



OXFORD

Forgotten Stars

Rediscovering
Manilius' *Astronomica*

Edited by

Steven J. Green and Katharina Volk

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FORGOTTEN STARS

*To the Memory of
Josèphe-Henriette Abry*

Preface

The *Astronomica* of Manilius: a five-book didactic poem at least partly written under Augustus. General first impressions might lead one to think that Manilius has much to attract critical attention from the Anglophone world. For the classical scholar, both the Augustan age and the 'golden' nature of its literary production are of course central to research and teaching. For the more general enthusiast, Manilius claims to be—and the extant literary record would support him—the first Roman to set out the workings of natal (or genethliacal) astrology, a topic to whose enduring popular interest any daily western newspaper will testify.

As is often the case, however, first impressions can be misleading, and Manilius' *Astronomica* remains a work much understudied and underrated in the Anglophone world. A major contributing factor to this neglect is the significant difference one must observe between the ancient and (popular) modern definitions of natal astrology. In the western world, astrology is typically depicted as inclusive and accessible to all classes, vague on detail and psychologically comforting in nature; its practitioners are deemed to have little recourse to proper scientific calculation; such predictions are therefore felt to be harmless, and certainly apolitical (in spite of some notorious anecdotes about the use of astrology by political figures such as Hitler and Ronald Reagan; see Barton 1994a: 4).

Ancient Roman astrology, particularly at the time in which Manilius was writing, could not be more different, as Tamsyn Barton's important works have shown us. To be sure, echoes of the modern-day popular astrologer can be found in the charlatans that peddled their unsophisticated trade to the masses in the Circus Maximus of ancient Rome. But proper astrology was, for the Romans, a serious science: it was fact. The complex calculations required to cast a horoscope rendered astrology an art exclusive to a small number of (foreign) experts. Moreover, particularly under Augustus, astrology became an intensely political affair, as the emperor manipulated the potential of astrology for positive political discourse whilst at the same time fashioning legislation to curtail its use among his rivals.

Consistent with the serious scientific nature of astrology under the Roman Empire, Manilius' serious astrological poem has proven to be very difficult for Anglophone readers—classicists and general enthusiasts alike—to master. Housman's infamously harsh verdict on the poem—that its only saving grace was its author's 'eminent aptitude for doing sums in verse' (1903–30: 2.xiii)—has been allowed to rule for too long, and yet it might seem to be a fair assessment to the reader who is stuck in the mathematical mire of the calculation of the ascendant in book 3. Nor does Manilius appear to help himself in this matter: books 4 and 5 are far more accessible to the lay reader, and yet one wonders how many readers can steel themselves to get this far. Goold's 1977 Loeb edition, with its extensive explanatory notes and diagrams, marked a significant development in the accessibility of Manilius to a larger audience. It is surprising, therefore, that Goold's masterly production has not generated the critical attention from Anglophone scholars that it deserved. (The most noteworthy pieces on Manilius in English since 1977 have typically come along approximately every ten years: see especially Wilson 1985; Neuburg 1993; Volk 2001, 2002.) It is with a similar (but reinforced) desire to put this neglected poet firmly back on the scholarly map that the present volume is offered. (Katharina Volk has recently published the first major monograph on Manilius to appear in English (Oxford, 2009). Our conference, however, can claim no credit for inspiring this particular piece of scholarship.)

The current collection of essays started its life as a major conference on Manilius, co-organized by the editors of this volume and held at Columbia University, New York, in October 2008. The aim was to bring together an international contingent of scholars for an interdisciplinary exploration of Manilius at an auspiciously significant time, close to the bimillennial celebration of the poem's composition. All of the contributors to the conference have revised their pieces for the current volume, with a further chapter subsequently commissioned. The international angle to the scholarship is particularly important for a study of Manilius. As Katharina Volk shows in her introductory chapter on the history of scholarship, Manilius has attracted significantly more attention from French, German, and particularly Italian scholars than it has from their Anglophone counterparts. Three leading exponents of this international Manilian surge—Josèphe-Henriette Abry, Wolfgang Hübner, and Enrico Flores respectively—are represented in the present volume. As none of the major works

from these scholars has found its way into English, however, one important additional aim of the present volume (and the original conference) is to bring together the important cultural or national scholarly traditions that have so far existed largely in isolation.

The range of perspectives from which Manilius is approached in the present volume is testament to both the complexity of Manilius and the differing fruitful avenues for modern interdisciplinary inquiry. Matters of literary interest, especially generic affiliation and intertextuality, are complemented by approaches which assess the socio-political, philosophical, scientific, and astrological resonance of the poem. Moreover, as a salutary counterbalance to the relative neglect of our author in recent times, the popular reception of the poem, especially in Renaissance times, is also explored. The volume is organized under five subheadings—Intellectual and Scientific Backdrop, Integrity and Consistency, Metaphors, Didactic Digressions, and Reception. These divisions are, of course, somewhat artificial, as there are frequent internal dialogues between papers from different sections, and they should be treated as convenient means of reader orientation rather than definitive statements of content and critical approach.

The editors would like to thank the Columbia Classics Department for hosting the conference and especially Marvin Deckoff for his generous financial support and unflagging good cheer. We also gratefully acknowledge funding from the Stanwood Cockey Lodge Foundation. In addition, we are most grateful to Hilary O'Shea for her support of the volume, as well as to Jenny Wagstaffe and the staff at OUP for their assistance during the book's production. Special thanks go to our editorial assistant Sarah Kaczor for her help in preparing the typescript.

And finally, a note of real sadness. It was with great regret that news was received of the untimely death of Josèphe-Henriette Abry just a week or so after the conference in October 2008 (to which she had been too ill to travel). The editors would like to dedicate this volume to dear Joette, whose appreciation and enthusiasm for Manilius permeate this book and provide inspiration for future studies on the author.

SJG and KV

Leeds and New York
March 2010

Abbreviations

References to classical texts typically follow the style of abbreviations of the *Oxford Classical Dictionary* (3rd edn.).

A&R	<i>Atene e Roma</i>
AC	<i>L'Antiquité classique</i>
AClass	<i>Acta classica</i>
AFLN	<i>Annali della Facoltà di Lettere e Filosofia dell'Università di Napoli</i>
AJA	<i>American Journal of Archaeology</i>
AJP	<i>American Journal of Philology</i>
ANRW	W. Haase and H. Temporini (eds.), <i>Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt: Geschichte und Kultur Roms im Spiegel der neueren Forschung</i> (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1972–)
BIBR	<i>Bulletin de l'Institut Historique Belge de Rome</i>
CCAG	<i>Catalogus Codicum Astrologorum Graecorum</i>
CCC	<i>Civiltà classica e cristiana</i>
CCJ	<i>Cambridge Classical Journal</i>
CErc	<i>Cronache ercolanesi</i>
CJ	<i>Classical Journal</i>
CP	<i>Classical Philology</i>
CQ	<i>The Classical Quarterly</i>
CR	<i>The Classical Review</i>
EMC	<i>Échos du monde classique</i>
EphK	<i>Egyetemes Philologiai Közlöny</i>
GIF	<i>Giornale italiano di filologia</i>
G&R	<i>Greece and Rome</i>
GW	<i>Gesamtkatalog der Wiegendrucke</i> (1925–38, 1978–)
HSCP	<i>Harvard Studies in Classical Philology</i>
ICS	<i>Illinois Classical Studies</i>
JHI	<i>Journal of the History of Ideas</i>
JRS	<i>Journal of Roman Studies</i>
LICS	<i>Leeds International Classical Studies</i>
LS	A. A. Long and D. N. Sedley, <i>The Hellenistic Philosophers</i> , 2 vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987)
MC	<i>Il mondo classico</i>
MD	<i>Materiali e discussioni per l'analisi dei testi classici</i>
Neuer Pauly	H. Cancik and H. Schneider (eds.), <i>Der Neue Pauly</i> :

	<i>Enzyklopädie der Antike</i> , 16 vols. (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1996–2003)
OCD	S. Hornblower and A. Spawforth (eds.), <i>The Oxford Classical Dictionary</i> , 3rd edn. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996)
OLD	P. G. W. Glare (ed.), <i>Oxford Latin Dictionary</i> (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983)
OSAPh	<i>Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy</i>
PACA	<i>Proceedings of the African Classical Association</i>
Pauly-Wissowa	A. F. von Pauly, G. Wissowa, and W. Kroll (eds.), <i>Real-Encyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft</i> , 24 vols. (Stuttgart and Munich: Metzler/Druckermüller, 1894–1982)
PBSR	<i>Papers of the British School at Rome</i>
PVS	<i>Papers of the Virgil Society</i>
RBPh	<i>Revue belge de philologie et d'histoire</i>
RCCM	<i>Rivista di cultura classica e medioevale</i>
REL	<i>Revue des études latines</i>
RFIC	<i>Rivista di filologia e di istruzione classica</i>
RhM	<i>Rheinisches Museum</i>
RRC	M. H. Crawford, <i>Roman Republican Coinage</i> , 2 vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1974)
SicGymn	<i>Siculorum gymnasium</i>
SIFC	<i>Studi italiani di filologia classica</i>
SVF	H. F. A. von Arnim, <i>Stoicorum Veterum Fragmenta</i> , 4 vols. (Leipzig: Teubner, 1903–24)
SyllClass	<i>Syllecta Classica</i>
TAPA	<i>Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association</i>
TLL	<i>Thesaurus Linguae Latinae</i> (1900–)
WS	<i>Wiener Studien</i>

Contributors

Josèphe-Henriette Abry† taught for many years at the University of Lyon. One of the leading Manilius scholars of the twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, she is the author of numerous articles on the *Astronomica* and other topics in ancient astrology.

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1

Introduction

A century of Manilian scholarship

Katharina Volk

Despite being a Classical Latin poet in the tradition of Lucretius and Virgil, Manilius has been neglected by modern scholarship, especially in the Anglophone world. True, over the centuries since the *Astronomica*'s rediscovery by Poggio Bracciolini in 1417, its difficult text has not failed to attract editors and has often been mined as a source for ancient astrology;¹ however, critical interest in the work's poetic qualities and larger philosophical and scientific ideas has arisen only in the last few decades and has been mostly restricted to Germany, France, and especially Italy. Our aim in this volume is to encourage readers to discover Manilius, and we have invited a group of international scholars—some of them veteran Manilians, others relative newcomers to the poet—to offer stimulating and diverse perspectives on the *Astronomica*, its background, content, purpose, poetics, and reception.² To put their contributions in context, this chapter provides an overview of scholarship on Manilius from the early twentieth century onward, tracing important lines of inquiry and discussing the most significant publications. It is intended as an introduction not only to this

¹ On the editorial history of Manilius, see Maranini 1994, with a list of all editions at pp. 350–64.

² With the exception of Enrico Flores, all contributors participated in the conference 'Forgotten Stars: Rediscovering Manilius' *Astronomica*', organized by the editors and held at Columbia University on 24–25 October 2008.