

Title	Abstracts
Author(s)	
Citation	西洋古典論集 (2016), 24: 66-67
Issue Date	2016-09-28
URL	<a href="http://hdl.handle.net/2433/217013">http://hdl.handle.net/2433/217013</a>
Right	
Type	Departmental Bulletin Paper
Textversion	publisher

## Studies on the First Proem of *Astronomica*

Tetsufumi Takeshita

The first proem of *Astronomica* is written in a very complicated style and this complexity, as Schrijvers says, comes from a symbolic and ambiguous usage of words. Therefore it is necessary to analyze such a “Manilian” style in order to understand the whole poem.

This paper begins by examining the novelty which the poet stresses repeatedly in the proem. I shall then move on to cosmological relationship between Manilius and Stoic philosophy; it is true some scholars call it into question, but, for the most part, the worldview of *Astronomica* accords with that of Stoics.

Given that Stoic cosmology is one of the characteristics of *Astronomica*, it is useful to examine the affiliation of *Astronomica* with Stoic poetry. In the second chapter, I shall first survey the Stoic poetry, quoting some passages from *Stoicorum Veterum Fragmenta*, then move on to Manilius’ attitude toward poetry. According to Crates of Mallus, a great poet is also a philosopher and conceals the truth under the veil of poetry; only a true κριτικός can discover it: in short, Stoic poetry consists in allegorical interpretation and these peculiarities can also be recognized in *Astronomica*.

In the last chapter, I attempt to explain some disputed lines, especially *suis figuris* (1. 24) and *emergere moles* (1. 116). From the point of view of Stoic poetry, it will be clear that these difficult verses have an allegorical meaning and their ambiguity is not caused by textual uncertainty, but intended by the poet himself.

### On the Sources of Two Anecdotes in Soseki’s *Wagahai wa neko dearu* —Aeschylus’ death and Agnodice—

Masahiro Gonoji

Natsume Soseki inserted a lot of anecdotes from ancient Greece and Rome in his first novel, *Wagahai wa neko dearu* (I am a cat). This article discusses the sources of two of those anecdotes: Aeschylus’ death and Agnodice’s story.

A bizarre anecdote on Aeschylus' death is transmitted from antiquity that he died struck by a turtle falling upon his head after an eagle, mistaking the poet's bald head for a rock, dropped it in the air. Five books in Soseki's existing library have a mention of this episode in their text, among which two can be excluded from candidate sources. The other three are Sir Thomas Browne's *Pseudodoxia Epidemica*, Lionel Barnett's *The Greek Drama*, and Sir William Smith's *A Classical Dictionary of Greek and Roman Biography, Mythology, and Geography* (abridged edition by G. E. Marindin). In conclusion, Smith's dictionary is the most probable source for Soseki, though none of the three books have any decisive evidence.

The second anecdote to examine is about how an Athenian woman named Agnodice was permitted to be a midwife. This episode is recorded only in Hyginus' *Fabulae* 274 in classical texts. It is unlikely that Soseki read Hyginus in Latin or in translation and he must have found the anecdote in some modern book. In contrast to the case of Aeschylus' death, that source book is obvious in a sense, since Soseki left a note in English of a certain transcription mentioning Agnodice's story, though its source book was unidentifiable so far. By web search the book in question was revealed to be Christopher Wordsworth's *Social Life at the English Universities in the Eighteenth Century*, which Soseki probably consulted for preparing his lecture at the university on eighteenth century English literature.