

*Deflexus solito cursu: Phaethon between Ovid and Manilius*

Stratis Kyriakidis\*

Univ. of Thessaloniki

**Abstract:** In a dialogue with the poets and philosophers of the past, Manilius in his first Book of his *Astronomica* uses the myth of Phaethon as one of the *aetia* for the creation of the Milky Way: Phaethon, the son of *Sol*, took his father's chariot and, in a frenzied course, caused the conflagration of the universe; hence the creation of the Milky Way. Among the prior versions of the myth, Manilius sets his own story in direct dialogue with the Ovidian Phaethon in the *Metamorphoses* tracing an intentional convergence between the poet and his mythic character. With selected words and phrases, Manilius conveys his own poetic and philosophical views on the attainment of knowledge vis-à-vis passive ignorance (which may bring admiration and fear) and the conflict between the *novum* and the *solitum*, the tradition. The *DRN* of the Epicurean Lucretius is the text on which the Stoic Manilius relies in order to develop his own thoughts on the need to respect tradition as well as on the importance of the renewal of poetic discourse. The *novum* was a major pursuit in the poetry of all the great poets of the Augustan Age, but all depends on how this pursuit of the new 'blends' with the *solitum* coming from the past.

**Resumen:** En diálogo con los poetas y filósofos del pasado, en el libro primero de sus *Astronomica* Manilio utiliza el mito de Faetón como uno de sus *aetia* para la creación de la Vía Láctea: Faetón, el hijo del *Sol*, ha cogido el carro de su padre y, en frenética carrera, ha provocado la conflagración del universo; de ahí la creación de la Vía Láctea. Entre las versiones previas del mito, Manilio sitúa su historia en diálogo directo con el Faetón de las *Metamorfoses* de Ovidio, trazando una convergencia intencionada entre el poeta y su mítico personaje. Mediante una selección de palabras y frases, Manilio transmite sus propias ideas

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\* **Dirección para correspondencia:** Markora 20, GR 11141 Athens (GREECE). E-mail: [skyr@otenet.gr](mailto:skyr@otenet.gr)

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poéticas y filosóficas acerca del logro de conocimiento frente a una ignorancia pasiva (que puede comportar admiración y miedo) y frente al conflicto entre lo *novum* y lo *solitum*, la tradición. El *DRN* del epicúreo Lucrecio es el texto en el que el estoico Manilio se basa para desarrollar sus propios pensamientos tanto por la necesidad de respetar la tradición como por la importancia de la renovación del discurso poético. Lo *novum* era uno de los principales objetivos en la poesía de todos los grandes poetas de la época de Augusto, pero todo depende de cómo ese objetivo de lo nuevo “se mezcle” con lo *solitum* procedente del pasado.

**Keywords:** Phaethon, Manilius, Ovid, Lucretius, knowledge, *novum* / *novitas*, *solitum*, fear, *athaumastia*, *athamvia*, *liber* / *libertas*, *didaxis*

**Palabras clave:** Faetón, Manilio, Ovidio, Lucrecio, conocimiento, *novum* / *novitas*, *solitum*, miedo, *athaumastia*, *athamvia*, *liber* / *libertas*, *didaxis*

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## 1. Introduction: Phaethon in Manilius

Manilius's *Astronomica* is the earliest account of an astrological system of the Hellenistic period “intended as a cohesive unity”.<sup>1</sup> Following the practice of the great Latin epic poets and in particular the ‘didactic’ poets, Manilius was in a continuous discourse with tradition and obviously had a need to be acknowledged<sup>2</sup> as a rightful successor of this tradition.

Further to the intimate relationship that Manilius and the poets – especially of the Augustan period – had with their past, there was also *the synchronic relationship* they had not only with society and its literature, but also with the cosmos and the world around them, which in one way or another could affect their work and the answers they were seeking to their existential anxieties. The humanisation of the universe through the various catasterisms<sup>3</sup> and its connection with the myth brought Man closer to it and through this process of familiarisation (or “domestication”<sup>4</sup>) Man had the sense that he was getting closer to a world beyond his reach. This close relationship with both, tradition and cosmos, becomes obvious in the *Astronomica* of Manilius since on the one hand the work is charged with allusions to previous works in which the poet was versed, and on the other its very theme is related to the heavenly world which is approached not as an ‘other’ world – different and eerie – but rather as the space in which Man sets his hopes, fears, and future.

<sup>1</sup> HÜBNER (2006) s.v. ‘Manilius III’, col. 241.

<sup>2</sup> KYRIAKIDIS (2016).

<sup>3</sup> LOWE (2014) 51-52.

<sup>4</sup> BARCHIESI (2009) 164.

It is not known when the myth of Phaethon,<sup>5</sup> the son of Helios,<sup>6</sup> first appeared in Greek literature, though the name is found in the *Theogony* of Hesiod (*Theog.* 984-991) as the son of Cephalus and Eos and the favourite of Venus.<sup>7</sup> From early on, the myth of Phaethon is related with the Heliades, the daughters of Helios, who grieved over the death of their brother (and were transformed into poplars, according to the version Ovid followed in the *Met.* 2.340-366<sup>8</sup>). From Aeschylus' tragedy *Heliades* some fragments have come down to us;<sup>9</sup> also 327 lines have survived from Euripides' tragedy *Phaethon*, which form the most extensive excerpt from Greek literature on this theme. In this tragedy, Phaethon is the illegitimate son of Helios and Clymene, the wife of Merops, king of the Ethiopians. James Diggle's *Euripides: Phaethon* (CUP, 1970) is an authoritative work on the subject.

Strangely enough, as the English scholar mentions (p. 5), the name *Phaethon* rarely appears in early Greek poetry and is completely absent from the extant lyric poetry. Besides the tragedians, the earliest reference to the myth is in Plato's *Timaeus* 22c, where the Egyptian priest clearly reports the myth with which the Greeks explained the cosmic conflagration.<sup>10</sup>

τὸ γὰρ οὖν καὶ παρ' ὑμῶν λεγόμενον, ὥς ποτε Φαέθων Ἡλίου παῖς τὸ τοῦ πατρὸς ἄρμα ζεύξας διὰ τὸ μὴ δυνατὸς εἶναι κατὰ τὴν τοῦ πατρὸς ὁδὸν ἐλαύνειν τὰ τ' ἐπὶ γῆς συνέκαυσεν καὶ αὐτὸς κεραυνωθεὶς διεφθάρη, τοῦτο μύθου μὲν σχῆμα ἔχον λέγεται, τὸ δὲ [22d] ἀληθές ἐστι τῶν περὶ γῆν κατ' οὐρανὸν ἰόντων παράλλαξις καὶ διὰ μακρῶν χρόνων γιγνομένη τῶν ἐπὶ γῆς πυρὶ πολλῶ φθορά.

(So what you are saying in your parts, that Phaethon, the son of Helios, had once harnessed his father's chariot but as he could not drive it on the paternal track, he burnt up everything on earth and himself was thunderstruck, this is what is said in the form of myth. The true meaning of this is that the bodies which rotate around the earth in heaven, with the passing of the years deviate from their course and they destroy with fire everything on earth.)

<sup>5</sup> MUSSO [(2012) 91-100 and notes] collects the references in ancient texts.

<sup>6</sup> In Homer *φαέθων* is not a separate character but only an adjective attributed to the sun: ἠέλιος *φαέθων* at *Il.* 11.735 and *Od.* 5.479, 11.16, 19.441, 22.388.

<sup>7</sup> For the early references see J. DIGGLE (1970) *Prolegomena* 4-9.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. Pliny *NH* 37.11.31.

<sup>9</sup> DIGGLE (1970) 27-32.

<sup>10</sup> According to SOLMSEN (1951) 7 n.18: "Jaeger [*Aristoteles*, Berlin 1923, p. 139] suggests that the 'rationalistic' interpretation of the Phaethon myth and perhaps also the actual theory of catastrophes did not originate with Plato himself but with scientists close to him whom he followed". MUSSO [(2012) 95-100 and notes] offers a good discussion on Plato's theory.

In another attempt to interpret the myth, Aristotle refers to the Pythagorean explanation that the Milky Way was created when a star was thrown off its course during Phaethon's journey with his father's chariot.<sup>11</sup>

τῶν μὲν οὖν καλουμένων Πυθαγορείων φασί τινες ὁδὸν εἶναι ταύτην οἱ μὲν  
τῶν ἐκπεσόντων τινὸς ἀστέρων κατὰ τὴν λεγομένην ἐπὶ Φαέθοντος φθοράν.  
(Aristotle, *Meteorologica* 345a)

(Of those who are called 'Pythagoreans' some argue that this way [i.e. the Milky Way] was created by a single star from those which fell out during the so-called Phaethon's catastrophe.)

The connection between Milky Way and Phaethon is also made by Manilius, as we shall see further down.

From this brief and incomplete excursus on ancient Greek literature, it is evident that there were attempts in the philosophical discourse of antiquity to demythologise and rationalise Phaethon and his 'story', thus implying that the myth of Phaethon was considered to 'mythologise' cosmic phenomena.<sup>12</sup> There are also scattered references from the Hellenistic period but of lesser importance.<sup>13</sup>

In Latin literature before Manilius, Lucretius has Phaethon's myth<sup>14</sup> as the allegoresis of the prevalence of the element of fire over that of water:

*Ignis enim superavit et ambiens multa perussit,* 396  
*avia cum Phaethonta rapax vis solis equorum*  
*aethere raptavit toto terrasque per omnis.*  
*at pater omnipotens ira tum percitus acri*  
*magnanimum Phaethonta repenti fulminis ictu* 400  
*deturbavit equis in terram, Solque cadenti*

<sup>11</sup> COOK [(1965) 40 with nn. 4 and 5] presents the different theories; also MUSSO (2012) 91-100.

<sup>12</sup> MUSSO (2012) 93-95 with n. 304; COCHRANE (2017) 38. The myth of Phaethon is also included in [Ps.]Palaephatus (*De Incredilibus*) where stories from Ovid's *Metamorphoses* are rationalised; see below, n. 34; on the relation of those stories with rhetoric and Greek philosophy, see ALGANZA ROLDÁN (2012).

<sup>13</sup> As, for instance, in Apoll. Rhod. 4.597-600, where Phaethon is called ἡμιδαής (598) and R.C. SEATON renders it in his Loeb translation as 'half-burnt'; cf. also *Il.* 16.294 'half-burnt' for the ships. The adjective, however, could also bear the meaning 'unskilled', 'half-ignorant', similar to the adj. ἀδαής, cf. δαημοσύνη = skill.

<sup>14</sup> HARDIE (2009b) 7.

*obvius aeternam suscepit lampada mundi,  
disiectosque redegit equos iunxitque trementis,  
inde **suum per iter** recreavit cuncta gubernans,  
scilicet ut veteres Graium cecinere poetae.                      405  
quod procul a vera nimis est ratione repulsum.*  
(Lucr. *DRN* 5.396-406)

(For fire prevailed and went around burning many parts when the fierce force of the sun's horses took Phaethon off course in the whole ether and all the regions of the earth. But the almighty father stirred up with violent anger threw down ambitious Phaethon from his horses to the earth with a sudden thunderbolt, and Sun, going towards him as he was falling, took hold of the eternal lamp of the world and brought back and yoked the dispersed horses while trembling, and then guiding them through his path restored everything. This is the way the old Greek poets have sung the story but it is very far from true reasoning.)

The most important, however, and most extensive continuous narrative of Phaethon's myth that existed at the time of Manilius is that of Ovid in the *Metamorphoses*, which extends across more than four hundred verses (*Met.* 1.747-2.400<sup>15</sup>). At the end of the Ovidian episode,<sup>16</sup> cosmic order is also restored (*Met.* 2.398-408), as in Lucretius. Nevertheless, it is not certain which version or versions of the myth, among the various references – short or otherwise – that existed in tradition, have influenced the Roman poet of the *Metamorphoses* in the shaping of his narrative. It is more than probable that here, as everywhere, Ovid has taken an eclectic approach towards his sources.

In Manilius' *Astronomica* there are many allusions to earlier literature and myths and a host of authors, poets, philosophers, heroes and statesmen parade in his work, some named but mostly unnamed. Whatever is appropriated by Manilius however, is reinstated in the world of the *Astronomica* in such a way as to conform to his views and theories. The restoration of cosmic order in Lucretius' and Ovid's Phaethon is a basic principle which Manilius also repeats in his own way the second time he refers to the myth of Phaethon in Book 4 (834-840), concluding that, after a long period, things are restored to their previous state:<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> For KNOX [(1988) 536], however, the end of the episode is at 2.398.

<sup>16</sup> Phaethon, however, also appears elsewhere in Ovid: *Met.* 4.246, 12.581; *Fasti* 4.793; *Trist.* 1.1.79, 3.4.30, 4.3.66. It also appears in Catull. 64.291; Hor. *C.* 4.11.25; Virg. *Aen.* 5.105.

<sup>17</sup> See also SALEMME (2000<sup>2</sup>) 19.

*nec non, cum patrias Phaethon temptavit habenas,*  
*arserunt gentes **timuit**que incendia caelum* 835  
*fugeruntque **novas** ardentia sidera flammis*  
*atque uno **metuit** condi natura sepulcro.*  
*in tantum longo mutantur tempore cuncta*  
*atque iterum in semet redeunt. sic tempore certo*  
*signa quoque amittunt vires sumuntque receptas.* 840  
 (Astr. 4.834-840)

(Furthermore, when Phaethon tried his father's reins, the nations were burnt and the sky was afraid of conflagration, and the burning stars tried to escape from the new conflagration and nature was afraid that it would be buried in a single grave. To such a degree everything changes in the long passage of time and once more it returns to the same state. Similarly, at a certain time the stars too lose their powers and after they take them back, they employ them again.)

The first incorporation of the myth of Phaethon into the *Astronomica* (Astr. 1.735-749) is more extensive and appears as one of the *aetia* of the creation of the Milky Way, a view we have also seen in Aristotle's text. Indeed Manilius, a teacher of astronomy and astrology, chooses to explain the formation of the Milky Way<sup>18</sup> through a series of *aetia* with intense metaphorical diction and, to a great extent, with roots in myth. The whole unit referring to the Milky Way proves to be not so much of astronomical or astrological value but rather the locus for the poet to weave a catalogue of his own literary, philosophical<sup>19</sup> and other experiences and views:<sup>20</sup>

<sup>18</sup> The whole unit covers lines 1.684-804 [also GLAUTHIER (2017) 283].

<sup>19</sup> For RAMELLI (2014) 162: "Manilius' poem was intended to be a philosophical poem; technical material is in the service of a philosophical discourse, and the model for it in the Latin world was Lucretius, although the philosophical orientation of these two authors was of course different and Manilius even seems to combat Lucretius' views on his own grounds"; see also p. 179 on the philosophical background of the myth of Phaethon.

<sup>20</sup> For GLAUTHIER [(2017) 283]: "Manilius' Milky Way narrative, in particular, makes an epideictic display of astronomical information that does not serve any purpose within the scheme of the *Astr.* and that actually involves the poet in self-contradictions to which he seems wholly indifferent. The result is a sprawling, almost schizophrenic text that bursts the Aratean framework apart at the seams and calls for a new image to conceptualize the poet's relationship with the heavens, that of Phaethon's chariot ride" and concludes that: "Manilius' narrative constitutes a literary or intellectual echo chamber in which competing voices bounce from line to line".

<i>Sic super incumbit signato culmine limes candidus et resupina facit mortalibus ora, dum <b>nova</b> per caecam <b>mirantur</b> lumina noctem <b>inquiruntque</b> sacras humano pectore <b>causas:</b> num se diductis conetur solvere moles segminibus, raraque labent compagine rimae admittantque novum <b>laxato tegmine</b> lumen; quid sibi non timeant, magni cum <b>vulnera</b> caeli conspiciant feriatque oculos <b>iniuria</b> mundi? <b>an</b> coeat mundus, duplicisque extrema cavernae convenient caelique oras et segmina iungant, perque ipsos fiat nexus manifesta <b>cicatrix</b> <b>suturam</b> faciens mundi, stipatus et orbis aeriam in nebulam densa compagine versus in cuneos alti cogat fundamina caeli. <b>an</b> melius manet illa fides, per saecula prisca illac solis equos <b>diversis cursibus</b> isse atque <b>aliam trivisse viam</b>, longumque per aevum exustas sedes incoctaque sidera flammis caeruleam verso speciem mutasse colore, infusumque loco cinerem mundumque sepultum? fama etiam antiquis ad nos descendit ab annis Phaethontem patrio curru per signa volentem, <b>dum nova miratur propius</b> spectacula mundi et puer in caelo ludit curruque <b>superbus</b> luxuriat nitido, <b>cupit et maiora parente</b>, <b>deflexum solito cursu</b>, curvisque quadrigis <b>monstratas liquisse vias</b> orbemque recentem <b>imposuisse</b> polo, nec signa <b>insueta</b> tulisse errantis meta flammis currumque solutum. quid querimur flammis totum saevisse per orbem terrarumque rogam cunctas arsisse per urbes? cum vaga dispersi fluitarunt fragmina currus, et caelum exustum est: luit ipse incendia mundus, et vicina <b>novis</b> flagrarunt sidera flammis nunc quoque praeteriti faciem referentia casus.</i>	1.716  <u>(1° action)</u>  720  <u>(2° action)</u>  725  <u>(3° action)</u> 730  735 <u>(4° action)</u>  738  743 740  744
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(Astr. 1.714-749)<sup>21</sup>

<sup>21</sup> Text by G.P. GOOLD (Loeb, 1997).

(1.714-717: In this way lies above the White Path marking overhead the vault of heaven and it draws upwards the eyes of men while they admire in the darkness of the night the strange radiance and search with their human minds the sacred causes. 718-720: Possibly the huge vault is seeking to break up itself into divided segments and with a loosening of the joints cracks slip in and admit new light through an opening of the ceiling. 721-722: How could men not fear when they observe the wounds of the great sky and the damage of heavens strikes their eyes? 723-728: Or perhaps the skies coalesce and the extremities of the two celestial vaults meet and join their edges and various segments and through those a bond is made, a prominent scar which forms a cosmic suture and having turned into an aerial vapour because of its dense structure, the compressed circular abutment drives together in wedge-like forms the foundations of the high sky. 729-734: Or is it perhaps better the view that there, in times past, the horses of Sun followed other course and wore a different path and with the passage of the centuries the burnt up regions and the stars scorched by the flames changed their dark appearance under a different colour and that ash was spread over the space and the sky was buried? (735-749) Another story comes to us from ancient times, that Phaethon, while flying with his father's chariot through the stars, admires from a closer position the new spectacles of heaven; the proud boy plays and revels with the glittering chariot in the sky and – wishing to surpass his father– turned off from the usual course and with the chariot going astray, left the way shown to him and laid a new orbit in the sky. [Fame has it that] the unaccustomed stars could not bear the fires which wandered from their 'guide-post and the chariot out of control'.<sup>22</sup> Why do we complain that flames fumed all over the world and that the earth turned to a funeral pyre burning in every city? When the pieces of the scattered chariot floated about, even the sky caught fire. Heaven itself suffered this conflagration and the neighbouring stars blazed with the recent flames so that even now they bear the marks of the past disaster.)

Here we shall not discuss the above unit in its entirety, nor shall we engage in an investigation into the reasons for this kind of presentation of the *aetia* but we shall rather confine ourselves to the 'Phaethon' *aetion*, which is the fourth in a series of seven, concerned with the formation of the Milky Way. It holds, that is, the middle position among the *aetia* as there are three preceding and three following. This placement betrays its special literary importance since the middle position had an

<sup>22</sup> The phrase from GOOLD's translation (1997).



essential function in Latin poetry.<sup>23</sup> The middle, whether in poetry or elsewhere, has often been considered the place from which the work can be ‘surveyed’ and is, therefore, the privileged locus which is offered for metapoetic evaluations. In making use of the middle position in this way, Manilius is aligned with the literary practices of the past.<sup>24</sup> And this he does quite often. Thus, Manilius constructs this ‘episode’ as an *aetion* of the creation of the Milky Way in a way that reveals not so much his views on cosmic matters as his philosophical thoughts<sup>25</sup> and metaliterary response to earlier works – especially Ovid’s.

The first two *aetia* (1.718-728) bear a ‘scientific’, so to speak, explanation which appears, according to commentators, to have originated in earlier philosophy;<sup>26</sup> Manilius, however, does not name his sources. In the introductory lines the poet suggests that humans both wonder (*mirantur*)<sup>27</sup> and search out (*inquirunt*) the *aetia* (*causas*) (1.714-717) of the Milky Way’s formation. In these two *aetia*, two rather opposite theories are presented: on the one hand the theory of the crevasse of the celestial vault from which light got through<sup>28</sup> and on the other, the theory of the convergence and unification of the different parts of the sky which close the ‘scar’ (*cicatrix*, 725)<sup>29</sup> like a ‘suture’ (*suturam*, 726).

It is apparent that the simplification of the vocabulary with its intense metaphorical quality is in accordance with the rules of analogy and aims at bringing closer the universe and Man himself. Characteristic of this purpose are phrases like *laxato tegmine* (720), *vulnera caeli* (721), *iniuria mundi* (722), and words like *cicatrix* (scar, 725), and *sutura* (stitching, 726).<sup>30</sup>

<sup>23</sup> On the importance of the middle in Latin poetry KYRIAKIDIS – DE MARTINO (eds) (2004).

<sup>24</sup> Characteristic is the Manilian phrase, *media extremis atque ultima summis / creduntur* (the middle is perceived from the edges and the lowest parts from the highest, 1.467-468). For the function of the middle in the *Astronomica*, see KYRIAKIDIS (2012) and (2016) 129-131. See below p. 136 with nn. 104 and 105.

<sup>25</sup> See above, p. 114 with nn.19 and 20.

<sup>26</sup> FERABOLI – FLORES – SCARCIA (1996) on 1.718-734.

<sup>27</sup> As BARCHIESI [(2009) 166] says: “Stargazing is the earliest form of civilization through spectacle, as soon as primitive men became spectators of *sparsa... miracula*.”

<sup>28</sup> This *aetion* closes with a rhetorical question with which the poet comments on it: *quid sibi non timeant, magni cum vulnera caeli / conspiciant, feriatque oculos iniuria mundi?* (How could men not fear when they observe the wounds of the great sky and the damage of heavens strikes their eyes? *Astr.* 1.721-722).

<sup>29</sup> LIUZZI (1995) on 1.726.

<sup>30</sup> FERABOLI – FLORES – SCARCIA (1996) on 1.718-734.

Immediately after the first two *aetia* which deal with the cosmological, so to speak, interpretation, but with an imagery which blurs somewhat its scientific clarity through the extensive use of metaphors, the poet proceeds to a *melius aetion* – the third one – in which the mythic element of Sun’s horses is used in order to interpret the Milky Way’s formation: the Milky Way seems to be the outcome of a cosmic destruction which was caused in the myth by the change of the usual course of Sun’s horses. Here Manilius introduces a clearly mythological *aetion* following in a way the Platonic argument in *Timaeus* 22c (above, p. 111) on Sun’s horses changing their course. He does not, however, make any reference to Phaethon nor does he give any rational explanation as suggested by the Egyptian priest in Plato (22d):

*an melius manet illa fides, per saecula prisca  
illac solis equos diversis cursibus isse  
atque aliam trivisse<sup>31</sup> viam, longumque per aevum  
exustas sedes incoctaque sidera flammis  
caeruleam verso speciem mutasse colore,  
infusumque loco cinerem mundumque sepultum?*  
(*Astr.* 1.729-734)

(Or is it perhaps better the view that, there in times past, the horses of Sun followed other course and wore a different path and with the passage of the centuries the burnt up regions and the stars scorched by the flames changed their dark appearance under a different colour and that ash was spread over the space and the sky was buried?)

Having thus prepared the ground, the poet now turns, in the fourth *aetion* (1.735-749), to the myth of Phaethon, son of Sun, in order to say more or less the same thing: it was the change of the accustomed course that led him to his downfall.<sup>32</sup>

## 2. The dismissal of *didaxis*

In Lucretius (above, pp. 112-113), the responsibility for the failure of Phaethon’s journey seems to rest with his arrogant craving to harness his father’s horses which

<sup>31</sup> Cf. Ov. *Met.* 2.167, *tritumque reliquant*, for Sun’s horses in the course of Phaethon which in turn recalls Lucretius’ phrase in proem 4 *nullius ante / trita* (1-2); below, p. 125.

<sup>32</sup> Cf. also Diodorus Siculus 5.23. MUSSO [(2012) 94 with n. 307] distinguishes two different branches of the mythological tradition. Diodorus Siculus represents the second branch. See HOUSMAN (1903) on 1.735-749 [p. 65].

angered Jupiter (5.399-401); the poet, however, gives special emphasis to the *rapax vis solis equorum* which violently took him off course<sup>33</sup> (*raptavit*) (5.397-398).<sup>34</sup> It is worth noting that in Ovid Sun justifies his son's inability to be in control of his horses (*Met.* 2.393):

*non meruisse necem, qui non bene rexerit illos.*

(he didn't deserve death because of his inability to guide them well.)

since even Jupiter himself *non agit hos currus* (does not drive this chariot, *Met.* 2.62; cf. 2.388-393).

While we see, therefore, that in Lucretius and Ovid Phaethon's failure is owed, to a degree, to his inability to guide his father's horses, in the Phaethon *aetion* of the Milky Way creation in Manilius, the responsibility of the conflagration falls on Phaethon himself and is not immediately related to the *currus* and its horses as their frenzied behaviour is denoted only by the phrase *currumque solutum* (*Astr.* 1.742), a phrase open to different interpretations.<sup>35</sup> Nevertheless, the *currus*, the role of which both Lucretius and Ovid have enhanced, appears in both Phaethon units of the *Astronomica* (repeatedly at the Milky Way unit of Book 1; also 4.834).<sup>36</sup>

<sup>33</sup> For SCHIESARO [(2014) 74 n.4], Lucretius makes Phaethon "the passive agent of the horses' strength".

<sup>34</sup> Cf. [Ps.-]Palaephatus [*De incredibilibus* 52.T {Περὶ Φαέθοντος}], who summarises the Ovidian version; Φαέθων ὁ τοῦ Ἡλίου παῖς, πόθον ἐσχηκὼς παράλογον ἐπιβῆναι τοῦ πατρικοῦ ἄρματος, πολλαῖς ἰκεσίαις καὶ δάκρυσιν πείθει τοῦτον. ἐπεὶ δ' ἐπέβη τοῦ ἄρματος καὶ τοὺς ἵππους ἤρξατο μυωπίζεω, ἠνιοχεῖν εὐ οὐκ εἰδὼς, μήτε μὴν οἶός τε ὦν ἐδραῖος ἐφιππάζεσθαι καὶ ἀκλόνητος, τοῖς ἵπποις παρασυρεῖς πολλῶ θράσει καὶ ἀγερωχίᾳ κεκωημένοις, καὶ προσγειότερος γεγόμενος, ἐκτινάσσεται παρὰ τὸν Ἑριδανὸν ποταμὸν καὶ ἀποπνίγεται, πλείονων τῆς περιουκίδος καταπυρποληθέντων μερῶν. (Phaethon, the son of Helius, had an irrational desire to drive his father's chariot. With many tearful entreaties he persuaded him: he climbed into the chariot and began to spur the horses on. But he had no knowledge of how to handle the reins: shaky, unable to keep his balance during the ride, he was swept off course by the horses, as their reckless high spirits drove them on. He came ever closer to earth, was thrown from the chariot into the Eridanus river, and drowned. The greater part of the surrounding territory was wasted by fire", trnsl. by J. STERN [ad.]).

<sup>35</sup> Servius on *Aen.* 10. 189, in his short review of Phaethon's myth does not relate the conflagration to Phaethon's inability to successfully guide his father's horses: *acceptis itaque curribus Phaethon, cum orbitam solis exisset, et coepisset mundus ardere, a Iove fulminatus in Eridanum cecidit, qui et Padus vocatur* (and so Phaethon, having taken the chariot, when he had gone beyond the course of the sun and the world began to burn, was thunderstruck by Jove and fell in the river Eridanus, which is also called Padus.)

<sup>36</sup> MUSSO (2012) 198.

Scholars usually recognise the metapoetic character of the *currus* and of the journey in literature. On one occasion the *currus* has been considered as a metaphor for the “artistic process”.<sup>37</sup> This is the phrase used by Gildenhard and Zissos [(2013) 122] for Medea’s chariot in Ovid’s *Metamorphoses*. Whatever Phaethon’s *currus* may represent, we can argue that the ‘process’ may at times lead to success, but it may also lead to failure and this seems to be related entirely to the traveller-poet<sup>38</sup> and how he fares in his journey. Much depends that is, on the charioteer’s character construction, as well as to whether (or not) he can control the *currus*. In Ovid, Phaethon does not travel in *his own* chariot and the horses do not recognise him as their own master; he is also unwilling to observe his father’s advice not to attempt the journey with his chariot, and at any rate, to follow the *solitus cursus* (*Astr.* 1.743)<sup>39</sup>, the fixed course of the sun.<sup>40</sup> In this way Phaethon in his ‘anxiety of influence’<sup>41</sup> (*cupit et maiora parente, Astr.* 1.739)<sup>42</sup> does not gain the knowledge he needed with the result the horses running unbridled in the universe to lead him to destruction.<sup>43</sup>

<sup>37</sup> For the corresponding cases of Icarus and Daedalus see SHARROCK (1994) 87-195, esp. 95; WEIDEN BOYD (2012) 108.

<sup>38</sup> Scholia in Pindarum on *P.* 10.65 (102): ἀλληγορικῶς δὲ τὸ ποίημα ἄρμα Πιερίδων, Drachm. For the poet as charioteer: in Greek literature beyond Pindar [GALE (2000) 12 n.28: “The chariot-journey... [is] common Pindaric metaphor for poetic composition”], see Empedocles 2 (3) 5 (WRIGHT and commentary on p. 158); also Parmenides fr. 1 (D-K): SALEMME (2000<sup>2</sup>) 37. On the relation of Lucretius (cf. *DRN* 6.47) to Parmenides on the imagery of the chariot-journey see GALE (1994) 51ff. and esp. 58; See also AHL [(1985) 184]: “The philosopher Parmenides describes his progress to knowledge as a journey in a chariot with blazing axle, escorted by the Heliades, Phaethon’s sisters [fr. 1 (= Sextus Empiricus *Adv. Math.* 7.3, and Simplicius *De Caelo* 557.25]. Plato describes the human soul as a chariot drawn by two horses, one good, one evil (*Phaedrus* 244-247); “Man’s soul, being imperfect, cannot control its chariot, loses its divine feathers, and falls to earth, where it must dwell”: See COOK (1965) 42 with nn. 5 and 6 on the relation of Plato and the Pythagoreans to Parmenides. The imagery also appears in Callimachus [GILDENHARD – ZISSOS (2013) 122-123 esp. with n. 124 and p. 130 n. 123]. See also below n. 56.

<sup>39</sup> The phrase also appears in the words of Jupiter instructing Mercury (*Met.* 2.838); cf. also *Met.* 10.638.

<sup>40</sup> GLAUTHIER (2017) 287: “With this in mind, the customary path that Phaethon abandons metamorphoses from the path of the sun into that of song, another metapoetic commonplace with which Manilius is familiar”.

<sup>41</sup> Cf. FELDHERR [(2016) 27].

<sup>42</sup> MUSSO [(2012) 198] rightly takes it as a ὕβρις.

<sup>43</sup> WEIDEN BOYD (2012) discusses the relation of the Ovidian Phaethon with the Odyssean Telemachus (where further references). SCHIESARO [(2014) 97ff.] returns to the subject. In the *Odyssey* (3.324-326, 369-370) Telemachus travels to Pylos and Sparta in order to hear news about his father. In Pylos Nestor gives him a chariot and his son, Peisistratus, as charioteer in

Phaethon, the disciple, dismissed Sun's *didaxis*. Could this behaviour be acceptable? Lucretius, in his own way, has given a negative answer acknowledging in full the role of the father-teacher (*te sequor, DRN 3.3, tu pater es, rerum inventor, 3.9*) and deifying his teacher Epicurus (*deus, bis 5.8*)<sup>44</sup> whose *vestigia* he follows (3.4).<sup>45</sup> Indeed, the journey was first made by the teacher-*deus* Epicurus who could travel with his mind in the universe and after his *peragratio* he comes to teach:<sup>46</sup>

*ergo vivida vis animi pervicit, et extra  
processit longe flammantia moenia mundi  
atque omne immensum peragravit mente animoque,  
unde refert nobis victor quid possit oriri,  
quid nequeat, finita potestas denique cuique  
quanam sit ratione atque alte terminus haerens. (DRN 1.72-77)*

(Therefore, the vigorous power of his mind prevailed, and he advanced far beyond the flaming walls of the world, and went through the whole of boundless space with his mind and intellect from where victorious he brings back to us the knowledge of what can come to be, what cannot and finally in what way each thing holds its limited powers and its deep-set limit.)

Unlike Phaethon, who travels in pursuit of the new with no knowledge or experience, Lucretius steps into the unknown (4.1-2) after having first accepted and acknowledged in full his teacher's precepts.

### 3. The poet of the *Metamorphoses* and Phaethon: Manilius' reading

In the fifteen lines of the *Astronomica* (1.735-749), which cover the Phaethon-unit at Book 1, it is quite clear that the poet considers the knowledge of the Ovidian narrative on Phaethon (*Met.* 1.747-2.400) as given. This is the reason why Manilius

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order to take him to Sparta. Both Telemachus and Phaethon make a journey. Both of them travel in a chariot which is not theirs. Nevertheless, there are some discrepancies: Telemachus has as a guide someone who knows the way, whereas Phaethon is driving the chariot himself without knowledge of the course. Furthermore, Telemachus travels in order to confirm his identity, while Phaethon travels after reaffirming his lineage.

<sup>44</sup> KYRIAKIDIS (2004) 30.

<sup>45</sup> *inque tuis nunc / ficta pedum pono pressis vestigia signis* [and now on the marks you have left I plant my own footsteps firm', trnsl. SCHIESARO (2014) 76]; cf. *ingressus vestigia, DRN 5.55.*

<sup>46</sup> KYRIAKIDIS (2016) 137.

does not give any detail on the episode; among other things omitted, there is a complete absence of Clymene's and Epaphus' words, and most of the last part of Book 1 of the *Metamorphoses* is not included; also missing are Sun's instructions and his words to his son, and Jupiter's catalytic intervention which led to Phaethon's downfall as well as the description of the lament for the loss of the young man at the end of the episode. Manilius incorporates the Ovidian episode in his own verses in a way, as we have suggested, that looks more like a critical assessment of it rather than a proper narrative.

With regard to the structure of the Manilian episode in Book 1, we note that, following Ovid, who divides his episode into two books (end of Book 1 / beginning of Book 2), Manilius, too, divides his fourteen verse-unit, together with the introductory verse, a total of fifteen verses, into two parts. The first group of verses (736-741) deals with Phaethon and his behaviour, while the second and rather longer part (741-749) deals with the consequences of this behaviour to the universe, followed by the poet's critique. As a matter of fact, this critique pervades the whole episode through some keywords in an intense intertextual play that we shall see shortly; however, in the second part, the critique comes through the personal voice of the poet-instructor who participates with a rhetorical question – a common technique in the *Astronomica* and generally in didactic poetry– *quid querimus flammis totum saevisse per orbem / terrarumque rogam cunctas arsisse per urbes?* (Why do we complain that flames fumed all over the world and that the earth turned to a funeral pyre burning in every city? *Astr.* 1.744-745). With this rhetorical question Manilius seems to confine the lament only to the destruction of nature. Ovid may well grieve as a narrator for nature, earth and people,<sup>47</sup> as becomes obvious from his terse verses *parva queror: magnae pereunt cum moenibus urbes ...* (*Met.* 2.214-215) in the introduction to the conflagration catalogues,<sup>48</sup> but the real lament in the episode concerns the loss of the young man (325-393). In the *Astronomica* the lament is not for Phaethon and this is part of the poet's didactic strategy with which he endeavours to set his own priorities.

These particulars, together with a host of others, render the dialogue between the *Astronomica* and the *Metamorphoses* imminent and we can further argue that in the Manilian 'Phaethon' there are three major protagonists: Phaethon himself, Manilius, and, as a third party – *e silentio* – the poet of the *Metamorphoses*.

<sup>47</sup> Cf. SEGAL (1971) 386-387.

<sup>48</sup> KYRIAKIDIS (2007) 141.

Let us look first at those points of the *Metamorphoses* which define the relation between the poet and his character, Phaethon, always from the viewpoint of the reader – who in our case is Manilius. The first verb for Phaethon in the *Astronomica* is found in the temporal clause *dum nova miratur propius spectacula mundi* (while he admires from a closer position the new spectacles of heaven, *Astr.* 1.737). This phrase immediately recalls the Ovidian *dumque ea magnanimus Phaethon miratur* (while ambitious Phaethon admires these..., *Met.* 2.111, also below p. 127). Both of these phrases are related to the beginning of the journey. Manilius, however, omits the word *magnanimus*<sup>49</sup> to avoid misreadings, allowing the phrase to run without this epithet; he refers thus the reader to another Ovidian phrase, which is none other than the *incipit* of the *Metamorphoses*. In the Manilian phrase, the word *nova* holds metrically the same position with that at the beginning of the *Metamorphoses*, and, like there, it is followed by a verb (*in nova fert animus mutatas dicere formas / corpora*, my mind is bent to speak of changed forms into novel bodies, *Met.*1.1-2). The introductory role of both, the Manilian phrase *dum nova miratur* for Phaethon and the Ovidian *incipit in nova fert animus* for the poet of the *Metamorphoses* himself, prepare the ground for the reader to see connections between Ovid the poet and Phaethon.

It is expected that the above Ovidian phrase, because of its position, could help the reader to see its metaliterary qualities: it has been well noted<sup>50</sup> that the long

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<sup>49</sup> Scholars usually tend to interpret the Latin adjective *magnanimus* as a word related only to the Greek *μεγάθυμος* and *μεγαλόψυχος* (following *OLD*, s.v.). However, BARCHIESI [(2005) ad loc.] shows a different path discussing the meaning of the epithet in the specific context of *Met.* 1 for Phaethon: “Nell’ epos ha di solito un valore aulico e nobilitante, ma qui è in discussione proprio la natura di Fetonte e il suo disastro deriva da un eccesso di aspirazioni sublimi”. In view of this, we should have in mind that the adjective *magnanimus* corresponds also to the Greek *μεγαλόφρων* [LSJ s.v.], the meaning of which oscillates between ‘high-minded’, ‘generous’ as in Pl. *Protag.* 9 and ‘arrogant’ *Euthd.* 293a. [See also HANNAY (2016) 49: “*Magnanimus* (*Met.* 2.111), the strongest echo of Longinus’s *μεγαλόφρων*”, with nn. 85 and 86 where he refers to the epithet *superbus* as also having good but also bad connotations]. Obviously the word *φρήν* is one of the words which correspond to *animus / anima* in Latin. This multivalence of the adjective is often ignored. On *magnanimus* as an attribute of Phaethon in Ovid and in Seneca, see MUSSO [(2012) 199-200, 207] who considers the use of this epic epithet for Phaethon in Ovid as ironic (200); the epithet, as we saw, is also attributed to Phaethon by Lucretius (*DRN* 5.400). See also GARANI (*forthcoming*).

<sup>50</sup> On the phrase *in nova fert animus* functioning as the *incipit* of the work and the hermeneutical possibilities deriving from it, see the discussion in BARCHIESI (2005) ad loc.; WHEELER (2009) 149; SCHIESARO (2014) 74 and n. 3, 96 n.94.

hyperbaton between *nova* and the word *corpora* which it qualifies, gives the possibility to the phrase *in nova fert animus* to be read independently<sup>51</sup> of the word *corpora* as a programmatic declaration for a new kind of epic the poet chooses to write. The interesting thing for us is that the phrase *fert animus* is applied only once more in the *Metamorphoses* and in particular at 1.775, a few lines that is, before the end of the book, within the episode of Phaethon, when his mother Clymene urges him to go and find his father Sun. Clymene's words begin, [*si modo*] *fert animus* (if only your mind guides you..., *Met.*1.775).<sup>52</sup> The repetition of this programmatic phrase [*in nova*] *fert animus* with which Book 1 and the whole work opens, can hardly be fortuitous.<sup>53</sup> Anderson notes:<sup>54</sup> "Phaethon is invited to have the same ambition as the epic poet beginning on his demanding task." The sense of affinity between the poet of the *Metamorphoses* and Phaethon, which obviously Manilius also perceives, is further strengthened by the poet himself at his *Ars Amatoria* 3.467 where, once more and in a clear programmatic discourse,<sup>55</sup> the same phrase is applied:

*Fert animus propius consistere: supprime habenas,  
Musa, nec admissis excutiare rotis.*

(My mind guides me to stand closer [to the things]. Muse, hold the reins well so you are not thrown off the chariot while the wheels run frantically.)

In this case too, the phrase *fert animus*, in the middle of the 3<sup>rd</sup> book of the *Ars Amatoria*, is again self-referential, as Roy Gibson notes,<sup>56</sup> while in the second part of the hexameter and in the pentameter we have the poet's warning to the Muse

<sup>51</sup> NELIS (2009) 250: "a complete sense unit".

<sup>52</sup> Cf. also *Pont.* 1.9.9 where the poet is recalling past memories of his friend Celsus; here, however, there is no reference to the past; for a very interesting reading of Clymene's words, see S. WHEELER [(1999) 88-89]: "Book 1 thus ends on the note of Phaethon's search for beginnings".

<sup>53</sup> HOLZBERG (1998) 88-90; WHEELER (1999) 89; WEIDEN BOYD (2012), 102-106, 116; SCHIESARO (2014) 74.

<sup>54</sup> ANDERSON (1997) on 1.775.

<sup>55</sup> SHARROCK (2006) 38.

<sup>56</sup> GIBSON [(2003) on lines 467-468] further notes that: "The chariot of poetry, an old image ... is also generally popular with didactic poets" and in his examples he includes Manilius, *Astr.* 2.57-59: *nostra loquar, nulli vatam debebimus orsa / nec furtum sed opus veniet, soloque volamus / in caelum curru, propria rate pellimus undas* (I shall tell my own song, I shall owe my words to no poet and no stolen work but my own shall emerge. In a lone chariot I fly to the sky, in my own ship I beat the seas). On this see VOLK (2003).



– the *alter ego* of the poet – not to hurry but to hold the reins. All this forms a figurative and metapoetic diction for the poet’s effort to keep control over his own work. Thus, in addition to the keyphrase *fert animus* which concerns both Phaethon and the poet of the *Metamorphoses*, the imagery of the chariot and the attempt to control it strengthens the connection between the poet and Phaethon; Phaethon, however, proved unable to control his father’s chariot with the known consequences.

*ruunt tritumque relinquunt  
quadriugi spatium nec quo prius ordine currunt.  
ipse pavet nec qua commissas flectat habenas  
nec scit qua sit iter, nec, si sciat, imperet illis.*  
(*Met.* 2.167-170)

([The horses] rush down and leave the trodden track of the chariot and they do not run the course in the way they used to. He [sc. Phaethon] is terrified. He does not know how to handle the entrusted reins nor does he know where the road is, nor, if he knew, would prevail upon them.)<sup>57</sup>

The repetition of the phrase *fert animus* with its clear self-referential and metapoetic use together with the chariot-imagery was a clear enough indication for Manilius who saw both these features as standing equally well for the *persona* of the poet as well as of Phaethon. Indeed, any reader may detect in the Ovidian opus a conscious act on the part of the poet to create the character of Phaethon as a ‘potential’ poetic foil. Besides, both the poet and his character have as a goal the quest of *novitas*,<sup>58</sup> and they both share the desire for a cosmic journey; it is the poet himself who strongly wishes his name to travel *super alta ... / astra* (*Met.* 15.875-876).<sup>59</sup> Ovid, however, begins his *Metamorphoses* with chaos and proceeds to a state of order in the world,<sup>60</sup> while his character, Phaethon, begins from total order and ends

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<sup>57</sup> The description here is strengthened by the following lines where the journey in the unknown course among *sparsa ... miracula caelo* (2.193) fills Phaethon with *gelida formidine* (200), while the horses *per auras / ignotae regionis eunt* (202-203)... *rapiuntque per avia currum* (205). The Ovidian phraseology here is strongly metapoetic, and a clear response to the Lucretian *avia... peragro* (*DRN* 4. 1) as well as to the phrase we saw above *avia cum Phaethonta rapax vis solis equorum / aethere raptavit toto terrasque per omnis*, *DRN* 5.397-398). See GARANI (*forthcoming*).

<sup>58</sup> SCHIESARO (2014) 78. See below, section 6.

<sup>59</sup> SCHIESARO [(2014) 74]. HARDIE (2015) on 15.875-976.

<sup>60</sup> BROWN (1987) 216; MYERS (1994) 44-45; ADAMIDIS (*forthcoming*).

up with the chaos of destruction, which is exactly what Ovid would obviously like to avoid for his work. Ironically this was the warning Tellus gave to Zeus at the end of the episode: *in Chaos antiquum confundimur* (We are thrown back to the ancient chaos, *Met.* 2.299).<sup>61</sup> For Ovid, Phaethon seems to act as an apotropaic character.

Manilius goes one step further to show the affinity between the poet of the *Metamorphoses* and his character Phaethon by picking up one further point: it is the word **propius** which appears in the hexameter of the self-referential elegiac couple of Ovid's *Ars Amatoria*. The poet of the *Astronomica* places it next to the phrase **dum nova miratur**, giving special emphasis to the common traits between Ovid and Phaethon.

#### 4. *Cognoscere vs mirari and timere*

In the *Astronomica* the spectacle of cosmos – novel for Phaethon – draws his admiration (**miratur**, *Astr.* 1.737). But the element of fear which **novitas** causes Phaethon in the *Metamorphoses*, first in the palace<sup>62</sup> and then in his cosmic journey,<sup>63</sup> is not included in the relevant unit of *Astr.* 1 whereas in Book 4 (above, pp. 113-114), fear plays a major role as the sky, the stars and nature fear in the face of the unexpected conflagration (*arserunt, incendia, ardentia sidera, flammis*)<sup>64</sup> caused by Phaethon (**timuit**, *Astr.* 4.835; **metuit ... natura**, 837) and the **novas ... flammis** (836). In all these cases fear has to do with the unexpected and the new. In Book 1, the poet of the *Astronomica* prefers to leave fear aside<sup>65</sup> and to emphasise only Phaethon's

<sup>61</sup> ZISSOS – GILDENHARD (1999) 34-36, esp. 35. This was a very strong imagery for the literature that followed. See BARCHIESI – HARDIE (2010) 72-73. In Manilius, according to LOWE [(2014) 46], “the stars represent order and the earth chaos, a conviction partly expressed through Stoic doctrine and partly through poetic tropes.”

<sup>62</sup> *rerum novitate paventem /... iuvenem*, *Met.* 2.31-32. DUFFALO (2013) 161: “The palace of the Sun, which also recalls the Palatine temple of Apollo, thus puts front and center the question of public art's capacity to change the behaviour of its viewers for the better, however much it may embody welcome order in the face of chaos”. For BROWN [(1987) 214] however: “It is with signal irony that he [i.e. Sun] whom his palace proclaims to be the guarantor of cosmic order becomes through his rash promise to Phaethon the cause of its disarray. For it is precisely the universe portrayed on the doors which Phaethon almost brings tumbling down”. See also WISE (1977).

<sup>63</sup> *ipse pavet*, *Met.* 2.169; *palluit et subito genua intremuere timore*, 180; *trepidus*, 194; *mentis inops gelida formidine lora remisit*, 200.

<sup>64</sup> On this, see MUSSO [(2012) 195].

<sup>65</sup> MUSSO (2012) 200.

admiration of the new spectacle of the universe. Admiration, however, also characterised all those who looked up at the Milky Way (*Astr.* 1.716-717), the difference with them being that they did not limit themselves to admiration – as Phaethon did<sup>66</sup> – but they proceeded to inquiry and the search for the cosmic secrets and their causes (*inquirunt sacras ... causas*, 1.717).<sup>67</sup> Let us repeat here the introductory lines to the whole passage of the *aetia* for the creation of the Milky Way:

*Sic super incumbit signato culmine limes  
candidus et resupina facit mortalibus ora,  
dum nova per caecam mirantur lumina noctem  
inquiruntque sacras humano pectore causas.* (*Astr.* 1.714-717)

(In this way lies above the White Path marking overhead the vault of heaven and it draws upwards the eyes of men while they admire in the darkness of the night the strange radiance and search with their human minds the sacred causes).

It is noteworthy that line 716 starts with exactly the same phrase with which Manilius opens the fourth action: *dum nova .... mirantur. Novitas* again is the main issue: people *wonder* (*mirantur*) at what is *new*. However, the onlookers of the Milky Way proceed to the next step and *inquirunt* the causes of things (*sacras causas*) – in contrast with Phaethon.<sup>68</sup>

Within this context the poet of the *Astronomica* shows that one has the option not to confine himself to admiration but to seek knowledge of cosmic matters. Elsewhere in the poet's work this thought is a clear precept, namely that knowledge should replace admiration. At *Astr.* 1.194-195,<sup>69</sup> for example, he advises: *nec vero admiranda tibi natura videri / pendentis<sup>70</sup> terrae debet* (nor should the fact surprise you that the earth is suspended) and the explanation follows. Similarly, at Book 5 the poet asks the reader not to be amazed by the qualities of the constellation of the Dog, explaining its characteristics:

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<sup>66</sup> MUSSO (2012) 201.

<sup>67</sup> Cf. Plut. *Mor.* [*De Fortuna*] 98A5: τὰ μὲν διδακτὰ μανθάνω, τὰ δ' εὐρετὰ ζητῶ (what is to be instructed I learn, what is to be discovered I enquiry).

<sup>68</sup> LIUZZI (1995) on 1.717.

<sup>69</sup> Similarly at *Astr.* 1.557-560: GREEN (2014) 20.

<sup>70</sup> KYRIAKIDIS (2015) 277; see also *Astr.* 1.173: FERABOLI – FLORES – SCARCIA (1996) ad loc. and on 195-196; HÜBNER (2011) 163-164. LOWE (2014) 50.

*ne talis mirere artes sub sidere tali,  
cernis ut ipsum etiam sidus venetur in astris;  
praegressum quaerit Leporem comprehendere cursu.  
(Astr. 5.231-233)<sup>71</sup>*

(You should not wonder at such qualities [men have] under this kind of constellation: You can see how the same constellation hunts among the stars. It seeks to catch the hare which runs ahead.)

*Athaumastia*, or *athamvia*, as it was called in antiquity, the lack, that is, of wonderment, has a long history in philosophical thought and broadly speaking it is a method of instruction. Before Manilius, Lucretius was also committed to this method<sup>72</sup> and we can often discern it in his work. The pattern is similar: the poet exhorts ‘it is not worth wondering’ and places the topic to be expounded with its explanation, as for instance at Book 2 of *DRN*:<sup>73</sup>

*Illud in his rebus non est mirabile, quare,  
omnia cum rerum primordia sint in motu,  
summa tamen summa videatur stare quiete.* 310  
(Lucr. *DRN* 2.308-310)

(In these things there is no need to wonder as to the reason why the sum of things [in the world] gives the impression of being totally motionless while all the beginnings of things are moving.)

Earlier in the same book, Lucretius has tried to persuade his reader that the understanding and knowledge of the laws of nature, that is of *ratio*, dispels fear: *hunc igitur terrorem animi tenebrasque necesses / non radii solis neque lucida tela diei / discutiant, sed naturae species ratioque* (This terror of the mind then and this obscurity are necessary to disperse not by the rise of the sun nor by the shining beams of the day but by the sight and laws of nature, *DRN* 2.59-61). Similarly, Epicurus teaching *ratio* puts an end to fears (6.25-26). Again, in Book 6 (47-67), Lucretius

<sup>71</sup> See HÜBNER (2010) ad loc.

<sup>72</sup> HARDIE (2009b) 3-4: “One powerful puritan voice dismissive of the monstrous and the marvellous is that of Lucretius. His strict delimitation of the possible in accordance with the dictates of scientific truth... had a profound influence on Augustan attitudes towards marvellous”; see also p. 7.

<sup>73</sup> On *DRN* 2.308, *illud ... non est mirabile*, important is FOWLER (2002) [where a number of references to other texts with a similar context]: “The doctrine of *nil admirari* goes back to Democritus, whose ἀθαμβία had much of the breadth of meaning of Epicurus’ ἀταραξία” (p. 386).

brings into his train of thought the same issue of fear caused by the *ignorantia causarum* (54)<sup>74</sup> [also: *ignari* (64), *caeca ratione* (67)] of the workings of nature, which leads to the wrong impression of the gods' omnipotence:<sup>75</sup> *pavidis ... mentibu'* (6.51), *formidine* (52), also: *mirantur* (59).<sup>76</sup> For us, it is interesting that these Lucretian verses are preceded by the imagery of the poet mounting the distinguished chariot (*insignem conscendere currum*, 6.47).

The knowledge of the laws of nature is the crucial point and Lucretius gives special emphasis to this, inviting the student /reader, when he has to face something novel,<sup>77</sup> to apply his mind to the secrets of *ratio* in which the poet will initiate him.<sup>78</sup>

*Nunc animum nobis adhibe veram ad rationem.  
nam tibi vehementer nova res molitur ad auris  
accidere et nova se species ostendere rerum. 2.1025  
sed neque tam facilis res ulla est quin ea primum  
difficilis magis ad credendum constet, itemque  
nil adeo magnum neque tam mirabile quicquam,  
quod non paulatim minuant mirarier omnes.  
(DRN 2.1023-1029)*

(Turn now your attention to me for a true reasoning. A new idea is trying to reach your ears with force and a new aspect of things to reveal itself. But nothing is so easy that it is not more difficult to believe at the start and likewise nothing so great and marvellous that all do not gradually reduce their wonder at it.)

The same precept is repeated later by Horace in his exhortation *Nil admirari*<sup>79</sup> at the *Epistle* to Numicius. The notion of fear is again present:

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<sup>74</sup> To this phrase the direct Virgilian response in the *Georgics* is *felix qui potuit rerum cognoscere causas* (2.490). On this and on the word *causa* in the *Georgics*, see SCHIESARO (1997) 81.

<sup>75</sup> See also Lucr. 5.82-90 (on those who wonder on everything that happens on high and are led back to the old superstitions) with HARDIE (2009a) 222.

<sup>76</sup> SCHIESARO (2014) 78.

<sup>77</sup> At *DRN* 5.97ff. the poet considers that the future cosmic destruction is an idea that men can only perceive through *ratio* (108), since for each one of us this idea is perceived as something novel, amazing, and unfamiliar: *res nova miraque* (97) *insolitam rem* (100). It is only with *ratio* that these three characteristics can be faced whereas *rationis egestas* (1211) brings concern (*cura*, 1207), the fear of the gods [*formidine divum* (1218)] and of the natural phenomena [*pavore* (1219), *tremunt* (1222), *timore* (1223)].

<sup>78</sup> GALE (2000) 196-201, esp. 199.

*Nil admirari prope res est una, Numici,  
solaque quae possit facere et servare beatum.  
hunc solem et stellas et decedentia certis  
tempora momentis sunt qui **formidine nulla**  
imbuti spectent.*

(Hor. *Epist.* 1.6.1-5)

(It is almost one single thing, Numicius, which can make one and keep him happy: not to wonder. There are some who can see the sun, the stars and the seasons that pass in certain courses without being imbued in some kind of fear.)

With these introductory lines Horace connects again the precept of *athaumastia* with all those who see (*spectent*, 5) the heavenly bodies and their movement **without fear** (*formidine nulla*, 1.6.4.).<sup>80</sup>

Lack of fear and wonderment is gained by the acquisition of knowledge and the investigation of the causes of things, according to the Pythagorean precept of *μηδέν θαυμάζειν* (do not wonder about anything). Accordingly Plutarch states:

Ὁ γὰρ φιλόσοφος λόγος τὸ μὲν ἐξ ἀπορίας καὶ ἀγνοίας θαῦμα καὶ θάμβος  
ἐξαιρεῖ γνώσει καὶ ἱστορίᾳ τῆς περὶ ἕκαστον αἰτίας.

(Plutarch *Mor.* 44B)

(Philosophical discourse with the knowledge and the investigation of the cause of each thing takes away the admiration and the amazement owed to perplexity and ignorance.)

<sup>79</sup> See MACLEANE (1881). On *nil admirari* (p. 577) he states that the phrase concerns “the equability of the soul”, a precept which was held in some form by nearly all ancient schools of philosophy. *Nil admirari*, therefore, is the correct admonition “when admiration amounts to a stupid wonder, excessive fear, excitement or other effects by which the judgement is misled and the passions roused injuriously”; it is in this sense that the thought is also present in the Latin didactic poetry. See also H.R. FAIRCLOUGH (1929, Loeb) 284-285; MAYER (1994) on 1.6.1. HARDIE (2009b) 10; McCARTER (2015) 93-123, esp. 108: “[*nil admirari* is] a motto associated with many divergent philosophical systems”. It goes without saying that the precept *nil admirari* has been used more broadly with the emphasis on the avoidance of anything mentally extreme and also for the need of mental preparation against anything unexpected (e.g. Cic. *TD* 3.30: *nihil admirari cum acciderit, nihil, ante quam venerit, non evenire posse arbitrari*). See also Hor. *Sat.* 1.5.101-103 with HARDIE (2009a) 222 and GOWERS (2012) ad loc.

<sup>80</sup> See MAYER (1994) ad loc.: “The philosophical study of natural phenomena freed men from dread...”

Manilius, an ardent follower of this theory, insists that knowledge of the cosmic secrets and the application of *ratio* are incompatible with fear:

*Sed quid tam tenui prodest ratione nitentem  
scrutari mundum, si mens sua cuique repugnat  
spemque timor tollit prohibetque a limine caeli?*  
(Astr. 4.866-868)

(But of what profit is it to explore the brilliant universe with so subtle reasoning, if anyone's mind resists and fear abolishes hope and hinders the entrance to the sky?)

The above Manilian thoughts seem to be a straight allusion to Phaethon, as they come shortly after the poet's second reference to him. Indeed, this is what had happened to Phaethon since he did not seek knowledge of the laws of nature (*scrutari*) with the result of being overwhelmed by fear (*timor*, cf. *timuit* Astr. 4.835) when he saw the celestial spectacle. In more general terms, the Stoic Manilius instructs the avoidance of amazement considering that *ratio*,<sup>81</sup> reasoning, in Greek *λόγος*, frees man from it:<sup>82</sup>

*ratio* (Astr. 1.97) *solvitque animis miracula rerum* (1.103)

(*ratio*, reasoning, frees the mind from wondering at things)

and if there is anything worth wondering at, it is *ratio* itself:<sup>83</sup>

*nec quicquam in tanta magis est mirabile mole  
quam ratio et certis quod legibus omnia parent.  
nusquam turba nocet.* (Astr. 1.478-480)

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<sup>81</sup> "Stoic reason is not a system that exists independent of the cosmos by which we evaluate it, but the name given to the ordering activity of the universe": HABINEK (2011) 35; MANN (2011). For GALE [(2011) 209] there is a basic difference between the Lucretian and the Manilian *ratio*: "Like Lucretius in the proem to *De rerum natura* 3, Manilius' *ratio* ascends to heaven, and is able to 'see everything everywhere' (*viditque quod usquam est*, 1.98); what it sees, however, is not atoms moving *sua sponte* in the void (Lucr. 3.33), but everything ordered and controlled by the *numen mundi* – the fateful power exerted by the stars (Astr. 1.111-12)"; also 211. For SALEMME [(2000<sup>2</sup>) 23] "la *ratio* maniliana è *logos* del tutto immanente nelle cose"; also p. 30.

<sup>82</sup> It should not escape us though that the description he makes of his mental journey in the universe at 2.136-141 and the reaction to his song of the *mirantibus astris* (2.141) is consonant with his views on admiration: the stars are amazed because they have not experienced such a performance before but also, it could be argued, because his song can be considered a piece of art (the text, below, p. 142).

<sup>83</sup> On Manilian Stoic *ratio*, see VOLK (2009) 226-231, esp. 229.

(Nothing is more wonderful in this whole structure than *ratio*, reasoning, since everything obeys certain laws and no disorder causes harm to anything.)

Besides, *ratio ... cuncta gubernat* (*Astr.* 2.82) and *omnia vincit* (*Astr.* 4.932).<sup>84</sup> This is the Manilian manifesto for absolute order (*certis ... legibus*)<sup>85</sup> existing in the universe and which Man perceives with the power of his mind.<sup>86</sup> It is clear that Man and God have much in common. On this point Volk [(2009) 262] refers to *Astr.* 4.883-885:

*iam nusquam natura latet; pervidimus omnem  
et capto potimur mundo nostrumque parentem  
pars sua perspicimus genitique accedimus astris.*

(Nature does not hide anywhere; we have surveyed and we are masters of the whole conquered world and we perceive our creator part of whom we are and we approach the stars from which we have been born.)

The same thought is also found at *Astr.* 4.933-934 with which Book 4 concludes:

*ne dubites homini divinos credere visus,  
iam facit ipse deos mittitque ad sidera numen.*

(Do not hesitate to credit man with the faculty of divine vision, for now he creates gods himself and sends a deity to the stars.)<sup>87</sup>

Although Manilius accepts the divine power that god(s) has/have given to Man<sup>88</sup> in order to penetrate into the secrets of the universe in his search of *ratio*, at the same time he believes that Man always exercises this power according to his mortal nature:

<sup>84</sup> SALEMME [(2000<sup>2</sup>) 42. Cf. *omnia vincit amor* (*Virg. Ecl.* 10.69) and *labor omnia vincit* (*Virg. Geo.* 1.145).

<sup>85</sup> On Manilius' profound belief in a "deterministic world", see LOWE (2014) 47ff. See also his discussion on the use of the adj. *certus* in the *Astronomica* (section "The Doctrine of Certitude", 47-49); above p. 126 n. 61).

<sup>86</sup> See LOWE (2014) 46.

<sup>87</sup> Cf. 2.105-108, 115-125. GREEN (2014) 22; KYRIAKIDIS (2016) 122-123.

<sup>88</sup> Cf. GREEN (2014) 24: "One could argue that, although the universe does want human beings to understand its workings, and although human beings are endowed alike with a divinely given *capacity* for intellect and wisdom, it is up to the individual to *exercise* this capacity and apply reason in order to distinguish truths from falsehoods: this cerebral intensity thus explains the exclusivity of the successful group".



*dum nova per caecam mirantur lumina noctem  
inquiruntque sacras humano pectore causas.  
(Astr. 1.716-717)*

(... while they admire in the darkness of the night the strange radiance and search with their human minds the sacred causes).

In Ovid, Phaethon may well not be the son of Clymene's husband Merops, whose name etymologically alludes to his human nature,<sup>89</sup> but Sun reminds him in "an inverse propempticon"<sup>90</sup> that *sors tua mortalis; non est mortale*<sup>91</sup> *quod optas* (your lot is mortal; what you ask, however, is not for mortals, *Met.* 2.56).<sup>92</sup> This is made quite clear in the world of the *Metamorphoses*. In this context characteristic is Ahl's view ([1985] 180): "To be a SOLar child, yet to be denied the SOLe thing that being the sun means, is to be denied everything that being the sun means".

### 5. Phaethon's *superbia* and *ignorantia*: From Ovid to Manilius

While, as seen above, Manilius insists on the need to avoid wonderment through enquiry and knowledge, Ovid as a poet aims at a diametrically opposite poetic effect since provoking amazement and wonder are part of his strategies<sup>93</sup> for the reception of the *Metamorphoses*. This is in a way encapsulated in the *non credendum* which seems to be related to the contents of his *carmen perpetuum*:

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<sup>89</sup> On the meaning of the word *merops* see MALTBY (1991) s.v.; AHL (1985) 179-180.

<sup>90</sup> BARCHIESI (2009) 166.

<sup>91</sup> ZIOGAS (2013) 71: "Phaethon's ... episode ... highlights the problematic nature of affairs between mortals and immortals as well as the repercussions of such liaisons for cosmic order".

<sup>92</sup> Seneca gives a different meaning to the myth of Phaethon (*De Providentia*, 5.9-6.1), since his character attempts to transcend his mortal nature and test his limits: *per alta virtus it* (5.11). HANNAY (2016) 54: "Seneca casts Phaethon as an exemplum of the stoic *vir bonus*, who (sublimely) avoids the easy route and tends to the heavens instead. Phaethon, of his course, is destined to fail in this mighty pursuit, but Seneca is not praising his ability to actually complete a noble task. Rather, he is pointing at Phaethon's moral success in his determination to challenge his own boundaries and attempt the divine, rather than the commonplace." The intertextual relationship between Ovid and Seneca has been acknowledged. In Seneca the characterisation of Phaethon as *vir bonus* – something which does not occur in Manilius – may perhaps originate as a thought in Ovid's funerary epigram written by the Naiads: *quem si non tenuit, magnis tamen excidit ausis* (even if he did not control it, yet he fell daring greatly, *Met.* 2.328). GARANI (*forthcoming*).

<sup>93</sup> For BARCHIESI [(2009) 165]: "Ovid transforms the didactic poetics of wonder into a new poetics of danger".

*Inspice maius opus, quod adhuc sine fine tenetur,  
in non credendos corpora versa modos.*<sup>94</sup>  
(*Tristia* 2.63-64)

(Look at my most important work, the bodies which have changed in the most incredible ways and which to this day I have left unfinished.)<sup>95</sup>

In the Ovidian episode of Phaethon – a potential foil of the poet in the eyes of Manilius – the element of wonder is vividly present (since the same character is amazed by the *miracles* he sees) and pervades the *Metamorphoses*: Phaethon admires Sun’s ornamented chariot – a work of Vulcan – when Aurora opens to him the gates of the sky (*Met.* 2.111-112):

*Dumque ea magnanimus Phaethon miratur opusque / perspicit ...*

(the time when ambitious Phaethon admires these and observes the artwork ...)

It is he who gazes at the *sparsa ... miracula caelo / ... simulacra ferarum* (the strange figures of beasts scattered in the sky, *Met.* 2.193-194) in a stupor (*ignarus stupet*, 2.191) while the horses are going off course. Many similar cases may be evaluated as instances of admiration for the beauty and the artfulness of the objects. Indeed, no one can deny that Phaethon, as the son of Sun, admired the beauty of the artifact (*currus*) and of the universe.<sup>96</sup> Besides, as Wise points out: “Several myths of the *Metamorphoses* are stories about flights. These imaginary voyages are taken either by artists or by characters granted an experience analagous to artistic experience. The possibility of vision made available through the act of flying provides the immediate connection between flight and art.”<sup>97</sup> In this episode, however, admiration (and fear) is mainly the result of ignorance and lack of experience of a precedent.<sup>98</sup> That is why Phaethon’s father calls him *ignare*,<sup>99</sup> *inscius* (*Met.* 2.100, 148) and the poet repeats the adjective in the phrase *ignarus stupet* (*Met.* 2.191), a phrase which takes us back to the Pythagorean view as presented by Plutarch (*Mor.*

<sup>94</sup> On *modos* and its meaning see INGLEHEART [(2010) on *Tr.* 2.64 (p. 100)].

<sup>95</sup> INGLEHEART (2010) on *Tr.* 2.63 and 64; KYRIAKIDIS (2013). See BARCHIESI – HARDIE (2010) 77-78.

<sup>96</sup> This kind of admiration was also accepted by Manilius: even the stars can admire art in the poet’s song (see above, p. 131 n. 82; for the text below, p. 142). HUSKELL (1998) 520.

<sup>97</sup> WISE (1977) 44.

<sup>98</sup> Moon is also amazed (*Luna / admiratur equos*, Moon looks in amazement at the horses, 2.208-209) as she sees Sun’s horses taking a different, new course.

<sup>99</sup> AHL (1985) 175. On the Ovidian use of this adjective see GUARINO ORTEGA (2012) 186.

44B, above pp. 130-131). There is not even a hint in the narrative that Phaethon responded positively to the knowledge Sun, his father, tried hard to instill in him. And so, after Sun's admonition (*Met.* 2.149), the narrative changes abruptly with the description of Phaethon *already* on the chariot, ready for his fatal journey (2.150). As a matter of fact, the only knowledge which Phaethon tried to acquire concerned his own microcosm, to ascertain, that is, his divine origin of which he was so proud, and this is confirmed at the beginning of the Ovidian episode where Phaethon is characterised as *superbus*<sup>100</sup> at *Met.* 1.752.<sup>101</sup>

*Sole satus Phaethon quem quondam magna loquentem  
nec sibi cedentem Phoeboque parente **superbum**  
non tulit Inachides.*

(*Met.* 1.751-753)

(Inachides [i.e. Epaphos] could not tolerate him [i.e. the son of Sun, Phaethon] who once was arrogantly bragging and not admitting that Phoebus was not his father).

The poet of the *Astronomica* will also use the adjective *superbus* for Phaethon; this time, however, the adjective is not related to the issue of his divine origin but to his ignorance of the catastrophic consequences his cosmic journey would have had (*et puer in caelo ludit curruque superbus*, *Astr.* 1.738).<sup>102</sup>

In Ovid, the knowledge Sun provided to his son was about his own fixed course with his chariot (*Met.* 2.133):

*hac sit iter (manifesta rotae vestigia cernes)*<sup>103</sup>

(this is the way! You shall see the distinct traces of the wheels.)

and he further advised that the middle course is the safest:<sup>104</sup> *medio tutissimus ibis* (you shall be safest keeping the middle course, 2.137).<sup>105</sup>

<sup>100</sup> HANNAY (2016) 49. Cf. Horace, *C.* 4.11.25f. Ovid uses the same attribute for Jason (*Met.* 7.156) which is translated in both instances as 'proud'. See GILDENHARD – ZISSOS [(2017) 226] who comment that the adjective "causes smiles" since Argus was defeated not by Jason's valour but rather with the *medicamina* of Medea.

<sup>101</sup> *Superbus* and *superbia* also at *Met.* 1.454; 1.752; 2.442; 3.354; 4.467; 6.169; 6.184; 7.156; 9.444; 13.17; 13.802; 14.715.

<sup>102</sup> See also *Astr.* 2.227; 4.180; 5.621 and 636.

<sup>103</sup> This invitation by Sol to his son reminds us of Lucretius' acknowledgement that he is following in the steps of his master Epicurus.

<sup>104</sup> AHL [(1985) 173] commenting on *Met.* 2.6 writes: "The stress on the *middle* position is important to the Phaethon narrative, with its emphasis on following the 'middle' path."

Contrary to Lucretius who acquires the knowledge about the universe by following in Epicurus' steps, Ovid presents a Phaethon who does not respond to his father's instructions and advice, the most important of which was *non curribus utere nostris* (*Met.* 2.146). Further to this, having no knowledge and experience of heavens he was forewarned by his father Sun that he should not imagine cities and groves and temples with gifts in the skies (*forsitan et lucos illic urbesque deorum / concipias animo delubraque ditia donis? Met.* 2.76-77).<sup>106</sup> Schiesaro states [(2014) 84]: "Knowledge, then, is either impossible, or lethal, or both. Phaethon's reckless audacity does raise him to the stars ('exaequat victoria caelo' [*DRN* 1.79]) but only so as to make his fall more grandiose — at the same time a tragic and epic event. Rather than revealing the pervasive rationality of the universe and freeing mankind from superstition, religion, and subservience to mythological explanations, his attempt comes very close to causing the return of primeval chaos (2.299 'in Chaos antiquum confundimur')..."

A possible reading of the Ovidian episode could be that Phaethon's downfall came as a result of the knowledge he obtained about his identity – as Ahl argues<sup>107</sup> – even though Ovid presents his character as having second thoughts on discovering his lineage: *iam cognosse genus piget et valuisse rogando* (he repents that he got the knowledge of his origin and that he prevailed in his demands, *Met.* 2.183). We may be right to say that the knowledge of his divine origins in itself was the initial cause of his destruction,<sup>108</sup> since that knowledge led him to haughtiness and to exceed his human limits. Ahl also relates the Phaethon episode with Narcissus, for whom Teiresias had foretold that "he will be safe if he does not know himself" [*si se non noverit* (*Met.* 3.348)] and he adds: "The search for knowledge about oneself may lead to obsession with self, as it does in Narcissus' case, or to cosmic catastrophe, as in Phaethon's". For Manilius,

<sup>105</sup> SCHIESARO [(2014) 88] relates it to Cic. *Orator* 98 where the advice to the rhetor to keep the 'middle style' has its value since, even if this is not the most successful, the orator is not at risk of falling far (*alte enim cadere non potest*) which seems to be relevant to the Ovidian use at *Met.* 2.135-137. See his excellent discussion on section VI 'Aurea mediocritas' (87-91). Cf. *nec preme nec summum molire per aethera cursum* (you should neither go very low nor take the course to the height of the ether, *Met.* 2.135): SCHIESARO p. 88. On *preme* see KYRIAKIDIS (2013) 7-8.

<sup>106</sup> This warning reminds us of what Salmoneus does in Book 5 (*caelum imitatus in orbe*, imitating heaven on earth, *Astr.* 5.91), who thought that he could imitate the Jovian thunderbolts and *ipsum / admovisse Jovem terris* (and had moved Jupiter himself to earth, *Astr.* 5.93-94). Like Phaethon, Salmoneus was also killed by Jupiter's thunderbolts [Phaethon: *Met.* 2.311-313; Salmoneus (another case of *hubris*): *Astr.* 5.94-96].

<sup>107</sup> AHL (1985) 177: "Phaethon's discovery of his shining paternity will bring him to his death"; see also p. 181.

<sup>108</sup> See also the myths of Actaeon, Teiresias, and Narcissus as presented in the Ovidian narrative.

however, the most important issue in this episode is Phaethon's unwillingness to respond to his father's instructions, the *monstratas ... vias* (*Astr.* 1.740) and to learn and comply with the cosmic laws which define the lives of all beings and whose transgression may lead to destruction.<sup>109</sup> Manilius makes no mention whatsoever of Phaethon's search for his identity in both episodes of Book 1 and 4 we have discussed above.

### 6. The quest of *novitas* and the poetics of *solere* and *libertas*

For Manilius knowledge of the universal secrets is of programmatic importance. Already at the opening of his work, in the proem, the poet uses a phraseology that – one would dare say – anticipates the *exemplum e contrario* of Phaethon which will follow later on, enhancing the value of knowledge 'in depth' (*scire ... penitus*, *Astr.* 1.17):

*iuvat ire per ipsum  
aera et immenso spatiantem vivere caelo  
signaque et adversos stellarum **noscere** cursus.      15  
quod solum **novisse** parum est. impensius ipsa  
**scire** iuvat magni **penitus** praecordia mundi ...  
(*Astr.* 1.13-17)<sup>110</sup>*

(It delights me to go through the air and to live walking about in the immense sky and coming to know the constellations and the opposite movement of the planets. But it is not enough to know only this. It is a greater delight to know in depth the very heart of the vast universe ...)

Musso<sup>111</sup> is right to note that in the above passage there is no mention of a chariot. She also notes that in the instances of *οὐρανοβατεῖν*<sup>112</sup> that follow, from Book 2 onwards, there is a chariot involved in its metapoetic usage. Indeed, in that book, Manilius refers to his own journey in the sky, this time with a chariot (*soloque volamus / in caelum curru*, *Astr.* 2.58-59). The description obviously recalls from the Milky Way unit the Phaethon *aetion*. The contrast between the two instances is

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<sup>109</sup> MUSSO notes [(2012) 201]: "L' esito infausto della vicenda ...è quindi collegato ... all' inesperienza e alla superficialità del giovane, che mosso da incoscienza e vanagloria, spreca l' occasione di conoscere...."

<sup>110</sup> Cf. Ovid *Met.* 15.147-149 (Pythagoras): SALEMME (2000<sup>2</sup>) 38. On other cases of the topos *iuvat ire* MUSSO (2012) 204. LANDOLFI [(2003) 11-28] discusses the sources of the imagery of the poetic journey in the sky.

<sup>111</sup> MUSSO (2012) 203.

<sup>112</sup> See also LANDOLFI (2003) 11-28.

obvious: having shown from the first verses of his work the need for substantial (*penitus*, 1.17) knowledge<sup>113</sup> and having declared his wish to stir up tradition, which is summarily called *Helicon* (*Astr.* 1.4),<sup>114</sup> Manilius attempts alone and with his own means this cosmic journey. Phaethon, on the other hand, without the required knowledge and without even showing any intention of acquiring it, in search only of confirming his own identity, ventures with *superbia* (*superbus*: *Met.* 1.752 / *Astr.* 1.738) on his journey but not in his own chariot. The chariot, here, is not *per se* a metaphor of the “artistic” (or poetic) “process”, – a valid application elsewhere –<sup>115</sup> but the conveyor of the knowledge of the *solitum* and the tradition. Since this chariot, however, is taken away from its master and is used by an inexperienced rider who does not know and is not known by the horses, it is quite expected to lose its bearings.

Manilius accordingly alludes to the relative passage of the Ovidian narrative (*Met.* 2.126-140) and incorporates it in his work by hinting at it somewhat. In particular, the instructions Sun gave to Phaethon as to the course<sup>116</sup> he always takes are represented in the *Astronomica* only by the past participle *monstratas* [... *vias*] (*Astr.* 1.740). As to the solar course, Manilius refers to it in earlier verses when he speaks about the firm orbit the celestial bodies follow in the universe:<sup>117</sup>

*cum facies eadem signis per saecula constet,* 185  
*idem Phoebus eat caeli de partibus isdem*  
*lunaque per totidem luces mutetur et orbes*  
*et natura vias servet, quas fecerat ipsa,*  
*nec tirocinio peccet, circumque feratur*  
*aeterna cum luce dies, qui tempora monstrat* 190  
*nunc his nunc illis eadem regionibus orbis,*  
*semper et ulterior vadentibus ortus ad ortum*  
*occasumve obitus, caelum et cum sole perennet.*  
 (Astr. 1.185-193)

(... for centuries the constellations have the same appearance, Phoebus himself travels in the same parts of the sky and the moon changes phases within a

<sup>113</sup> Cf. 1.25: *interius ... cognoscere*: KYRIAKIDIS (2016) 135.

<sup>114</sup> KYRIAKIDIS (2016) 113-116.

<sup>115</sup> GILDENHARD – ZISSOS (2013) 122 (above p. 120).

<sup>116</sup> In Ovid “Sun, as a caring father that tries to dissuade his son, enumerates the most frightening signs of the zodiac and in fact, resorting to exaggeration, outlines his one year course through the ecliptic and not the daily one”: ADAMIDIS (*forthcoming*).

<sup>117</sup> A similar disconnection has been made by Ovid between the Phaethon episode and his reference to the Milky Way, *Met.* 1.168-180.

specific number of days and nature observes the ways she has set herself, neither does she fall into errors due to lack of experience and the day goes around with eternal light and shows the same time once in this area, the next at another and to those that travel towards the East or the West, these two (i.e. East and West) always are distant and the sky with the sun continue the same movement.)

The reader, therefore, before reaching the episode of Phaethon knows well the permanence of the cosmic rules and in particular the course of the sun.<sup>118</sup> The Manilian Phaethon violated this fixed course, the *solitus cursus*, having ignored his father's instructions.<sup>119</sup> He is like those in Lucretius who *ignari* (*DRN* 6.64) *errantes caeca ratione feruntur* (67). Furthermore, whereas *natura* has her own rules which are eternal (*Astr.* 1.188) and the sun passes over the same places again and again (186-187), Phaethon attempts to *impose* – as Manilius says – a new way (*monstratas liquisse vias orbemque recentem / imposuisse polo*, 740-741).<sup>120</sup> As a result, there comes his downfall. Manilius is clearly critical of Phaethon's behaviour in not following the *solitus cursus* – the traditional orbit, that is – and striving instead to impress and to impose a novel path (*orbem recentem*) by ignoring the cosmic rules. He shows, therefore, his ignorance as to the fact that everything and everybody – even the sun – obeys to the cosmic rules of the One (*spiritus unus*, *Astr.* 2.64).<sup>121</sup>

Phaethon is obviously attracted to the novel and he wants to impress a new way in the orbit. As a matter of fact, all three protagonists, Phaethon, Ovid and Manilius converge in their pursuit of the *new*, the *novum*. On this point, we have

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<sup>118</sup> Lucretius, too, talks about the fixed course of the sun and the moon by the *natura gubernans* (*DRN* 5.77), repeating it at 5.1439 where he shows that this fixity (*certa ratione gerit rem atque ordine certo*) teaches humans the standard alternation of the seasons (1436-1439). In this case nature seems to be personified. *Natura* may also be considered as personified in Manilius: LOWE (2014) 49 n. 22.

<sup>119</sup> MUSSO (2012) 198: “Manilio, pur menzionando fra i vari personaggi della vicenda il solo Fetonte, non mostra in alcun modo ammirazione verso il giovane, né cerca di giustificare la sua impresa come segno di grandezza d' animo, ma la giudica piuttosto come una dimostrazione di avventatezza giovanile”.

<sup>120</sup> The verb *imponere* is used very rarely in the *Astronomica*, one of the few cases being for Rome [*quam <sc. Italiam> rerum maxima Roma / imposuit terris* (*Astr.* 4.694-695)].

<sup>121</sup> VOLK [(2009) 61 n. 8] has noted that the terminology is not consistent throughout the work: elsewhere, the supreme power is identical with *natura* (*illa parens mundi natura*, *Astr.* 2.209): “In the poet's pantheistic cosmos, *mundus* ('universe'), *natura* ('nature'), and *fatum* ('fate') to some extent function as synonyms”.

seen how Phaethon and the poet of the *Metamorphoses* come close in their quest. It is, however, the third of the group, Manilius, who also has a claim to what he actually accuses Phaethon of, namely pursuing the *novum*: Phaethon admires the new (*dum nova miratur propius spectacula mundi*, *Astr.* 1.737) and wants to initiate a new orbit in the firmament (*orbemque recentem / imposuisse polo*, 740-741); Ovid programmatically opens his work with the phrase *in nova fert animus* (*Met.* 1.1) alluding obviously to his quest for the new. In the same vein, Manilius in his pastiche-like proem to his third book,<sup>122</sup> that is the middle book of the *Astronomica*, demonstrates not only his conviction as to the sublimity of the poetry he is about to write, but also the fact that he is going to take a new course:

*In nova surgentem*<sup>123</sup> *maioraque viribus ausum*  
*nec per inaccessibleis metuentem vadere saltus*  
*ducite, Pierides. vestros extendere fines*  
*conor et ignotos in carmina ducere census.*  
(*Astr.* 3.1-4)

(Pierides, guide me as I rise to new things and I dare greater deeds than my powers; nor am I afraid to go through inaccessible forests. I endeavour to broaden your domains and to bring unknown wealth to the songs.)

In this “proem in the middle” the poet declares his striving to do new and greater things following thus the tradition of his forebears, among whom are Lucretius (cf. *Avia Pieridum peragro loca nullius ante / trita solo*, *DRN* 4.1-2),<sup>124</sup> Virgil (cf. *primus ego ... Geo.* 3.10), and, as we have seen, Ovid (cf. *in nova fert animus ... Met.* 1.1) who were also in pursuit of the novel. Manilius claims his own place in the series of those great poets by gathering in the middle – an appropriate locus for programmatic poetics – a host of intertextual references. Although I have referred to the above proem

<sup>122</sup> KYRIAKIDIS (2016) 115-116.

<sup>123</sup> For the sublime in Manilius (along with 1.32; cf. 1.113: *hoc mihi surgit opus*) see also BARCHIESI (2005) on *Met.* 1.1; HARDIE (2009a) 122-123 and KYRIAKIDIS (2016) 115-116, 119, 135-138. LOWE [(2014) 62] refers to the “poet’s fascination with the sublime.” On the Lucretian character of the Manilian sublime see also PORTER (2016) 483-495 [esp. section: “Manilius’ Lucretian sublime”].

<sup>124</sup> HARDIE (2007) 117: “contrast-imitation defines the relationship between the *DRN* and Manilius’ *Astronomica*... which presents a Stoic account of astronomy and astrology in self-conscious opposition to the *DRN*’s Epicurean and anti-providential account of the world”; see also LANDOLFI (2003) 62f.; RAMELLI (2014) 160; HANNAY (2016).



of the *Astronomica* elsewhere,<sup>125</sup> I would like here to linger for a moment on Manilius' pursuit of the *novum* and his efforts to tread in impenetrable places. First, let us remind ourselves of the meaning of the adj. *novus*. According to the *OLD* the adjective's meaning is basically double:<sup>126</sup> the 'new', that which is 'made and brought into existence for the first time' as well as the 'unfamiliar', the 'out of the ordinary' (s.v. 1, 2 and 3) and also the 'additional to that already existing, fresh, further' (s.v. 5).

Since *novitas* attracts Phaethon<sup>127</sup> as it attracts both the poet of the *Metamorphoses* and the poet of the *Astronomica*, the reader wonders what is the meaning of the word *novum* in each case and what does *novitas* entail. The texts disclose the difference: indeed, the *novum* of Phaethon seems to be the 'new', that which he does not know, or of which he does not have any previous experience, being thus related to his ignorance. The *novum*, however, that attracts the two poets – Ovid and Manilius – is the result of their poetic *labor* which reveals their deep knowledge– even respect – of the past and tradition, a combination of a sort of the Lucretian *usus et impigrae simul experientia mentis*<sup>128</sup> which is at the foundations of civilisation. In fact, the *novum* in their work concerns the active *renewal* of the poetic discourse;<sup>129</sup> and if one wonders which is the way to that renewal, I believe that the answer lies hidden within the episode of Phaethon itself: in Ovid Phaethon's yoke lacked the *usual* burden (*solitaque iugum gravitate carebat*, *Met.* 2.162), leaving thus the horses free to run their irrational course, and in Manilius Phaethon alienated himself from the *solitus cursus*. In fact, in both poets, Phaethon was off course.

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<sup>125</sup> KYRIAKIDIS (2016). See above, pp. 116-117 with nn. 23 and 24; also p. 136 with nn. 104, 105.

<sup>126</sup> HARDIE (2009a) 107-109 also recognises different kinds of *novelty*: "What *Fama* spreads is 'news', an up-to-date report about the private lives of two royal families. Gossip dies unless it has new things to tell ... Novelty of a different kind figures largely in the discourse of the sublime, particularly in the development of the ps.-Longinian sublime, by Boileau, who stresses 'cet extraordinaire et ce merveilleux' in the sublime."

<sup>127</sup> On Phaethon who "brings the element of *novitas*" see FELDHERR (2016) 36f.

<sup>128</sup> Lucretius *DRN* 5.1452: HARDIE (2009a) 16.

<sup>129</sup> The kind of *novitas* which has "connotations of literary originality" is valid both in Lucretius and in Ovid: NELIS (2009) 267. GREEN [(2014) 21] referring to 2.49-59: "Manilius once again offers self-congratulation for the novelty of his astrological enterprise". Cf. *Astr.* 2.57-59: *nostra loquar, nulli vatium debebimus orsa, / nec furtum sed opus veniet, soloque volamus / in caelum curru, propria rate pellimus undas*. (I shall tell my own song, I shall owe my words to no poet and no stolen work but my own shall emerge. In a lone chariot I fly to the sky, in my own ship I beat the seas).

As the above diversion from the usual path has obviously metapoetic connotations, it is inevitable to compare it with the Callimachean precept to keep a course on untrodden paths, *κελεύθους ἀτρίπτους* (*Aetia*, 1.1.27-28, Pf.), a poetic principle which is recalled often enough by the Roman poets in various ways.<sup>130</sup> One may be in pursuit of the untrodden and new either by seeking something different, something that appears for the first time or that is a new experience, or by proceeding to something *further / additional* to what already exists, as we saw earlier. In either cases the poet may have the feeling of liberation from the poetic tradition. At *Astr.* 2.136-141 Manilius introduces himself as the poet who is free (2.139) to perform his poetic journey in heaven and will recite his poetry.

*Haec ego divino cupiam cum ad sidera flatu  
ferre, nec in turba nec turbae carmina condam  
sed solus, vacuo veluti vectatus in orbe  
liber agam currus non occursantibus ullis  
nec per iter socios commune regentibus actus,                   140  
sed caelo noscenda canam, mirantibus astris  
et gaudente sui mundo per carmina vatis,  
vel quibus illa sacros non invidere meatus  
notitiamque sui, minima est quae turba per orbem.*

(*Astr.* 2.136-144)<sup>131</sup>

(This is the subject I should like to bring to the stars with a divine breath. I shall not compose my song in the crowd or for the crowd, but alone, as though carried around an empty race-course, I shall drive my chariot free without coming across anyone or without having anyone, while he steers his own, as a fellow traveller over a common course. I shall sing my song for the sky to know, for the admiring stars and for the universe, rejoicing in the song of its bard and for those to whom the stars have allowed to see the sacred courses and knowledge of themselves, the smallest group of people in the world.)

<sup>130</sup> In a similar vein, Manilius joins the long chain of eclectic poets, among whom Callimachus has a prominent place (*σικχαίνω πάντα τὰ δημόσια*, I detest all common things, *Epigr.* 28.4, Pf.); also Horace (*C.3.1.1: odi profanum vulgus et arceo*, I hate the profane mob and keep them at distance, [trns. D. WEST]), Virgil (*cetera .... / omnia iam vulgata ...*, all other topics are already trite, *Geo.* 3.3-4) and Ovid (*vilia miretur vulgus*, let the multitude admire worthless things, *Am.* 1.15.35) while Ovid in his exile poetry claims that the *novitas* of the work is protected by the gods (*Pont.* 4.13.24).

<sup>131</sup> SALEMME (2000<sup>2</sup>) 3; VOLK (2003).

Phaethon in Ovid, too, had characterised himself as *free* (*ille ego liber*, I, free-willed, *Met.* 1.757).<sup>132</sup> Thus, it is legitimate to ask what Manilius means with this self-characterisation, when it is he who instructs that everything is defined by the stars,<sup>133</sup> and when it is he who condemns the diversion from the customary.

The word *liber* is rare indeed in the *Astronomica*. It appears here and once more at 3.140, in a totally different situation that does not concern our present discussion.<sup>134</sup> This connection of the poetic “I” with the sense of liberty, essentially unique in the *Astronomica*, seems to be entirely different from the sense of liberty that Phaethon has in Ovid; in the latter case we deal with the superficial liberty which is founded only on the knowledge of Phaethon’s divine origin and the great expectations this has created in him. Manilius on the other hand, using the phrase *liber agam currus* (*Astr.* 2.139) for himself, describes his mental cosmic journey during which he will impart – through his poetic labour and song – the knowledge of the eternal rules he has acquired. Furthermore, Phaethon feels free but without having any real knowledge of the existing cosmic rules leads himself to destruction. For Manilius, freedom and free will are related to the quest for knowledge and to the compliance to the constant rules that govern the universe. Earlier Lucretius (*DRN* 2.251-262),<sup>135</sup>

<sup>132</sup> For HANNAY (2016) 50: *liber* is a characteristic “[harmonizing] well with the sublime”.

<sup>133</sup> Even the *fata* are controlled by the stars and everything is predetermined (*Astr.* 1.1-2); also *hoc quoque fatorum est, legem perdiscere fati* (and this is also a matter of fate to learn well that is, the rules of fate, *Astr.* 2.149); [*natura*, 3.47] *fata quoque et vitas hominum suspendit ab astris* (Nature made the lives and the fate of people to depend on the stars, *Astr.* 3.58).

<sup>134</sup> *Astr.* 3.140-141: [*undecima pars*] *quaque valetudo constat, nunc libera morbis, / nunc oppressa*, dealing with the *undecima pars* which astrologically influences our health.

<sup>135</sup> FOWLER (2002) in his superb analysis states that lines 2.251-293 form the “second section of the argument for the *clinamen* that most difficulties are concentrated” (pp. 322-366). Also at *DRN* 2.1044-1047 [with BAILEY (1947) ad loc. and on 2.740] the poet describes the freedom of the mind to explore the rules of nature as far and as deep as it can: *quaerit enim rationem animus, cum summa loci sit / infinita foris haec extra moenia mundi, / quid sit ibi porro, quo prospicere usque velit mens / atque animi iactus liber quo pervolet ipse* (Since the sum of space is infinite, far and beyond the limits of this world, the mind seeks out the reason of what is over there as far as it wishes to see and up to the place where the unfettered projection of the mind can freely fly). Lucretius seems to equate the breadth of the universe with that of the mind’s ability to reach. A related thought is elaborated by Manilius on 1.96-98. For the poet of the *Astronomica* it is the very Nature which wishes her secrets to be disclosed through poetry: *iam propiusque favet mundus scrutantibus ipsum / et cupit aetheros per carmina pandere census* (The universe already favours those who closely search its secrets and craves to unfold through songs the celestial richness, *Astr.* 1.11-12). *Propius* has again its role to play, see above its usage for both Phaethon and the poet of the *Metamorphoses* himself, pp. 124-125). The difference with Phaethon here is that Nature favours those who are in search of knowledge).

like his master Epicurus in his *Letter to Menoeceus*,<sup>136</sup> believed in the free will but with a logic of course, that was entirely conditioned by the atomic theory. The Stoic Chrysippus had also put forward his belief in free will and choice (even though he does not use the relevant terms), as Aulus Gellius has preserved his words (7.2.7-8): although all obey to the *fata* (the Greek *εἰμαρμένη*<sup>137</sup>), Man has the possibility of his own choice depending on his *ingenium mentis* (i.e. the mental characteristics of the individual) which on occasion may be *asper* (harsh), *insciturum* (uncultured), and *rude* (uncouth):

“*Quamquam ita sit,*” inquit “*ut ratione quadam necessaria et principali coacta atque conexa sint fato omnia, ingenia tamen ipsa mentium nostrarum proinde sunt fato obnoxia, ut proprietates eorum est ipsa et qualitas. 8 ... Sin [vero] sunt aspera et inscita et rudia*<sup>138</sup> *nullisque artium bonarum adminiculis fulta, etiamsi parvo sive nullo fatalis incommodi conflictu urgeantur, sua tamen scaevitate et voluntario impetu in assidua delicta et in errores se ruunt.*” (Aulus Gellius NA 7.2.7-8)

(He then said: “Even though it is a fact that all things in a certain way are subject to an inevitable and fundamental law and are connected very closely with fate, yet the same characteristics of our minds are subject in the same way to fate, in accordance with their individuality and their very quality. 8. ... If, however, they are harsh, uncultured, uncouth, and without any support from education, through their own bluntness and conscious inclination, they fall into continual blunders and faults whether they may be impelled by a small inconvenience of fate or none at all.”)

<sup>136</sup> <ὅτι μὲν κατ' ἀνάγκην ἐστίν,> ἃ δὲ ἀπὸ τύχης, ἃ δὲ παρ' ἡμᾶς, διὰ τὸ τὴν μὲν ἀνάγκην ἀνυπεύθυνον εἶναι, τὴν δὲ τύχην ἄστατον ὄραν, τὸ δὲ παρ' ἡμᾶς ἀδέσποτον, ὧ καὶ τὸ μεμπτόν καὶ τὸ ἐναντίον παρακολουθεῖν πέφυκεν ([He affirms rather] that some things happen of necessity, others by chance, others through our own agency. For he sees that necessity destroys responsibility and that chance or fortune is inconstant; whereas our own actions are free, and it is to them that praise and blame naturally attach, Epic. *Letter to Menoeceus* 133, trnsl. by R. DREW HICKS. <https://ebooks.adelaide.edu.au/e/epicurus/menoceus/>).

<sup>137</sup> Chrysippus has written a work *Περὶ Εἰμαρμένης*: FOWLER (2002) p. 340.

<sup>138</sup> Manilius characterises human life as *rudis* before mankind discovered the secrets of the universe: *Nam rudis ... vita / in speciem conversa operum ratione carebat / et stupefacta novo pendebat lumine mundi*, for the uncouth life was turned towards the outward appearance of things, without knowledge of nature's workings, and stunned gazed attentively at the new light of the world, *Astr.*1.66-68) [also 1.74]. In this phrase the use of this form of *stupefacio* is much stronger than a participle of *miror*: HASKELL (1988) 519.

It is quite clear that Chrysippus' Stoic views, lingering between the *εἰμαρμένῃ* and the free-will, add to the issue a kind of 'individualistic' approach and in a sense the philosopher appeals to knowledge and civilisation.

On the same issue, Horace refers more vividly – since poetry has the advantage of vividness over the philosophical discourse – to his own free choice to renew Roman diction by introducing the *Parios iambos* (*Epist.* 1.19.23) to Latium. According to McCarter, the poet at *Epistle* 1.19, is following “a middle path between total independence and slavish adherence, and this middle path is aligned with true freedom (*libera vestigia*, ‘free footprints’)”.<sup>139</sup>

*o imitatores, servum pecus, ut mihi saepe  
bilem, saepe iocum vestri movere tumultus!  
Libera per vacuum posui vestigia princeps,  
non aliena meo pressi pede. (Epist. 1.19.19-22)*

(O you imitators, a servile herd, how your commotions have often roused my bile, and often laughter! I was the first to plant my footsteps freely in the void, in no other's steps did I place my feet, trnsl. Hardie 2009a, 54).

The above thought on the Horatian middle path recalls and takes us back to Sun's instruction in the *Metamorphoses*, *medio tutissimus ibis* (you shall be safest keeping the middle course, 2.137).

Mental freedom and free will remain the issue on which Manilius wishes to contrast himself with Phaethon. Fate and the rules of nature may well be given, but *the acquisition of culture and knowledge – the poet's real challenge*, as is well attested on a number of occasions in his work<sup>140</sup> – is what makes the difference: Phaethon did not listen to Sun and for this, due to the *voluntarius impetus* (the conscious inclination), *in errorem se ruit*, to paraphrase Chrysippus' words as they appear in Gellius. Manilius presents Phaethon taking, or rather imposing, his own course (*orbemque recentem / imposuisse*, *Astr.* 1.740-741) and he is criticised for it. At the same time the poet stresses his difference from Phaethon: being conversant with the secrets of heavens, he feels as a poet inspired by god, *ἐνθεος*, according to the Platonic terminology (Plat. *Ion* 533e),<sup>141</sup> a concept appearing in the phrase *divino flatu* at

<sup>139</sup> McCARTER (2015) 248.

<sup>140</sup> Cf. KYRIAKIDIS (2016) “Pursuing knowledge” 135-138.

<sup>141</sup> πάντες γάρ οἱ τε τῶν ἐπῶν ποιηταὶ οἱ ἀγαθοὶ οὐκ ἐκ τέχνης ἀλλ' ἐνθεοὶ ὄντες καὶ κατεχόμενοι πάντα ταῦτα τὰ καλὰ λέγουσι ποιήματα, καὶ οἱ μελοποιοὶ οἱ ἀγαθοὶ ὡσαύτως (For

Astr. 2.136.<sup>142</sup> For the inspired poet imparting the knowledge of the everlasting and *solitum* proves to be much more important than Phaethon's divine origin and makes the poet feel free and unique: free to travel on the eternal ways – because he knows them –, free to teach and sing in his own way (cf. *primusque novis Heliconam movere / cantibus*, Astr. 1.4-5);<sup>143</sup> he is also unique as he will be alone without anyone else on his course (cf. *soloque volamus / in caelum curru*, Astr. 2.58-59; *non occurrentibus ullis / nec per iter ... commune*, 2.139-140). On the contrary, Phaethon in his effort to take a new and different course without the required knowledge, destroys nature and himself.

At Astr. 3.393-394, Manilius is honest about his personal ambitions:

*a me sumat iter positum, sibi quisque sequatur  
perque suos tendat gressus, mihi debeat artem!*

(Let anyone take the way I have set, let him follow it and tend it in his own pace; to me let him owe the art!)

The phrase *iter positum* alludes to the road the poet has marked by his teaching; with it he implicitly but clearly refers to the *imposuisse*<sup>144</sup> he had used for Phaethon.<sup>145</sup> Manilius claims for himself the originality of his method (*mihi debeat artem!*) and applies to himself the modest *positum*<sup>146</sup> leaving for Phaethon the harsh verb *imposuisse*. He allows, therefore, the student-reader free to choose his own pace in his treading on the *posita* of the instructor's *itinerata*.

all the good epic poets recite all these nice poems not from art but rather because they are god inspired and possessed.)

<sup>142</sup> Ps.-Longinus (*De Sublimitate* 15) has recourse to the myth of Phaethon in order to repeat the Platonic idea of the god-inspired poet, which we also find in Manilius through the imagery of the flying chariot: ἄρ' οὐκ ἂν εἶποις, ὅτι ἡ ψυχὴ τοῦ γράφοντος συνεπιβαίνει τοῦ ἄρματος, καὶ συγκινδυνεύουσα τοῖς ἵπποις συνεπτέρωται; (Would you not say therefore, that the writer's soul is on board the chariot, and sharing the same risk, it flies together with the horses?): see HANNAY (2016); GARANI (*forthcoming*).

<sup>143</sup> See above, p. 138.

<sup>144</sup> Cf. Astr. 1.96 where the verb *imponere* applies to *ratio*.

<sup>145</sup> At Virg. *Geo.* 1.60-61, it is *natura* who imposes the laws (*continuo has leges aeternaque foedera certis / imposuit natura locis* (nature imposed these laws and eternal rules on certain areas)).

<sup>146</sup> Cf. Lucretius' reference to his *didaxis*, *inque tuis nunc / ficta pedum pono pressis vestigia signis*, *DRN* 3.3-4.

The above phrases have been written as though Manilius wished to explain the way he views the issue of personal liberty (although in this passage the actual word is missing) and of the succession in *didaxis*: each student is *liber*, free, relying on his teacher's *posita*, to teach his own class what will be *novum* for them, in a combination of "freedom and innovation".<sup>147</sup> The poetic and especially the didactic discourse on the universe may be renewed on one condition: that both instructor and instructed do not deviate (*deflexus*) from the *solita*, the tradition; their only task is to show the 'shape' and form of the world (*tantum monstranda figura, Astr. 4.438*),<sup>148</sup> as Sun himself did to Phaethon in Ovid, according to Manilius' reading (*monstratas vias, Astr. 1.740*), and earlier in Lucretius Epicurus to mankind (*DRN 6.27*). The poet professes the freedom to renew the didactic discourse thus claiming originality for his work; he insists, however, on profound knowledge and the respect of tradition.

On this and similar thoughts classical poetry has always relied. Each poet looks back to his forebears and to tradition, but in the end he leaves his personal mark on the poetry of his days. No one has thrived *in vacuo*. As T.S. Eliot has remarked: "No poet, no artist of any art, has his complete meaning alone. His significance, his appreciation is the appreciation of his relation to the dead poets and artists. You cannot value him alone; you must set him, for contrast and comparison, among the dead":<sup>149</sup> Phaethon in pursuing the *new*, wished to succeed trusting on no one but his divine origin and for this he failed. In his risky venture (*Met. 2.328, magnis .... ausis*) he exceeded his mortal capacities and unwilling to be initiated into the cosmic secrets he shunned the knowledge of tradition. On the other hand, however, both Manilius and Ovid strived after the *novum* but the *non credendum* and the *miraculum* that were the means to the latter poet's literary objectives were not compatible with the didactic principles of Manilius and this kept the two poets apart. A work that proudly claims to rely on the *non credendum* in the very words of its creator (Ovid *Tr. 2.64, in non credendos corpora versa modos*), is by nature iconoclastic and ventures to be outside the rules and the precepts of tradition that Manilius opts for. This is one of the reasons perhaps that Manilius asserts that his journey through heavens will have no other fellow traveller.<sup>150</sup>

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<sup>147</sup> The phrase is part of the chapter title in HARDIE [(2009a) 41] on "Virgilian and Horatian didactic".

<sup>148</sup> GOOLD's translation of the word *figura* is 'pattern'.

<sup>149</sup> ELIOT (1917).

<sup>150</sup> KYRIAKIDIS (2016) 143.

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