

Stars and Constellations in Hyginus' *Fabulae*: Cementing the Link with the *De Astronomia*

Although most scholars now accept that the *Fabulae* attributed to Hyginus is the work of the same person who wrote the *De Astronomia* (Fletcher), very little work has been done on the link between these two texts. At first glance, there are few similarities: the *De Astronomia* is erudite and the *Fabulae* is an often inept mess (Rose). But this paper will argue that some parts of the *Fabulae* are much more learned than others, and that they are generally the chapters that involve astronomical matters. The presence of such elements in the *Fabulae* not only cements the link between the works but also shows that the *Fabulae* is not completely unlike the *De Astronomia* in quality, and there is thus no reason to argue that it is simply a badly abridged work full of later interpolations (Werth).

After reviewing the basic evidence for the connection between the *Fabulae* and the *De Astronomia*, I will discuss a group of chapters in the former that involve stars and constellations, including 14 (*Argonautae*), 80 (*Castor*), 130 (*Icarus, Erigone et Canis*), 177 (*Callisto*), and 192 (*Hyas*). These chapters share numerous similarities with each other but differ from most of the rest of the *Fabulae*.

First is the presence of catasterisms, which are the subject of *De Astronomia* 2 but relatively rare in the *Fabulae*. Second is the complexity of these chapters, either in terms of length, style, and/or amount of detail. Some of these chapters also provide variants (i.e., giving multiple possibilities for a name or detail), which are rare in the *Fabulae*. Finally, these chapters include between them most of the direct quotations of poetry in the *Fabulae*. This kind of quotation is extraordinarily rare in the *Fabulae*, but references to poets are common in *De*

Astronomia 2. In one case (14), the quotation of poetry even demonstrates specialized astronomical knowledge.

All of these characteristics in turn make these *fabulae* more similar to the general approach of Book 2 of the *De Astronomia*, which collects the *aitia* for the constellations. In addition to supporting the argument that both works are by the same author, these similarities may even allow us to suggest that these chapters in the *Fabulae* betray the author's particular interests and foreshadow a later, more mature work.

Finally, this examination sheds some much-needed light on the *Fabulae*, which is widely used but still understudied. The material it transmits was shaped by the particular interests of its author and not all parts of the *Fabulae* deserve the kind of censure the work as a whole has received from editors and other scholars.

Bibliography

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