

Recent scholarship (Johnston 1980, Thomas 1988, Farrell 1991, et al.) has convincingly demonstrated Aratus's importance as a didactic source for the *Georgics*, but his importance as a programmatic model has been underestimated because of Vergil's claim at *Geo.* 2.176 to sing after the model of Hesiod: *Ascraeumque cano Romana per oppida carmen*. My paper will argue that the night-laboring farmer mentioned by Vergil during a discussion of nighttime and wintertime work (*Geo.* 1.287-310) should be understood as a metaliterary reflection of Aratus (*et quidam sero hiberni ad luminis ignis | pervigilat ferroque faces inspicat acuto*, *Geo.* 1.291-92). It is no new claim that the *Georgics* is a poem preoccupied with its position in literary history (see esp. Thomas 1988, Farrell 1991), and the mysterious old gardener in *Geo.* 4 has long prompted suggestions that some important literary predecessor lay behind the digression at 4.125-48 (e.g. Harrison 2004, Leigh 1994, Thomas 1992). Vergil's similar digression at *Geo.* 1.291-96, however, on the night-laboring farmer and his wife, has evidently suggested programmatic intent to very few, despite the fact that Thomas 1985 and Kyriakides 1998 have remarked at length on the programmatic reuse of *Geo.* 1.294 to describe Circe's singing in the opening of *Aen.* 7 (*arguto tenuis percurrens pectine telas*, *Aen.* 7.14).

In order to make programmatic reference to Aratus in this digression, Vergil describes his night-laboring farmer in terms that recall both the traditional praise of Aratus and the most well-known passage of Aratus's *Phaenomena*. Callimachus in *Epigram* 27 uses the erotic metaphor of restless sleeplessness (*ἀγρουπνίη*) to characterize Aratus's attitude toward the composition of his poetry; because of this epigram's influence, sleepless nights become thereafter fixed as a metaphor for the hard work of composing refined poetry (see Thomas 1979 on *Cat.* 50, *Prop.* 1.10, et al.; cf. *Cinna* fr. 11 Courtney, *Lucr. DRN* 1.142). At *Geo.* 1.291-96, Vergil creates a rustic metapoetic vignette by literalizing this and other metaphors from *Ep.* 27 as domestic chores done at night on the farm: *ἀγρουπνίη* (27.4) = *pervigilat* (1.292), *τὸ μελιχρότατον... ἀπεμάξατο* (27.2-3) = *decoquit*... *despumat* (1.295-96). In the figure of the farmer's wife, moreover, who sings while she weaves, Vergil has created a complex allusion to Homer's Circe (see *Od.* 10.220-23, 254-55), whose weaving (*λεπτὰ τε καὶ χαρίεντα*) Vergil uses to literalize the weaving metaphor in Callimachus's reference to the *Phaenomena* as *λεπτὰὶ ῥήσιες* (*Ep.* 27.3-4). Finally, at *Geo.* 1.292 Vergil has coined the word *inspicat* ("to make resemble an ear of wheat") in order to refer directly to Aratus: this *hapax* is an allusion to the first line of Aratus's description of the constellation Virgo (*Παρθένον, ἣ ῥ' ἐν χειρὶ φέρει Στάχυν αἰγλήεντα*, 97 = *Spicum illustre tenens, splendenti corpore Virgo*, *Cic. Arat.* fr. 16.5-6 Soubiran). Vergil here uses the only permanent feature of Virgo's iconography—the bright ear of wheat she holds in her hand—as a covert means of referring to the most famous passage of the *Phaenomena*, which Aratus introduces as a digression on Virgo: the departure of Justice from the Earth after the arrival of the Bronze Race.

Scholars have productively discussed the possibility of metaliterary allusion in *Geo.* 4 with stimulating and thought-provoking results. The discovery of such an allusion to Aratus in *Geo.* 1, however, has the potential to be more convincing, since the *Phaenomena* survives intact, while the authors suggested as models for the old gardener survive only in fragments. Moreover, since scholars have already convincingly showed that Aratus is an important source of didactic material for *Geo.* 1, we now have the opportunity to analyze the conjunction of his importance as a source with his importance as a programmatic model, and to apply these findings more broadly to the other books of the *Georgics*.

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