas praesensionum potest? Etsi video Boethum Stoicum esse conatum, qui hactenus aliquid egit, ut earum rationem rerum explicaret, quae in mari caelove fierent.

⁴⁰ About the *De consulatu suo* see De Giorgio 2013.

⁴¹ Cic. *de cons.* 2 Soubiran.

⁴² Cic. *Mar.* 3 Soubiran.

⁴³ Enn. *ann.* 79-96 Vahlen².

So, in the *De divinatione*, the practice of self-quotation and the quotation of traditional poetic verses becomes quite sophisticated, helping to reinforce Quintus' discourse from an argumentation perspective. However, what is most remarkable is that the validity of this procedure is denied and contradicted by Cicero himself. In fact, in the second book of the *De divinatione*, we discover that Cicero (2, 45) explicitly blames Quintus for having used the verses from the *De consulatu suo* (*sed urges me meis versibus*) and firmly denies the validity of the divination (*divinationem nego*). Cicero then remembers the quotation from the *Prognostica* and states that the causes of the phenomena described in that work were thoroughly investigated by the philosophers Boetus and Posidonius (2, 47). In any case, even if it is not possible to discover the causes for those phenomena, they are indicated as facts because they have been observed and recorded⁴⁴.

Furthermore (2, 51), Cicero quotes a famous statement attributed to Cato, who said it was no wonder that a *haruspex* would begin to laugh when he saw another *haruspex*⁴⁵. In any case, if we read the conclusion of this book (2, 150), we understand that Cicero's attitude toward his poetic work (or the forced explanations in this quotation practice) is more nuanced. In fact, Cicero adopts an academic solution. He rejects the imposition of a single judgement, arguing that everyone must accept the theses deemed closer to the truth. He emphasises that the clash between reason and opinion is necessary, thus allowing the audience to make judgements without constraints.

In conclusion, it is possible to state that the fragments of Cicero's translation of Aratus in the *De natura deorum* and *De divinatione* form a diptych with astronomical poetry (the *Aratea*) in the first work and meteorological poetry (the *Prognostica*) in the second. Thus, Cicero reconsiders his translation of Aratus in 45-44 BCE and arranges an anthological selection that is useful for philosophical argumentation. Not only does Cicero reread the work of his youth and examine it from a the-

⁴⁴ Cic. *div.* 1, 47, *Et eo quidem loco et Prognostica nostra pronuntiabas et genera herbarum, scammoniam aristolochiamque radicem, quarum causam ignorares, vim et effectum videres. Dissimile totum; nam et prognosticorum causas persecuti sunt et Boethus Stoicus, qui est a te nominatus, et noster etiam Posidonius et, si causae non reperiantur istarum rerum, res tamen ipsae observari animadvertique potuerunt.* See Pease 1963, 430-431.

⁴⁵ Cf. Cic. *nat. deor.* 1, 71, *Mirabile videtur quod non rideat haruspex cum haruspitem viderit.*

matic perspective, but he also finds the deep roots of his thought in those earlier literary works.

As for the *Prognostica*, Cicero not only chooses significant *excerpta*, but – maybe intentionally – he also proposes a new arrangement of the sections. In the *De divinatione* (1, 13-15), the thematic succession of Aratus' verses changes. Cicero breaks the continuity of the lines dedicated to the sea, the rocks and the coot (fr. 3 Soubiran = Arat. 909-915). In addition, he combines the verses on the coot with those on other animals that forecast bad weather in their songs: the *acredula* (perhaps a type of frog or bird) and the crow (fr. 4, 4-9 Soubiran = Arat. 948-953). However, the latter lines should be among those dedicated to the frogs and oxen that Cicero mentions in the following section, hence keeping them distinct (fr. 4, 1-3 and 10-11 Soubiran = Arat. 946-947 and 954-955). Finally, at the end of this anthology from the *Prognostica*, the author isolates the lentisk, whose botanical cycle (the flowering, fruiting and ripening of the fruits) corresponds to the three annual phases of ploughing (fr. 5 Soubiran = Arat. 1051-1053).

This new arrangement of the verses does not seem to depend only on memorisation, but rather on Cicero's intention to create a new form for his meteorological poetry to make it functional for the discussion of divination⁴⁶. Therefore, the *De divinatione* constitutes a further stage in Cicero's rethinking of Aratus' work. In particular, Cicero reads his earlier poetic translations in light of academic doctrine. Regarding the meteorological omens, Cicero states that not only should an in-depth investigation into the relationship between cause and effect be conducted, but, most importantly, the concept of the probable should be considered, and the solution closest to the truth chosen.

9. *Closing the circle*

In chronological order, the last mention of the *Prognostica* in Cicero's works is in the *Epistulae ad Atticum* (15, 16a). Here, the discussion is not about editorial problems, political theory, philosophy, rhetoric or theolo-

⁴⁶ For this hypothesis, see Gamberale 1973; Pellacani 2015a, 144 n. 336. Traglia 1950, 31 n. 1 ascribes the arrangement of these verses to Cicero's quotation by heart: «è evidente che l'autore nel *De divin.* citava a memoria i versi che più gli piaceva di ricordare, senza badar troppo al loro ordine».

gy; rather, the backdrop is the charming and lonely Arpinum countryside, where the author can write freely without fear of being judged. On a day between May and June of 44 BCE, Cicero finds time to write a brief letter to his friend Atticus. He tells him that he wants to go to Tusculum. Thus, in everyday life, with an awareness of an upcoming desire for change, he remembers his *Prognostica* to talk about his daily fears: the frogs predict rain or, perhaps, the more dangerous clouds that hang over his fate⁴⁷. The circle closes perfectly with this quotation because the *Epistulae ad Atticum* contain the first and last references to Aratus' translations. Hence, they accompany Cicero through the main stages of his life and in his most important works.

10. Conclusion

This journey through Cicero's translation of Aratus cannot help but start with the *De oratore*. In this work, Cicero proposes poetry as a preparatory exercise for the orator. Furthermore, the cultural expertise of the orator also includes scientific knowledge, such as astronomy. In the *Epistulae ad Atticum*, Cicero displays his continuing interest in the translation of Aratus' work. Moreover, this interest emerges at a crucial political moment. In constructing a public image through the publication of his works, Cicero shows particular attention to prose and poetry and to works in Greek and Latin. In the *De re publica*, astronomy is a precursor to a reflection on political philosophy; the knowledge of Eudoxus and Aratus is projected into an authoritative past and becomes the justification for Cicero's interest in astronomy. The *De legibus* testifies to the presence of the *Aratea* within the context of Cicero's family because the quoted passages are attributed to Quintus, the brother of Marcus Cicero. Moreover, in the *De re publica* and *De legibus*, we find a tendency that will continue in Cicero's succeeding works. In his philosophical works, the *Aratea* are increasingly used in a functional way for philosophical argumentation. In the *De re publica*, the initial verse of the *Aratea* intro-

⁴⁷ Cic. Att. 15, 16a, *Narro tibi, haec loca venusta sunt, abdita certe et, si quid scribere velis, ab arbitris libera. Sed nescio quo modo οἶκος φίλος. Itaque me referunt pedes in Tusculanum. Et tamen haec ῥωπογραφία ripulae videtur habitura celerem satietatem. Equidem etiam pluvias metuo, si Prognostica nostra vera sunt; ranae enim ῥητορεύουσιν. Tu, quaeso, fac sciam ubi Brutum nostrum et quo die videre possim.* On this passage see also Pellacani 2016.

duces the theme of the monarchy, whereas, in the *De legibus*, it presents the concept of divine law. In these works, we read only the mention of the first verse, but the quotations will be more extensive in subsequent dialogues (*De natura deorum* and *De divinatione*).

In the *Orator*, Cicero reevaluates his poetry from a stylistic perspective, inserts it into a renowned poetic tradition and places himself on the coat tails of Naevius and Ennius. Moreover, through poetry, he implicitly rehabilitates the hiatus, a linguistic phenomenon that the teachers of grammar and rhetoric vigorously censored. In the *De natura deorum*, Cicero offers a new form for his astronomical poem and presents it as a poetic anthology that is functional for philosophical argumentation and demonstrating divine providence. Furthermore, he emphasises the importance of Latin and poetry for disseminating astronomical information in the Roman environment. The *De divinatione* continues the experiment that Cicero began in the *De natura deorum*. In the *De divinatione*, we read an anthology that constitutes not only a selection, but also an abbreviated reshaping of the original work. Between the two works, there is the transition from the astronomical section, contained in the *De natura deorum*, to the meteorological part, which we read in the *De divinatione*. Also, in this latter work, Cicero as author rereads his youthful poetic work in the light of the academic doctrine through the polemical contrast between Marcus and Quintus as characters about the correct use of poetic quotations.

For citational strategies, we observe different discursive mechanisms. In the *Epistulae ad Atticum*, Cicero presents the *Prognostica* as a work which, in its materiality, he can send to Atticus and remains in the concrete and mental library of the two friends in their everyday lives. In the political dialogues, in addition to generic references to Aratus, we read the isolated quotation of the first verse of the *Phaenomena*. In the *De re publica*, Cicero attributes the quote to Scipio, and in the *De legibus*, we read a self-quote by Cicero as a character who cites his translation of the *Aratea*. In the *Orator* too, we find the isolated quotation of a verse of Cicero's translation. The cases of the *De natura deorum* and the *De divinatione* are more complicated than the previous works. In both cases, Cicero, as an author, presents an anthology of his translation from Aratus but, in the narrative fiction, not in the role of Marcus Cicero as a character; instead, Balbus and Quintus Cicero make these quotations. Thus, Cicero as author reaffirms the authoritativeness of his juvenile

work in the astronomical and meteorological fields, distances himself from incorrect interpretations of his translation, and proposes a new literary form – the anthology – to revitalise the diffusion of his poem.

In general, it is possible to see that the quotes from the *Aratea* and *Prognostica* are relevant from the rhetorical, argumentative and stylistic perspectives. In addition, the analysis of the contexts into which they are inserted highlights the connections between poetry and rhetoric and between poetry and philosophy. On the one hand, Aratus' poetic work, through its Latin translation, successfully integrates astronomy into the Roman cultural landscape. On the other hand, Cicero's poetic work does not appear separate from the rest of his literary production; rather, it is closely connected to all the literary genres and cultural fields he worked in. Cicero as a poet was judged in various ways⁴⁸; however, it is impossible to understand his poetry if we do not start from Cicero's own point of view. Poetry is an essential part of his education, intellectual life and existential experience. If «rarely poet in verse, he is often poet in prose»⁴⁹, in the *Aratea* and *Prognostica*, Cicero at least conceived of an even closer link between prose and poetry – not only in form, but also and, especially, in content.

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⁴⁸ Malcovati 1943, 282-283: «Troppo noti i giudizi sfavorevoli, spesso malevoli, degli antichi – eccettuato Plutarco – [sulla produzione poetica di Cicerone], perchè si debban qui ripetere. Nell'età moderna, com'essa ebbe detrattori spietati, quale il Montaigne che non sapeva perdonare all'autore d'averla messa in luce, così ebbe anche esaltatori entusiastici, quale il Voltaire che non dubitava di metter Cicerone alla pari di Lucrezio». See Bishop 2018; Marciniak 2018.

⁴⁹ Malcovati 1943, 283: «raramente poeta in verso, poeta egli è spesso nella prosa».

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