

“Are Roman poets really teaching when they sound philosophical?”

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1. Cic. *De Or.* 1.69.

Etenim si constat inter doctos, hominem ignarum astrologiae ornatissimis atque optimis versibus Aratum de caelo stellisque dixisse; si de rebus rusticis hominem ab agro remotissimum Nicandrum Colophonium poetica quadam facultate, non rustica, scripsisse praeclare, quid est cur non orator de rebus eis eloquentissime dicat, quas adcertam causam tempusque cognorit?

2. Philodemus *On Poems* V. 25.30–26.11; cf. McOsker (2021).

εἰ γὰρ καθὸ πῶημα, φυσικὸν οὐδὲν οὔτε λέξεως οὔτε δι[α]νοήματος ὠφέλημα π[α]ρασκευάζει—διὰ τοῦτ[ο] δὴ τῆς ἀρετῆς ἐστηκότεες ὑπόκεινται κ[ο]πιοί, τῆι μὲν λέξει τὸ μ[ε]μιμῆσθαι τὴν ὠφέλιμα προσιδάσκουσαν, τῆς δὲ διανοίας τὸ μεταξὺ μετ[ε]σχηκέναι τῆς τῶν σοφῶν καὶ τῆς τῶν χυδαίων. καὶ ταῦτ’ ἔστιν, ἂν τε νομίη τις ἂν τε μή, καὶ κριτέον ἐπὶ τ[α]ῦτ’ ἐπανάγοντας.

... if a poem, qua poem (καθὸ πῶημα), provides no natural benefit (ὠφέλημα) either in language or in content—Therefore there so exist solid goals for goodness—for language, the imitation (μ[ε]μιμῆσθαι) of language which teaches useful things in addition, and for thought, being intermediate between the thought of the wise and that of the uneducated. And these [sc. solid goals] do exist, whether one thinks so or not, and one must judge with reference to them.

3. Lucr. *DRN* 3.790-93, sim. at 5.131-38

quod si posset enim, multo prius ipsa animi vis
in capite aut umeris aut imis calcibus esse
posset et innasci quavis in parte soleret,
tandem in eodem homine atque in eodem vase manere.

4. Horace, *Satire* 1. 46-49

hoc erat, experto frustra Varrone Atacino 46
atque quibusdam aliis, melius quod scribere possem,
inventore minor; neque ego illi detrahere ausim
haerentem capiti cum multa laude coronam.

5. Vergil *Geo.* 1.231-53

idcirco certis dimensum partibus orbem two lines on constellations
per duodena regit mundi sol aureus astra.
quinque tenent caelum zonae: quarum una corusco zones in sky
semper sole rubens et torrida semper ab igni;
quam circum extremae dextra laeuaque trahuntur 235 on earth?
caeruleae, glacie concretae atque imbribus atris;
has inter mediamque duae mortalibus aegris
munere concessae diuum, et uia secta per ambas, slanted road
obliquus qua se signorum uerteret ordo. for the ordo signorum

mundus, ut ad Scythiam Rhiphaeasque arduus arces 240
 consurgit, premitur Libyae deuexus in Austros.
 hic uertix nobis semper sublimis; at illum
 sub pedibus Styx atra uidet Manesque profundi.
 maximus hic flexu sinuoso elabitur Anguis
 circum perque duas in morem fluminis Arctos, 245
 Arctos Oceani metuentis aequore tingi.
 illic, ut perhibent, aut intempesta silet nox
 semper et obtenta densentur nocte tenebrae;
 aut redit a nobis Aurora diemque reducit,
 nosque ubi primus equis Oriens adflauit anhelis 250
 illic sera rubens accendit lumina Vesper.
hinc tempestates dubio praediscere caelo
 possumus, hinc messisque diem tempusque serendi....

Styx and Manes see “that one”
 constellation Anguis

“there” either night or alternating sun

from “this”? farmers learn....

6. Horsfall (2013) commentary on *Aeneid* 6:

p. 439: “a fairly careful reading suggests to me ... a multiplicity of barely compatible sources and an exposition that leaves many questions mercifully unanswered.”

p. 486 “No attempt to reconstruct an entire Virgilian system of eschatology will be offered here ...; the poet typically offers us apparent scraps of such a system... and with such scraps ... the reader must be satisfied.”

p. 504: “that these verses are intended as a coherent exposition of a comprehensible system I cannot quite believe.”

Zetzel (1989): “the Virgilian underworld... embodies radically different and mutually incompatible accounts of the afterlife and the nature of the soul, and it is hard to see how they can be reconciled.”

7. Horace *Ars Poetica* 251-56

Syllaba longa breui subiecta vocatur iambus,
 pes citus; unde etiam trimetris adcrecere iussit
 nomen iambeis, cum senos redderet ictus,
 primus ad extremum similis sibi; non ita pridem,
 tardior ut paulo graviorque veniret ad auris,
spondeos stabilis in iura paterna receipt..

iambus first

spondee “not so long ago” (?)
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275-84

Ignotum tragicae genus invenisse Camenae
 dicitur et plaustris vexisse poemata Thespis
 quae canerent agerentque peruncti faecibus ora.
 Post hunc personae pallaeque repertor honestae
 Aeschylus et modicis instravit pulpita tignis
 et docuit magnumque loqui nitique coturno.
 Successit vetus his comoedia, non sine multa
 laude; sed in vitium libertas excidit et vim
 dignam lege regi; lex est accepta chorusque
 turpiter obticuit sublato iure nocendi.

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Thespis & wagons

Aeschylus: mask, noble cloak,
 wooden stage,
 280 grand language & cothurnus

lex against too much *libertas*?

8. Aristotle's *On Poets* frag. 38 Janko, from Themistius' "On Speaking, or, How the Philosopher Should Speak"

καὶ οὐ προσέχομεν Ἀριστοτέλει ὅτι τὸ μὲν πρῶτον ὁ χορὸς εἰσιῶν ἦδεν εἰς τοὺς θεοὺς, Θέσπις δὲ ρόλογόν τε καὶ ῥῆσιν ἐξεῦρεν, Αἰσχύλος δὲ ὑποκριτὰς καὶ **ὀκρίβαντας**, τὰ δὲ πλείω τούτων Σοφοκλέους ἀπηλαύσαμεν καὶ Εὐριπίδου;

"Do we not pay attention to Aristotle, <when he says> that at first the chorus entered and sang to the god, Thespis invented a prologue and the speech, Aeschylus (invented) actors (some mss say "the third actor") and stages (**ὀκρίβαντας**?), and we enjoy the rest of these things courtesy of Sophocles and Euripides?"

9. Horace Satires 1.1

Qui fit, Maecenas, ut nemo, quam sibi sortem
 seu ratio dederit seu fors obiecerit, illa
 contentus vivat, laudet diversa sequentis? mempsimoria
 'o fortunati mercatores' gravis annis soldier says merchant lucky
 miles ait, multo iam fractus membra labore; 5
 contra mercator navim iactantibus Austris:
 'militia est potior. quid enim? concurritur: horae merchant says soldiers die fast *WTF)
 momento cita mors venit aut victoria laeta.'
 agricolam laudat iuris legumque peritus, lawyer praises agricola
 sub galli cantum consultor ubi ostia pulsat; 10
 ille, datis vadibus qui rure extractus in urbem est, agricola praises city-dweller life
 solos felicis viventis clamat in urbe.
 cetera de genere hoc—adeo sunt multa—loquacem
 delassare valent Fabium. ne te morer, audi,
 quo rem deducam. si quis deus 'en ego' dicat 15 if offered a chance to switch
 'iam faciam quod voltis: eris tu, qui modo miles,
 mercator; tu, consultus modo, rusticus: hinc vos,
 vos hinc mutatis discedite partibus. eia,
 quid statis?' nolint. atqui licet esse beatis. [...20-27cut] they would refuse. Why?
 ille gravem duro terram qui vertit aratro,
 perfidus hic caupo, miles nautaeque, per omne
 audaces mare qui currunt, hac mente laborem 30
 sese ferre, senes ut in otia tuta recedant, b/c they want safe old age
 aiunt, cum sibi sint congesta cibaria: sicut
 parvola—nam exemplo est—magni formica laboris
 ore trahit quodcumque potest atque addit acervo
 quem struit, haud ignara ac non incauta futuri. 35
 quae, simul inversum contristat Aquarius annum,
 non usquam prorepat et illis utitur ante te = Maecenas (et al)
 quaesitis sapiens, cum te neque fervidus aestus claim that YOU never spend
 demoveat lucro neque hiems, ignis mare ferrum, switch to miserliness as topic
 nil obstat tibi, dum ne sit te ditior alter. 40
 quid iuvat inmensum te argenti pondus et auri
 furtim defossa timidum deponere terra?
 quod, si conminuas, vilem redigatur ad assem?
 at ni id fit, quid habet pulcri constructus acervus?
 milia frumenti tua triverit area centum: 45 tua
 non tuus hoc capiet venter plus ac meus: ut, si [46-60 cut]

at <u>bona pars hominum</u> decepta cupidine falso 'nil satis est', inquit, 'quia tanti quantum habeas sis': quid facias illi? iubeas miserum esse, libenter quatenus id facit: ut quidam memoratur Athenis sordidus ac dives, populi contemnere voces	65	the majority of human beings say nothing is enough (because of status; new topic) Proof: one rich miser from Athens
sic solitus: 'populus me sibilat, at mihi plaudo ipse domi, simul ac nummos contemplor in arca.' Tantalus a labris sitiens fugientia captat flumina—quid rides? mutato nomine de te	70	you
fabula narratur: congestis undique saccis indormis inhians et tamquam parcere sacris cogeris aut pictis tamquam gaudere tabellis. nescis, quo valeat nummus, quem praebeat usum? panis ematur, holus, vini sextarius, adde quis humana sibi doleat natura negatis.	75	you do not know how to spend
an vigilare metu exanimem, noctesque diesque formidare malos fures, incendia, servos, ne te compilent fugientes, hoc iuvat? horum semper ego optarim pauperrimus esse bonorum. at si condoluit temptatum frigore corpus	80	Rich man better off when sick?
aut alius casus lecto te adflixit, habes qui adsideat, fomenta paret, medicum roget, ut te suscitet ac reddat gnatis carisque propinquis? non uxor salvum te volt, non filius; omnes vicini oderunt, noti, pueri atque puellae.	85	Everyone hates you
miraris, cum tu argento post omnia ponas, si nemo praestet, quem non merearis, amorem? [...] denique sit finis quaerendi, cumque habeas plus, pauperiem metuas minus et finire laborem incipias, parto quod avebas, ne facias quod Ummidius quidam; non longa est fabula: dives [...]	95	Second miser story: Ummidius (96-105 cut)
est modus in rebus, sunt certi denique fines, quos ultra citraque nequit consistere rectum. illuc, unde abii, redeo, qui nemo, ut <u>avarus</u> ,	110	return to where I started (not really!) praise others for having more \$ (new!) (so why not switch?)
se probet ac potius laudet diversa sequentis, quodque aliena capella gerat distentius uber, tabescat neque se maiori pauperiorum turbae conparet, hunc atque hunc superare laboret. sic festinanti semper locupletior obstat, ut, cum carceribus missos rapit ungula currus, instat equis auriga suos vincentibus, illum	115	
praeteritum temnens extremos inter euntem. inde fit, ut raro, qui se vixisse beatum dicat et exacto contentus tempore vita cedat uti conviva satur, reperire queamus. iam satis est. ne me Crispini scrinia lippi	120	hardly anyone dies satisfied
conpilasse putes, verbum non amplius addam.		

10. Juvenal 9. 124 utile consilium modo, sed commune, dedisti.

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I had some space at the end so here are two really nice illustrations from Bakker.

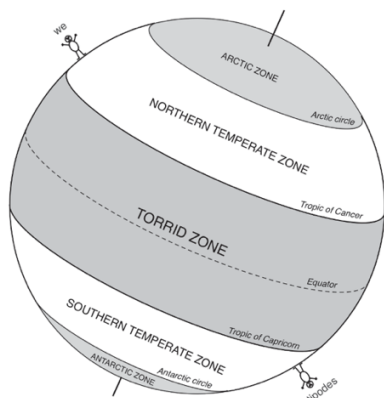


figure 1 Terrestrial sphere with the five zones

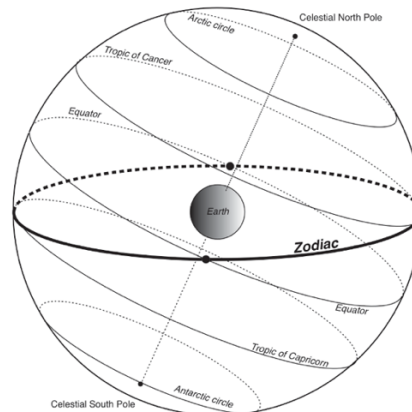


figure 2 Celestial sphere with the five parallel circles and the zodiac