

Stoicism in the Stars: Cicero's *Aratea* in the *De Natura Deorum*
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1. Harleianus 647, 9th c. © British Library.

Illustration of the constellation Aries (f2v) above text of Cicero's *Aratea*. Text within the figure = Hyginus' *De Astronomia*, acting like a commentary on Cicero's *Aratea*. This manuscript can be viewed online: http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/FullDisplay.aspx?ref=Harley_MS_647



2. Zeno etymologizes Hesiod's *Theogony* - *De Natura Deorum* 1.36 (speaker = Epicurean Velleius):

cum vero Hesiodi Theogoniam, id est originem deorum, interpretatur, tollit omnino usitatas perceptasque cognitiones deorum; neque enim Iovem neque Iunonem neque Vestam neque quemquam qui ita appellatur in deorum habet numero, sed rebus inanimis atque mutis per quamdam significationem haec docet tributa nomina.

In Zeno's interpretation of Hesiod's *Theogony*, or "On the Origin of the Gods", he took away entirely the customary and received notions of the gods; for he does not count Jupiter, nor Juno, nor Vesta, nor any named divinity among them, but teaches that these traditional names have been applied through a certain mechanism of identification to inanimate and mute matter.¹

3. *SVF* 1.103; cf. Long 1992:62:

nam Zenon Citieus sic interpretatur, aquam χάος appellatum ἀπὸ τοῦ χέεσθαι.

For Zeno of Citium interpreted "chaos" to be primal water from the verb "to pour" (χάος ~ χέεσθαι).

4. Aratus' *Phaenomena* 1-2:

ἐκ Διὸς ἀρχώμεσθα, τὸν οὐδέποτε ἄνδρες ἐώμεν | ἄρρητον.

From Zeus let us begin - we mortals never leave him | unspoken.

5. Scholia to Aratus' *Phaenomena* 1-2. Zeus = ἀήρ (Maass 1898:335, 10-11):

καὶ γὰρ τὸν ἀέρα Δία λέγουσιν. οὗτός ἐστι κατὰ τοὺς Στωϊκοὺς διὰ πάντων διήκων.

For they say that Zeus is ἀήρ, which, according to the Stoics, permeates everything.

6. Scholia to Aratus' *Phaenomena* 1-2. Zeus = ἀήρ (Martin 1974:41, 2):

οἱ γὰρ Στωϊκοὶ ὑποτίθενται, μᾶλλον δὲ πάντες οἱ ὄρον φωνῆς γράψαντες, πεπληγμένον ἀέρα αὐτὴν εἶναι. "οὐδέποτε γὰρ ἄρρητον αὐτὸν ἐώμεν" - αἰεὶ δι' αὐτοῦ τὰς ῥήσεις ποιούμεθα.

For the Stoics, or rather everyone who has given an explanation for human vocalisation, hypothesize that sound is made through "hit air" (πεπληγμένον ἀέρα). When Aratus says, "For we never leave him unspoken," he is referring to the fact that human speech is always achieved by means of "air"/Zeus.

7. Aratus' *Phaenomena* 167-174; trans. adapted from Kidd (1997):

παρ ποσὶ δ' Ἐνιόχου κεραδὸν πεπτηότα Ταύρον
μαίεσθαι. τὰ δὲ οἱ μάλ' εἰκότα σήματα κείται:
τοίη οἱ κεφαλὴ διακέκρυται: οὐδέ τις ἄλλω
σήματι τεκμήραιτο κάρη βοός, οἷά μιν αὐτοὶ
ἀστέρες ἀμφοτέρωθεν ἐλισσόμενοι τυπόωσιν.
καὶ λίην κείνων ὄνομ' εἴρεται, οὐδέ τοι αὐτως
νήκουστοι Ἰάδες.

¹ Translations are mine unless otherwise stated.

Near the feet of the Charioteer look for the horned Bull crouching. This constellation is very recognisable, so clearly defined is its head: one needs no other sign to identify the ox's head, so well do the stars themselves stamp both sides of it as they go round. Their name is also well-known: the Hyades are not just nameless.

8. *Left*: illustration of the constellation Taurus from Grotius' edition of Cicero's *Aratea* (1600).
Right: modern photograph of the Hyades within Taurus © Jerry Lodriguss apod.nasa.gov. The upsilon shape (υ) of the Hyades is marked out in light green.



9. The Hyades in *De Natura Deorum* 2.110-1 (~Aratus' *Phaenomena* 167-174):

cuius sub pedibus
corniger est valido conixus corpore Taurus.
 eius caput stellis conspersum est frequentibus:
has Graeci stellas Hyadas vocitare suerunt,
 a pluendo ($\upsilon\epsilon\iota\nu$ enim est pluere), nostri
 imperite Suculas, quasi a subus essent,
 non ab imbribus nominatae

Under whose feet
the horned Bull crouches on its strong body.
Its head is sprinkled with many stars.
These the Greeks are wont to call the Hyades
from the rain (the Greek verb ὑεῖν means “to rain”).
Our ancestors wrongly called these stars the “Piglets” (*Suculae*),
as though they came from the Latin word for “pig,” *sus*, and not from the rain.

10. Scholia to Aratus' *Phaenomena* 171:

οἱ δέ, ὅτι δυόμενοι αἴτια ὑετοῦ γίνονται.

Others say that they are called the Hyades because their setting is the cause of rain.

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