HIDDEN GODS, HIDDEN TEXTS: ARATEAN ECHOES AND ALLEGORESIS IN CICERO, *DE DIVINATIONE* 1.79*

ABSTRACT

This article argues for an as-yet-undiscovered double allusion to Aratus' Phaenomena *(1–5 and 100–7) embedded in Cicero's* De diuinatione *(1.79). This intertextual link sheds light on a now-lost passage of Cicero's* Aratea *and raises some questions about the relationship between Cicero's dialogue and Catullus 64.*

Keywords: Cicero; *De diuinatione*; Aratus; intertextuality; allegoresis

The presence of self-quotations from Cicero's *Aratea* and *Prognostica* in the *De natura deorum* (2.104–14 and 159) and the *De diuinatione* (1.13–15) is a topic to which recent critics have given ample discussion,[1] examining the origin of this citational practice, strategies for achieving self-canonization, and the narrative techniques employed by Cicero to craft these two dialogues and to shape the 'second wave' of his poetic reception—the first being, of course, Lucretius' *De rerum natura*.[2] The purpose of this note is to contribute new evidence to this broader picture and to pinpoint a hitherto-undiscovered allusion to a passage from Aratus' *Phaenomena* which has no correspondence in Cicero's extant fragments:[3] the myth of Dike.[4]

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[1] See especially H. Čulík-Baird, *Cicero and the Early Latin Poets* (Cambridge and New York, 2022), 54–6; C. Bishop, *Cicero, Greek Learning, and the Making of a Roman Classic* (Oxford and New York, 2019), 259–300; A.A. Raschieri, '*Aliquanto post suspexit ad caelum et inquit*: the *Aratea* and *Prognostica* across Cicero's works', *Ciceroniana On Line* 3 (2019), 49–71; H. Čulík-Baird, 'Stoicism in the stars: Cicero's *Aratea* in the *De natura deorum*', *Latomus* 77 (2018), 646–70; C. Steel, *Reading Cicero. Genre and Performance in Late Republican Rome* (London, 2005), 49–82.

[2] E. Gee, *Aratus and the Astronomical Tradition* (Oxford and New York, 2013), especially at 81–109 and 189–231 (the useful 'Appendix B').

[3] No reference to Aratus is given in the commentaries on the *De Diuinatione*, from A.S. Pease, *M. Tulli Ciceronis De diuinatione liber primus* (Urbana, IL, 1920) to D. Wardle, *Cicero: On Divination Book 1* (Oxford, 2006), or C.E. Schulz, *Commentary on Cicero De Diuinatione I* (Ann Arbor, 2014), nor do we find any reference in commented editions of the *Aratea*, from W.W. Ewbank, *The Poems of Cicero* (London, 1933) to N. Ciano, *Gli* Aratea *di Cicerone. Saggio di commento ai frammenti di tradizione indiretta con approfondimenti a luoghi scelti (frr. 13 e 18)* (Bari, 2019). Cicero's *Aratea* are quoted according to J. Soubiran, *Cicéron. Aratea. Fragments poétiques* (Paris, 1972).

[4] Cicero's corresponding translation is now lost, and only five lines are usually assigned to this episode (correspondence to Aratus' lines within brackets): fr. 17 *malebant tenui contenti uiuere cultu* ('they were happy enough to live with modest means'; Arat. 110); fr. 18 *ferrea tum uero proles exorta repentest | ausaque funestum primast fabricarier ensem, | et gustare manu iunctum domitumque iuuencum* ('then suddenly sprouted the iron race, which dared for the first time to forge the dire sword and to feed on the cattle subjugated and domesticated'; transmitted by Cic. *Nat. D.* 2.159 and

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While discussing the existence of divination, the character of Quintus uses the following words to shift from the 'technical' divination to the 'natural' (*Diu*. 1.79):[5]

quid igitur expectamus? an dum in foro nobiscum di immortales, dum in uiis uersentur, dum domi? qui quidem ipsi se nobis non offerunt, uim autem suam longe lateque diffundunt, quam tum terrae cauernis includunt, tum hominum naturis implicant. nam terrae uis Pythiam Delphis incitabat, naturae Sibyllam.

What do we expect? For the immortal gods to walk with us in the forum, in the streets, in our homes? Though they do not overtly manifest themselves to us, they spread their power far and wide: they now enclose it in the hollows of the earth, now shroud the nature of human beings with it. Indeed, the Pythia at Delphi was stirred up by the power of the earth, the Sibyl by that of her own nature.

In this passage, the divine inspiration of the Greek Pythia and of the Roman Sibyl is explained according to a conception similar to the Stoic theory of *pneuma* pervading the universe.[6] The sentence introducing the gods and their physical absence from human life deserves special attention since it contains a 'negative' reference to the theme of theoxeny, that is, the cohabitation of gods and men notably during the Golden Age:[7] to quote just one poetic example chronologically close to Cicero's treatise, see Catull. 64.384–6 *praesentes namque ante domos inuisere castas* | *heroum, et sese mortali ostendere coetu,* | *caelicolae nondum spreta pietate solebant* ('in previous times, when holy devotion was not yet despised, sky-dwellers were keen on visiting regularly the heroes' pure abodes and showing themselves amidst mortal banquets'),[8] a passage which bears close thematic affinities with Cicero's *qui ... ipsi se nobis non offerunt*. In addition to this passage, however, Cicero shows a striking connection with the Aratean tale of Dike (Arat. 100–7):

λόγος γε μὲν ἐντρέχει ἄλλος 100
ἀνθρώποις, ὡς δῆθεν ἐπιχθονίη πάρος ἦεν,
ἤρχετο δ' ἀνθρώπων κατεναντίη, οὐδέ ποτ' ἀνδρῶν
οὐδέ ποτ' ἀρχαίων ἠνήνατο φῦλα γυναικῶν,
ἀλλ' ἀναμὶξ ἐκάθητο καὶ ἀθανάτη περ ἐοῦσα.

corresponding to Arat. 130–2); fr. 19 *et Iouis in regno caelique in parte resedit* ('and she settled down in Juppiter's realm, occupying a section of the night-sky'; Arat. 134). See H. Van Noorden, *Playing Hesiod. The 'Myth of the Races' in Classical Antiquity* (Cambridge, 2015), 207–8. As I will argue elsewhere, however, Cic. *carm*. fr. 10 Blänsdorf *nam quasi uos sibi dedecori genuere parentes* ('yes, indeed, your fathers begot you nearly to dishonour themselves') can be assigned to Justice's speech (Arat. 124): A. Magnavacca, 'The Maiden and her words. Cic. *carm*. fr. 10 Blänsdorf reconsidered', *HSPh* 114 (2024) (forthcoming).

[5] Texts from Cicero's *De Diuinatione* and from Aratus come respectively from Pease (n. 3) and from D. Kidd, *Aratus Phaenomena* (Cambridge, 1997); I have reproduced the latter's translation.

[6] See Wardle (n. 3), 301 with some ancient doxography; on this Chrysippean tenet, notably expounded by the Stoic Balbus in Cic. *Nat. D*. 2.19, see also M. Lapidge, 'A Stoic metaphor in Late Latin poetry: the binding of the cosmos', *Latomus* 39 (1980), 817–37, at 817–19.

[7] On this theme, see B. Gatz, *Weltalter, goldene Zeit und sinnverwandte Vorstellungen* (Hildesheim, 1967), 36–9 and L. Bruit and F. Lissarrague, s.v. *Les Theoxenies*, in *Thesaurus Cultus et Rituum Antiquorum* 2 (2004), cols. 225–9. An analysis of the different chronological settings of theoxeny in literary works (the Heroic Age according to Hesiod's *Catalogue*, fr. 1.6–7 M.–W. and Catullus 64 vs the Golden Age according to Aratus) is offered by Van Noorden (n. 4), 35, with further bibliography.

[8] See also the very end of the poem, Catull. 64.407–8 *quare nec talis dignantur uisere coetus,* | *nec se contingi patiuntur lumine claro* ('this is the reason why they disdain visiting such companies and they do not allow themselves to be touched by the bright daylight'): the Aratean presences in Catullus are well analysed by G. Luck, 'Aratea', *AJPh* (1976), 213–34, at 228–34.

καί ἐ Δίκην καλέεσκον· ἀγειρομένη δὲ γέροντας 105
ἠέ που εἰν ἀγορῇ ἢ εὐρυχόρῳ ἐν ἀγυιῇ,
δημοτέρας ἤειδεν ἐπισπέρχουσα θέμιστας.

There is, however, another tale current among men, that once she actually lived on earth, and came face to face with men, and did not ever spurn the tribes of ancient men and women, but sat in their midst although she was immortal. And they called her Justice: gathering together the elders, either in the market-place or on the broad highway, she urged them in prophetic tones to judgements for the good of the people.

The description of the Golden Age is characterized by the ubiquitous presence of the goddess Dike, who, despite her immortal status (line 104), did not restrain from being in contact with mankind (lines 102–3) and drove them to justice in the assembly (lines 105–7). The strong verbal similarities between Aratus and Cicero make it likely that Cicero was rephrasing some expressions from Aratus' passage while adapting it in a broader sense, that is, from Dike to all the gods. Cicero is even reproducing the very sequence of his model: first of all, he mentions the gods' immortality (*di immortales* ~ ἀθανάτη περ ἐοῦσα); the same places where they do not manifest (*dum in foro … dum in uiis uersentur* ~ ἠέ που εἰν ἀγορῇ ἢ εὐρυχόρῳ ἐν ἀγυιῇ, reversing Aratus but maintaining a similar correlative structure);[9] then their public activities (*in foro nobiscum di immortales … uersentur*[10] ~ δημοτέρας ἤειδεν … θέμιστας); finally, the same face-to-face contact between men and gods (*se nobis non offerunt* ~ ἤρχετο δ' ἀνθρώπων κατεναντίη).

So much for the description of what gods do not do. When describing the 'positive' actions performed by the gods (*uim autem … implicant*), Quintus' words seem to take their departure from Aratus and follow instead the Stoic doctrine on *pneuma*. It is possible, however, that the depiction of the gods' pervasive power can be considered as a further reference to Aratus (1–5):

Ἐκ Διὸς ἀρχώμεσθα, τὸν οὐδέποτ' ἄνδρες ἐῶμεν 1
ἄρρητον. μεσταὶ δὲ Διὸς πᾶσαι μὲν ἀγυιαί,
πᾶσαι δ' ἀνθρώπων ἀγοραί, μεστὴ δὲ θάλασσα
καὶ λιμένες· πάντη δὲ Διὸς κεχρήμεθα πάντες.
τοῦ γὰρ καὶ γένος εἰμέν· 5

Let us begin with Zeus, whom we men never leave unspoken. Filled with Zeus are all highways and all meeting-places of people, filled are the sea and harbours; in all circumstances we are all dependent on Zeus. For we are also his children …

This passage has a strong intratextual connection with the myth of Dike owing to the 'spatial' connotation of the benevolence of Jupiter and Dike: lines 2–3 and 106, in fact, offer the sole occurrences of the words ἀγυιά and ἀγορά in Aratus. It is not implausible, then, to suggest that this connection had already been appreciated by Cicero himself while crafting his passage of the *De Diuinatione*. In this second case, the parallels between the Greek text and the Latin passage are more thematic: the extension of the power of the gods in Quintus' words (*uim autem suam longe lateque*

[9] The final part of the Ciceronian tricolon (*dum domi*) seems to be an addition by Cicero: perhaps this is a direct reminiscence of Catull. 64.384 *domos … castas* quoted above.

[10] The same expression recurs in Cic. *Cael.* 3, which describes M. Caelius the Elder not participating in public life: *quibus autem propter senectutem,* ***quod iam diu minus in foro nobiscumque uersatur****, non aeque est cognitus, hi sic habeant …*

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diffundunt) matches the adverb πάντη in Aratus (line 4), while the idea of the gods shrouding human natures with their power (*tum hominum naturis implicant*) can be seen as a response to Aratus' strong affirmation τοῦ γὰρ καὶ γένος εἰμέν. What is more, even the phrase *quam tum terrae cauernis includunt* may hint at an 'Aratean' expression: the expression *terrae cauernae* ('the hollows of the earth') points to a chthonic environment,[11] but at the same time is the antonym of the metaphor *caeli cauernae* ('the upwards cavities of the sky'), already employed by Cic. *Arat*. 252 *dicitur* [*sc*. *orbis Lacteus*] ... *late caeli lustrare cauernas* ('the Milky Way is said to traverse the caves of the sky').[12]

This analysis aims to show that the character of Quintus should be credited not only with a double allusion to the most striking Aratean passages that encapsulate the Stoic divine *logos* pervading the universe (interpreted by him as Chrysippus' *pneuma*:[13] Aët. 1.7.33 = *SVF* 2.1027 = 46A L.–S.) but also with an allegorical reading of the myth of Dike (Dike was not a goddess, rather it was the Stoic *logos* itself).[14] To convince his brother of the reliability of divination, he uses the same Stoic theology that Marcus was inclined to prefer at the very end of the *De natura deorum* (3.95 *haec cum essent dicta, ita discessimus ut Velleio Cottae disputatio uerior, mihi Balbi ad ueritatis similitudinem uideretur esse propensior* 'Once all those arguments were made, we took our way home: Velleius thought that Cotta's arguments corresponded better to the truth, but to me the arguments of Balbus seemed to be closer to verisimilitude'). This point will in turn be refuted by Cicero in the second book of the *De Diuinatione*, where he argues that 'We can easily get rid of divination, but it is necessary to retain the existence of gods' (2.41 *diuinatio enim perspicue tollitur; deos esse retinendum est*). If read against *Diu*. 1.79, this last passage clearly represents an attempt

[11] Pease (n. 3), 232.

[12] See also Lucr. 4.170–1 *undique uti tenebras omnis Acherunta rearis | liquisse et magnas caeli complesse cauernas* and Varro, *Sat. Men*. fr. 270.1–3 Astbury[2] *nubes aquai frigido uelo leues | caeli cauernas aureas obduxerant | aquam uomentes inferam mortalibus*. The poetic undertones of Cic. *Diu*. 1.79 were noted by Lucan when criticizing the divine inspiration of his own Pythia: see especially 5.86–7 *quis latet hic superum? quod numen ab aethere pressum | dignatur caecas inclusum habitare cauernas?*

[13] This interpretation might have been prompted by ancient commentators on Aratus (see *schol. Arat*. 1, page 40, lines 7–10 Martin, where Zeus is identified with ἀήρ pervading all things). Quintus will thus take advantage one more time of the exegetical tradition surrounding Aratus' poem: I have in mind Cicero's *Prognostica* and the Aratean commentator Boethus of Sidon quoted in *Diu*. 1.13–15.

[14] The allegorical reading might have been prompted by the very words with which the tale begins in Aratus (who is a Stoic poet after all). In line 100, λόγος … ἄλλος accomplishes two functions: the first is intertextual, since the expression signposts the reminiscence of Hes. *Op.* 106 ἕτερόν τοι ἐγὼ λόγον ἐκκορυφώσω and all the Hesiodic elements present in the passage, on which see C. Fakas, *Der hellenistische Hesiod. Arats* Phainomena *und die Tradition der antiken Lehrepik* (Wiesbaden, 2001), 149–75 and Á.L. Gallego Real, *El hipotexto hesiódico en los* Phaenomena *de Arato* (Amsterdam, 2004), 112–56; the second is interpretative, because it invites readers to speculate on the other meaning of the tale in the whole poem (λόγος … ἄλλος would have then reminded Cicero's contemporaries of the word ἀλληγορία: see J. Whitman, *Allegory. The Dynamics of an Ancient and Medieval Technique* [Cambridge, MA, 1987], 263–8). On this last point, see K. Kidder, *Criteria of Truth. Representations of Truth and Falsehood in Hellenistic Poetry* (Cambridge, MA and London, 2023), 60–5 and H. Van Noorden, 'Aratus' Maiden and the source of belief', in M.A. Harder, R.F. Regtuit and G.C. Wakker (edd.), *Nature and Science in Hellenistic Poetry* (Leuven / Paris / Walpole, MA, 2009), 255–75; readers can find useful remarks on the use of mythology in Dike's episode in F. Bellandi, 'Noterella Aratea (su *Phaen*. 98–101 e relative traduzioni latine)', *MD* 45 (2000), 105–18 and in Kidd (n. 5), 217–18.

to negotiate between a Stoic (and Aratean) authority and the Academic sceptical attitude towards the issue at stake in the treatise.[15]

I conclude with a remark on a matter of editorial technique. I would not dare to say that we ought to attempt a reconstruction of Cicero's Latin translation of Aratus from the words uttered by Quintus, but this passage deserves to be mentioned in the discussion of how ubiquitous Aratus is in Cicero's works, from his early poems to his late philosophical treatises.

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[15] A synthesis of this topic, which lies well beyond the scope of this article, is provided by T. Reinhardt, 'Cicero's Academic scepticism', in J.W. Atkins and T. Bénatouïl (edd.), *The Cambridge Companion to Cicero's Philosophy* (Cambridge and New York, 2022), 103–19.