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Contents

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The lectures printed in the present issue of the *Proceedings* do not represent a complete record of what the Society has heard between 1998 and 2000: some of the lectures have been otherwise or elsewhere published.

The Editor expresses his warmest thanks to members of his family for their help and technical expertise generously afforded him during the preparation of this volume. The Society sends grateful good wishes to its master compositor, Ernest Buckley, who has now retired.

Proceedings of the Virgil Society 24 (2001) 1–9

Virgil's *Inheritors*

A paper given to the Virgil Society on 31 January 1998

Virgil's influence on twentieth century English literature has a distinctive profile: the figures who stand out at this end of the century are Homer (Derek Walcott's long narrative poem *Omeros* appeared in 1990 and Christopher Logue's versions of parts of the *Iliad* have been appearing since *Patrocleia* in 1962) and Ovid. Ted Hughes's *Tales from Ovid* appeared to critical acclaim in 1997. This followed closely on *After Ovid: New Metamorphoses* (1994), in which versions of the Ovidian tales are provided by 42 English language poets, some of them very important literary figures (including Seamus Heaney, Les Murray and Ted Hughes). Ovid holds an attraction for the modern audience which stems partly from the mythical nature of his material, partly from its variety, and perhaps partly from the fact that one can select from the collection and is not bound to read the whole epic.[1] In their introduction Lasdun and Hofmann write of the "casual satisfactions of montage, repetition, obliquity, sampling, channel hopping" as though they were characteristic of *After Ovid* rather than of the *Metamorphoses* themselves. Virgil has, by contrast, both a lower and less favoured profile. Auden's 'Secondary Epic' (1959) unfolds the inevitable failure of Anchises's prophecy of the glorious future of Rome, and Homer, Ovid and Dante are far more important in Pound's *Cantos* than Virgil is, Dante and Ovid than Virgil in Eliot's *Waste Land.*

Reputations change with the way in which the audience of a particular time and place reads any given author. In this paper I want primarily to look at the way Virgil's *Aeneid* seems to be revisited in Golding's *Inheritors,* but as a starting point I would like to make some comments about the way Virgil uses Homer, for the way in which authors relive in other

authors varies with the sociology of literature, the expectations and knowledge of the audience.

It is well known that Roman literature is heavily modelled on Greek. This becomes much more self-conscious and aware in the Augustan period, in which poets make claims to be transferring Greek genres into Latin in varying degrees of explicitness.[2] The concepts of imitation and models are, furthermore, dealt with in rhetorical and educational literature.[3] But there is more to Virgil's use of Homer in the *Aeneid* than just literary habit and the taste of the times. The Homeric epics were especially well known to the Roman educated class, and were fundamental to Roman education, and furthermore the heroic values of the *Iliad* especially were clearly sympathetic to the kind of individualistic sense of honour that helped generate civil war and the end of the Republic, so that there was particular point in Virgil's use of Homer to produce a radical revaluation of what heroism should mean. We can see this already in the animal world of the *Georgics,* in Virgil's treatment of the glamorous horse with its epic and warlike trappings, and potential dangers,[4] but it is much more systematically presented in the *Aeneid.* Aeneas is the inverse of a Homeric hero: he flees Troy in its last moments, carrying an old man and leading his wife and child (there is an obvious contrast with the Iliadic Hector who knowingly doomed himself and Troy in the fight with Achilles, with his wife and child inside the city), he becomes emotionally attached to Dido in Carthage, but leaves her on the command of the Gods, suppressing his personal feelings in favour of a more corporate duty (the contrast with the Homeric Odysseus who wants to leave Calypso and Circe is clear), and he has recurrent bouts of hopelessness (in Book 5, after the fire; in later books as he ponders alone awake when all else is asleep). The conflict between duty and personal inclination is a major element in the *Aeneid,* and one of a number of polar pairs which reinforce each other throughout, reason versus emotion, control versus anger, Jupiter versus Juno, male versus female, Rome versus Carthage, the future versus the past, and so on. We see these opposing elements at conflict inside Aeneas, but also inside Dido, Amata, and Turnus, and in each case the outcome is different. Turnus is a more Homeric hero than Aeneas, but that is not what the future needs. The fierce individualism of the Homeric heroes has a glamour in spite of (or even because of) the tragic implications, but stability requires a new and more colourless ethos, in which loyalties to

family, state and the divine plan take precedence and are summed up in Aeneas's personal epithet, *pius*.

There is, of course, another side of the picture, the cost in individual human lives.[5] Poems and narratives (and of course the *Aeneid* is both) work on a multiplicity of often incommensurate levels; I have just touched on Virgil's use of Homer and its interrelation with one element of patterning and repetition. Another element of repetition, this time to do with imagery rather than thematic oppositions and their various embodiments, gives colour to the cost that others pay for Aeneas's mission.

At four points hunted or shot deer intersect in different ways with the narrative and there is both a local and cumulative effect. At 1.184ff the shipwrecked Aeneas shoots three deer to feed his companions. This is a functional and necessary act in terms of both survival and morale, and it takes place on the level of narration, it is part of the story.

The next appearance is of a deer hit by an arrow, and is different in a number of ways. It is when Dido is compared in a simile (4.68ff) to a deer shot and wounded by a shepherd (*pastor,* 71). The shepherd is to some extent a stand-in for Aeneas (in his role as protector of his flock, and in his unawareness of what has happened to the deer). In this instance Aeneas does not shoot at Dido intentionally, she is just an accidental victim of Aeneas's mission. The reader may observe the difference between this and the intended deer-shooting at 1.184ff, but the results are equally fatal,[6] and both are the victims of Rome's future. The next case of deer-shooting returns to the narrative level. It is at once a more trivial and a more profound event. At 7.479ff another stand-in for Aeneas, his son Ascanius/Iulus, shoots a stag in a hunt. Here the primary element is sport rather than food, fun rather than necessity, though this in itself is not to be despised, and though the shooting is intentional, there is again an element of accident (at least on the human level),[7] for it turns out in the end that this is a special deer in the care of Silvia, and its death is the immediate cause of the fighting which leads to the ensuing and bloody war.[8]

The fourth instance, like the second, comes in the form of a simile (12.749ff). Aeneas, himself hit by an arrow here, is chasing Turnus as a hound chases a deer. The same elements are present, but rearranged: motivation, intentionality, outcome. Aeneas chases Turnus with intent (though in the simile he is not this time represented by a human, and so the colour is different) in the context of open war, and the ultimate

outcome is Turnus's death, a death that seems to be due to Aeneas's losing control over the emotions he has had to try all along, with varying degrees of success, to subordinate to his mission.

The nature of the motive and of the outcome is different in all these cases, but the common element is the recurrent motif of deaths in the wake of Rome's history,[9] and this raises questions about responsibility and the ideology of war and empire (though there is no single simple answer).[10] It is this (among other things) that makes Virgil's poem a deeply serious one, but it is also this that has been, in varying degrees, an embarrassment in the late twentieth century[11] (I have already mentioned Auden's 'Secondary Epic' (1959) and its darker view of the 'future' of Rome.)

It is now time to turn to Golding's *Inheritors*. A number of Golding's novels have well known relationships with other works of literature. The *Lord of the Flies* is like a grimly revisionist version of *Coral Island* and *Pincher Martin* is similarly related to Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*. There are equally striking similarities between the *Inheritors* and the *Aeneid*. It is at once obvious that the three models, for want of a better word, are very different kinds of book and that none of them has the same status for us as Homer did for Virgil (indeed there is no real parallel at all for that). It follows that the similarities between Golding's novels and the models are not functional in precisely the way they are in Virgil, but this obviously does not mean that they are not functional at all. I shall return to this point after looking at the similarities themselves.

Firstly there is the basic level of the plot. In the *Aeneid* refugees sail to a new land and attempt to settle peacefully, but accidentally cause a war, mass destruction, and ultimately become the Romans, subsuming the native society. To the society they effectively replace (Latinus's kingdom) are clearly attributed the features of a long lost Golden Age (at Book 7.202ff they are the children of Saturn and they lack a penal code). The new society, that of Aeneas and his descendants, is marked out by prophecies as embodying world domination, power, and the arts of government rather than of literature, art and science (Anchises's speech at 6.847ff is a key passage in the epic as a whole). But also prefigured, inevitably because of the known facts of Roman history fresh in the minds and memories of Virgil and his contemporaries, is civil war. In the *Inheritors* a group of pre-humans return from their winter quarters by the sea to the inland site they occupy in summer by immemorial tradition. In the year of the narrative another group representing our own direct ancestors have already

arrived as runaways and settled on an island in the river which passes the native settlement. The new arrivals gradually kill and displace the original inhabitants.

The differences between Virgil and Golding are of colour and detail. As to the colour, although there is a general resemblance in plot-lines, the bulk of Golding's tale is told from the viewpoint of the original inhabitants, those displaced, specifically that of one of the group of pre-humans, Lok, and is a tale of loss and attrition and blank incomprehension of the events overtaking the group. Only the final chapter gives us the other perspective, that of those who are to become the future.[12] It is as though Golding gives us the viewpoint of Aeneas's accidental victims.

As regards the detail, the two groups in Golding are distinguished from each other by a broad range of features. The one is characterised as simple, happy and, despite the exigencies of the annual winter privations, living as if in a sort of Golden Age; the other, by contrast, is technologically advanced. In objective terms this is the core element upon which the other differences depend. This will be made clearer by treating the two groups individually.

The small pre-human group, who call themselves "the people" owing to their isolation from outside contact, eat roots, grubs and the like. They eat meat, but only the meat of animals slain by other animals or the like. They do not kill, and even so feel guilt at using the bodies so. The phrase "sweet and wicked meat" is an index of their mixed feelings. They cook the meat and have fire, but, like the meat itself, it is fire that they find, preserve and carry with them on their summer-winter migration. They do not know how to make fire themselves, and their culture is generally based on finding rather than making. The image of the deity (Oa) is a felicitously shaped root that has been found. A tree serves as a bridge (they are averse to water), a stone serves as a chopper. They are, furthermore, uncomfortable with novelty. For example, when the old woman wants to feed the dying Mal hot meat-water (i.e. broth) the idea of using a shell as a container for the liquid (the concept of a cup is alien to them) is dismissed as a "new thing." Instead she drips the meat-water drop by drop into Mal's mouth by dipping a stick in and out of it. On the other hand, though novelty worries them, they have a sense of the past (not a historical memory as such) in the form of a mythical impression of a summer without winter and a feeling of the antiquity of the overhang where they live in summer.

With the other group a nexus of contrasts emerges. They arrive by water, which they do not fear, in a boat which they have constructed. They light, quench, and relight fires. They cook, eat and relish meat. They also kill for the purpose, including the primitive child Liku whom they have caught and kept for a while, almost as a pet. Their culture is based not on finding, but on making. They build, and they make weapons. They use bows and arrows and one of them is carving an elaborate knife. There are differences and points of contact with the *Aeneid* here. It is not the case that the bow and arrow has a role as a fighting weapon in the *Aeneid* comparable to its role in Golding. But it does have another kind of prominence in the reader's mind, because of the first three occurrences of the killed or wounded deer motif. If this is a rather adventitious point of contact, another leads to a more substantial point: it is not the case that in Virgil one group is armed, the other not, but not only does Aeneas have a special, divinely crafted, shield, but it is also one which, like the knife in Golding, is fashioned far more elaborately than its mere function requires.

In fact, the making and artifice which characterise the newcomers in Golding persistently goes far beyond functionality and extends into the realms of artistic expression, social activity and a strong sense of personal individuation, and again there are both contrasts with the original inhabitants and also points of contact and contrasts with the *Aeneid*. The carving on the knife moves it along the continuum from mere tool towards art object, or rather questions the separability of what seem to be two ends of a scale. But the newcomers also paint, which, while it may seem to us less obviously useful, is only possible because of the same imaginative leap that produces the making of anything from something else, and which is the context also of the newcomers' making (and wearing) of clothes and jewellery and their strongly individuated hairstyles. Hand in hand with the individuation of the newcomers (much less developed in the original inhabitants) is the elaboration of their social rituals, which involve song, dance, festivities and the use of alcoholic drink. This latter element requires both manufacture and the design and construction of containers (contrast the original inhabitants' rejection of the idea of using even a natural product, a shell, as a drinking implement). The social structure, the individuality of the newcomers, and their vision beyond short-term needs all combine in the way they choose[13] and compete for sexual partners (the sex-life of the original inhabitants is markedly undifferentiated),

and the "subtlety and imagination" with which they pursue sex as pleasure (as witnessed by Lok from his hiding place). Moreover, the young are socialised into the whole complex of values and skills by games, role-play, the use of dolls and toys (themselves artefacts); the children themselves build model houses. Artistic, technological and social development are all bound up with leisure and play, and are inseparable from the destructive aspects of human development.

There are two comparisons especially to be made with Virgil here. One concerns the relationship of art and power, the other the question of individuation. As regards the first, a key passage is *Aeneid* 6.847ff:

> *excudent alii spirantia mollius aera*
> *(credo equidem), uiuos ducent de marmore uultus,*
> *orabunt causas melius, caelique meatus*
> *describent radio et surgentia sidera dicent:*
> *tu regere imperio populos, Romane, memento*
> *(hae tibi erunt artes), pacique imponere morem,*
> *parcere subiectis et debellare superbos.*

Here in Anchises's prophetic speech to Aeneas art and science are marked off almost as luxuries which the world power has, however reluctantly, to relinquish.[14] While it may not be incompatible with Golding's picture of a much more organic connection, it is clearly a radically different emphasis.[15] As regards the second comparison, Aeneas embodies the conflict between personal desires and external duties which faces other characters in the *Aeneid* too, but he is, albeit imperfect, a model in his suppression of the personal in favour of the group. But others as well as Aeneas pay a price for his success (Dido, Pallas, Lausus), and his success rides on the back of much more destruction, in various degrees accidental or inevitable (at least in terms of the prize, Rome's destiny). In Golding if anyone represents the group-based value system it is the members of "the people," the original and artless inhabitants who are sacrificed to their more individuated and dynamic supplanters. For Golding art and science, individuality and aggression are inseparably bound together in a complex loss of Eden with all the compensations that follow and we enjoy, but the emphasis is on the loss, since the vast bulk of the tale is given from the perspective of the displaced and innocent victims. In Virgil the other voices are heard, and the destruction wreaked

by the Trojans is not concealed, but there is a persistent construction of an ideal which is meant to limit the damage, *pietas*.[16]

The relationship between the two works cannot be quite the same as between Virgil and Homer because Virgil does not hold for us a position equivalent to Homer's for Virgil; it is much less important for the reader of Golding to have read Virgil than for the reader of Virgil to have read Homer, and this is because we have a plethora of foundation myths (and loss of Eden myths, since Golding unites the two), like the Voortrekkers' monument, which give the same general point of reference, but there is still a similarity. Virgil uses Homer to generate a radical alternative value system. The *Aeneid* revalues the Homeric poems, makes it hard to read Homer in the same way as before; in a sense it turns the glamour of the Homeric heroes into a nostalgic but outmoded memory, or tries to. *The Inheritors* rewrites the *Aeneid* from the viewpoint of the victims and inevitably questions the value of what the victors gain. In Golding *pietas* looks very much like part of the price paid for development, but in this the difference from Virgil need not be exaggerated, for both ideals and lost Utopias are located other than in the perceived world around us.

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Notes

1. For more detail see F. Jones, *LCM* 19.3 & 4 (1994) 60–4.
2. Cf., for example, Hor. *Odes* 1.1, 3.30; Prop. 3.1, 4.1 etc.
3. See D.A. Russell in D.A. West and A.J. Woodman (eds), *Creative Imitation and Latin Literature* (Cambridge, 1979), 1–16.
4. Virgil interweaves the treatment of horses and cattle at *Georgics*.3.49–283.
5. This is also present in the *Eclogues* and *Georgics*. In the *Eclogues* public gain and private loss can be compared within *Ecl.* 1 and 9, and by comparing those two poems with *Ecl.*4. For the *Georgics* see J. Griffin, "The Fourth *Georgic,* Virgil and Rome", *G&R* 26 (1979) 61–80. The same theme can be traced in other Augustan poets.
6. In this case there are the additional complication of Venus's role and Cupid with his arrows.
7. Allecto is at work (7.476ff).
8. On this passage see Griffin (n.5), 66–7, who connects this passage with the simile at 4.68–73.
9. In the *Georgics,* life is a battle in which human survival often costs animals lives (like the birds who lose their homes). Cf. A. Betensky, 'The farmer's battles', *Ramus* 8(1979) 108–19; M. Gale, "War and peace in Lucretius and the *Georgics*" *PVS* 23(1998) 101–28.

10. Cf. W.V. Harris, *War and Imperialism in Republican Rome,* 327–70 B.C. (Oxford 1979); R.O.A.M.Lyne, "Virgil and the politics of war", *CQ* 33 (1983) 188–203.
11. This is manifested rather differently within and outside the field of scholarly activity. Within that field there was in the 1960s and for some time onwards a susceptibility subsequently re-evaluated, to seeing the Augustan poets as criticising Augustus; Ovid and Propertius were the figureheads of this tendency, but Horace and Virgil were sometimes seen as writing from a similar, but more subtly expressed position. Among ordinary readers there is less of a potential vested interest in seeing a particular author as some sort of kindred spirit: it is easier in various ways simply to look elsewhere if a particular author seems alien.
12. Just as the adult perspective appears only at the end of *The Lord of the Flies,* and only at the end of *Pincher Martin* takes us outside the hero's mind.
13. The complications of love have led to the flight of the new people from wherever they were before. The complications of love do not take the same shape in the *Aeneid,* but it is Aeneas who comes against them in Carthage, and flight is the result here too.
14. See Griffin (n.5), 61–80.
15. Cf. Auden's *Horae Canonicae.*
16. There is another difference which deserves mention as well. Whereas in Virgil the language used is that of the ultimate harmonious amalgamation of Trojan and pre-Trojan to produce the Roman race, in Golding the new arrivals become terrified of the natives (in ignorance that they are all but exterminated) and demonize them.

Proceedings of the Virgil Society 24 (2001) 11–29

'Semper honos nomenque tuum laudesque manebunt': Virgil and Twelfth-Century Epic?

A paper given to the Virgil Society on 9 May 1998

It is widely held that in the Middle Ages Virgil's *Aeneid* was the best-known and most loved of Classical texts. No matter how tightly constricted became the wasp-waisted funnel through which the Classics were transmitted, there was always room for Virgil. Two examples, drawn from many, will, I hope, serve to illustrate this. At the end of the sixth century, the *Aeneid* was certainly known to the great historian of the Franks, Gregory of Tours, whose Latin style manifests a respect for rhetoric which stands in marked contrast to his constant struggle with the rules of grammar; true, Gregory's knowledge of Virgil's poem may not, like that of many subsequent readers, have extended much beyond the great storm scene in Book One, but he knew it nonetheless.[1] And in a similar vein, some years ago I sought to contest the assertion that another great historian, Bede, knew no more of Virgil's poetry than such pickings as he could glean from the pages of Latin grammars. That contention was in itself by no means wrong-headed: medievalists must always bear in mind the possibility that Classical quotations and reminiscences may be drawn indirectly from intermediate sources. In Bede's case, however, the saint's own Latin verse had been overlooked, verse which in fact reveals him to have been a keen and intelligent reader of the Roman poet.[2]

Such examples could be extended almost indefinitely: Virgil was ubiquitous. Indeed, his very ubiquity places me in something of a quandary. To attempt to discuss, for example, 'Vergil in the Middle Ages' (to borrow the title of Comparetti's now somewhat outdated, but still interesting, survey)[3] would be an undertaking almost as vast as contemplating writing

the *Aeneid* itself. I shall, therefore, content myself with considering what may perhaps be some unfamiliar Medieval Latin texts, but ones in which we might well expect to detect Virgil's influence. Through this approach, I hope that we can arrive at a deeper understanding of the ways in which that influence worked. And, perhaps, I will also be able to demonstrate that the Middle Ages need not necessarily be viewed as a hell through which the literate needed, or need, to be guided by the *Aeneid,* much as Dante was led through the Inferno by Virgil.

In my home institution of Cambridge, Medieval Latin, under the able direction of Professor Peter Dronke, tended until recently to concentrate on lyric poetry and on philosophy. It would certainly not be difficult to illustrate Virgil's influence in both these fields, or for that matter on another which attracts much of my own scholarly endeavour, that of historiography. Here, however, I would like to turn to another area, one which will, I hope, have the added advantage of accessibility. I propose therefore to consider the influence of Virgil on Medieval epic poetry.

Having decided to limit this paper to a single genre, we are still by no means out of the woods. Vast amounts of epic verse were composed throughout the Medieval period, constituting a corpus immensely larger than the surviving Roman epics. If we are not to be swamped by this material, we need to impose on it further, more manageable boundaries. For this reason, I have elected to restrict my paper to the fecund period of the so-called twelfth-century renaissance.

Critics have been fond of cursing the Middle Ages with renaissances: in addition to the Renaissance of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, which is commonly held to have put an end to the Middle Ages, other renaissances can be encountered in the Carolingian period, in the tenth century, and in the twelfth. Whatever is the meaning of the rather overworked term 'renaissance' (or 'renouatio' or call it what you will), it is certainly the case that the twelfth century saw in France, England and much of the rest of Europe an extraordinary outburst of creative energy, coupled with renewed enthusiasm for Classical texts and *auctores.*[4] This was so much the case that two decades in particular, the 1170s and 80s, saw the composition of no less than four major poems of epic scale and vision. These four poems are (not in order of composition): the *Anticlaudianus* by Alan of Lille;[5] the *Architrenius* by John of Hauvilla;[6] the *Bellum Troianum* or *Ylias* by Joseph of Exeter;[7] and the *Alexandreis* by Walter of Châtillon.[8]

All four of the authors of these poems knew Virgil's works intimately (as is amply demonstrated by *fontes* listed in the editions themselves). Like all their contemporaries, they had studied Virgil's poetry exhaustively at school; and their ready familiarity with it is everywhere apparent in the Virgilian diction, quotation and echoing with which their works are studded. Curiously enough, however, one of the most striking things about these four epics is how very un-Virgilian they are in conception and inspiration. To give some sense of this and of the poems' contents, they can briefly be characterised as follows.

The first two poems, the *Anticlaudianus* and the *Architrenius,* can, although their basic structure is narrative, best be described as being philosophical-moral in content. Most firmly rooted in twelfth-century Chartrian philosophy is Alan of Lille's *Anticlaudianus,* which deals with the creation of a new and perfect man, Wisdom's journey to God to obtain him a soul, and the new man's triumphant battle against the Vices which menace him. One of the major influences on Alan's poem is revealed in its title, which we might paraphrase as 'Against Claudian'. In particular, Alan had in mind Claudian's sardonic political invective *In Rufinum.*[9] Composed at the end of the fourth century, *In Rufinum* was very popular and influential in the Middle Ages; its victim, Rufinus, is depicted as an archvillain set on the world by the powers of Hell, whose council at the beginning of the work endured as one of its best-known passages. The basic plot of the *Anticlaudianus* is thus essentially an inversion of Claudian's poem, and the famous scene in Hell (which of course foreshadows Milton) is also closely imitated by Alan. Another important influence upon the *Anticlaudianus* was the *Psychomachia,* composed by Claudian's contemporary, Prudentius.[10] This was one of the most popular of the Christian Latin epics, using as it does the epic conventions of heroic battle to depict an allegorical struggle between Virtues and Vices within the soul of Man. On this poem the *Anticlaudianus* relies for its climax. In the case of Alan of Lille, then, Claudian and Prudentius can be seen to have been his prime literary models.

The second of our philosophical poems, the *Architrenius,* has a more satirical purpose and edge. Its hero, the 'arch-moaner' of its title, is an unhappy young man who wanders the world, encountering and lamenting excesses of all kinds. Finally he arrives at a paradise of philosophers and meets Nature herself, who marries him off to a maiden called Moderation, to live happily ever after. One obvious model for this poem, which contains

a great deal more wit and humour than this simple summary would suggest, is the whimsical *De Nuptiis* of Martianus Capella, a handbook on the Seven Liberal Arts, cunningly disguised as an allegorical wedding between Mercury and Philology, and tricked out with fantastical rhetoric.[11] Among the Classical poets, the authors who are most consistently echoed and imitated by John of Hauvilla are Lucan and Juvenal, both writers whose satirical edge struck a chord with key preoccupations of the twelfth-century audience. One admiring reader of the *Architrenius* – who admittedly was probably one of John of Hauvilla's pupils – commented that the poem's only fault lay in its faultlessness:[12] certainly, we are here at a far remove from the spirit of Virgil's dying wish that his unrevised epic be consigned to the flames.

Our second pair of twelfth-century epics are, on the surface at least, more conventional. The *Ylias* or *Bellum Troianum* by Joseph of Exeter is an account of the Trojan war, based not on Homer, whose original Greek text was virtually unknown to the West in the Middle Ages, but instead on an allegedly much more truthful account, supposedly written by a Trojan eyewitness, Dares the Phrygian, who along with Dictys of Crete (on the Greek side) provided medieval readers with much of their knowledge about Troy. Given the Trojan subject-matter of Joseph's epic, we might well expect it to be consciously Virgilian. Yet that would be too obvious for the precocious Joseph. I cannot resist citing here a favourite passage from Joseph's poem (*Ylias* 4.172–207). The passage in question is at first sight a conventional ecphrasis of a beautiful woman, with Joseph seizing the opportunity to describe Helen of Troy, as so many other medieval texts love to do. At first all proceeds as expected, Helen being described in due order from top to toe. Suddenly, however, Joseph's pen is transformed into a scalpel, as he literally cuts Helen open before our astonished eyes, ghoulishly praising her fine heart, lungs, and spleen. Yet it is by the liver, the seat of love, that all is revealed, for it is a monster that not even Tityos's vulture can subdue. According to Marlowe, it was Helen's face that launched a thousand ships. Joseph knows better: it was her liver, her own internal hell that brought a world to ruin. After that, it is not surprising to learn that Joseph's favourite Classical model is Lucan, though in this case Joseph has managed to out-Lucan him. The *Bellum Troianum* is quite simply a *tour de force,* a twelfth-century Silver Latin epic which effortlessly takes up the baton from Lucan and from Statius.

The last of our four poems is Walter of Châtillon's *Alexandreis*. This is a Classicising epic, dealing not with that fantastic Alexander the Great whose myth is perpetuated in so many Medieval vernacular texts, but based primarily on the sober history of Quintus Curtius, which was probably written in the early imperial period. The *Alexandreis* too owes a heavy debt to Silver-Latin poetry, even though Walter evidently intended to challenge Virgil by supplying what was, in effect, the one great unwritten epic of Antiquity. When, for example, Alexander enters Babylon at the height of his triumph, Walter depicts his greatness as surpassing not that of Virgil's Aeneas, but rather of Lucan's Caesar and of Claudian's Honorius (*Alex.* 5.504–9). In terms of Walter's literary models, this is no mere lip-service. Lucan, for example, provides the inspiration for Walter's skilful handling of the opposition between Alexander and the Persian King Darius, which provides much of the tension at the centre of the epic, and which is explicitly constructed along similar lines to that between the demonic Caesar and the ineffectual but sympathetic Pompey which lies at the heart of Lucan's epic. Likewise, Claudian's council in Hell at the beginning of his *In Rufinum,* which we have already had cause to mention in connection with Alan of Lille's *Anticlaudianus,* also lies behind one of Walter's boldest conceits: in the *Alexandreis,* Alexander's end is hastened when his boast that a single world is not enough to conquer triggers the indignation of Nature: at her instigation, a Hellish council engineers Alexander's poisoning, because the Devil, misguided as always, labours under the misapprehension that the Macedonian will conquer the Underworld, and so blasphemously misreads prophecies of Christ's Harrowing of Hell (*Alex.* 10.1–167).

These summaries of the four epics, though brief, threaten to take us off in new directions. My point, however, is simple. To an audience which has cut its teeth on the *Aeneid,* and the *Aeneid* alone, these poems appear pretty alien. This observation can further be reinforced by remarking on their structure: not one is divided into the conventional twelve books of Virgil's poem. Metrically and stylistically, too, they are worlds apart from Virgil's practice. Despite their frequent echoing of the *Aeneid,* our four Medieval poets in fact exhibit a quite phemonenal understanding of the verse of Ovid, Lucan and Statius, and imitate their practice in so skilful a way that it verges on the uncanny. By now then it has, I hope, become clear that, for twelfth-century epic, Virgil was only one model among very many. Hence the question-mark in the title of my paper.

I have not, however, forgotten that our prime concern here is with Virgil. I would, therefore, like to devote the rest of this paper to exploring the influence of the *Aeneid* on what is the most Virgilian of these epics, Walter of Châtillon's *Alexandreis*. The *Alexandreis* also merits our attention because, although all four of the epics I have mentioned were popular in the Middle Ages, Walter's poem was by far the most widely read. It immediately took its place amongst the Classics in the school curriculum, and its popularity is borne out by the vast number of surviving manuscripts. Its literary influence was also immense.

The *Alexandreis,* then, was widely read, as well as being more consciously Virgilian than the other twelfth-century epics with which we are concerned here. This Virgilianism manifests itself in several ways, one of the most striking of which is the taking over, in modified form, of certain motifs from the *Aeneid.* Walter is thus, to my knowledge, the only Medieval Latin poet who offers us a reworking of a central image of Virgil's *Aeneid,* the description of Aeneas's shield in Book Eight of that poem. Walter's reworking of this episode merits close attention, but since space is limited, I shall restrict myself here to summarising some of its salient points.

At the end of the second book of the *Alexandreis,* Walter describes in detail the shield of the Persian king, Darius (*Alex.* 2.494–544). What is depicted on it both complements and contrasts with the shield in *Aeneid* 8. Aeneas's shield is, as we all know, a window on the future, a physical symbol of the Rome-to-be, a burden which Aeneas shoulders and so links his own time to that of Virgil's Roman readers, whose past and present depended on his action. Darius by contrast bears a shield which records his people's past, the deeds of the rulers of Babylon and Persia, very largely as recorded in the Bible. Darius is thus saddled with representations of the fall of the tower of Babel, God's vengeance exacted for the sack of Jerusalem, and the conqueror Cyrus's ignominious end at the hands of a Scythian queen. Unlike Aeneas, poor Darius is thus marked out as yesterday's man, by means of a clever combination of the Virgilian shield-motif with the Persian king's role as a counterpart of Lucan's Pompey.

Nevertheless, in another sense Darius's shield does point forward to a contemporary audience much as Aeneas's did. By placing Darius and Alexander within the narrative of the Bible, and so of the history of salvation, Walter was able to bring them and their story closer to his own Christian

readers. Thereby he also added a further, complicating moral dimension: no less than Darius, Alexander will prove to be an autocratic ruler, no matter how attractive he may appear *en route.* Thus Darius's shield is not only an awful warning for him, but also for Alexander, and, for that matter for all kings: unless mortal power keeps within bounds, it will inevitably be cut down by a jealous God, a central motif of Walter's poem, which has been thoroughly explored by critics such as Kratz and Dionisotti.[13]

The Virgilian shield-motif is thus melted down, recast and reshaped under Walter's Vulcan hammer. The same, yet different, it is an icon which helps us to 'read' the *Alexandreis.* Instructive though the shield is, however, I would like to devote the remainder of this paper to a different passage, one in which we may examine Walter's reactions when he reworked not a description, but a narrative passage which could deliberately be made to evoke Virgilian ghosts and memories

Let us turn first to Walter's prose source, the following passage of Quintus Curtius (8.13, 12–16):[14]

> *Erant in medio amne insulae crebrae, in quas et Indi et Macedones nantes, leuatis super capita armis, transibant. ibi leuia proelia conserebantur, et uterque rex paruae rei discrimine summae experiebatur euentum. ceterum in Macedonum exercitu temeritate et audacia insignes fuere Hegesimachus et Nicanor, nobiles iuuenes et perpetua partium felicitate ad spernendum omne periculum accensi; quis ducibus promptissimi iuuenum, lanceis modo armati, transnauere in insulam quam frequens hostis tenebat, multosque Indorum, nulla re melius quam audacia armati, interemerunt. abire cum gloria poterant, si unquam temeritas felix inueniret modum; sed dum superuenientes contemptim et superbe quoque exspectant, circumuenti ab eis qui occulti enauerant eminus obruti telis sunt. qui effugerant hostem aut impetu amnis ablati sunt aut uerticibus impliciti. eaque pugna multum Pori fiduciam erexit cuncta cernentis e ripa.*

This comparatively short passage relates an incident in Alexander's Indian campaign against Porus. As the opposing armies lined the Hydaspes, impromptu skirmishes took place on the islands in mid-river.

In one of them, two high-born Macedonian youths, Hegesimachus and Nicanor, after initial success, paid the price of their rashness by being overwhelmed by the enemy. Every reader of Virgil will immediately appreciate the potential of this incident, noting how easily it might be moulded so as to recall the doomed bravery of Nisus and Euryalus's night-sally in Book Nine of the *Aeneid*. We may rightly ask, therefore, how Walter exploited this potential gold-mine.

Certainly he rose to the challenge, devoting over seventy lines of Book Nine of his epic to the episode (and remember his books contain on average only some five hundred lines). The passage (*Alex.* 9.71–147) runs as follows:

Fluminis in medio terrae radicitus herens
Insula multa fuit, quo uecta natantibus ulnis
Arma ferens ibat ab utraque cohorte iuuentus,
Expertura suas paruo certamine uires.
Exercebat enim modice discrimine sortis
Qui grauis instabat summi preludia casus.
In castris Macedum, res non indigna relatu,
Corporibus similes animisque fuere Nicanor
Et Symachus, quos una dies, ut creditur, una
Ediderat terris. par milicie labor ambos
Parque ligabat amor. belli discrimen inibant
In lucro damnoque pares, si saxa rotare
Tormento iussi, si claudere menibus hostem,
Frangere si muros, iunctis umbonibus ibant;
Si frumentatum missi, si cingere fossis
Obsessos, hostem noctu si fallere, siue
Excubiis operam dare, si explorare latentes
Vallibus insidias, quecumque pericula bellum
Obiectasset eis, dubiae molimina sortis
Corporis atque animi socia paritate ferebant.
Horum igitur uirides animos animante iuuenta,
Nescio quid magno conceptum pectore tandem
Effutire parant, primusque 'uidesne, Nicanor,'
Acer ait Symachus 'quam fluminis obice parui
Hereat et nutet inuicti gloria regis?
Audendum est aliquid quod nos, de margine ripae

Hostibus expulsis nostra uirtute, coronet
Victrici lauro, uel si quid fata minantur,
Induat aeterna nudatos corpore fama.'
Vix ea, cum rapto sermone Nicanor 'et ipse
Hec ego mente diu tacita dis testibus' inquit
'Concepi, sed iam mora nulla feramur in hostes,
Contenti leuibus armis.' nec plura locuti,
Accincti gladiis rapidos mittuntur in amnes.
Lancea pone natat. ducibus committitur istis
Multa manus fluuio. quos ut uicina recepit
Insula, confusis resonat clamoribus ether,
Nam predicta frequens loca iam possederat hostis.
Fit grauis occursus Indorum. grandinis instar
Tela uolant multasque ferunt per inania mortes.
At Symachus, qui forte prior transnauerat, hostes
Educto mucrone petit, sociusque Nicanor
Multo contendit uestire cadauere terram.
Iamque satis factum gladiis, iam tela rubebant
Marcia, purpureis distincto flumine guttis.
Iam poterant iuuenes merita cum laude reuerti,
Sed nullo contenta modo est temeraria uirtus.
Dumque tryumphatis insultant hostibus, ecce
Occulte subeunt plures morientibus Indi.
Hic dolor, hic planctus, Graium Macedumque ruinae.
Sternitur Andromachus, regum generosa propago,
Occumbunt clari titulis ter quinque quirites,
Quos longo genuit ereptos Grecia luctu.
Soli restabant animo non sanguine fratres
Graiugenae, uitae socii mortisque futurae.
Quos ubi telorum pressit circumfluus ymber,
Mentibus attonitis hesere quid esset agendum.
Nam neque tela uiris neque lancea, quippe minutim
Utraque fracta iacent. igitur que sola supersunt
Arma, mouent gladios, raptimque feruntur in hostes.
Sed reprimunt gressus teneris haerentia membris
Spicula, nec Martis opus exercere dabatur
Cominus. ergo uiri, quia iam suprema minari
Fata uident, orant ut premoriatur uterque

Occumbatque prior socioque superstite, cuius
Cernere funus erat leto crudelius omni.
Obiciunt igitur sibi se certantque uicissim
Alterius differre necem. dum se obicit alter,
Dum tamen hic illum dumque istum protegit ille,
Ecce gyganteis abies excussa lacertis
Aduolat et mediis conatibus artat utrumque
Affigitque solo. sic indiuisa iuuentus
Cuspide nexa iacet. sed nec diuturnus in ipsa
Morte resedit amor. amplexus inter et inter
Oscula decedit, moriensque sua sociique
Morte perit duplici. resoluto corpore tandem
Tendit ad Elysios angusto tramite campos.

Obviously, this passage is too long to work through in detail; so I shall limit myself here to some general remarks to serve as a basis for further investigation. Colker, the editor of the *Alexandreis,* and Christensen – whose 1905 commentary remains an essential aid to the poem[15] – were quick to point out Walter's debt to Virgil for the overall structure of the episode and for his depiction of the close bonding of the two warriors (whom he calls Nicanor and Symmachus), their debate before plunging into action, and the literary immortality which their rash heroism wins them.

However, as much as these similarities, it is the differences between the two poets which are striking. Not only is Walter's version simply shorter than Virgil's (the Nisus and Euryalus episode running to over three hundred lines), but Walter also omits many touches which our contemporary audience would see as characteristically Virgilian. When, for example, the youths are killed, Walter has nothing to match the pathos of Virgil's subtly erotic comparison of the dying Euryalus to a flower cut down or a nodding poppy (*Aen.* 9.443–7) – and this despite the fact that Walter is elsewhere an enthusiastic imitator of the traditional epic simile. Similarly, although Walter is equally fond of emotive rhetoric, he does not round off the incident with a moving speech, like that of Euryalus's distraught mother in the *Aeneid* (9.473–502). And although the basic tragedy of both pairs of warriors is that they go too far, Walter does not employ any narrative device like that of the helmet looted by Euryalus, whose gleam in the moonlight betrays him, so offering a concrete expres-

sion of the heroic code which is his undoing (9.371–4). Within its overall Virgilian structure, then, the tone of this episode is often far removed from the Roman poet's famed empathy.

Indeed, other influences are at work. Take, for instance, Walter's narrative of the death of the Macedonian heroes (in lines 131–147 above). In the *Aeneid,* it will be remembered, when Euryalus was captured, Nisus, still undetected, dispatched two Latins with his javelins; and when the captor's sword is turned on Euryalus, his companion gives vent to the agonized cry, *'Me, me, adsum qui feci, in me conuertite ferrum,/o Rutuli'* (*Aen.* 9.427–8). Walter took a hint from this altruistic self-sacrifice on Nisus's part, but quite transformed it. In lines 134–9, we are treated to the spectacle of the devoted friends each striving to protect the other by interposing his own body, each eager to be the first to die so as not to witness the other's death. The emotion is thereby heightened, but not without a suggestion of a manic contest of *politesse,* each party vying before some open door: 'After you!' 'No, after you!' The same mannered quality can also be found in the death itself (lines 140–6). It is for instance present in the language whereby their fatal union is marked by an emphatic chiasmus, which also links lines 144–5 in a symbolic enjambment: *amplexus inter et inter/Oscula.* This element of the contrived places us firmly in the world of post-Virgilian epic, that of Lucan and particularly of Ovid.

Of the many Ovidian parallels that could be cited, consider the following from *Metamorphoses* 12.419–28:

> *(Auctor in incerto est) iaculum de parte sinistra*
> *Uenit et inferius, quam collo pectora subsunt,* 420
> *Cyllare, te fixit; paruo cor uulnere laesum*
> *Corpore cum toto post tela educta refrixit.*
> *Protinus Hylonome morientes excipit artus*
> *Inpositaque manu uulnus fouet oraque ad ora*
> *Admouet atque animae fugienti obsistere temptat;* 425
> *Ut uidet exstinctum, dictis, quae clamor ad aures*
> *Arcuit ire meas, telo, quod inhaeserat illi*
> *Incubuit moriensque suum complexa maritum est.*

This passage comes from Ovid's grotesque description of the battle of the Lapiths and Centaurs. Among the slain on the latter side are the tragic

Cyllarus and his mate Hylonome, one of the loveliest she-centaurs, Ovid assures us, ever to have cantered through the pages of Latin poetry. When Cyllarus is fatally wounded, Hylonome joins him in death, their unity too being marked by pointed verbal repetition, and enjambment in lines 424–5: *oraque ad ora/Admouet.* In addition to the similar tone of the two passages, note too the manner in which both begin: death is dealt out by a sudden, impersonal weapon; hurled by giant arms in Walter (line 140, *gyganteis … excussa lacertis);* thrown from the left by an unknown hand in Ovid (line 419, *de parte sinistra, auctor in incerto est*). In both passages, the effect is to inject added horror and pathos.

To return now to Walter, his giant-hurled spear pierces not just one of the Macedonians, but both, symbolically linking them forever in death. The effect is certainly striking, but not entirely original since it points us back to another post-Virgilian model. Walter was by no means the first to rework the Nisus-Euryalus episode. There is also a similar passage in Book Ten of Statius's *Thebaid.* In the course of a night-raid on the Theban camp, the warriors Dymas and Hopleus, who are in effect Statius's Nisus and Euryalus, make an ill-fated attempt to recover the bodies of their fallen leaders. They are discovered as they return and, in the following passage , Hopleus is killed by a spear which transfixes not only him but also grazes the body of Tydeus which he is carrying (*Theb.* 10.399–404):

> *At non magnanimus curauit perdere iactus*
> *Aepytus, et fixo transuerberat Hoplea tergo* 400
> *Pendentisque etiam perstrinxit Tydeos armos.*
> *Labitur egregii nondum ducis immemor Hopleus,*
> *Exspiratque tenens – felix, si corpus ademptum*
> *Nesciat – et saeuas talis descendit ad umbras.*

The similarity of context makes it evident that Walter also had this passage in mind.

There are, however, also important differences between Walter and Statius. Walter does not, for example, explicitly draw a parallel between his heroes and Nisus and Euryalus, or imagine both pairs of warriors meeting in the afterlife, as Statius does at the end of his version of the episode. Walter, though, does go much further than the Silver Latin poet, in having a single spear pierce and kill his two protagonists. The homosexual undercurrent in Virgil's story, with Nisus playing the concerned

and protective *erastes* to Euryalus's more inexperienced *eromenos,* is thus given a far more brutal climax. The shaft which links the dying Nicanor and Symmachus 'between embraces and kisses' clearly exploits the homosexual ambivalence implicit in much piercing and wounding in heroic battle: their death, skewered on a single spear, therefore brings a new and shocking physicality to the original Virgilian construct.

It is clear, then, from what has gone before that one level at which we can appreciate Walter's use of Virgil is as a kind of literary *contaminatio* (to borrow a phrase from Roman comedy), replaying, as it were, an episode from the *Aeneid,* but reshaping it in the light of later developments in Silver Latin epic. Is that, though, all that Walter is doing with his treatment of Nicanor and Symmachus? I would like now to investigate another dimension of their story, this time within the epic as a whole. An old objection, which used frequently to be raised against post-Virgilian epic, is that it is episodic and lacks unity. Such an attitude was never particularly helpful, and it often blinded critics to the strong thematic links which bound together constituent elements of the plot in Silver Latin epics.

With this in mind, let us return for a moment to Nisus and Euryalus, and their role in Book Nine of the *Aeneid.* That book consists of two main structural units: the failed mission of the two Trojans (176–502), and, contrasted with it, Turnus's equally unsuccessful attack on the Trojan camp (503–813). The failure of the Italians, it will be recalled, is ironically due to Turnus's own over-confidence. When he has forced his way into the camp, he is carried away by his own blood-lust, and hurls himself on in a typically Homeric *aristeia.* By failing to open the gate for his troops, he loses his best chance of defeating the Trojans, whose last day, Virgil stresses, it could well have been (*Ultimus ille dies bello gentique fuisset,* 9.759). Instead, Turnus plunges on in his *furor,* is eventually cornered by cooler-headed adversaries, and can save himself only by leaping, like Horatius, into the Tiber. Turnus's failure through this excess is thus thematically linked with that of Nisus and Euryalus, who are undone by lingering too long at the scene of their slaughter and by Euryalus's over-confidence in taking the helmet whose glint will betray him. Weighed against the more responsible leadership manifested by Aeneas in his proto-Roman guise, all three heroes are found wanting.

I stress the link between these two episodes because it also has important implications for the structure of the Ninth Book of Walter of Châtillon's epic. Later in the same Book, Walter relates Alexander's

confrontation with the Malli, or Sudracae as he calls them, following Curtius. The incident is a well-known one: when Alexander finds himself alone on the enemy walls after a scaling-ladder breaks, he does not retreat, but leaps down into the city to face the entire population single-handed. He is pressed to his limits, only being rescued when his men finally burst in, and not before he has been seriously wounded by an arrow – a wound which historical commentators see as a contributary factor in Alexander's early death. Walter gives this episode too a prominent place in his poem, devoting well over a hundred lines to it (9.341–500).

Now, having been alerted to the influence of Book Nine of the *Aeneid* earlier in Walter's own Book Nine, it is difficult not to be struck by the similarities which Alexander's leap into the city of the Sudracae and his narrow escape bear to Turnus's experiences in the Trojan camp. Indeed, even if this response were not immediately triggered by the parallels between Nicanor and Symmachus and Nisus and Euryalus, Walter gives his readers another clue within the Sudracae episode itself. In the following passage, Alexander nears exhaustion, overwhelmed by a hail of missiles, his helmet broken, and his knees giving way beneath him (*Alex.* 9.391–5):

> *Sed clipeum iam missilium perfoderat imber,*
> *Fractaque plangebat saxorum turbine cassis.*
> *Lubrica succiderant genua et labefacta laboris*
> *Pondere continui uix sustentare ualebant*
> *Egregium corpus.*

The *locus classicus* for such a description of the warrior *in extremis* in Latin epic is, of course, Virgil's similar depiction of the plight of Turnus when cornered in the Trojan camp (*Aen.* 9.806–14):

> *Ergo nec clipeo iuuenis subsistere tantum*
> *Nec dextra ualet, iniectis sic undique telis*
> *Obruitur. strepit adsiduo caua tempora circum*
> *Tinnitu galea et saxis solida aera fatiscunt*
> *Discussaeque iubae, capiti nec sufficit umbo* 810
> *Ictibus; ingeminant hastis et Troes et ipse*
> *Fulmineus Mnestheus. tum toto corpore sudor*
> *Liquitur et piceum (nec respirare potestas)*
> *Flumen agit, fessos quatit aeger anhelitus artus.*

These two passages constitute a good example of what I would term conscious *variatio* on Walter's part, in that he evidently evokes his Virgilian model through the similarity of context, but is careful never to echo Virgil's diction explicitly (as you can see by comparing the passages), and introduces characteristically medieval wordplay at one point (9.393–4, lab*efacta* labo*ris pondere*). These similar descriptions of exhaustion in battle thus reinforce the parallel between Alexander and Turnus, whilst at the same time Walter's verbal modifications also subtly encourage the reader to explore both similarity and difference.

Why does Walter draw this parallel? What view does he take of Alexander's leap into the enemy city? At one point, in the authorial voice, he poses the question – was the king's action brave or rash? – only to come up with the answer that it was both brave and rash (*Alex.* 9.371–3):

> *Queritur an fortis facto an temerarius isto*
> *Rex fuerit, sed si contraria iungere curas,*
> *Et fortis fuit et facto temerarius isto.*

At first sight, this appears irritatingly like Walter having his cake and eating it. However, one model for framing his question in this way can be found when Virgil in the *Eclogues* archly wonders whether Medea or Amor was more responsible for the killing of her children (in *Eclogue* 7.47–50):

> *Saeuus amor docuit natorum sanguine matrem*
> *Commaculare manus; crudelis tu quoque mater.*
> *Crudelis mater magis, an puer improbus ille?*
> *Improbus ille puer; crudelis tu quoque mater.*

And, as we have perhaps come to expect by now, an even closer parallel is provided by Ovid, who depicts Europa's father as being simultaneously both pious and wicked in exiling Cadmus (*Met.* 3.3–5):

> *Cum pater ignarus Cadmo perquirere raptam*
> *Imperat et poenam, si non inuenerit, addit*
> *Exilium, facto pius et sceleratus eodem.*

Passages like these account, then, for the tone of Walter's question. All the same, the apparent ambivalence of Walter's attitude to his hero is considerably undermined if viewed in the light of the Virgilian allusions we have been discussing. Turnus's escapade in the Trojan camp was his great missed opportunity, missed through his own selfish blood-lust. The parallel, if recognised, certainly tips the scales of our sympathy away from Walter's Alexander.

These similarities between Alexander and Turnus bring us face to face with one of the central problems of Walter's epic: how are we to read his hero? On the positive side, Alexander is always brave and courteous. By means of Biblical parallels, Walter also makes it clear that Alexander has a part to play in the history of salvation, and hence that he can often legitimately be viewed as God's agent punishing the wicked on earth. Moreover, Alexander's campaigns in the East had a special significance for Walter's twelfth-century audience. The poem was written less than eighty years after the successful conclusion of the First Crusade, and in the decade before the Third Crusade was to set off.[16] Alexander, then, can be seen as a kind of proto-crusader whose campaigns justify the West's assaults on the East. Linked with this role is that of Alexander as a strong ruler, whom Walter can offer as a model to his own King of France. The *Alexandreis* can thus be seen as akin to the didactic 'Mirrors for Princes' that were so frequently written in the Middle Ages for the instruction of royalty. Indeed, it should not be forgotten in this connection that Walter filled a gap in his narrative sources by devoting much of the First Book of his epic to Aristotle's teaching of the young Alexander to fit him for his regal future (*Alex.* 1.59–183).

There is, however, a debit side. Alexander is a ruthless conqueror whose ambition knows no bounds. After his Persian wars, which might be seen as justified, Alexander has no compunction about attacking peoples who have done him no harm and live in peace. Contrary to being always God's agent, he is also explicitly characterised as the hammer, or scourge, or destruction of the world.[17] Immediately after the sack of the city of the Sudracae in retaliation for Alexander's wound, Walter relates his hero's hubristic boast that one world is not enough to conquer.[18] For Walter, it is that boast which brings about Alexander's ruin at the hands of a vengeful Nature and her hellish allies. Alexander is thus a dynamo that threatens to destroy everything by its own energy. Finally, on his death-bed, Alexander imagines that he is being summoned by God to lead Heaven's forces

in some renewed Gigantomachy. His last words, '*Inuitus ad regna trahor*', 'I am being dragged unwillingly to rule in Heaven' (*Alex.* 10.417), constitute, in the context of Christian Latin epic, the very apotheosis of blasphemous megalomania.

Faced with this dichotomy, critics have tended to come down on one side or the other. They stress Alexander's virtues, but play down his faults; or are embarrassed by the frequent nobility of a ruler they prefer to cast as a monster. Some even castigate Walter for inconsistency or carelessness.[19] What they are surely missing is that the ambiguities of Alexander's character have been carefully written into his epic by Walter. Above all, the *Alexandreis* is a meditation of the possibilites and limitations of heroism, and so also constitutes, if you will, an exploration of the collocation, *arma uirumque,* which famously begins Virgil's epic and is central to his poem. Indeed, one way of approaching the *Aeneid* is as a testing, puzzling poem, forever drawing the reader on from one interpretation to another and perhaps back again. Certainly, its central character, Aeneas, is by no means simply drawn. His actions and motives have attracted the curiosity and attention of generations of readers and critics, and will continue to do so. The complexity of the character of Alexander, which also lies at the heart of Walter's epic, can, then, be viewed as another, subtle indication of his Virgilianism. Walter emerges as an intelligent reader of the *Aeneid,* as well as simply a Virgilian imitator.

Reference to heroism and its limitations also returns us neatly to the episode of Nicanor and Symmachus, with which we began. What I did not remark at the outset is that it is comparatively unusual for Walter to allow characters other than Alexander and his other main protagonists to occupy centre-stage for any length of time, as these Macedonian youths do. Once we appreciate their links with the flawed heroism not only of Nisus and Euryalus, but also of Turnus and of Alexander himself, we can see why Walter allowed them to do so. It is not simply that Walter saw in his source a good opportunity to replay a familiar Virgilian passage. Rather the Nisus and Euryalus episode dealt with a question which was pivotal to Walter's epic. As Nisus asks his companion (*Aen.* 9.184–5):

> *'dine hunc ardorem mentibus addunt,*
> *Euryale, an sua cuique deus fit dira cupido?'*

That is the question which every reader of the *Alexandreis* must answer for themselves.

Let me end by posing one key question: why should anybody want to read Medieval Latin epics? My own answer, as a committed medievalist, must be that they are intrinsically interesting in their own right. But I hope I have also demonstrated something which more and more medievalists and Classicists have come to realise, namely that the medieval epics do not exist apart from their Classical antecedents; rather the two are in a state of symbiosis and dialogue. To return for a moment to Walter of Châtillon's striking, and perhaps central, image of Darius's shield, I suggested that its symbolic functions are not limited to Darius alone, but that it is also a mirror in which Alexander's fate and place in the scheme of things can be glimpsed. We can view the medieval epics in the same way, forever reflecting their authors' reading of Virgil and the Classics and casting new light on it. As authors and readers, the medieval poets helped to shape our reception of the Classics, and we ignore them at our peril. An image much beloved by twelfth-century writers, and most famously cited by John of Salisbury, was to see themselves as dwarves perched on giants' shoulders, and so able to see just a little further. Likewise, the medieval poets themselves can afford us a further insight into Classical texts, and, if we forget whose shoulders we are perched on, we may well be in danger of a fall.

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Notes

1. For Gregory's reading in general (and knowledge of Virgil in particular), see M. Bonnet, *Le latin de Grégoire de Tours* (Paris, 1890) 48–76.
2. N. Wright, 'Bede and Vergil,' *Romanobarbarica* 6 (1981/2) 361–79.
3. D. Comparetti, *Vergil in the Middle Ages* (London, 1895).
4. A still useful survey is C.H. Haskins, *The Renaissance of the Twelfth Century* (Cambridge, Mass., 1928).
5. Ed. R. Bossuat, *Alain de Lille, Anticlaudianus* (Paris, 1955); translated by J.J. Sheridan, *Anticlaudianus: or The good and perfect man* (Toronto, 1973).
6. Ed. P.G. Schmidt, *Johannes de Hauvilla, Architrenius* (München, 1974); Schmidt's text is reprinted with accompanying translation in W. Wetherbee, *Johannes de Hauvilla, Architrenius* (Cambridge, 1994).
7. Ed. L. Gompf, *Joseph Iscanus, Ilias* (Leiden, 1970); translated by G. Roberts, *The Iliad of Dares Phrygius* (Cape Town, 1970). There is also an edition and translation of the first three books of the poem by A.K. Bate, *Joseph of Exeter, The Trojan War I-III* (Warminster, 1986).

8. Ed. M.L. Colker, *Galteri de Castellione Alexandreis* (Padova, 1978); translated (into prose) by R.T. Pritchard, *Walter of Châtillon, The Alexandreis* (Toronto, 1986); and (into verse) by D. Townsend, *The Alexandreis of Walter of Châtillon. A Twelfth-Century Epic* (Philadelphia, 1996).
9. Ed. M. Platnauer, *Claudian* (2 vols, London, 1922) I.24–97.
10. Ed. H.J. Thomson, *Prudentius* (2 vols, London, 1949) I.274–343.
11. Ed. J. Willis, *Martianus Capella* (Leipzig, 1983).
12. *uitiosum esse illum librum eo solo quod nullum uersum contineat uitiosum,* Gervais of Melkley in his *Ars Poetica;* see Schmidt, *Johannes,* 10.
13. D.M. Kratz, *Mocking Epic: Waltharius, Alexandreis and the Problem of Christian Heroism* (Madrid, 1980) 61–155; and A.C. Dionisotti, 'Walter of Châtillon and the Greeks', in *Latin Poetry and the Classical Tradition. Essays in Medieval and Renaissance Literature,* eds P. Godman & O. Murray (Oxford, 1990) 73–96.
14. Ed. J.C. Rolfe, *Quintus Curtius* (2 vols, London, 1946) II.340.
15. H. Christensen, *Das Alexanderlied Walters von Châtillon* (Halle a. S., 1905).
16. For a convincing reconsideration of the date of the poem, see Dionisotti (n. 13 above), 90–96.
17. For example, *fatalis malleus orbis* (8.338); *mundi fatale flagellum* (7.119); and *lues mundi* (6.1). A useful tool is H.E. Stiene & J. Grub, *Verskonkordanz zur Alexandreis des Walter von Châtillon* (Hildesheim, 1985).
18. *absque deorum/Ut loquar inuidia, nimis est angustus et orbis,/Et terrae tractus domino non sufficit uni.* (*Alex.* 9.563–5).
19. See, for instance, G. Cary, *The Medieval Alexander* (Cambridge, 1956) 173–4.

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Virgil in Bloomsbury

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I

Whatever critical merits may still be credited to Cyril Connolly's best known work, *The Unquiet Grave,* Latinists are bound to admire the boy who, during services at Eton, read the text of Petronius cloaked in a black leather binding. He understandably went on to become, according to Noel Annan, 'the most over-educated boy that Eton produced in the twentieth century'.

In its first edition (1944) *The Unquiet Grave* carried the subtitle *A word cycle by Palinurus,* thus rescuing the key element of the title originally planned, *The Tomb of Palinurus.* A year later, in September 1945, a new edition displayed alongside his chosen *nom de plume* the author's real name, which had always been, in any case, an open secret. From Connolly's introduction to the 1950 edition we learn that the book, 'inevitably a war-book' (1950:xi), was written in Bloomsbury, precisely in Bedford Square, where he lodged while editing *Horizon,* in the year from the autumn of 1942 to the autumn of 1943. Traces of an interest in mythology similar to the one we see displayed in *The Unquiet Grave* can be dated much earlier, to some unpublished 1926 fragments which already attest to Connolly's acquaintance with the work of Eliot and Frazer. *The Unquiet Grave* started as a diary, but gradually, we are told, 'there was a pattern to be brought out' (1950:xii), and finally a 'symphonic structure' emerged, one in which various themes and characters 'became fitted into an inevitable position in the pilot's periplus'. Connolly included among the ten greatest poets of all times Giacomo Leopardi, and one can indeed perceive a certain similarity between *The Unquiet Grave* and Leopardi's *Zibaldone,* a massive collection of thoughts and quotes which is far more

extensive than *The Unquiet Grave,* but is equally structured on the alternation between the author's own theoretical or personal reflections and a personal anthology of significant work by admired writers.

Connolly's book was published to considerable acclaim, praised by the likes of Berenson and Hemingway, as well as Maurice Bowra and Nancy Mitford, although it did not meet with the approval of her friend Evelyn Waugh, or, for that matter, of Orwell and Spender.

II

The epilogue to *The Unquiet Grave* bears the title 'Who was Palinurus?', and is organised as 'a psychiatrist's confidential report' (1945:95). The diagnosis is 'strongly marked palinuroid tendencies', the prognosis is 'grave', and the 'clinical picture' occupies ten pages of rather close and rewarding analysis of Virgil. Connolly is explicitly indebted (1945:100) in this section to the 'fascinating' *Cumaean Gates* by W.F.Jackson Knight,[1] whose *Roman Virgil* he had himself enthusiastically reviewed, but some fine observations on what we would now call the pictorial quality of Virgilian metre, especially in the description of the sea, are Connolly's own.

We should not exaggerate the medical appearance of this chapter; in the same years, it is true, a Dr Logre read Lucretius's *De rerum natura* as clinical material for a reconstruction of the author's psychology, but Connolly must be exempted from charges of such untenable leaps of faith. His interest is rather more focused on the psychology of Palinurus as a symbol, indeed a mirror, of himself.

The first part of the 'clinical picture' deals with the experiences of Palinurus as *gubernator* in the long journey described by Aeneas in Book 3. Connolly rightly observes that all the events depicted here are seen through Aeneas's eyes, though he does not follow up the specific implications of this narrative focalisation. 'In a lesser man' these frightful adventures – the Harpies, Scylla, Charybdis, the Cyclops, Etna – might have caused 'anxiety-neurosis or effort-syndrome' (1945:97), and here we are reminded of Connolly's remarks about his own life experience in a frightened London during the war. Connolly does not claim explicitly that Palinurus did in fact suffer from such ailments of the soul, but the implication is that he rather clearly did.

The next part of the picture deals with book 5, and the exchange between Palinurus and Aeneas at lines 13ff. Scared by the accumulation of ominous clouds in the sky Palinurus recommends that the fleet seek temporary refuge in Sicily, suspending for the time being a direct route to Italy. It is at this point that Connolly's interpretation of Palinurus begins to emerge. The storm, he claims, is a punishment directly arising from Aeneas's betrayal of Dido, and as such cannot be overcome with normal nautical skills. Palinurus has correctly surmised that the flames which lighten up the sky at the beginning of the book come from Dido's funeral pyre, and 'from that moment realised that Aeneas was guilty of hybris and impiety' (1945:98). He was 'not the Messiah'. In a similar vein does Connolly read Palinurus's avoidance of the games: 'Palinurus does not join, and he lets other pilots fight them out. One can imagine him brooding over the past while the noisy sports proceed around him' (1945:98). The autobiographical echo is clear. In a draft of *The Unquiet Grave* he had talked of those people who are 'abandoners of revels, mute, contemplative,' and as such 'they will not compete, they will not boast, they will not join groups of more than six.'[2]

It is in this context that Connolly questions the guiltlessness of Palinurus which is mentioned at 5.841 *te, Palinure, petens, tibi somnia tristia portans/ insonti.* 'But was Palinurus guiltless?' Connolly asks (1945:99). 'If, as we suggest, he was tired of the fruitless voyage, horrified by the callousness of Aeneas, by the disasters which he seemed to attract, by his rowdy games, by the final burning of some of the ships by the angry women, – that act unforgivable in the eyes of a man of the sea, – then was his disappearance as accidental as Aeneas supposed? (1945:99–100). The clue to which Connolly draws our attention is that, although the sea is calm, Palinurus takes with him in his fall tiller, rudder and a section of poop. As Connolly reasonably observes, 'tillers come off easily, but not part of the stern!' (1945:100). Connolly's interpretation of this detail is heavily symbolic: 'Thus [Palinurus] not only provides himself with a raft, but inflicts a kind of castration on Aeneas, in removing both his chief pilot and his means of steering, and this within the dangerous orbit of the Sirens!'. Although Connolly briefly returns at the very end of the book to the possible sexual meaning of the very name Palinurus, 'castration' surely must be taken in rather un-literal terms. As he goes on to say, what Palinurus displays here is 'anti-social hysteroid resentment,' a heavy-going definition, no doubt, but one that fits well with Connolly's

interpretation of Palinurus as, ultimately, a passive-aggressive character who indirectly displays his anger at Aeneas.

Palinurus is not alone in this resentment. Together with him as part of what he calls 'the old guard' Connolly lists Misenus and Caieta, who both die shortly after Palinurus, at the very moment in which Aeneas [quote] 'visits the underworld, and there consecrates himself entirely to his Empire-building mission' (1945:103). All this may suggest that this old guard 'had had enough of it, [and ...] unconsciously did not wish to enter the promised land or to go through with the fighting necessary to possess it'. Palinurus would thus be giving voice, symbolically, to the same resentment that the Trojan women display as they burn the ships. It is at this point (1945:103 n.1) that Connolly footnotes Jackson Knight explicitly: 'Virgil knew the cost of Empire; the cost in suffering, and the cost to conscience and to so many graceful things.'[3] In this quaint reference to 'many graceful things' one hears again the deep analogy between Connolly-Palinurus and the suggestions he finds in Virgil. In his 1950 introduction Connolly claims that part of the mourning from which *The Unquiet Grave* stems is that, 'as a Londoner', during those war-years he 'was affected by the dirt and weariness, the gradual draining away under war conditions of light and colour from the former capital of the world' (1950:xi).

We are now ready for the conclusion of Connolly's clinical analysis: 'Whether [P] deliberately tried to abandon Aeneas, or whether he was the innocent victim of divine vengeance, or a melancholy and resentful character who felt his special nautical gift was henceforth unwanted, cannot be deduced from the evidence.' (1945:103). But a footnote adds: 'The Palinurus passages are so charged with haunting images and golden cadences as to suggest that Virgil has identified himself with his pilot (as did Milton with Orpheus). Both poets reflect their unconscious death-wish. *Palinurus : Aeneas :: Virgil : Augustus*.' The final equivalence, stated bluntly, and yet modestly consigned to a footnote, is the exegetical result towards which the whole book has laboured. The equivalence is based in turn on the pervasive identification of Connolly with Palinurus, their shared inability to reach the *telos* they craved.

In the blurb to the American edition we read that '"P" appears to be some kind of professional writer who has given us his mysterious case history; he sets out to write a masterpiece but instead is drawn nearly down to suicide. This concept is indeed expressed in the very first page of *The Unquiet Grave,* in an aphorism which was to haunt Connolly forever,

coming as it did to represent both his unbeatable sense for the sharp one-liner and the self-perception of his own limits: 'the more books we read, the sooner we perceive that the true function of a writer is to produce a masterpiece and that no other task is of any consequence' (1945:1). Through the intermediate figure of Palinurus, Connolly casts a doubt on Virgil's commitment to the Augustan *telos* of an imperial Rome. In the last page of *The Unquiet Grave* he sums up his evaluation of the character: 'Palinurus clearly stands for a certain will-to-failure or repugnance to success, a desire to give up at the last moment, an urge towards loneliness, isolation and obscurity' (1945:104). Virgil's most explicit palinuroid moment is probably to be found in his testament, but Connolly's intuition clearly illuminates other important aspects of the *Aeneid*.

III

What are we to do with Connolly's interpretation of Palinurus? Connolly, if nothing else, rescues a minor character from relative insignificance and promotes him to a symbol of a pervasive tendency of the *Aeneid*, as well as a metahistorical example of human behaviour. It is also worth noting that Palinurus thus becomes, probably, the first *male* character fully to embody what are now usually labelled the 'pessimist' tendencies of the poem. Significantly, Palinurus will figure prominently in the early work of Michael Putnam and Charles Segal,[4] who, together with other teachers and students at Harvard, forcefully advocate, in the mid-Sixties, a reading of the *Aeneid* which is focused on its darker, tragic side.

In particular, Connolly makes two claims which warrant closer investigation. Firstly, as we have just seen, that Palinurus 'stands for a certain will-to-failure or repugnance to success'; secondly, that Palinurus displays towards Aeneas the same hesitant and complex relationship that Virgil had *vis à vis* Augustus. In order to assess these insights properly, it is now time to turn to Virgil's text.

Palinurus, the pilot of Aeneas's flagship, is first introduced at 3.201–202, when Aeneas narrates in front of Dido his departure from Crete following the prophecy of the Penates, and the fleet is caught in a severe storm which eventually lands it on the Strophades (3.196–202):

> *continuo uenti uoluunt mare magnaque surgunt*
> *aequora, dispersi iactamur gurgite uasto;*

inuoluere diem nimbi et nox umida caelum
abstulit, ingeminant abruptis nubibus ignes,
excutimur cursu et caecis erramus in undis.
ipse diem noctemque negat discernere caelo
nec meminisse uiae media Palinurus in unda.

It is significant that Palinurus is first introduced in the context of a storm, since he will attribute his death, more or less correctly, to a similar event. The association of Palinurus's name in the 4th and 5th foot and a form of the noun *unda* in the 6th is repeated in 3.562, and encapsulates in an iconic phrase the pilot's unhappy fate.[5] In the scene preceding the storm, when the Trojans acknowledge that they must leave Crete, Palinurus is compared to Aeneas both in terms of their ultimate goal and in their genealogy, since their ancestors Dardanus and Iasius both originate from Italy. More importantly in the light of future developments, Palinurus is here presented as unable to understand the situation, and indeed impotent in spite of his considerable experience.

A second reference to Palinurus occurs shortly later in the same book, at lines 513–520. Palinurus acts here with a large degree of autonomy, almost replacing Aeneas as he urges the immediate departure towards the west coast of the Adriatic sea. On this occasion his technical expertise is once more prominently foregrounded, as it will be shortly thereafter when he crucially veers to the left and is thus able to avoid Charybdis (561–63)[6]:

necdum orbem medium Nox Horis acta subibat:
haud segnis strato surgit Palinurus et omnis
explorat uentos atque auribus aera captat;
sidera cuncta notat tacito labentia caelo,
Arcturum pluuiasque Hyadas geminosque Triones,
armatumque auro circumspicit Oriona.
postquam cuncta uidet caelo constare sereno,
dat clarum e puppi signum; nos castra mouemus
temptamusque uiam et uelorum pandimus alas.

It is in book 5, however, that Palinurus acquires greater relevance, and represents a significant element of coherence and continuity across various parts of the narrative. He is first pictured at the very beginning of

the book, at lines 12–31, when he is worried by the impending tempest and urges Aeneas to land at Drepanum:

> *ipse gubernator puppi Palinurus ab alta:*
> *"heu quianam tanti cinxerunt aethera nimbi?*
> *quidue, pater Neptune, paras?" sic deinde locutus*
> *colligere arma iubet ualidisque incumbere remis,*
> *obliquatque sinus in uentum ac talia fatur:*

It is at this point that the sea journey is interrupted, and the book details first the elaborate games celebrating the first anniversary of Anchises's death, then the Trojan women's partially successful attempt at burning the ships in order to prevent further wanderings. At the end of the book we find the most extensive Palinurus narrative, the one on which Connolly himself concentrates, spanning from line 833 to line 861. The Trojans have left Sicily again, and they sail towards one of the most important stages of their mission. Sailing is at first safe and uneventful, the waves recede, clouds abandon the sky (820–21), and a magical procession of sea-creatures appears. These *blanda/ … gaudia* (827–28) lull Aeneas into security. After he orders that sails be raised fully he disappears for the moment from the narrative, which zooms in on Palinurus, leader of the first ship. While his mates are fast asleep, so fast that he will be unable to get their attention when he shouts as he falls from the ship, Palinurus is in charge. To him appears the god Somnus dressed up as Phorbas (838–46):

> *cum leuis aetheriis delapsus Somnus ab astris*
> *aera dimouit tenebrosum et dispulit umbras,*
> *te, Palinure, petens, tibi somnia tristia portans*
> *insonti; puppique deus consedit in alta*
> *Phorbanti similis funditque has ore loquelas:*
> *"Iaside Palinure, ferunt ipsa aequora classem,*
> *aequatae spirant aurae, datur hora quieti.*
> *pone caput fessosque oculos furare labori.*
> *ipse ego paulisper pro te tua munera inibo."*

Palinurus is too experienced a sailor to accede to such an unconventional proposal (848–53):

"mene salis placidi uultum fluctusque quietos
ignorare iubes? mene huic confidere monstro?
Aenean credam (quid enim?) fallacibus auris
et caeli totiens deceptus fraude sereni?"
talia dicta dabat, clauumque adfixus et haerens
nusquam amittebat oculosque sub astra tenebat.

The god, obviously unfazed, resorts to magical tricks, and Palinurus falls into the sea overcome by sleep, thus paying the price that Neptunus had mentioned to Venus at 815–16:

"unus erit tantum amissum quem gurgite quaeres;
unum pro multis dabitur caput."

It is because of this prophecy that Palinurus can definitely be seen as a scapegoat, paying the price for the entire fleet, but most prominently for Aeneas; it is worth remembering in this context that Connolly insisted on the relationship between Palinurus and Aeneas as doubles. More recently Nicoll and Hardie[7] have persuasively suggested that Palinurus is a twin of Aeneas, and his death paves the way for the founding hero's success just as the death of Remus is a precondition for Romulus's own triumph. Romulus is evoked in the intertext of 815–16, the famous line by Ennius in which Romulus's deification is announced, *Annales* 54–55 Sk.:

"unus erit quem tu tolles in caerula caeli
templa"

If Palinurus is a randomly chosen scapegoat we could be exempted (as, for instance, Bandera argues)[8] from further scrutiny of the reasons why he is chosen to die. On the other hand at least since Servius readers and critics have been tempted to read deeper motivations in the choice of Palinurus as a victim. Servius (*ad Aen.*5.840) already suggested that the personification of Somnus is used *more poetico* to stand, simply, for Palinurus's very human falling asleep. This is important to the interpretation of the scene, since Palinurus is weighing the relative value of two moral options which can be summarised, with Hardie, as 'vigilant toil' and 'easeful sleep'.[9] Others have seen in the death of Palinurus , which does in effect bring to a close the Odyssean part of the poem, the necessary conse-

quence of changed conditions. He is no longer needed, not unlike Anchises or Creusa or Caieta, and he must disappear. At this point in his *Bildungsroman* Aeneas no longer needs an *alter ego,* nor indeed a father or a nurse. Putnam, for instance, claims that Palinurus must die 'by virtue of the knowledge of the sea and loyalty he symbolizes.'[10] Or one could take symbolism one step further, and read in Palinurus's death the symbol of "man's solitude", weakness and isolation *vis à vis* the dark forces of the unknown, as Laudizi and Setaioli have recently suggested.[11]

Yet I suspect that even framing the issue of Palinurus's death as a contrast between toil and rest might be reductive. Let us return to Somnus. Whether or not we consider it a quasi-metaphor for Palinurus's own mental processes we cannot simply dispose of the connotations that couching these in divine imagery inevitably implies: Palinurus is a victim offered to placate the gods, as Neptunus points out, and it is significant that a divine agent carries out the required sacrifice.

IV

Palinurus's death can arguably be read at two different levels. On the one, following Connolly's lead, we should pay attention to Palinurus's psychology, and look at the possible 'subjective' explanation for his death-wish. At another level, we should look for the 'objective' causes that make Palinurus the chosen victim for the sacrifice.

In Connolly's reading, specific subjective qualities mark Palinurus out as a sacrificial victim. Connolly points out that he is, at least in his heart, disenchanted with Aeneas' project, and simply too worn out and despondent to carry on. Already in Lucan Palinurus is said to be seeking *portus ... quietos* (9.43).

The adjective *fessus* features many times in book 5. In reference to Palinurus it is used at line 845, when Somnus offers relief for his *fessos ... oculos*. Previously, tiredness had been exposed by Nautes as the main reason for the Trojan women's decision to sabotage the mission. *Fessus* recurs at 715 and 717, but is effectively explained at 714. This is not, simply, physical exhaustion, but also disenchantment with Aeneas's plan: these are people whom *pertaesum magni incepti rerumque tuarum est* (714). These people quit Aeneas and his grandiose plan, and Palinurus will shortly follow suit in a more dramatic and radical manner. In spurning Aeneas's *magnum inceptum* and *res* all these people display

again an attitude which can be loosely considered Epicurean. They are not interested in the grand scheme of things, they have had enough. As Lucretius suggests at the end of book 3 of *De rerum natura,* life is a banquet one should at some point consider leaving without too much fuss, because craving to go on living is useless.

In search of the 'objective' reasons which justify Palinurus's death it is useful to look first at Aeneas's words after he discovers that Palinurus has fallen into the sea.

In the last two lines of the book Aeneas delivers his own interpretation of the events:

> *"o nimium caelo et pelago confise sereno,*
> *nudus in ignota, Palinure, iacebis harena."* (870–1)

These lines echo quite closely epigrams written for those dead at sea.[12] Their epigrammatic tone is important, as if Aeneas did not want to labour the reasons why Palinurus actually died. He is willing to consider only one interpretation, the steersman's excessive confidence in his own craft. His assumption when he meets Palinurus in the Underworld will be different, since there his first words will refer to divine agency:

> *"quis te, Palinure, deorum*
> *eripuit nobis medioque sub aequore mersit?"* (6.341–2)

But we actually know from Palinurus himself that, on the contrary, he is far from trusting the potentially deceiving calm sea. *Confise* at 870 picks up *confidere* at 849 (*mene huic confidere monstro?*), and emphasises what we as readers already know, namely that Aeneas's interpretation is wrong. It is equally startling that Aeneas does not even entertain the thought that Palinurus's disappearance might have been caused by divine agents. Note also that *confise sereno (sc.pelago)* at 870 echoes *fraude sereni (sc.caeli)* at 851, thus reinforcing the contrast between how Palinurus actually behaved and how Aeneas thought he did.

I would like to argue that Aeneas is implicitly pointing here at what he considers the true reason for Palinurus's death. Palinurus consistently displays in the various scenes in which he appears a strong reliance on empirical knowledge, and a proportionately limited interest in supernatural explanations. This contrast is made explicit at 5.17ff., where, in spite

of a cursory reference to *pater Neptunus* in line 14, Palinurus's lack of trust in divine intervention involves Iuppiter himself:

> *"magnanime Aenea, non, si mihi Iuppiter auctor*
> *spondeat, hoc sperem Italiam contingere caelo.*
> *mutati transuersa fremunt et uespere ab atro*
> *consurgunt uenti, atque in nubem cogitur aer.*
> *nec nos obniti contra nec tendere tantum*
> *sufficimus. superat quoniam* Fortuna*, sequamur,*
> *quoque uocat uertamus iter. nec litora longe*
> *fida reor fraterna Erycis portusque Sicanos,*
> *si modo rite memor seruata remetior astra."*

Significantly, in his reply Aeneas is careful to dissociate himself from Palinurus's interpretation of the events. He simply admits that the winds are hostile, and he then hastens to displace responsibility on to the steersman himself:

> *tum pius Aeneas : "equidem sic poscere uentos*
> *iamdudum et frustra cerno te tendere contra.*
> *flecte uiam uelis."*

Indeed, Aeneas is quick to recognise that the current predicament offers him a chance to return to Sicily, to the city of Acestes, and to visit again the grave of Anchises. Immediately afterwards, as he speaks to the Trojans and announces his new plans for the games, he attributes the detour, which happens to take place exactly one year after his father's death, to the will of the gods (45–57):

> *"Dardanidae magni, genus alto a sanguine diuum,*
> *annuus exactis completur mensibus orbis,*
> *ex quo reliquias diuinique ossa parentis*
> *condidimus terra maestasque sacrauimus aras;*
> *iamque dies, nisi fallor, adest, quem semper acerbum,*
> *semper honoratum (*sic di uoluistis*) habebo.*
> *hunc ego Gaetulis agerem si Syrtibus exsul,*
> *Argolicoue mari deprensus et urbe Mycenae,*
> *annua uota tamen sollemnisque ordine pompas*

exsequerer strueremque suis altaria donis.
nunc ultro ad cineres ipsius et ossa parentis
haud equidem sine mente, reor, sine numine diuum
adsumus et portus delati intramus amicos."

What to Palinurus appears as a chance series of events, is to Aeneas the unfolding of a divine plan. Similarly, at the end of the book, Palinurus is unable to understand that his own skills are utterly useless in the face of divine power, and in his epigrammatic envoi Aeneas faults Palinurus for what would appear to him as the unacceptable ignorance of the superiority of divine power to any intellectual or technical prowess conceived in purely human terms.

This contrast between different views of interpreting events and identifying the causes behind them is to be found throughout book 5, where gods repeatedly intervene to modify the normal course of events. In the boat-race, for instance, Mnestheus is on the verge of catching up with Cloanthus, and they seem bound to finish the race side by side when Cloanthus invokes Neptunus's assistance, and is miraculously helped to the finish line by a chorus of Nereides. Cloanthus's *pietas* easily overcomes Mnestheus's reliance on *summae ... vires* (226) and his lay invocation to the winds (211 *ventis ... vocatis).* What sets Aeneas apart from lesser fellow Trojans, and shapes his unique form of *pietas,* is precisely his uncanny ability to recognise divine intervention and heed it. Aeneas consistently remarks on the gods' power to turn events in unpredictable ways. Consider for instance the shooting contest at 519ff. Eurytion shoots down the target, a dove, but, when old Acestes decides to shoot the arrow anyway, a prodigy marks him as the winner, as Aeneas is quick to recognise (533–34):

"sume, pater, nam te uoluit rex magnus Olympi
talibus auspiciis exsortem ducere honores."

The most relevant passage, however, is the dialogue between Aeneas and the old sailor Nautes at 700ff. The ships have already been damaged, and Aeneas must decide whether to yield to the pressure of the women and other Trojans, who clamour for a premature end to the journey, or the demands of *fata* (703). Nautes is in many senses a double of Palinurus, yet he is not equally doomed. His technical prowess is remarkable, but the narrator explicitly connects it with divine favour:

tum senior Nautes, unum Tritonia Pallas
quem docuit multaque insignem reddidit arte,
haec responsa dabat, uel quae portenderet ira
magna deum uel quae fatorum posceret ordo;
isque his Aenean solatus uocibus infit:
"nate dea, quo fata trahunt retrahuntque sequamur;
quidquid erit, superanda omnis fortuna ferendo est."

Nautes's reference to *Fortuna* is significantly different from Palinurus's at line 22. There Palinurus claimed that *superat quoniam Fortuna, sequamur,* and advocated the interruption of the journey. *Fortuna,* which editors here print with a capital F-, is another name for *casus.* In Nautes's words *fortuna,* in a negative sense and with small f-, is an unforeseen setback which must be taken in one's stride, one of the turns that *fata* impose in their not immediately intelligible movements back and forth (709 *trahunt retrahuntque).* But Nautes does not lose sight of the *Aeneid's* ultimate *telos,* and his suggestion, eminently practical, is that at this time Aeneas select the best people to carry on the search for the fated homeland and leave in Sicily those who are no longer up to the task (714–15). As Aeneas ponders the wisdom of Nautes's suggestions, Anchises appears *imperio Iovis* (726) and lends his authoritative support to the sailor's words.

Palinurus's mistake is thus at the same time epistemological and ethical. He simply does not possess a correct understanding of how events unfold, and who controls them. His epistemic outlook is narrowly human and empiric, and, much as an Epicurean would, he prefers to look at visible causes interpreted on the basis of his skills, just as he points out at line 25: *si modo rite memor servata remetior astra.* Since a victim must be chosen, Palinurus seems to be the ideal candidate, the most removed from the emphatically non-technical *pietas* which Aeneas so prominently displays in this book.

Palinurus's appearance in book 6 seems to confirm this hypothesis. During the journey to the Underworld announced by Anchises, Aeneas meets his *gubernator Palinurus,* who offers a first-person account of his demise. This passage raises some significant problems, since it does not coincide in all details with what we have been told in book 5. This is not the moment to go over such discrepancies in detail, especially since the points I would like to emphasise are not directly affected by the issue.

Even in the Underworld Palinurus is unwilling to attribute his demise to divine intervention, and, in flagrant contradiction with book 5, claims that he has succumbed to a tempest. Moreover, at the end of his explanation of the events, Palinurus begs Aeneas to pick him up and allow him to cross the river which, being as yet unburied, he has not so far been allowed to cross. His request is harshly rebuked, not by Aeneas, but by the Sibyl, who effectively charges Palinurus with impiety:

> *"unde haec, o Palinure, tibi tam dira cupido?*
> *tu Stygias inhumatus aquas amnemque seuerum*
> *Eumenidum aspicies, ripamue iniussus adibis?*
> *desine fata deum flecti sperare precando."* (6.373–6)

Here, in spite, for instance, of the fact that Palinurus acknowledges that Aeneas cannot possibly be visiting the Underworld without divine consent (368 *sine numine divum),* Palinurus is portrayed again as insensitive to the rigid rules of divine order which affect humans in life as well as in death, and it is significant that the charge of *dira cupido* levelled by the Sibyl mixes two Lucretian *iuncturae, dira libido* (4.1046) and *dira cuppedine* (4.1090).[13]

Palinurus's tendentially impious behaviour is highlighted by the contrast with a related character. Palinurus is not the only descendant of the *Iasius pater* who is prominently mentioned at 3.168. Towards the end of the poem a relation – Macrobius (*sat.*5.15.12) wonders whether they are in fact brothers – Iapyx son of Iasus (392 *Iasides)* will treat Aeneas' wounds. Iapyx is no less skilled than Palinurus, but his interpretation of events is very different, as he is quick to assume that the wounds could not possibly have healed without divine help (12.427–29):

> *"non haec humanis opibus, non arte magistra*
> *proueniunt, neque te, Aenea, mea dextera seruat:*
> *maior agit deus atque opera ad maiora remittit."*[14]

If this interpretation of Palinurus's shortcomings is correct, he would be falling into a type of mistake which is not unique in Virgil.[15] A comparable scene can be found in the first *Eclogue,* where Meliboeus and Tityrus discuss their respective errors of knowledge. Meliboeus laments that the oaks 'often touched from the sky' (17) had in fact predicted an impending

disaster, but he did not pay due attention to these signs, because his own mind was 'ill-fated' (16: *si mens non laeva fuisset).* Tityrus, on the other hand, was ensnared in an analogical fallacy: he thought he knew that small things could provide a reliable image of larger things (23: *sic parvis componere magna solebam),* that he could imagine Rome on the basis of the nearby small town. This is very much a Lucretian error, the very foundation of the analogical method of *De rerum natura.* Unlike Meliboeus however, who finds no remedy for his misjudgment, Tityrus does discover a way to overcome his mistake. His 'conversion' arrives when he is finally able to 'recognize the favourable gods' (41: *praesentis ... cognoscere divos),* ask the famous *iuvenis* for a *responsum* (44), and engage in the pastoral activities recommended by the *iuvenis* (45: "feed, youths, your oxen as of old; rear your bulls"; *'pascite ut ante boves, pueri; summittite tauros').* In this way Tityrus was able to gain the *fortuna* to which Meliboeus immediately refers in his answer: *fortunate senex ...* (46).

It is not the analogical science praised by Lucretius that can help Tityrus, but a form of knowledge that depends on mutually reinforcing bonds between social and religious powers, a form of knowledge that ultimately recognizes its subordinate status and learns how to 'know the gods', as Virgil will repeat at *G.*2.493. *Fortuna* can derive only from 'knowing the helpful gods', *praesentis cognoscere divos,* that is the *praesentia numina* of *G.*1.10 (Virgil refers *praesentis* to divinities only in these two passages before the *Aeneid).* That is why Virgil exclaims at *G.*2.458 'o happy farmers, o too happy should they realize their blessings!' *(o fortunatos nimium, sua si bona norint,/agricolas):* their happiness is there for them to grab, provided they understand the hierarchical structures that shape both the relationship among humans, and the relationship between them and the gods. The proud illusion of *cognoscere causas* should be replaced by the willingness to *cognoscere curas* (1.117), to listen to the poet and his practical, consciously limited precepts based on elementary forms of connection between visible phenomena.

V

I hope I have given some indications of the fact that Connolly's slim book still holds considerable interest for classicists, apart from being a very interesting work in its own right. His reading of Virgil is clearly sympathetic if we compare it with the strong ambivalence *vis à vis* the *Aeneid*

which marks British culture after the first World War.[16] If our point of reference, however, is the other Bloomsbury icon, T.S.Eliot, then of course this assessment must change. It would be difficult to find two works more different from each other than *The Unquiet Grave* and 'What is a classic?'.[17] Eliot, too, seems to identify himself with Aeneas, but he rather sees the *Aeneid* as 'the new insight into History', a representation of order and power which its status as a classic extends and projects over the whole of Western culture. Aeneas already foreshadows that 'prototype of a Christian hero', very distant from the self-doubting and self-destructing hero Connolly chooses as his own model, that Eliot will promote in later years.

On the other hand Connolly's Virgil finds a comparable soulmate in the protagonist of H.Broch's *Death of Virgil,* a more extended and deeper psycho-analytic enquiry into the motivations of the poet. In a letter from Princeton on 10 May 1945, Broch writes to Aldous Huxley in terms to which Connolly would have easily subscribed: 'This essentially renouncing attitude *vis à vis* art has been mine, now, for numerous years, and it was inevitably to become a real problem for me. It is because of it that I have been led to the historical Virgil, in whose desire to destruct the *Aeneid* I have perceived a similar renunciation.'

Today, a psycho-analytic approach to the *Aeneid* would need to take up a different strategy, ignoring on the one hand the psychology of the author, fascinating as it might be, and the kind of sexual symbolism that Connolly refers to at the very end of *The Unquiet Grave.* There, by way of 'a last clue', he points out that the name of Palinurus, in Greek, means 'one-who-makes-water-again', a *double entendre* Martial will exploit.[18] Given, as Connolly points out, the 'sexual significance' of the verb in Latin, and 'the importance attached to their names by neurotics', the possibility opens up for 'a deep analysis on Freudian lines,' 'should time permit – and funds be available' (104).

This analysis was never to materialise, but Virgil's sea had one last role in Connolly's life, or rather his death, as his family and friends chose a line from the first book of the *Aeneid* (1.167) as an epigraph for his tomb-stone, *intus aquae dulces vivoque sedilia saxo.*

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Notes

This is the slightly revised text of a lecture given in London on 26 March 1999 at the kind invitation of the Virgil Society. I have not altered its colloquial tone, and consequently kept secondary references to a minimum. I am very grateful to Carlotta Dionisotti, Ingo Gildenhard and Philip Hardie for their comments; and to Roland Mayer for his comments and his gift of the 1945 edition of *The Unquiet Grave.*

1. W.F. Jackson Knight, Cumaean Gates. *A Reference of the Sixth Aeneid to the Initiation Pattern* (Oxford, 1936).
2. J. Lewis, *Cyril Connolly. A Life* (London, 1997). 353.
3. Jackson Knight, cit., 168.
4. M.C.J. Putnam, *The poetry of the Aeneid: four studies in imaginative unity and design* (Cambridge, Mass., 1965) esp. 93–104; C.P. Segal, "*Aeternum per saecula nomen,* the Golden Bough and the Tragedy of History: Part I," *Arion* 4, 1965, 617–657 at 645–654: "In Palinurus we come close to the heart of Vergil's tragic sense" (654).
5. Note the 'iconic' position of *media* in the middle of the line, and *Palinurus* engulfed *media ... in unda:* cf. D.L. Lateiner, "Mimetic syntax: metaphor from word order, especially in Ovid," *AJP* 111, 1990, 204–237, esp. 210–211, 217–221.
6. Note that 3.516 *Arcturum pluviasque Hyadas geminosque Triones* – a line dense with sophisticated astronomical knowledge, is repeated verbatim from 1.744, where it indicates one of the topics of Iopas's song. The song, which in turn is related to such passages as *G.*2.475ff and *E.*6.31ff, has a distinctly didactic, rationalistic and almost Lucretian ring to it.
7. W.S.M. Nicoll, 'The Sacrifice of Palinurus,' *CQ* 38, 1988, 459–72; P.Hardie, *Virgil* (Greece & Rome New Surveys in the Classics 28), Oxford, 1998, 104–114.
8. C. Bandera, 'Sacrificial levels in Virgil's *Aeneid,' Arethusa* 14, 1981, 217–39.
9. Hardie 113.
10. Putnam 98.
11. G. Laudizi, 'Palinuro (Verg.*Aen.* V 827ss.; VI 337 ss.),' *Maia* 40, 1988, 57–73; A. Setaioli, 'Palinuro: genesi di un personaggio poetico,' *Bollettino di Studi Latini* 27, 1997, 56–81.
12. A. Barchiesi, 'Palinuro e Caieta. Due "epigrammi" virgiliani (*Aen.* V 870 ss.; VII 1–4),' *Maia* 31, 1979, 3–11.
13. *Dira cupido* recurs at 9.185, where Nisus highlights 'the choice between naturalist and supernaturalist explanation of phenomena' (P. Hardie).
14. Iapyx's words make sense in connection with the poet's work as considered by Virgil.
15. I borrow the following paragraph from A.S., "The Boundaries of Knowledge in Virgil's *Georgics,*" in T.N.Habinek-A.S., eds, *The Roman Cultural Revolution,* (Cambridge, 1997), 63–89.
16. See Th. Ziolkowski, *Virgil and the Moderns* (Princeton 1993), 101–145.
17. Both works are dated 1944, but Connolly's was written in the gloomy days of 1942–43.
18. Martial 3.78.

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The Poetics and Afterlife of Virgil's Descent to the Underworld: Servius, Dante, Fulgentius and the *Culex*

A paper given to the Virgil Society on 12 February 2000

I

The punishments in the underworld of the *Aeneid* notoriously foreshadow the Christian hell. Philippe Ariès, in a history of Western attitudes to death, has observed that 'the distance between the underworlds of Homer and Virgil is greater than the distance between Virgil's underworld and the earliest figurations of the Christian afterlife.'[1] This is hardly surprising: there was a very strong, almost invincible, tradition for the works of Virgil. Throughout the early centuries of our era they were firmly stapled into educational curricula, whilst Homer virtually disappeared from western Europe, along with other pagan Greek works which contained *katabases* – the standard term for accounts of the world beyond the grave.[2]

The best single study of the reception of Virgil in late antiquity and the medieval period is probably still provided by Domenico Comparetti's *Vergil in the Middle Ages,* first published in English in 1895.[3] Surprisingly though, that work makes no attempt to explore or explain the special impact of Virgil's *katabasis* in the sixth book of the *Aeneid* on later ages. Comparetti concentrates on the afterlife of the Virgilian corpus as a whole, and does not treat the influence of specific portions of it, apart from the Fourth *Eclogue.* This is a common failing among historians of literary tradition and sociologists of literature, who often assume that researching into the fortunes of an ancient text in later times does not require close engagement with its contents.[4] However, if one is dealing with something

as widely disseminated as the *Aeneid,* certain *bits* of it tend to have as much cultural importance as the whole. Earlier audiences may never have read (or heard) the entire poem themselves. Whilst Dante can plausibly claim to have read the *Aeneid 'tutta quanta,'* other authors of medieval vision literature may not have been so concerned with the poetic context of the *katabasis* that inspired their accounts of life after death.

Nonetheless studies like Comparetti's are still extremely helpful. They show that the reception of Virgil in later times is complex and very difficult to plot. They paint a picture of Christian fathers who were tormented by the awkward fact that they disapproved of pagan literature as much as they depended on it for guidance of their Latin expression. A striking example of this tension is to be found in a letter written in the ninth century from Ermenrich of Ellwangen to Grimaldus the Abbot of St. Gall.[5] Ermenrich is worried that he may have quoted from Virgil rather too much. He claims to have had bad dreams about the poet:

> *Nolo tamen ipsum videre, quem credo in pessimo loco manere, et quia terret me visus eius. Sepe vero quando legebam illum, et post lectionem capiti subponebam, in primo sopore, qui post laborem solet esse dulcissimus, statim affuit monstrum quoddam fuscum, et per omnia horribile, interdum gestabat codicem, interdum calamum ad aures, veluti scripturus aliquid, ridebat ad me, vel, quia dicta eius legebam, irridebat me. Ast ego evigilans, signabam me signaculo crucis, librum eius longeque proiciens iterum membra dedi quieti. Sed nec cessavit fantasma ipsius terrens me, ferens tridentem, nescio utrum Plutonis domestici eius, an alicuius alterius pre manibus, facie furva solos dentes candidos ostendit: quamque comminationem illius similiter in nomine Domini signatus contempsi, veluti ludum eius ante risibilem pro nihilo habui.*
>
> *Epistula Ermenrici ad Grimaldum*
> ed. Dümmler (1898), 561–2

> Anyway I have no wish to see Virgil, whom I believe to be in a very bad place, and besides the sight of him terrifies me. Often indeed, when I was reading him, and after reading put him under my head, in that first sleep which should be sweetest after toil, there immediately appeared before me a dark

> monster, dreadful in every aspect. Sometimes it was brandishing a codex, other times with a pen behind its ear as one about to write, it was either laughing in my presence, or, because I was reading his words, it was mocking me. But waking up, I signed myself with a sign of the cross and hurling his book far away, again gave my limbs to sleep. But his phantasma did not stop terrifying me. He carried a trident – I know not if it belonged to Pluto his domestic companion, or to some other – in his hands and with his gloomy appearance only his white teeth were showing. Again I disregarded this menacing of his in a similar way, by signing myself in the name of the Lord, and reckoned it of no account, like his earlier trick of laughing.

The alarming event is related in a letter which is largely a pedantic, donnish discussion of good linguistic usage in Latin. The irony is that much of this good usage has to be derived from Virgil – whose person Ermenrich so deplores. Yet even as it deprecates Virgil, this passage uses Virgilian phrases and diction.[6] This embarrassing clash of interests rears its head again a few pages later:

> *Linquamus, pater, iam linquamus Maronem cum Sinonte suo mendacissimum, et in Stige pessima palude cum Apolline et Musis suis sepultum. Ibi amplexetur Proserpinam suam et audiat Orpheum pro Euridice sua diis infernalibus citharizantem ...*
> *Celestis Rex maledicat talia figmenta. Et quid hec eadem nominare valeo? Nisi supra compositorum equorum, qui redam tuam trahunt, stercora decidentia. Unde non immerito Ennius poeta a quodam interrogatus, quid quereret in Marone, respondit: 'Aurum,' inquiens 'in stercore quero.' Et quia prout nosti, sicut stercus parat agrum ad proferendum satius frumentum, ita dicta paganorum poetarum, licet feda sint, quia non vera, multa tamen adiuvant ad percipiendum divinum eloquium.*
>
> *Epistula Ermenrici ad Grimaldum*
> ed. Dümmler (1898), 563

> Let us leave him, my father, let us leave Maro, who is as mendacious as his very own Sinon, buried in the foulest swamp of the Styx with Apollo and his Muses. There let him embrace Proserpina and listen to Orpheus strumming for his Eurydice from the infernal gods ...
> May the King of Heaven curse such fictions. What then am I capable of calling them? Mere dung falling from horses reined together as they draw your cart along. Wherefore, Ennius the poet, when asked by someone what he was looking for in Virgil, replied not unreasonably 'I am looking for gold in dung.' Since even as dung spread upon the field enriches it to a better harvest, so the writings of the pagan poets, though they are foul – and indeed untrue – are very helpful for the understanding of divine eloquence.

Of course the very images of the Hell to which Ermenrich would consign the mendacious poet come from that poet himself. Ermenrich depends as much on the content of Virgil as he depends on the 'dung' of his literary form. The anecdote about Ennius is quoted almost *verbatim* from a story told by Suetonius. But in Suetonius, it was of course *Virgil* who was supposed to have made this discourteous remark about his predecessor.[7] Ermenrich's perverse manipulation of this literary anecdote and his utter disregard for chronology is extraordinary to modern eyes – but it could well have been deliberate. For medieval scholars, Virgil was the chief representative of the Classical pagan tradition. But it is important to bear in mind that the major form of commentary on the poet was grammatical and rhetorical. This was the case from late antiquity right up to the time of Dante. Allegorical interpretations (like those of Bernard Silvestris and John of Salisbury) which sought to resolve the tension between studying pagan letters and holding to Christian doctrine, did emerge in the twelfth century. However, such interpretations do not seem to have been taught in the classroom.[8] Exposition of Virgil remained on the whole confined to the teaching of grammar.

All this indicates that if we want to explain the influence of the sixth book of the *Aeneid* on the poetic imagination of Dante, or on the superstitious imagination of Christian vision literature, we cannot merely go along standard routes. The purpose of this paper is to explore, and to try out some explanations for, the impact of Virgil's account of the under-

world on some of his Christian readers up to and including Dante. The exploring will come in the next section (II). I shall consider some passages, early in the tradition of response to Virgil – and not that typical of it – in which commentators are concerned with constructing meaning and content in Virgil, rather than with the expression and form of the poetry. I will try to show how these passages might be partly responsible for the cultural afterlife of a book that deals with life after death. The final part (III) will offer some tentative explanations for the cultural impact of Virgil's *katabasis* in terms of *Aeneid* 6 'itself' – that is Virgil's form, diction and rhetoric. The topography and narrative strategies of *Aeneid* 6 may have bypassed Virgil's more immediate successors, to work more directly on later readers like Dante. There is a moral to the whole story which might be drawn by implication from this paper as a whole: some Christian interpretations of *Aeneid* 6, for all their apparent extravagance, raise wider questions about ways Virgil is read now. I am not so confident that we are any better at reading Virgil than those whose readings we disparagingly call 'allegories'.[9]

II

The fourth century corpus of commentary on Virgil known as 'Servius' is a useful place to begin exploring the early impact of Virgil's *katabasis*. The sixth book of the *Aeneid* is introduced in this way:

> *Totus quidem Vergilius scientia plenus est, in qua hic liber possidet principatum, cuius ex Homero pars maior est. et dicuntur aliqua simpliciter, multa de historia, multa per altam scientiam philosophorum, theologorum, Aegyptiorum, adeo ut plerique de his singulis huius libri integras scripserint pragmatias.*
>
> Servius (introduction to *Aeneid* 6)

Though all of Virgil is full of knowledge it is predominant in this book, of which the greater part is from Homer. Some things are simply said, many from history, many from the deep wisdom of philosophers, theologians, Egyptians, to the extent that a good many have written whole treatises about these individual aspects of this book.

Although the observations in Servius are principally those of a grammarian, we are told that the *Aeneid* is full of *scientia,* in which the sixth book excels.

Macrobius, whose *Saturnalia* was also written in the fourth to fifth century AD, certainly seems to regard Virgil as the fount of all learning. In the preface to this work of Virgilian criticism, Macrobius says that it is meant to be a 'tool for knowledge' (*scientiae supellex*), and he sees rhetoric as the main form of wisdom belonging to Virgil. Macrobius had an extensive influence on the medieval conception of what Virgil was about, and that preoccupation with rhetoric is obviously in line with the chief focus of Virgilian studies in the middle ages. But the *Saturnalia* takes the form of a symposium in which different speakers eulogize the poet's various strengths: there is a character called Eustathius who deals with Virgil's knowledge of astrology and philosophy, though none of this discussion has survived. But at 1.24.18 we are told:

> *De astrologia totaque philosophia, quam parcus et sobrius operi suo nusquam reprehendendus aspersit.*
>
> Macrobius *Saturnalia* 1.24.18
>
> [The *Aeneid*] concerns astrology and all philosophy, which the poet should not be reproached for sprinkling soberly and sparingly into his work.

Macrobius acknowledges, along with Servius, the role of *scientia* and philosophy in Virgil.[10] Presumably his discussion would have said something about the sixth book of the *Aeneid.*

But important as any contemporary conceptions are which Servius might have reflected, it is worth speculating about later notions this introduction to 6 might have inspired. The Servian commentary, though much tampered with at certain stages, is the fullest we have from antiquity. It was also, like Macrobius, read in various forms from the time of its production right through the middle ages. Servius's introduction to the sixth book of the *Aeneid* (quoted earlier) tells us that if wisdom is what we are after, this is the place to look. Such a remark might well have ramified the importance of that particular book for medieval Christian readers. On the other hand, the information that a 'great part is taken from Homer' would have meant relatively little to such readers – who had no Greek, and who

thought that the canonised *Ilias Latina* in 1070 hexameters was Homer's output. Servius's use of the word *simpliciter* here is important. It means more than just 'simply.' Elsewhere in the Servian corpus it is set against *per allegoriam: simpliciter* means 'literally.' A comment on verse 20 of the third *Eclogue* provides one example:

> *sed melius simpliciter accipimus: refutandae enim sunt allegoriae in bucolico carmine, nisi cum, ut supra diximus, ex aliqua agrorum perditorum necessitate descendunt.*
>
> Servius on *Ecl.* 3.20

> But I think it is better we take it on one level (*simpliciter*): allegories in bucolic poetry should be done away with, except when, as I said above, they derive from the crucial theme of lost estates.

So if we take *simpliciter* in this way, our first quotation from Servius holds that much of *Aeneid* 6 is to be understood literally.[11] We can only wonder what that would have implied to certain readers of Virgil's *katabasis* at certain times. Something literal could be something credible: the antiquity of a story might prove a sufficient defence of its truth in ages when there was no clear notion corresponding to our idea of fiction and when a canonised *auctor* really had authority.[12]

What about 'philosophers, theologians, Egyptians'? *Philosophorum* and especially *theologorum* would have had certain connotations for Christians. Even *Aegyptiorum* could well represent something special to them: consider for example this excerpt from Gratian, *Concordantia discordantium canonum* (circa 1140):

> We read that Moses and Daniel were learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians and Chaldeans. We read that our Lord ordered the children of Israel to spoil the Egyptians of their gold and silver: the moral interpretation of this teaches that we should find in the poets either the gold of wisdom or the silver of eloquence, we should turn it to the profit of salutary learning. In Leviticus we also are ordered to offer up to the Lord the first fruits of honey, that is, the sweetness of human eloquence.[13]

But to show that these comments in Servius might have induced people to attach special importance to the descent to the underworld in the *Aeneid,* one should do more than posit a sufficiently ignorant Christian living in a sufficiently dark age as a token reader of Servius. It would be better to consider the response of a particular individual to Servius's comments, an individual who himself offers a portrayal of the afterlife. In my view, there are indications that the Servian corpus might have been available to Dante himself in some form.[14] This is because traces of Servius can be discerned in Dante's famous tenth letter to Can Grande della Scala, in which the poet offers an introduction to his *Commedia.* The beginning of his 'self-exegesis' is as follows:

> *Sex igitur sunt quae in principio cuiusque doctrinalis operis inquirenda sunt, videlicet subiectum, agens, forma, finis, libri titulus, et genus philosophiae.*
>
> Dante *Epistolae* 10.6
>
> There are six points then, as to which enquiry must be made at the beginning of every didactic work, namely the subject, the author, the form, the aim, the title of the book and the branch of philosophy to which it belongs.

Servius's introduction to the first book of the *Aeneid* begins thus:

> *In exponendis auctoribus haec consideranda sunt: poetae vita, titulus operis, qualitas carminis, scribentis intentio, numerus librorum, ordo librorum, explanatio.*
>
> Servius, introduction to *Aeneid* 1
>
> In providing an exposition of an author, these things should be considered: the life of the poet, the title of the work, the nature of the poem, the intention of the writer, the number of books, the order of the books, the interpretation.

However this resemblance does not prove much by itself: the schema is fairly conventional, and similar things can be found in Donatus and Boethius as well as Servius. But a little later, once Servius's *explanatio* is

underway, a remark on the third word of the *Aeneid* provides something more to go on:

> *CANO polysemus sermo est. tria enim significat aliquando 'laudo,' ut* regemque canebat*, aliquando 'divino,' ut* ipsa canas oro, *aliquando 'canto,' ut hoc loco.*
>
> Servius, on *Aen.* 1.1

> CANO is an instance of polysemous discourse; it signifies three things. It can mean 'I praise' as in *regemque canebat,* it can mean 'I prophesy' as in *ipsa canas oro* (*Aen.* 6.75), or it can mean 'I sing' as in *canto*, as it does here.

Dante, a few lines below the excerpt from the letter quoted above, also uses and explains the word *polysemus* in this way:

> *Sciendum est quod istius operis non est simplex sensus,immo dici potest polysemos, hoc est plurium sensuum; nam primus sensus est qui habetur per litteram, alius est qui habetur per significata per litteram. Et primus dicitur literalis, secundus vero allegoricus, sive moralis, sive anagogicus.*
>
> Dante *Epistolae* 10.7

> It must be understood that the meaning of this work is not of one kind only; rather the work may be described as 'polysemous,' that is, having several meanings; for the first meaning is that which is conveyed by the letter, and the next is that which is conveyed by what the letter signifies; the former of which is called 'literal,' while the latter is called allegorical or mystical.

The word *polysemus* is an unusual one, and the parallel way in which it is introduced and employed suggests to me a community between these passages of Dante and Servius. This is allowing for the fact that Dante uses the word attributively of his whole *opus* whilst in Servius it is used to characterise *sermo* or language. The change rung by Dante on the notion of *polysemus* as a critical term rather reflects what many now regard as a major artistic difference between the *Aeneid* and the *Commedia.* The

Aeneid of course has been seen to use allegory and symbols and Book 6 no less than any other. However, by and large nowadays, Virgil's poem is read, at least primarily, *simpliciter* – it sings of a *particular* man: Aeneas. In contrast, the *Commedia,* from its very opening, is seen to deal with 'everyman.'[15] The work is customarily seen to display itself as allegory, even in a primary reading. Dante's own verdict of the *Commedia* endorses this:

> *Est ergo subiectum totius operis, literaliter tantum accepti, status animarum post mortem simpliciter sumptus. Nam de illo et circa illum totius operis versatur processus. Si vero accipiatur opus allegorice, subiectum est homo, prout merendo et demerendo per arbitrii libertatem iustitiae praemiandi et puniendi obnoxius est.*
>
> Dante *Epistolae* 10.8[16]
>
> The subject then of my whole work, taken in the literal sense only, is the state of souls after death, pure and simple. For on and about that, the whole work turns. If however the work be regarded from the allegorical point of view, the subject is man according as by his merits or demerits, in the exercise of his free will, he is deserving of reward or punishment by justice.

So going back to the estimate of Virgil's *katabasis* in the Servian corpus, what might Dante's response to it be? We could look in the *Commedia.* The abundant reference throughout to the sixth book of the *Aeneid* suggests assent to Servius's claim that it is there that the *scientia* of the poem is predominant. As for the assertion that the greater part of the book is from Homer, Dante certainly has a sufficient conception of who Homer is. In the fourth Canto of the *Inferno,* Dante asks Virgil:

> 'O tu ch'onori scïenzia ed arte,
> questi chi son c' hanno cotanta onranza,
> che dal modo delli altri li diparte?'
>
> *Inferno* 4.73–5
>
> 'O thou who honourest both science and art, who are these who have such honour that it sets them apart from the condition of the rest?'

The answer from Virgil soon comes:

'Mira colui con quella spada in mano,
    che vien dinanzi ai tre sì come sire.
Quelli è Omero poeta sovrano;
    l'altro è Orazio satiro che vène;
    Ovidio è il terzo, e l'ultimo Lucano.
Però che ciascun meco si convene
    nel nome che sonò la voce sola,
    fannomi onore, e di ciò fanno bene.'
Così vidi adunar la bella scola
    di quel signor dell'altissimo canto
    che sovra li altri com'aquila vola.
Da ch'ebber ragionato insieme alquanto,
    volsersi a me con salutevol cenno;
    e 'l mio maestro sorrise del tanto:
e più d'onore ancora assai mi fenno,
    ch'e' sì mi fecer della loro schiera,
    sì ch' io fui sesto tra cotanto senno.

Inferno 4.86–102

'Mark him there with sword in hand who comes before the three as their lord; he is Homer, the sovereign poet. He that comes next is Horace the satirist, Ovid is the third, and the last Lucan. Since each shares with me in the name the one voice uttered they give me honourable welcome and in this do well.' Thus I saw assemble the noble school of that lord of loftiest song who flies like an eagle above the rest. After they had talked together for a time they turned to me with a sign of greeting, and my master smiled at this; and then they showed me still greater honour, for they made me one of their number so that I was the sixth among those high intelligences.

It must be significant that Dante depends on Virgil for the *sovrano poeta* to be pointed out to him. There is also something attractive about the conceit in verses 91–2: all the poets share in the name of *altissimo poeta* uttered by the one voice. Homer's glory is shared by Virgil, and now by Dante too, since he is here admitted to their company. There is a hierarchy, but it is a flexible one. This is a useful device on Dante's part since

he would not be sure, even after reading Servius, how much credit to assign to Homer, how much to Virgil, for the *sciënzia* he discovers.

From the remarks in his epistle to Can Grande della Scala, it seems clear that Dante would understand Servius's *simpliciter* to mean 'literally.' Whether he would have read the sixth book of the *Aeneid* allegorically or literally is another matter. But the claim that this book in particular draws from the *alta scientia* of philosophers and theologians would have a particular appeal and meaning for Dante.[17] The point here has not been so much to demonstrate inviolably Servius's influence on Dante as to illustrate the resonances Servius's observations and his privileging of book 6 of the *Aeneid* might have had for him as a medieval reader.

Servius is not the only important commentator from late antiquity to attach special importance to the *katabasis* in Virgil's epic. Fulgentius' *Expositio Continentiae Vergilianae* – an 'exposition of the content of Virgil according to moral philosophy' – does so too. This was a text which had a fundamental and dynamic role in shaping the reception of Virgil until well into the eighteenth century. Fulgentius was probably writing in the sixth century, some two hundred years after the commentaries of Servius, Tiberius Claudius Donatus, and Macrobius. His treatise stands in strong contrast to those commentators because it does not deal with grammar or rhetoric. Instead it provides our earliest example of a reading of the *Aeneid* which is first and foremost allegorical.

Fulgentius's *Expositio* also diverges from its predecessors in the manner of its presentation. It begins by taking the form of a letter from the author to a grammarian called Calcidius. The author wants to avoid treating the *Eclogues* and *Georgics* because they might be dangerous: 'in them are woven *rationes* so mystical [i.e. 'allegorical'] that in those books Virgil has included the secrets of almost every art.' Such arts include prophecy in the fourth *Eclogue,* priestly matters in the fifth, omens in the eighth and ninth, and astrology in the first *Georgic,* augury in the third *Georgic,* as well as in *Aeneid* 6.245–6. However, Fulgentius's work soon shifts from being an epistolary treatise to a dialogue with Virgil himself:

> *Cui ego: Seponas quaeso caperatos obtutus, Ausonum vatum clarissime, rancidamque altioris salsuram ingenii iocundioris quolibet mellis sapore dulcescas: nam non illa in tuis operibus quaerimus ... sed tantum illa quaerimus levia, quae mensualibus stipendiis grammatici distrahunt puerilibus*

auscultatibus. Tum ille contracto rugis multiplicibus supercilio: 'Putabam, inquit, vel te homuncule, creperum aliquid desipere, in cuius corde vecturam meas onerosiores exposuissem sarcinulas; at tu telluris glabro solidior, adipatum quidpiam ructuas. (ruptuas Helm*). Cui ego: 'Serva ista quaeso tuis Romanis, quibus haec nosse laudabile competit et inpune succedit; nobis vero erit maximum si vel extremas tuas praestringere contigerit fimbrias. Ad haec ille: 'Quatenus, inquit, in his tibi discendis non adipata grassedo ingenii, quam temporis formido periculosa reluctat, de nostro torrentis ingenii impetu breviorem urnulam praelibabo, quae tibi crapulae plenitudine nausiam movere non possit ... In omnibus nostris opusculis fisici ordinis argumenta induximus, quo per duodena librorum volumina pleniorem humanae vitae monstrassem statum. Denique ideo tale dicendi exordium sumpsimus: 'arma virumque cano,' in armis virtutem, in viro sapientiam demonstrantes ...*

Expositio (ed. Helm), 85–6

I said: 'If you please, put aside your frowning expressions, o most famous of Italian poets and sweeten the bitter sauce of your difficult ideas with the condiment of sweet honey, for I do not seek these [philosophical] things in your writings ... I seek only the easy things grammarians expound to their boyish ears for monthly fees.' Then, wrinkling his brow Virgil said: 'I thought, little man, that you were too foolish for me to load my heavier burdens on your heart. You are more dense than a dirt clod and will sleep through anything weighty.' I said: 'Save that sort of knowledge, I pray, for your Romans for whom it is honourable and harmless. It will be enough for me to touch the lowest hem of your robe.' 'He said: 'As far as your coarse intelligence and the timidity of your age permit you to learn, I will dip out just a few drops from the fountain of my swelling genius and explain these matters to you. This small measure will prevent you from becoming so drunk that you get sick ... In all my works I treated subjects relating to natural philosophy. And in the twelve books of the *Aeneid,* I revealed fully the condition of man's life. And I began the exordium with

> 'Arms and the man I sing' referring to virtue by 'arms' and 'wisdom' by 'man' ...

There follows an elaborate exegesis of the poem's opening before a very close and chronologically thorough summary and interpretation of the *Aeneid*. There is no explicit statement in the text by either 'Fulgentius', the narrator, or by 'Virgil', the character, to claim special importance for the sixth book. The priority is rather suggested by more space and attention being paid to that book by Fulgentius's Virgil than to all the other books put together. The commentary he supplies on 7–12 constitutes less than half the amount supplied for Book 6.

The last part of the exposition of the sixth book by the character of Virgil gives a fairly representative impression of how that commentary reads:

> '... *Nam et vide quid filium docet:*
> *Principio caelum et terram camposque liquentes*
> *Lucentemque globum lunae Titaniaque astra.*
> *Vides ergo quia sicut Deum creatorem oportuit et de secretis naturae mysteriis docet et reduces iterum animas iterum de vitis demonstrans et futura ostendit.'*
>
> Expositio (ed. Helm), 102

> '... Note what [Anchises] teaches his son:
> In the beginning [an indwelling spirit infused] the heavens and the earth and the watery plains and the shining orb of the moon and the stars of Titan.
>
> [6.724–5]
>
> You can see that the creator must be God and that Anchises teaches about the hidden mysteries of nature, and describes the souls returning again and again from life, and reveals the future.'

At this point Fulgentius responds, not to express agreement, as he has done so far, but to heckle for the first time:

Ad haec ego: O vatum Latialis autenta, itane tuum clarissimum ingenium tam stultae defensionis fuscare debuisti caligine? Tune ille qui dudum in bucolicis mystice persecutus dixeras:

'Iam redit et virgo, redeunt Saturnia regna;
Iam nova progenies caelo promittitur alto,'

nunc vero dormitanti ingenio Academicum quippiam stertens ais: 'Sublimes animas iterumque ad tarda reverti corpora.' Numquidem oportuerat te inter tanta dulcia poma mora etiam ponere tuaeque luculentae sapientiae funalia caligare? Ad haec ille subridens: 'Si, inquit, inter tantas Stoicas veritates aliquid etiam Epicuream non desipissem, paganus non essem; nullo enim omnia vera nosse contingit nisi vobis, quibus sol veritatis inluxit. Neque enim hoc pacto in tuis libris conductus narrator accessi, ut id quod sentire me oportuerat, disputarem et non ea potius quae senseram lucidarem. Audi ergo quae restant ...

Expositio (ed. Helm), 102–3

I said: 'O truest of Italian bards, how could you have obscured your brilliant genius in the darkness of such a stupid line of defence? Wasn't it you, who writing allegorically in the *Eclogues,* once said:

'Now a virgin returns and the reign of Saturn returns
Now a new race is promised by high heaven.'

[*Eclogue* 4.6–7]

But now, snoring out some sort of Academic tripe while your wit is asleep, you say: 'Heavenly souls go up to heaven and are returned again to slow bodies.' [*Aen.* 6.720]. Why did you put blackberries among so many sweet apples and darken the torches of your brilliant wisdom?' Smiling he said: 'If I had not muddled something Epicurean in with so great Stoic truths, I would not have been a pagan. No people except you Christians on whom the sun of truth has shone can know all of the truth. But I was not brought to come in as a narrator in your book with the stipulation that I should argue about what I should

> have known, but to explain those things that I did know. Now listen to what remains ... '[18]

Any merit in Fulgentius, including such evident humour, was lost on Comparetti, who says of Fulgentius that he was 'violent and incoherent ... disregard[ing] every law of common sense in such a patent and well-nigh brutal manner, that it is hard to conceive how any sane man can seriously have undertaken such a work, and harder still to believe that other sane men should have accepted it as an object for serious consideration.'[19] Exactly a century later the article on Fulgentius in the *OCD* in 1996 is just as disdainful: '[the *Expositio*] is characterised by extreme foolishness of thought.' However, it is not so much the nature of the allegorising as the emphasis Fulgentius' Virgil places on the sixth book of the *Aeneid* which is of interest here. The excerpts from the *Expositio* quoted here should suffice to highlight its status as an amusing literary creation, which is as much a parodic variant of Virgil's *katabasis,* as a commentary on it. In this respect alone, the importance of Fulgentius for manipulating Dante's reception of *Aeneid* 6 in the *Inferno* should now be very evident.[20]

I mentioned that in his introduction to the *Expositio,* Fulgentius professed to eschew arts like augury treated in *Georgic* 3, and also in *Aeneid* 6.245–6, which he actually quotes. Those verses describe the Sibyl cutting the bristles from between the horns of the heifers and laying them on the fire, as she invokes Hecate. Twenty lines later in Virgil's narrative, we hear another *vates* making an invocation which is just as sinister. This time, the *vates* is Virgil the narrator himself:

> *Di, quibus imperium est animarum, umbraeque silentes*
> *et Chaos et Phlegethon, loca nocte tacentia late,*
> *sit mihi fas audita loqui, sit numine vestro*
> *pandere res alta terra et caligine mersas.*
>
> *Aeneid* 6.264–7

> You gods who hold power over the spirits, you silent shades, and Chaos and Phlegethon, you places silent far in the night, let it be lawful to speak what I have heard, let it be granted by your power to reveal things hidden deep in the darkness of the earth.

Fulgentius, having just quoted Virgil's lines describing the Sibyl's ritual activity, says he does not want to get involved with this sort of thing: he fears that anyone who does might end up with a broken head (*ne dum quis laudem quaerit nominis fragmen reperiat capitis* ...) But the very next thing he does is to perform a pagan invocation, addressed to the Muses:

> *Vos Heliconiades, neque enim mihi sola vocanda est*
> *Calliope, conferte gradum, date praemia menti.*
> *Maius opus moveo; nec enim mihi sufficit una.*
> *Currite, Pierides, vos enim mea <maxima cura>,*
> *Parrasias niveo conpellite pectine cordas.*
>
> *Haec tam parva precatio credo quod Virgilianis satisfecerit Musis.*
>
> *Expositio* (ed. Helm), 85

> O Maids of Helicon – and I do not call on Calliope alone –
> Assist me and give your blessing to my mind.
> I undertake a more difficult task: a single Muse will not suffice:
> Run, Pierian Maidens, you are my greatest care.
> Strike the Arcadian lyre with an ivory plectrum.
>
> I think even this little invocation will satisfy the Virgilian Muses.

The Muses were seen to be as threatening as any other kind of pagan deity to early Christian readers: Ermenrich, as we saw, consigned them to the 'foulest swamp of the Styx'.[21] Fulgentius's emphatic invocation is more than controversial. *Maius opus moveo* of course is taken from *Aeneid* 7.45. But then Fulgentius goes even further by demanding in no uncertain terms the *personam Mantuani vatis.* This may be humorously expressed, but it is nonetheless a necromantic exercise. The diction that opens this 'bardophany' marks definitively the transition from discursive epistolary style in which the *Expositio* began, to that of the dramatic narrative in which it is to continue:

> *Cede mihi nunc personam Mantuani vatis, quo fugitivos eius in lucem deducamus amfractus. Nam ecce ad me etiam ipse Ascrei fontis bractamento saturior advenit, quales vatum*

> *imagines solent, dum assumptis ad opus conficiendum tabulis stupida fronte arcanum quiddam latranti intrinsecus tractu submurmurant (submurmurat* Helm).
>
> *Expositio* (ed. Helm), 85

> Send me now the Mantuan Bard in person, so that I can lead his fugitive meanings into the light. And behold, he himself comes towards me well filled with a draught of the Ascraean spring, just as *imagines* of bards are supposed to, with his tablets raised in order to treat his topic, and with a fixed frown murmurs some mysterious truth that wells up from within him.

Ecce ('behold') is the word that heralds the appearance of Palinurus whose shade is the first shade Aeneas encounters in his *katabasis*. *Ecce* also introduces the apparition of the dead Hector in Aeneas's own narrative of his dream in *Aeneid* 2.270. The word *imago* is still more obviously evocative of *Aeneid* 6: it is used more there than in any other book of Virgil's entire epic. The two most important occurrences there are the places where Aeneas discovers the incorporeal form and content of the shades he sees. The first is at 293: Aeneas tries to attack the array of Scyllas, Harpies and Gorgons:

> *corripit hic subita trepidus formidine ferrum*
> *Aeneas strictamque aciem venientibus offert,*
> *et ni docta comes tenuis sine corpore vitas*
> *admoneat volitare cava sub imagine formae,*
> *inruat et frustra ferro diverberet umbras.*
>
> *Aeneid* 6.290–4

> At this point Aeneas trembling with sudden fear snatches his sword and brandishes his drawn blade at their approach, and if his learned guide had not forewarned him that they were vague spirits without substance, flitting about with the image of a form, he would have rushed on and slashed in vain at shadows with his sword.

The fact that Aeneas does not try this out for himself here adds extra sense and pathos to his later attempt to embrace Anchises (6.700). He tries this

three times, even though the first reference in Aeneas's preceding speech to his father was to his *tristis imago*. This is why Fulgentius is quite at home with what *imagines* of poets are supposed to look like. Possibly the apostrophe to Virgil *Ausonidum vatum clarissime* is supposed to recall the Sibyl's address to Musaeus in 6.669: *optime vates*. Fulgentius then does not quite offer another *katabasis* narrative, but the context in which his *expositio* is put forward, expressed by Virgil himself, suggests an implicit link between this account and that of the epic *katabasis*. This functions in addition to the explicit treatment of the book which takes up such a large part of Fulgentius's text.

A reading of this then would corroborate the opinion gleaned from Servius that the sixth book of the *Aeneid* is the most useful. This would not have escaped the attention of anyone who read either both commentators or Fulgentius alone. Another point about the reception of Virgil's underworld via Fulgentius recalls the opening of this discussion. There are resemblances between this account of an apparition of Virgil in Fulgentius's letter to Calcidius and the one quoted earlier from Ermenrich's letter to Grimaldus. In Fulgentius, that apparition is deliberately conjured up by the author. For Ermenrich on the other hand, the apparition was quite unwanted. But both visions echo the diction used by Virgil himself for Hector's appearance in Aeneas's dream, and both are mainly preoccupied in different ways with Virgil as the poet of the sixth book. Ermenrich is writing two centuries after the allegorist; it would be interesting to consider the extent to which Fulgentius inspired a tradition of vision literature featuring Virgil which would have been less humorously conceived than his own.[22]

There is one more text which is concerned with the content of Virgil and which gives centre place to the descent to the underworld in *Aeneid* 6. This text comes far earlier in the tradition than the others I have discussed: it was known to Lucan, Statius, Martial, and Suetonius as well as to Aelius Donatus and Servius. It also had a key place later in the tradition – we have manuscripts of it dating from the tenth century. It is written in 415 hexameters and most of those Romans named probably believed it was written by Virgil himself. The *Culex* is obviously not a commentary in the sense that the works of Macrobius and Servius are commentaries. But we might usefully read it as a kind of commentary, just as it was conversely useful to treat Fulgentius as a literary successor of Virgil in considering the fictional background of his interpretation.

The *Culex,* as the work's title indicates, is about a gnat. The poem opens with a dedication to Octavian which takes up 41 verses in which the poet seeks to justify his more trivial theme. The actual story begins with a shepherd driving his goats at dawn out to their mountain pasture. The idyllic life of the shepherd is celebrated for some fifty verses. At midday this particular shepherd ensures his herd is sheltered and soon falls asleep. A malicious serpent then approaches, but the shepherd is warned of this by a sting in the eye from a gnat. He wakes immediately, crushes and kills the gnat, and then sees the serpent which he beats to death. At nightfall the weary shepherd leads his flock back to their fold and falls asleep. The spectre of the gnat then appears to him and sings reproachfully of his death. The lament takes up nearly half the poem and provides the link with the *katabasis* in the *Aeneid.* The gnat complains that the shepherd's life has been saved while the *Manes* have driven him over the waves of Lethe. The contrast between the life he saved and the death he endures is brought out several times.

There are in fact several parallels between this account of the underworld and the one in *Aeneid:* the gnat's version often serves to elaborate on certain features of it. For instance, Charon, Tisiphone and Cerberus are mentioned and described; Otus and Ephialtes are mentioned by name (in *Aeneid* 6.583 they are merely referred to collectively as *Aloidas geminos*); Sisyphus is unnamed but his fate is referred to, as in *Aeneid* 6.616. The same basic structure is followed in both texts: we have the threshold of the underworld described, an enumeration of those who died tragically and of the wicked who are now reaping their just deserts, ending with an account of the more fortunate lot of the great Roman heroes: the Fabii, the Decii, Horatius, Camillus and the Scipios. Observing the seats of the great and pious offers little consolation to a humble gnat, and he ends by drawing an explicitly negative comparison between their fortune and his:

> *illi laude sua vigeant: ego Ditis opacos*
> *cogor adire lacus, viduos, a, lumine Phoebi.*
>
> *Culex* 372–3

> Let them flourish in their renown: I am compelled to approach the gloomy lakes of Dis that are, alas, deprived of the light of Phoebus ...

Such a contrast might well have occurred to those among the audiences or readers of Virgil's story of death in various times who did not consider themselves to be among the likes of Anchises or Marcellus. Additional elements are drawn from beyond the *Aeneid:* the episode of Orpheus and Eurydice perhaps provides the interest the encounter with Dido would have had, and there is a lengthy treatment of Greek heroes on the theme of how the mighty fall. But basically the apparatus of the underworld which Aeneas saw in the *Aeneid* provides a topography which is the authoritative one for this account too, vague though that topography may be.

However, a disturbing contrast is brought out in the *Culex* between Aeneas's view of the underworld and that of the gnat. Aeneas, like Odysseus, does not see it as one who has died, but goes as a visitor. The route he takes, though it may seem to have a rather random dreamlike quality, has a purpose – and that purpose is Aeneas's own. The gnat describes the same place but from the perspective of an observer who has actually died. His account emphasises disconcertingly that he has become a passive object, blown and driven along, subject to the *Manes.* This is made clear from the very beginning of the gnat's speech, by expressions which are here emphasised:

> *'quis' inquit 'meritis ad quae delatus* acerbas
> cogor adire vices*? tua dum mihi carior ipsa*
> *vita fuit vita,* rapior per inania ventis.
> *tu lentus refoves iucunda membra quiete*
> *ereptus taetris e cladibus; at* mea Manes
> viscera Lethaeas cogunt transnare per undas;
> praeda Charonis agor ...
>
> *Culex* 210–16

> 'What deserts are mine' he says, 'and to what ills am I wafted *who am compelled to face a bitter requital?* While your life was dearer to me than life itself, *I am swept by the winds through empty space.* You at your ease in sweet repose refresh your limbs, you who were snatched from a hideous death, but *my remains the Shades compel to pass over Lethe's waters; as Charon's spoil I am driven ...*

The unfortunate insect is not someone who travels of his own accord and he has had no idea of where he is going at each stage:

> *feror avia carpens,*
> *avia Cimmerios inter distantia lucos*
> *quam circa tristes densentur in omnia poenae!*
>
> *Culex* 231–3

> I take my way over pathless regions – pathless regions far away amid Cimmerian groves and around me throng the woeful penalties for all misdeeds.

> *eheu, mutandus numquam labor! auferor ultra*
> *in diversa magis, distantia nomina cerno,*
> *Elysiam transnandus agor delatus ad undam.*
>
> *Culex* 258–60

> Alas for the hardship never to change! I am hurried off on to far different sights and see famous names. Across Elysium's water I must swim and to that tide am I borne.

Finally the gnat has to submit to judgment:

> *maxime Minos,*
> *conscelerata pia discernis vincula sede.*
> *ergo iam causam mortis, iam dicere vitae*
> *verberibus saevae cogunt sub iudice Poenae.*
>
> *Culex* 374–7

> Greatest Minos you keep apart the chains of the wicked from the seat of the righteous. So before the judge cruel figures of Penance now compel me with blows to plead the case for death, the case for continued life.

This passivity, the idea of being carried or driven along, conveyed by these verbs in the first person passive voice, prefigures the style of medieval visions of death. So also does the very individual nature of the trial the gnat has to undergo at 374–7. For the middle ages, Gurevich, Ariès and

Chaunu all discuss the prevalence of the notion of a separate trial over that of a simultaneous Last Judgment at the end of time.[23] The imagery and language of court procedure are used in the source passage in *Aeneid* 6.430f., but the defendants are dealt with in groups, according to the circumstances of their deaths:

> *infantumque animae flentes, in limine primo*
> *quos dulcis vitae exsortis et ab ubere raptos*
> *abstulit atra dies et funere mersit acerbo;*
> *hos iuxta falso damnati crimine mortis.*
> *nec vero sine sorte datae, sine iudice, sedes:*
> *quaesitor Minos urnam movet; ille silentum*
> *consiliumque vocat vitasque et crimina discit.*
>
> *Aeneid* 6.427–33
>
> The weeping souls of infants, whom a dark day snatched from the breast, deprived of the sweetness of life on its very first threshold, and then plunged into the bitterness of death; near them are those condemned to death on false charges. Their places here do not lack the casting of lots and do not lack a judge. Minos, as president of the court shakes the urn, and he summons a council of silent jurors and enquires into their lives and crimes.

Another notable feature of the 'gnatabasis', is the insect's relentless use of the narrative present. All the things he sees and undergoes are described as they are happening – yet at the same he is talking to the shepherd. This device is also to be found in later *katabases*.

As a general reflection on Virgil, the *Culex* is interesting. The poet clearly wants his audience to think he is Virgil. As well as obvious echoes of the *Aeneid*, there is the aforementioned adddress to Octavian in which he prophesies greater work to come. In his seeking to imitate Virgil convincingly, we might imagine the *Vergilius personatus* elaborating on themes and subjects which would strike him as appropriately typical, and for which Virgil was known. We find, then, the idealisation of the country life, descriptions of nature, brief battle narratives, compassion for small animals as well as the preoccupation with death and the afterlife. That preoccupation is conspicuous even before the gnat's misfortune: the end of

the dedication looks to the place established for Octavian in the *pia sede* (39); we are told of Agave who will have to do penance for the death of her son (111), and of the mourning of Phaëthon's sisters (128–9).

III

At this point I want to go on to the final stage of our enquiry. What features of *Aeneid* 6 itself prompted it to be remembered and celebrated? For Christian times the mere nature of the book's content might be sufficient. An account of Hades serves a better purpose than a description of a boxing match or chariot race. The Bible does not really provide sufficiently graphic accounts of the afterlife to inspire imaginations, artistic, poetic or even visionary. Works which did supply such accounts were composed, not of course to stimulate the arts, but to incline people to behave. An early and influential example is the *Apocalypse of St. Paul.* This originally Greek text, supposed to have been written by an *Egyptian,* was translated into Latin and into several European languages from the fourth century.[24] It had a great deal of currency in the seventh and eighth centuries. It was not canonical – church fathers including Augustine inveigh against it. This text, at any rate, does not lack graphic detail, and enumerates torment after torment piled up for sinners in Hell. After relaying all this, the author says:

> *Tunc Paulus scripsit multas penas; et sunt numero quasi centum xliiii. Si fuissent centum viri ab inicio mundi, et unusquisque habuisset ferream linguam, numquam possent unam penam enarrare inferni.*
>
> *Visio Pauli* Redact. I.11

> Then Paul wrote down the many punishments, and their number is 144. Even if there had existed from the beginning of the world, one hundred men, each of whom possessed an iron tongue, they would not be able to recount a single one of hell's punishments.

That is clearly familiar, recalling the way the Sibyl ends her long account to Aeneas of the sinners in Tartarus in *Aeneid* 6.562–627:

non, mihi si linguae centum sint oraque centum,
ferrea vox, omnis scelerum comprendere formas,
omnia poenarum percurrere nomina possim.

Aeneid 6.625–7

I could not, even if I had a hundred tongues, a hundred mouths and a voice of iron recount all the forms of their crimes or run through the mere names of all their punishments.

The Sibyl's words of course would cut ice with Christians: the view that the Cumaean Sibyl had prophesied the birth of Christ in Virgil's 'Messianic *Eclogue*' was already well current by the fourth century after it occurred.[25] So, even in a Christian account of the afterlife as early as the Latin *Apocalypse of St. Paul,* Virgil's *katabasis* is providing some kind of model.

But the reason for the influence of Virgil's particular story of death in later times, when there was an abundance of other Christian ones, still needs explanation. Dante's debt to Virgil is a general one, it may be true, but the sixth book of the *Aeneid* is picked up more than any other in the *Inferno.*[26] And we also have to account for the prominence given to the book in pagan antiquity when other, older *katabasis* narratives would have been known and available. A superficial response would be that Virgil's treatment of the world of death is an especially good one. In the end such a favourable evaluation is rooted in appreciation of Virgil's poetic form. It remains to turn to that form, and to the rhetoric, in a broad sense, of the narrative in *Aeneid* 6, for a selective examination of their potential impact on the book's various readers and audiences.

Much of the power of the story in *Aeneid* 6 derives from its immediate location in the narrative surrounding it. Immediately before, Aeneas's epitaphic pronouncement, after his discovery of the death of Palinurus, is what closes Book 5:

'o nimium caelo et pelago confise sereno
nudus in ignota, Palinure, iacebis harena.'

Aeneid 5.871–2

'O Palinurus, you trusted too much in the calm sea and sky. You will lie uncovered on an unknown shore.'

And immediately after our *katabasis,* Book 7 opens with another epitaphic apostrophe, this time from the poet:

> *Tu quoque litoribus nostris, Aeneia nutrix,*
> *aeternam moriens famam, Caieta dedisti*
>
> *Aeneid* 7.1–2

> You too, Caieta, the nurse of Aeneas, in your death have given eternal fame to our shores …

Servius explains the *quoque* ('too') thus: *sicut Misenus, Palinurus etiam* ('as with Misenus, so too with Palinurus'). All three have localities named after them. But there might be another purpose to the relation of this death at this point – so directly after Aeneas's exit through the ivory gate. We saw the condition of Palinurus in Hades when we would not have expected to hear of him again, but we now know something of what is in store for Caieta. Her death here, the first event recounted after Aeneas's return to his comrades, serves to load *every* death that follows in the poem with a depth of meaning it could not have had before. The full implications of these passages are examined in an important article by Alessandro Barchiesi.[27]

This is relevant to a more panoramic consideration of the placing of the *katabasis* book in the poem. The importance of the ordering and numbering of the books in Servius is indicated in his introduction to the first book of the *Aeneid,* quoted above. This is the beginning of the Servian commentary on Book 7:

> *in duas partes hoc opus divisum est: nam primi sex ad imaginem Odyssiae dicti sunt, quos personarum et adlocutionum varietate constat esse graviores, hi autem sex qui sequuntur ad imaginem Iliados dicti sunt, qui in negotiis validiores sunt: nam et ipse hoc dicit* maius opus moveo. *et re vera tragicum opus est, ubi tantum bella tractantur.*
>
> Servius on *Aeneid* 7.1

> This whole work is divided into two parts. The first six books are supposed to be made in the image of the *Odyssey.* It is the convention that the variation of characters and of the speeches makes these books weightier; the six books which come next

> are supposed to be in the likeness of the *Iliad* – these are stronger because of the serious matters in them, as the poet himself says: 'I begin a grander enterprise' [*maius opus moveo*]. The work really is a tragedy where it treats of war so much.

And 12.952, the final line of Turnus' tragedy, can only remind us of where those dying in war will go: *vitaque cum gemitu fugit indignata sub umbras*. Book 6 then is crucially placed, before the mortal combat and at the climax of Aeneas's journey of discovery. This endows it with a gravity which no allegorist could miss.

The spatial nature of the underworld in the story, as opposed to its temporal location in the narrative, is a much more complicated question. Much has been written on Virgil's topography in Book 6 and its bearing on actual localities. But space in a general sense, like time, character, and event is a basic product of narrative. If we attempt to produce any definite elevation of the actual underworld from the point at which Aeneas and the Sibyl enter it at 268, we run into some difficulties. There are few coordinates supplied in Virgil's narrative which is, in Conington's words, 'demonstrably inconsistent or confused.' In these *inania regna* (a disturbing indication if we want to find our way), we are told there is a path in the woods (271). But the sky is concealed by *umbra* and there are no colours. This is the *vestibulum* and the jaws of Orcus are inhabited by Grief, Cares, Old Age, Diseases, Fear and the like. Then more visually identifiable bogeys appear: the Centaurs, Scyllas, Gorgons and Harpies.

From here is the the *via* leading to the waters of Acheron (295), and there is a whirlpool (296, 310). There is the description of Charon: this place is a riverbank. The Sibyl explains to Aeneas this is the realm of the unburied. They finally cross the river (416) where Cerberus is waiting. Aeneas walks away from the riverbank (424) to the region of the prematurely dead bound by the Styx (439). The nearby (*nec procul*) Lugentes Campi are inhabited by the lovelorn. Aeneas continues the journey (477:*Inde datum molitur iter*) to the *ultima arva* occupied by the glorious in war. The Sibyl hurries Aeneas on (540), telling him of the path which forks to Elysium on the right, or to Tartarus on the left. They reach the gateway of Elysium marked by the Cyclopes' forge (629). After they have entered the meadows, Musaeus shows the travellers the valley inhabited by Anchises (679), from which, much further on, Aeneas can see Lethe (711).

The strange thing is that after Anchises has shown Aeneas the whole region, the narrator announces the famous way out at 893 – the twin gates of Sleep – through which Aeneas passes with the Sibyl to join instantly his ships and companions. Why hadn't he gone in through the out door? There might be one thing that redeems this abrupt syncopation of the narrative. Through this whole *katabasis* Aeneas and the Sibyl have been moving in time as well as in space. It was afternoon when Aeneas was talking to Deiphobus and he could well have used up the appointed time, hence the Sibyl's warning that night was impending. It was twilight when they reached Elysium as they went through the *opaca viarum*. The apparition of the Gates of Sleep at the end of the excursion, whatever else they represent, offer a neat closural device.

Nonetheless this topography is generally elusive. Summarised thus, it seems a good deal clearer than it does to most readers of the original. No dimensions are given, except one set which are relative: the Sibyl tells us that Tartarus is twice as deep as Olympus is high (577–9). The fact that we are brought back to the place where we started might cause us to wonder whether the whole region occupies any physical space at all – especially if the Shades are incorporeal. This topographical vagueness may have contributed a great deal to the widespread influence of Virgil's particular story of death. If no strict geography is asserted, this dream-like description can be reconstructed time after time, and made compatible with other models, even if they are informed by a different theology. Colin Hardie remarks 'The structures of *Inferno* and *Purgatorio* offered by [the character] Virgil [in the *Commedia*] contrast with his unsystematic *Aeneid* 6, which is not reducible to maps and diagrams.'[28] This might have been to Dante's advantage: maps, diagrams and cartographic paintings of the cosmos of the *Commedia* alone began to abound soon after its creation.[29]

Finally, another formal feature of Virgil's narrative in the sixth book of the *Aeneid* is important in accounting for the exceptional influence of this particular *katabasis* on commentators, theologians and poets, both in pagan antiquity and in later Christian cultures. Ancient *katabases* generally involve someone who has gone to the underworld, relating what he has witnessed. This is the case with Odysseus's account of Hades in the eleventh book of Homer's *Odyssey* as well as with the gnat in the *Culex*. The narrator of the biblical book of Revelation also keeps saying *vidi, et*

vidi haec, as do his major sources – Daniel, Ezekiel and Zechariah. A character can also recount a *katabasis* to someone else who in turn tells it to his readers or audience. This happens with the Myth of Er in Plato. Occasionally some *katabases* can consist of directions being issued by an authority to an initiate who must follow them.[30] Dante obviously uses the first device, following the forms of biblical or vision literature, and directly relates his experiences *in propria persona* to his reader or audience.

However, the manner of narration in the *Aeneid* is different again. This presentation of the underworld is apparently more objective. It is given in the third person, at times in the firm manner of a topographical description. This is the only major literary *katabasis* which seems to come directly from a disembodied poet-narrator. Perhaps it is unsurprising then that Virgil eventually acquired the status of *vates* in the sense of 'seer' as well as 'poet.' Virgil's employment of the third person turned out to be a successful rhetorical device – a device not used by Homer in this context – which basically accounts for the authority and precedence this story of death came to acquire. There is a catch though, and Virgil's innovation – which I have discussed elsewhere – is a cunning and rather subtle one.[31] In *Aeneid* 6 there is a higher proportion of direct speech from characters in relation to the narrator's discourse than in any other part of the poem. In this book of 901 verses, the Sibyl and Anchises speak about 160 each – more than any of the other characters, including Aeneas. It is really these two characters who supply the most information to Aeneas, and thus to the audience, about the underworld. The prominent voice granted to the Cumaean Sibyl in particular would command the attention of Christian readers, especially given her rôle as a pagan prophet of the Nativity. Overall, the poet has passed the real burden of responsibility on to his characters. Leaving aside the issue of Virgil's actual sources, we have an inventive variation on the traditional form of the *katabasis,* a dialogical presentation by a group of speakers. Virgil's vatic authority has endured, but it is to some extent an *imago.*

Byron is one of many writers to send up the form of *katabasis.* His mock apocalyptic poem, *The Vision of Judgment* (1822) does for King George III roughly what Seneca did for the Emperor Claudius. The English monarch, who haplessly championed the divine right of kings, arrives expectantly at the Gates of Heaven to find himself in a very embarrassing position: none of the lethargic angels who are cranking up the sun and moon have the faintest idea who he is. The following aside from

Byron's poem will temper the claims to *scientia* in this paper, which have verged too far on the grave:

> And this is not a theologic tract,
> To prove with Hebrew and with Arabic,
> If Job be allegory or a fact,
> But a true narrative; and thus I pick
> From out the whole but such and such an act
> As sets aside the slightest thought of trick.
> 'Tis every tittle true, beyond suspicion,
> And accurate as any other vision.

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Notes

1. This is from the opening of P. Ariès, *The Hour of Our Death* (New York, 1981).
2. Literature on *katabasis* is obviously extensive. See generally A. Dieterich *Nekuia* (Berlin, 1913. On katabasis and Virgil see the commentaries on *Aeneid* 6 by R.G. Austin (Oxford, 1977) and E. Norden (5th edn. Stuttgart, 1970), and Raymond Clark, *Catabasis: Vergil and the Wisdom-Tradition* (Amsterdam, 1979). The Virgil commentary of the seventeenth century Spanish Jesuit, Juan Luis De La Cerda has some interesting insights on the conceptions of life after death in *Aeneid* 6, which I discuss in R. Gibson and C. Kraus, *The Classical Commentary* (Leiden, 2002).
3. The 1895 English translation by E.F.M. Benecke has been reprinted (London, 1966).
4. This is also true for much of the current study of 'second sophistic' Greek literature and also of renaissance 'neo' Latin literature. Accounts of production, circulation, readership etc. generally exclude a more intimate interpretative engagement with the texts themselves.
5. Part of this excerpt from Ermenrich's letter is translated by Helen Waddell, *The Wandering Scholars* (6th edn; Harmondsworth, 1932), 18–19. The Latin text (which was not easy to locate from Waddell's brief reference) can be found in E. Dümmler (ed.) *Ermenrici Elwangensis Epistola ad Grimaldum Abbatum* in *Monumenta Germaniae Historica: Epistolarum Tomi* (5.1) (Berlin, 1898), 534–79.
6. Ermenrich's mention of the first sleep which is sweetest after toil recalls *Aen.* 2.268; for his conceit of 'giving limbs to sleep,' compare *Aen.* 5.836 and 8.30.
7. *Suetoni Reliquiae* (ed. Reifferscheid), 67: *cum is [Maro] aliquando in manu haberet rogareturque quidnam faceret, respondit se aurum colligere de stercore Ennii.* Compare Cassiodorus *De institut. div. liter.* c.1, opp. ed Garet II, 540.
8. See G. Padoan, 'Tradizione e fortuna del commento all' <Eneide> di Bernardo Silvestre,' *Italia Mediovale e umanistica* 3, (1960), 227–40 and P. Hardie, *Humanist*

exegesis of Virgil in fifteenth-century Italy and the medieval tradition of commentary (London: Warburg Institute M. Phil thesis, 1976).

9. On the potentially misleading opposition between modern 'interpretation' and ancient and medieval allegory, see A. Laird, 'Figures of Allegory from Homer to Latin Epic' in G. Boys-Stones (ed.), *Metaphor and Allegory in Ancient Thought* (Oxford, forthcoming).

10. However, in the Servian corpus there are only 183 comments of a strictly allegorical nature; this is a very small proportion of the whole. See J.W.J. Jones, 'Allegorical interpretation in Servius,' *Classical Journal* 56, (1960–1), 217–26.

11. Debates on the extent to which features of *Aeneid* 6 were to be read allegorically have a longstanding tradition; see J. Conington in the second volume of his commentary on Virgil (4th edn; London, 1884), 424–5 for an account of the debate between Warburton and Gibbon on this question.

12. However the discussion in Boccaccio, *Genealogia Deorum* 14.9 shows a remarkably advanced discussion of both allegory and fiction, rooted in a number of earlier texts.

13. For the Latin text see E. Friedberg and A.L. Richter (eds), *Corpus iuris canonici* (Leipzig, 1878–81) Compare Cassiodorus, *Div. lett.* cap. 28, where Cassiodorus, impressing on his monks the necessity of the seven arts, recommends the example of Moses, who was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians.

14. There is no mention by name of Servius anywhere in Dante's Latin or vernacular works – and unfortunately no article on the Servian tradition in the *Enciclopedia Dantesca* (Rome, 1970–8). See also T. Barolini *Dante's Poets: Textuality and Truth in the Comedy* (Princeton, 1984) and P. Giannantonio, *Dante e 1'Allegorismo* (Florence, 1969).

15. See e.g. J. Sinclair (ed.) Dante: The Divine Comedy – 1 Inferno, (Oxford, 1939), 30 quoting Pellegrini (*Lecturae Dantis* on *Inferno* 1.1: 'It was characteristic of Dante's thought – rather of medieval thought in general – to proceed from the reality to the symbolical meaning, and not to sing in his lines of simple abstractions.' The debate between Warburton and Gibbon (note 11 above) largely hung on the former's claim that the figure of Aeneas in Book 6 represents allegorically the training into the mysteries of an ancient legislator.

16. For a Latin text, see E. Moore and P. Toynbee (1924), *Le Opere di Dante Alighieri* (4th edn. Oxford 1924).

17. See the full article on *'scienza (SCIENZIA; ISCIENZIA)'* in the *Enciclopedia Dantesca* v, 74–7 (cf. n. 14 above), which defines the term for Dante in the first instance as 'possesso di conoscenza vera.' The chapter entitled 'Poetry and Theology' in E.R. Curtius, *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages,* tr. W. Trask (London, 1979), 214–28 deals with these two categories in medieval thought, the relationship between them, and Dante's reconciliation of them.

18. Here I take issue with the translation in O.B. Hardison (ed.), *Medieval Literary Criticism* (New York, 1985), 79: 'But I did not come here to explain your scripture.' *In tuis libris* must surely refer to Fulgentius's own work.

19. Comparetti (note 3 above), 112.

20. See U. Pizzani's article on Fulgentius in the *Enciclopedia Dantesca* iii, 71, and P. Giannantonio, *Dante e 1'Allegorismo* (Florence, 1969) *passim.*

21. Curtius (see note 17), 232–46 traces Christian hostility to Muses. Rosati – in D. Fowler and E. Spentzou (ed.) *Cultivating the Muses: Power, Desire and Inspiration*

(Oxford, 2001) – has recently echoed this. Fulgentius is not the only exception. For the complexities of Petrarch's adoption of the Muses in his *Africa,* see my own discussion in Fowler and Spentzou.

22. For an excellent account of medieval vision literature and accounts of the world beyond the grave see the chapter entitled 'The *Divine Comedy* before Dante' in A. Gurevich, *Medieval Popular Culture* (Cambridge, 1988), 104–52.

23. See Ariès (note 1 above), Gurevich (in previous note) at 120–2, and P. Chaunu, *La Mort à Paris, XVIe-VIIe-XVIIIe siècles* (Paris, 1978).

24. See T. Silverstein (ed.), *Visio Sancti Pauli* (London, 1935) for the Latin text. The supposed Egyptian authorship is especially significant given the quotations from Servius and Gratian above.

25. See e.g. J. Carcopino, *Virgile et le mystère de la IV eglogue* (Paris, 1930) and P. Courcelle, 'Les exégèses chrétiennes de la quatrième Eglogue,' *Revue des Études Anciennes* 5, (1957), 249–319.

26. This is easily demonstrated by the most cursory reading of the *Inferno:* see A. Ronconi's article on 'Virgilio' in the *Enciclopedia Dantesca* v, 1030–49, especially 1044f. and E. Moore *Studies in Dante* i, (Oxford, 1896), 166f.

27. 'Palinuro e Caieta: Due epigrammi virgiliani' *Maia* (1977) 29–30, 3–11.

28. See C. Hardie's Introduction to the reprint of E. Moore, *Studies in Dante (*Oxford 1969).

29. A good recent discussion of the renaissance tradition of producing these diagrammatic representations is to be found in J. Kleiner, *Mismapping the Underworld: Daring and Error in Dante's Comedy* (Stanford, 1994), 23–56.

30. Some Orphic texts provide examples of this. A literary example is provided by Apuleius, *Metamorphose* 6.17–19 in which Psyche is given directions by a talking tower on how to descend to the underworld. Her execution of these instructions is more briefly recounted in 6.20.

31. On speech in the *katabasis* of Virgil's Fourth *Georgic* as well as the *Aeneid,* see A. Laird, *Powers of Expression, Expressions of Power: Speech Presentation and Latin Literature* (Oxford, 1999), 166. There are 36 speeches in *Aeneid* 6 – more than half the text of the book. At the same time there is a smaller number of personages who speak than in any other book of the poem.

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Painting Virgil: Victorian Choices

A paper given to the Virgil Society on 25 March 2000

From the Renaissance to the beginning of the nineteenth century, the Virgilian corpus inspired an extensive visual response.[1] Virgil is employed for both the illustration of narrative and the evocation of mood. The *Aeneid* becomes a narrative sourcebook for artists, and certain subjects or episodes, Dido and Aeneas in particular, acquire the status of stock imagery with or without specific reference to text. Rubens's *The Death of Dido* (c.1635–40: Louvre, Paris), depicts Dido, as recounted at the end of *Aeneid* 4 (642–3: *effera Dido/sanguineam volvens aciem*) seated on top of a pyre surmounted with her bridal bed, Aeneas's garments and effigy, and plunging Aeneas's sword into her own breast. At the same time, descriptive passages in the *Aeneid,* the *Eclogues* and the *Georgics* were translated into the genre of landscape painting. Many of Claude's imaginary landscapes present Virgilian associations and subjects. Likewise, Turner was prompted to envision his own Virgilian landscapes. *Dido Building Carthage* (c.1815: National Gallery, London), inspired by the bustling activity of Carthaginian citizens in *Aeneid* 1, was considered by the artist to be among his most successful works. A portrait tradition even gives us representations of the poet himself. In *'Tu Marcellus Eris'* an emotive painting by Ingres, painted in 1812, Virgil reads his *Aeneid* to the imperial family of Augustus, his wife, Livia, and sister, Octavia. As Virgil foretells Marcellus's death in book 6, Octavia (the mother of Marcellus) faints, falling into the arms of Augustus.

These representations by Rubens, Turner and Ingres are merely three examples from the many paintings which constitute an impressive Virgilian tradition in western art. However, although this tradition affirms the ideals of classical heritage and is sanctioned by the canonical

high-art practices of the Renaissance, it is summarily rejected by painters in Victorian England. Virgilian subjects or allusions are rarely selected and, when selected, show few links with the familiar canon of imagery.

Although classical-subject painting was not a coherent movement in Victorian Britain, classical subjects and motifs were adopted by many artists working in different styles. Both highly acclaimed Academic painters – Frederic, Lord Leighton, Sir Lawrence Alma-Tadema, Sir Edward Poynter – and those aligned with other schools – notably Pre-Raphaelite painters, Dante Gabriel Rossetti and Edward Burne-Jones – all sought classical subjects through sophisticated negotiations with ancient literary and archaeological source material. And while an idealized Hellenic world comprising Homer, mythology, Phidias and the Elgin marbles formed the impetus behind many classical-subject canvases, paintings of Rome, constructed largely from archaeological evidence and Latin poetry, constitute a significant and identifiable form of Victorian classicism. With few exceptions, however, painters of ancient Rome neglect Virgilian texts in favour of other Latin literary sources.

From the Renaissance onwards, Ovid's *Metamorphoses,* like Virgil's *Aeneid,* was appropriated as a source book of narrative imagery. In the nineteenth century, representations of myth continue to play a major part in the artist's oeuvre: Victorian culture, rich in visual and literary mythological allusion, assumes, and in turn guarantees, a reading and viewing public familiar with the narratives of ancient myth. While some mythological paintings assume either a generic form of myth or allude to a specifically Greek source, many can be taken to have an Ovidian origin. One Ovidian metamorphosis that held a special appeal for the Victorian imagination is Galatea's transformation from statue to living woman. Edward Burne-Jones produced two series of four paintings on the subject. In the second painting of the second series, *The Hand Refrains* (1875–8: Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery), the sculptor Pygmalion admires his finished statue, gazing longingly at his own creation before the moment of metamorphosis when the marble will become living flesh.

The same myth appears on the Victorian stage in the form of W. S. Gilbert's comedy, *Pygmalion and Galatea,* performed at the Lyceum in 1884 with the young actress, Mary Anderson, in the lead. A contemporary writer reports the excitement with which Mary Anderson was greeted: 'just then the idol of London and drawing crowds to gaze upon her as *Galatea,* the living statue'.[2] In the 1890s living statues enjoyed a new

popularity in the form of entertainment on the music hall stage, and reached the height of their success in 1906 with the performance of 'La Milo' at the London Pavilion and 'Galatea, or La Statue Humaine' (better known as Miss Maude Odell) at the Palace Theatre of Varieties.

Pygmalion and Galatea represented only one of several Ovidian subjects which exercised a wide appeal. Renaissance artists had sought to capture the exact moment of metamorphosis as Daphne is transformed into a laurel tree, and by the Victorian period countless Daphnes still flee from their pursuing Apollos. In John William Waterhouse's *Apollo and Daphne* (1908: Private collection), the artist avoids the difficult representation of metamorphosis by showing Daphne enclosed in twisting branches.

Reference of a more specific kind to Latin literary texts is found in the visual treatment of Catullus. Lawrence Alma-Tadema's *Catullus at Lesbia's* (1865: Private collection) presents a biographical vignette of the poet. At the same time, the painting looks to Catullus 3, in which the poet laments the death of Lesbia's pet sparrow. What we are shown, then, in Alma-Tadema's revisionary depiction, is a Catullus arriving at Lesbia's salon clutching the dead bird in his own hand. Might the death of the sparrow in Catullus 3 signify the death of love and the end of the poet's affair? This, it would seem, is Alma-Tadema's construction. His is a desolate Catullus, evidently supplanted in Lesbia's affections by the two other men in the painting, presumably her new lovers.

In the Victorian age, Catullan subjects are common enough, both biographical and textual. Other instances include Alma-Tadema's *Lesbia Weeping over her Sparrow* (1866: Brigham Young University, Utah) and *Catullus Reading his Poems at Lesbia's House* (1870: Private collection) and Edward Poynter's *Lesbia and her Sparrow* (1907: Private collection). Even Frederic Leighton, who sought inspiration primarily from Greek literature and art, painted one Catullan subject. *Acme and Septimius* (Ashmolean Museum, Oxford) was exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1868 with a catalogue quotation from Catullus 45:

> Then gently bending back her head,
> With that sweet mouth, so rosy red,
> Upon his eyes she dropped a kiss,
> Intoxicating him with bliss.

Leighton chooses an excerpt not conspicuously informed by the familiar Catullan ribaldry or wit, which helped to inspire Alma-Tadema's depictions of Catullus and Lesbia. Furthermore, Leighton includes a particularly sentimentalized translation which elicited a suitably acerbic comment from Algernon Swinburne: 'The picture of Acme and Septimius is excellently illustrative of Mr Theodore Martin's verse; it is no wise illustrative of Catullus'[3]. It is nonetheless significant that even a painter usually driven by Hellenic inspirations includes one Catullan subject in his oeuvre.

Tibullus also generates a quota of biographical scenes. We have Alma-Tadema's *Tibullus at Delia's* (1866: Boston Museum of Fine Arts), Henry J Hudson's *Neaera Reading a Letter from Tibullus* (1893: Cartwright Hall, Bradford City Art Gallery) and Dante Gabriel Rossetti's *The Return of Tibullus to Delia* (1867: Private collection). Rossetti's painting illustrates the final stanza of Tibullus, *Elegies* 1.3 in which the poet envisions an idyllic return home to a faithful mistress.

Of all the Latin poets, it is actually Horace who is most often appropriated by Victorian artists, although, unlike Catullus and Tibullus, 'Horace' is not recreated in biographical terms. It is not Horace's life (real or assumed), but his poetry, and the *Odes* in particular, which stimulate the artistic imagination. In Victorian painting it is characteristic that Horatian text is used in the form of catalogue quotation. Usually unaccredited and often in the original Latin, such quotations were clearly designed for instant recognition by an educated audience.

Edward Poynter's *Chloe* (Private collection), for instance, was exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1893 accompanied by the following catalogue quotation, line 10 from *Odes* 3. 9:

> *Dulcis docta modos et citharae sciens*

A nineteenth-century translation reads:

> Skilled in notes of dulcet song and the science of the lute. [4]

In the Horatian context, the words constitute a tangent moment in the main narrative which takes the form of a dialogue between the poet and his ex-lover, Lydia, and recounts the growing passion they have for each other. Each playfully claims a new lover but both ultimately decide to renew their old love. Chloe is Lydia's rival, the poet's new love, whom he

will ultimately cast aside. In the line quoted – *Dulcis docta modos et citharae sciens* – Horace describes Chloe's talents. Accordingly, Poynter shows her holding a *tibia* while her *cithara* rests beside her.

On six separate occasions, Poynter selected lines from Horace's *Odes* as catalogue quotations to accompany six of his paintings. Indeed, Horatian quotations become so commonplace that in one instance the art critic F. G. Stephens selected his own lines to accompany a painting by Leighton. Although *Whispers,* a painting of two lovers seated on a bench, appeared at the Royal Academy in 1881 without any appended verse, Stephens described it in the *Athenaeum* as 'an illustration of Horace's well-known line, *Lenesque sub noctem susurri*' [5] – 'soft whispers as darkness falls' (*Odes* 1. 9. 19). In a similar vein, a critic writing in the *Art Journal* in 1883, offers speculative identification of the various men and women from Alma-Tadema's paintings with the assertion: 'we name [them] from the *Odes* of Horace.'[6]

A more unexpected use of Horatian text comes in the form of an inscription within the canvas. Alma-Tadema's *Bacchante* (1907: Private collection) displays a golden-haired bacchant gazing at the viewer through heavy-lidded eyes. An architectural inscription running along the top of the canvas is obscured by a statue of Dionysus and abruptly cut off on either side. Nevertheless, it can be identified as a sequence of verse from *Odes* 3. 25, lines 18–20:

> *... dulce periculum est,*
> *O Lenaee, sequi deum*
> *cingentem viridi tempora pampino.*

and translated as:

> ... Oh, how perilously sweet
> 'Tis to follow thee, Lenaeus,
> Thee the god who wreathes his temples with the vine-leaf
> For his crown.[7]

Horace is comparing poetic inspiration to Dionysiac frenzy. His piquant summation of the pleasure and danger of Dionysiac worship alerts us to the potential threat of Alma-Tadema's bacchante, surely an alluring *femme fatale* who is the '*dulce periculum*' here.

Horace's influence on Victorian painters is ubiquitous, and on one occasion, indeed, calls forth a textual-biographical image, in the shape of John Collier's *Horace and Lydia* (1924: Private collection). This painting, like Alma-Tadema's *Catullus at Lesbia's* completed nearly fifty years earlier, shows poet and lover in a Pompeian-type domestic setting.

The Victorian use of Latin poetry derives, in part, from the work of the French Néo-Grec painters who, in the mid-nineteenth century, developed historical genre painting by representing antique themes, not as exalted deeds and moral *exempla* as in neo-classical history painting, but as daily life within precise archaeological settings. Genre scenes included biographical studies of Latin poets such as Charles-François Jalabert's *Virgil, Horace and Varius at the House of Maecenas* (1844–6: Musée des Beaux-Arts, Nîmes). Significantly, it is Virgil who declaims his poetry to his fellow poets and their illustrious patron.

Yet the classical-biographical genre in Victorian Britain excludes Virgil. In Victorian painting there is no Virgilian counterpart to the imaginary scenes from the life of Catullus and Tibullus, or (even) Horace. Strikingly, the Victorian biographical tradition even admits the comparatively obscure figure of Gallus in Alma-Tadema's *The Poet Gallus Dreaming* (1892: Private collection). Although virtually nothing of Gallus's work survives, a popular-educated interest in the poet had been fostered by W.A. Becker's imaginative description of his life, downfall and suicide in *Gallus or Roman Scenes of the Time of Augustus.* Published in Leipzig in 1838, Becker's work was soon translated into English and reprinted many times throughout the Victorian period.

In Victorian painting, it is essentially the witty, urbane and seemingly carefree world of Latin love poetry that appealed to the re-creators of Roman life. Catullus, Tibullus and Horace are all depicted enjoying the pleasures of urban society. Gallus is placed high up on a marble terrace overlooking the Mediterranean sea, in a setting which can be identified as the Bay of Naples, a playground for the rich and famous from the early Empire. The wealthy built spectacular *villae maritimae* daringly placed on the edges of cliffs along the bay. Becker even describes Gallus's visit to the seaside resort of Baiae, where he enjoys a pampered and leisured existence. The martial-heroic *Aeneid,* the elusive-Arcadian *Eclogues* and the often austerely rural *Georgics* are, by contrast, far removed from such a Rome. Ancient biographical sources, too, give painters little incentive. Of Virgil himself, the *Vita* of Donatus tells us: 'At Naples [he] was commonly

Figure 1 Dante Gabriel Rossetti, *Paolo and Francesca da Rimini* (1855: courtesy of the Tate, London 2001)

called Parthenias ... He spent most of his time in Campania or Sicily, where he could get away from people.' With no Lesbia, Delia or Lydia, Virgil presents a far less tantalizing subject.

The single attested biographical representation of the poet in Victorian painting is not the Virgil of late-Republican Rome but the Virgil of Dante. *Paolo and Francesca da Rimini* [Figure 1], an early painting by Dante Gabriel Rossetti, illustrates a scene from the *Inferno* albeit with one striking adjustment. Although Dante describes Virgil as 'master' and 'guide,' here a very young Virgil holds tightly on to the hand of the older Dante. In the centre of the canvas, Virgil holds his cloak up to his mouth while looking nervously at Paolo and Francesca, the two lovers buffeted in the winds. Rossetti's touching conception of Virgil as a timid boy is remarkable. Although the artist draws on something of Ingres's anxious young Virgil reading to the imperial family, he constructs an image of the poet quite at odds with the serious and high-minded author of the *Aeneid,* the 'mature,' central, archetypal figure (as T. S. Eliot was to portray him[8]) of all western poetry to come. Rossetti's image, surprisingly out of step with traditional Virgilian iconography, is nevertheless representative of the few Virgilian subjects and allusions in Victorian painting.

Greatly admired in the eighteenth century, Virgil's work, of course, occupied a somewhat lower status in the nineteenth. With the promotion of Greek scholarship he was often compared unfavourably with Homer

and condemned for a lack of originality.[9] In J. K. Huysmans's *Against Nature,* a work of decadent fiction written in *fin-de-siècle* France, Virgil is described as 'one of the most appalling pedants and one of the most deadly bores that Antiquity ever produced.'[10] Horace, by contrast, is cited positively in the works of creative writers of the period. The English decadent poet Ernest Dowson uses lines from the *Odes* as titles of two of his poems,[11] while many more Horatian allusions are scattered throughout his works.[12]

One of the strongest condemnations of Virgil was from the German scholar, B. G. Niebuhr, who argued that the *Aeneid* was 'a complete failure' as, deriving from Greek epic traditions, it had lost touch with Italian origins. He writes:

> Its contents were certainly national; yet it is scarcely credible that even Romans, if impartial, should have received sincere delight from these tales. We feel but too unpleasantly how little the poet succeeded in raising these shadowy names, for which he was forced to invent a character, into living beings, like the heroes of Homer.

Niebuhr continues:

> Virgil, we may be sure, felt a misgiving, that all the foreign ornament with which he was decking his work, though it might enrich the poem, was not his own wealth, and that this would at last be perceived by posterity.[13]

Niebuhr not only contributed to a marked negativity that attached to the reputation of Virgil in general, but prompted a reassessment of the *Aeneid* in particular, through his reinterpretation of the legends surrounding the foundation of Rome. In his influential *History of Rome* (1811–12), Niebuhr challenged the traditional study of Roman history with a rejection of the historical validity of myth in relation to the origins of Rome. In Britain, Thomas Arnold's own *History of Rome* (1838) followed Niebuhr's approach to Roman legend.

This recategorization of the stories associated with the founding of Rome raised questions for practitioners of the visual arts. How were painters to approach the *Aeneid:* as history or as myth? For Victorian painters of classical subjects there was a clear distinction between the representation of

ancient history on the one hand, and ancient myth on the other. With the exclusion of traditional history painting from the works of the Néo-Grecs, subjects from a historical Rome were no longer accepted as ideals of exemplary action, and historical genre painting predominated. Mythological scenes, by contrast, stress connections with the Hellenic world: subjects derive from Greek textual sources, and figure-types and drapery from Greek sculpture. Greek themes themselves are touched with a characteristic Romantic longing for an unspecified past, a past which evokes dream-like visions of a mythological Golden Age. Far removed from the *Odyssey,* and symptomatically mediating Homer's antiquity through Dante,[14] Tennyson's 'Ulysses' imagines Odysseus grown old and longing for one last adventure:

> Death closes all: but something ere the end,
> Some work of noble note, may yet be done,
> Not unbecoming men that strove with Gods.
> The lights begin to twinkle from the rocks;
> The long day wanes: the slow moon climbs: the deep
> Moans round with many voices.

Victorian painters convey the same sense of nostalgia and melancholic poignancy in their images of Greece as we find in Tennyson's response to Homer. Frederic Leighton's *Idyll* (1881–2: Private collection) derives its title from Theocritus (rather than from Virgil's *Eclogues*) and its figures from the Parthenon sculptures. At sunset two reclining women listen to the sound of a piper playing against a pastoral landscape. Leighton's construct mythologizes a de-historicized Greece.

Eighteenth and early nineteenth-century history paintings often chose subjects from Livy and from Virgil, but with the rejection of the old traditions of history painting, the *Aeneid* seems to have been dismissed by association with 'history' (and, perhaps, the *Eclogues* and the *Georgics* by association with the *Aeneid*). Furthermore, the *Aeneid,* even if re-categorised as myth, did not appeal to the Romantic representation of mythology in a golden age of Greece. It may indeed be that Virgil's identification of Trojans as proto-Romans, and his dismissive emphasis on guileful Greeks, played a part here. In any case the martial-heroic character of the *Aeneid* made it problematic. Robert Browning, friend and admirer of Frederic Leighton, is known to have suggested subjects for Leighton's paintings. One such suggestion was the slaying of Thamyrus by Turnus from *Aeneid*

12 (341). Such a painting was never attempted: Leighton, like many Victorian painters of Greece, eschewed scenes of epic combat in favour of Romanticized depictions of reflective and often regretful individuals.[15] Even Tennyson in 'To Virgil: Written at the Request of the Mantuans for the Nineteenth Centenary of Virgil's Death' ultimately invokes Virgil as the poet of Empire. The nostalgia which permeates so much of his poetry is here uneasily situated in a longing for the glory of an imperial past:

> Now thy Forum roars no longer,
> Fallen every purple Caesar's dome
> Though thine ocean-roll of rhythm
> Sound for ever of Imperial Rome.

Virgilian material, then, does not fall readily into either of the two main Victorian representational modes of antiquity: Roman historical genre painting of urban social life, and Romanticized representations of Greek, or Greco-Roman, myth. The painter of Virgil, like Rossetti with his timid boy, was thus obliged to seek a new treatment of an old subject.

One Virgilian episode – often repeated on the pre-nineteenth-century canvas – which would seem likely to appeal to a Victorian sensibility, imbued with the individualism and melancholy of the Romantic imagination, is the personal tragedy of Dido. At the Royal Academy Summer exhibition the aesthetics of female abandonment and death were celebrated annually in the form of countless Ariadnes, Andromedas, Ophelias and Ladies of Shalott. Yet Dido was never among their number.

The pathos of Dido's personal grief is addressed in Purcell's opera, *Dido and Aeneas,* popular in the mid-nineteenth century, and in Berlioz's *The Trojans at Carthage,* first performed in 1863. In the visual arts there is one solitary Dido. The Yorkshire painter John Atkinson Grimshaw, better known for urban landscapes, street and dock scenes, did produce a small number of classical subjects in the 1870s and '80s including *Dido* [Figure 2]. Much like Grimshaw's other works, the setting is moonlit, misty and atmospheric.

Grimshaw's *Dido* stands offering flowers before a marble altar. Disrupted by some sound, she looks behind her into the darkness. It is evident that the the artist's intention is to illustrate lines 457–63 from *Aeneid* 4. A translation by William Morris runs as follows:

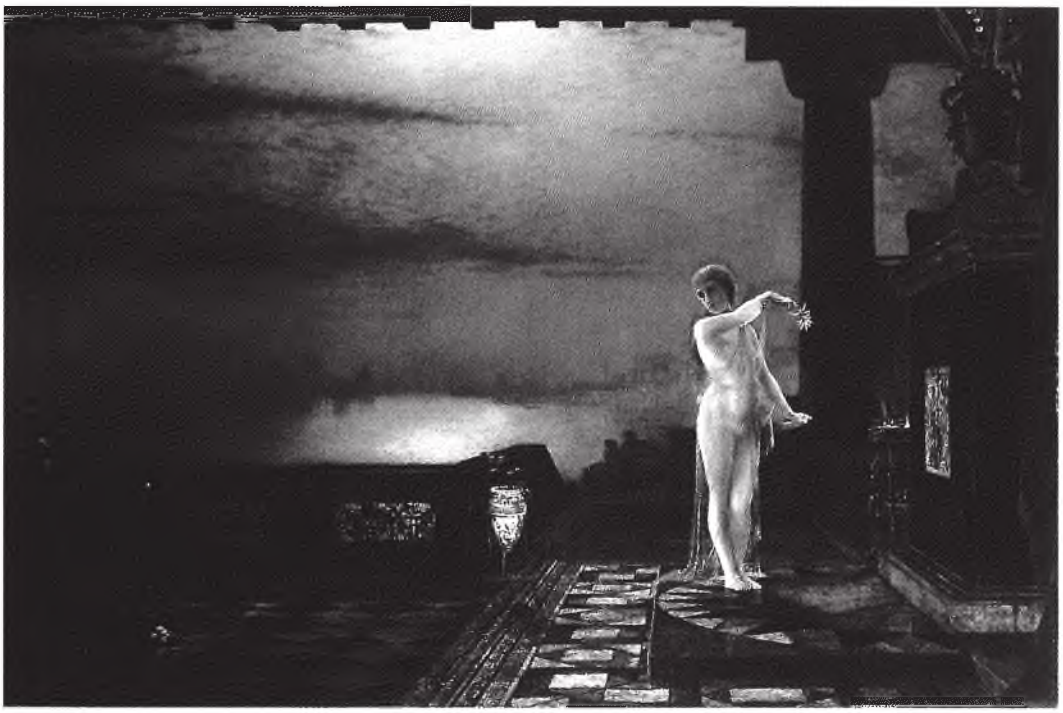

Figure 2 John Atkinson Grimshaw, *Dido* (1873: courtesy of Sotheby's)

> Moreover, to her first-wed lord there stood amidst the house
> A marble shrine, the which she loved with worship marvellous,
> And bound it was with snowy wool and leafage of delight;
> Thence heard she, when the earth was held in mirky hand of night,
> Strange sounds come forth, and words as if her husband called his own.
> And o'er and o'er his funeral song the screech-owl wailed alone,
> And long his lamentable tale from high aloft was rolled.[16]

Grimshaw's Carthage is created from a varied assortment of visual sources: a Roman mosaic floor, a Pompeian-type bronze tripod, an Egyptianizing painted column, and an altar surmounted with vase and flowers suggestive of Victorian funerary monuments.

Archaeological accuracy was of prime concern for the historical genre painter, and a plausible recreation of the domestic settings of the late first century BC and the early first century AD could be easily gleaned from the excavation of private dwellings at Pompeii and Herculaneum. Paintings such as Alma-Tadema's *Catullus at Lesbia's* and Poynter's *Chloe* are validated by the use of literary and archaeological sources. By comparison, the

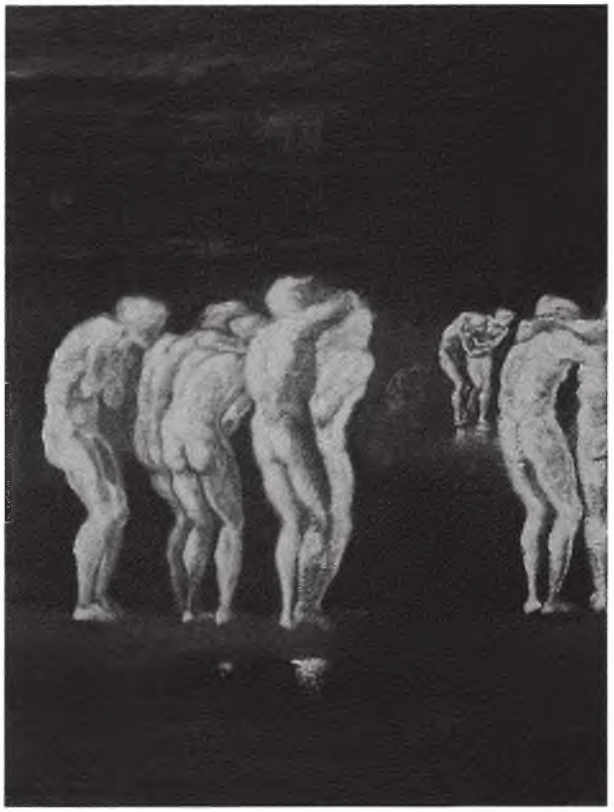

Figure 3 Edward Burne-Jones, *Souls on the Banks of the River Styx* (c.1873: private collection)

artist who strives to situate Dido in a pre-Roman Carthage is faced with an overwhelming lack of archaeological evidence. Is it perhaps the very elusiveness and non-Romanness of his composite that encourages Grimshaw to produce an image based on the *Aeneid* at all?

The same question, it may be, arises in connection with quite a different painting on a notional Virgilian theme. Edward Burne-Jones's *Souls on the Banks of the River Styx* [Figure 3] looks to Aeneas's journey to the Underworld as its subject. In 1873 Burne-Jones was commissioned by William Morris to produce designs for Morris's own translation of the *Aeneid* to be published in the form of an illuminated manuscript. This was a large and ambitious project which both men entered into with much excitement. Burne-Jones wrote to a friend in 1874: 'Every Sunday morning you may think of Morris and me together – he reads a book and I make drawings for a big Virgil he is writing – it is to be wonderful and put an end to printing.'[17] The project was, however, never finished and Morris's translation was published in 1876 without the intended illustrations, while the manuscript

Figure 4 Edward Burne-Jones, *The Sirens* (c.1891–98: The John and Mabel Ringling Museum of Arts, Sarasota, Florida)

was eventually completed by other hands after it was bought in its unfinished state from Morris by Charles Fairfax Murray in 1890.

Nevertheless, Burne-Jones did complete a number of pencil studies and was prompted to produce the unfinished or preparatory oil sketch, *Souls on the Banks of the River Styx* It depicts huddled groups of white figures against a dark, gloomy background and illustrates the passage in *Aeneid* 6 where Aeneas encounters souls in the Underworld whose bodies must await burial before they can cross the river. Morris's translation of lines 305–9 runs as follows:

> Down thither rushed a mighty crowd, into the flood-side borne;
> Mothers and men, and bodies there with all the life outworn
> Of great-souled heroes; many a boy and never-wedded maid,
> And youths before their father's eyes upon the death-bale laid:
> As many as the leaves fall down in first of autumn cold.[18]

Intriguingly, the same memorable passage has surely influenced another seemingly unrelated painting, *The Sirens* of c.1875 [Figure 4], which shows a group of ghostly figures waiting on a desolate shore.

Figure 5 Edward Poynter, *A Roman Boat Race* (1889: courtesy of Sotheby's)

What Burne-Jones appears to have done in *The Sirens* is to construct a non-Virgilian subject from lines of the *Aeneid.* There are other Victorian paintings which point to Virgil more explicitly through the use of catalogue quotations, where, once again, the actual subjects are far removed from an illustration of text. Edward Poynter selected lines 115–16 from *Aeneid* 5 which he had printed in translation (Poynter incidentally chose Morris's translation) as catalogue quotation to accompany *A Roman Boat Race* [Figure 5]:

> Four ships from all the fleet picked out, will first the race begin
> With heavy oars.

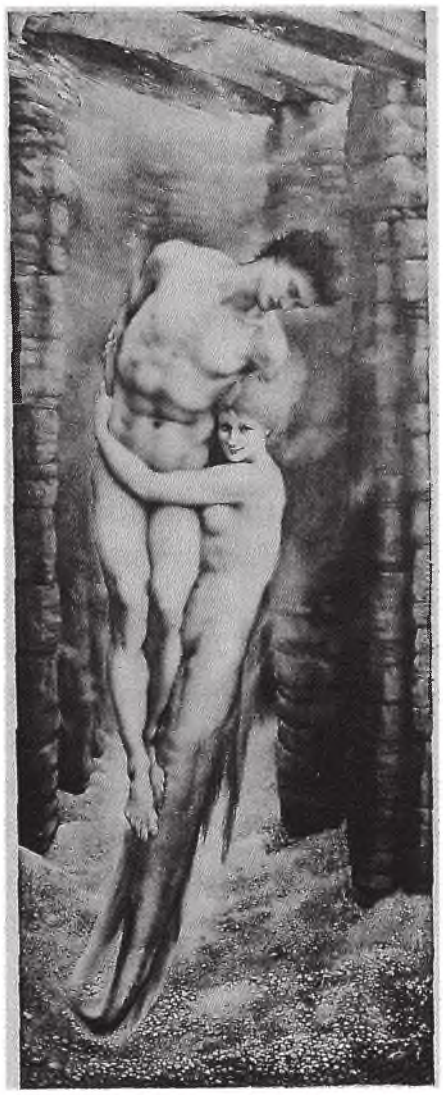

Figure 6 Edward Burne-Jones, *The Depths of the Sea* (1886: private collection)

Although Poynter has chosen lines from the *Aeneid* which allude to the Trojan boat race, part of the funeral games to commemorate the death of his father, Anchises, the artist has neatly undercut the Virgilian heroic by effecting a transposition to the context of women spectators at a pleasure race in imperial Rome. The artist subverts the viewer's expectations by alluding to historical-mythological epic, but then produces a historical genre scene showing the frivolous enjoyments of a pleasure-seeking urban Rome.

Equally subversive is Burne-Jones's use of a Virgilian catalogue quotation to accompany *The Depths of the Sea* [Figure 6], a painting of a sea nymph clutching a drowning man as she greets the viewer with an enigmatic smile. The artist went to some pains to construct his setting. For the underwater effect he borrowed a tank from a fellow artist, Henry

Holiday, who had it specially made for a painting of the Rhine maidens in Wagner's *Das Rheingold.* Holiday wrote in his reminiscences:

> 'I modelled the three nymphs, tinted them, and placed them in a large tank with a plate-glass front, filled with water coloured transparent blue-green. I also modelled rocks, and the effect was curiously natural. Burne-Jones borrowed my tank later when he painted his "Mermaid".' [19]

When shown at the Royal Academy in 1886, *The Depths of the Sea* received unanimous praise from the critics. George Bernard Shaw declared after seeing the painting: 'the rest of the exhibition is leather and prunella.'[20] The mermaid's expression provoked the most positive critical comment. F. G. Stephens, writing in the *Athenaeum,* described it as 'a marvel of wicked witchery', while the critic of *The Times* claimed that 'the strength of the picture is undoubtedly in the mermaid's face, which the artist has invested with a look of triumph that is neither human nor diabolic ... almost worthy of Leonardo da Vinci.' [21] However, no critic, contemporary or modern, has commented on the quotation printed in Latin in the Academy catalogue, although it is surely this quotation that helps to unravel the mystery of the mermaid's enigmatic gaze. It reads as follows:

> *Habes tota quod mente petisti,*
> *Infelix.*

Seemingly from *Aeneid* 4, line 100, it translates, in the words of Morris:

> That which all thine heart was set on thou hast found,
> Unhappy one.

'Thou' could refer either to the sea nymph who clasps the dying youth or to the youth lured to his death. However, the Latin quotation itself is less than straightforward, as in the *Aeneid* the words following *petisti* are *Ardet amans Dido* and not *Infelix,* which of course is the familiar epithet applied to Dido at various points throughout the *Aeneid.* The quotation, then, suggests that 'thou' is Dido. In Virgil's Latin, it is actually Venus. The first words are spoken by Juno to Venus, who tells the goddess of love that, as was her wish, Dido has fallen in love with Aeneas. Through the

inclusion of *infelix,* the lines are in effect associated with Dido and, through her, with love (the unrequited love of the Carthaginian queen for Aeneas) and death (her tragic death, which is the inevitable outcome). Returning to the painting, we see that the reconstituted Latin sequence illuminates the poignant plight of both the sea nymph, who has captured her youth only for him to die, and the youth, who has followed the nymph to the 'depths of the sea' only to gain his love in the arms of death.

Burne-Jones makes no mention of Dido in his quotation but through the epithet unquestionably conjures up her name and her plight. No less surprising than the manipulation of the Latin text is the use of Virgil to add mood and meaning to a painting of a mermaid or siren, an image more usually associated with Homer. The sirens are dangerous female predators whom Odysseus and his crew encounter in *Odyssey* 12. Although Homer says nothing of their appearance, the sirens are given a form by later literary and visual sources. Initially half-bird and half-human, they are gradually anthropomorphised and feminised until, by the late-antique and medieval period, they are fully human except for the addition of a fish's tail. Nineteenth-century sirens had become interchangeable with mermaids as *femmes fatales* who emerge from the water to lure unsuspecting men to their deaths. Nevertheless, many artists were keen to stress their sirens' Greek affinities through unmistakable illustrations of the *Odyssey* and the use of Homeric quotations. Burne-Jones, on the other hand, has wilfully rejected the Homeric text in favour of a Virgilian one, as he virtually had already in *The Sirens,* which he described himself as 'a sort of Sirenland – I don't know when or where – not Greek Sirens, but any sirens, anywhere, that lure on men to destruction.'[22] As we have seen, if the painting suggests any source then it is Virgil's description of souls on the banks of the Styx.

Perhaps the one straightforward use of a Virgilian subject, and certainly a more conventional use of Virgilian text as appended to a canvas, is found in Alma-Tadema's *On the Road to the Temple of Ceres.* The painting, however, looks not to the *Aeneid,* but to Virgil's earlier work. It is accompanied by lines of verse from John Dryden's translation of the *Georgics,* this time not merely included in the accompanying exhibition catalogue, but printed on the picture's frame:

> When Winter's rage abates, when cheerful Hours
> Awake the Spring, and Spring awakes the Flow'rs,

> On the green Turf, thy careless Limbs display,
> And celebrate the mighty Mother's day.
> For then the Hills with pleasing Shades are crown'd,
> And Sleeps are sweeter on the silken Ground:
> With milder Beams the Sun securely shines;
> Fat are the Lambs and luscious are the Wines.
> Let ev'ry Swain adore her Pow'r Divine,
> And Milk and Honey mix with sparkling Wine:
> Let all the Quire of Clowns attend the show,
> In long Procession, shouting as they go;
> Invoking her to bless their yearly Stores,
> Inviting Plenty to their crowded Floors.
> Thus in the Spring, and thus in Summer's Heat,
> Before the Sickles touch the ripening Wheat,
> On *Ceres* call; and let the lab'ring Hind
> With Oaken Wreaths his hollow Temples bind:
> On *Ceres* let him call, and *Ceres* praise,
> With uncouth Dances and with Country Lays.

The lines, from *Georgics* 1 (335–350 = Dryden 1.463–482), belong to a well-known passage celebrating spring, summer and harvest festivals. The painting shows a rural religious festival, in the shape of an informal procession of celebrants, and would seem faithful enough in its response to an agricultural poem. But the lines cited are not merely incidental to the painting; they constitute its immediate and central inspiration. Alma-Tadema is not usually noted for his depiction of movement and his figures often have a static quality. Art historians have observed that the leading female dancer here displays unusual vibrancy.[23] What they fail to note is the connection between this surprising animation and the verse inscription. The crucial phrase comes in the last line of the quotation: 'With uncouth dances and with country lays' – uncouth dances – *motus incompositos* – the very sound and rhythm of the words conveys a clumsy movement, which Alma-Tadema has translated into the image of a country girl dressed in a rough animal skin dancing with bare feet to the beat of a *tympanum*.

The Georgics, of course, also retells the Orpheus myth, a myth which inspired various European symbolist artists, for whom the poet's disembodied head, still singing as it floats down the river Hebrus, becomes a

potent symbol. In Ovid's *Metamorphoses,* the river carries both lyre and head, and while Ovid's head only emits a piteous murmur, Virgil's pours out a passionate lament. T. S. Burt's 1883 translation of *Georgics* 4, lines 523–7, reads as follows:

> But, even when the Aeagrian Hebrus bore
> His head reft from its alabaster neck,
> And roll'd it down the channel of the stream,
> Its voice and tongue with fleeting breath still cried:
> 'Eurydice, wretched Eurydice!'
> All the stream's banks repeat: 'Eurydice.'

Paintings of the myth by Gustave Moreau, Odilon Redon and Franz von Stuck all point us to the possibility of the poet's immortality through the representation of the lifeless head and the (Ovidian) lyre, and yet they all choose to show the poet's mouth firmly closed. Although it is Virgil who highlights the artistic possibilities of the scene, the painters derive their detail from Ovid's narrative. The British artist John William Waterhouse draws on the same subject, mood and detail as his European counterparts. *Nymphs Finding the Head of Orpheus* [Figure 7] is a sad, strange picture of two women seated on a rock gazing down at the head of the poet floating in the water below. Lyre and head are entangled with the poet's hair and, once again, his lips are closed to the Virgilian lament.

Conventional predilection for a Greek or Ovidian mythology and a historical-genre and mainly urban Rome combine with academic assaults on Virgil's reputation to ensure that conventional Virgilian iconography had become obsolete in the painting traditions of Victorian Britain. And yet, while there are virtually no illustrations of Virgilian narrative in the mould of Rubens's *Death of Dido* and Turner's *Dido Building Carthage,* artists still occasionally look to a Virgilian text – but essentially in an individualist spirit: for the Victorian artist, it seems, Virgil is known, but not revered; tacitly acknowledged, but then manipulated to suit the artist's purpose. Hence Rossetti represents Virgil as a timid boy, Poynter translates epic grandeur into frivolous pleasure, Burne-Jones conflates Virgilian and Homeric imagery and even boldly misquotes the *Aeneid.* If not quite a wholesale rewriting – as, say, Pound rewrites Propertius –

Figure 7: John William Waterhouse, *Nymphs Finding the Head of Orpheus* (1901: private collection)

these examples epitomise a distinctive kind of appropriation in which Virgil remains exemplary, yet is in no way sacrosanct.

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Notes

1. See Nigel Llewellyn, 'Virgil and the Visual Arts' in Charles Martindale, ed., *Virgil and his Influence* (Bristol, 1984) and M.J.H. Liversidge, 'Virgil in Art' in Charles Martindale, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to Virgil* (Cambridge,1997).
2. W. Graham Robertson, *Time Was: The Reminiscences of W. Graham Robertson* (London, 1931): 98.
3. Algernon Swinburne, 'Notes on Some Pictures of 1868' in *Essays and Studies* (London, 1901): 361.
4. *The Odes and Epodes of Horace,* tr. Lord Lytton (London, 1872).

5. *Athenaeum,* 30 April, 1881: 598.
6. 'The Works of Lawrence Alma-Tadema,' *Art Journal,* 1883: 66.
7. *The Odes and Epodes of Horace,* tr. Lord Lytton (London, 1872).
8. T. S. Eliot, 'What is a classic?' (1944) and 'Virgil and the Christian world' (1951), in *On Poetry and Poets* (London, 1957).
9. Norman Vance, *The Victorians and Ancient Rome* (Oxford, 1997): 134–9.
10. J. K. Huysmans, *Against Nature,* tr. Robert Baldick (Harmondsworth 1966) : 40, first publ. 1884. However, Des Essientes condemns all Latin writers until Lucan.
11. 'Vitae summa brevis spem nos vetat incohare longam' from *Odes* 1.4.15 and 'Non sum qualis eram bonae sub regno Cynarae' from *Odes* 4.1.3–4.
12. See Rowena Fowler, 'Ernest Dowson and the Classics,' *The Yearbook of English Studies,* 3 (1973): 243–52.
13. B. G. Niebuhr, *The History of Rome,* tr. J. C. Hare and C. Thirlwall (Cambridge, 1828), vol. 1: 166.
14. See W. B. Stanford, *The Ulysses Theme: a Study in the Adaptability of a Traditional Hero* (Oxford, 1954).
15. Although Norman Vance discovers a combination of Virgilian pathos and sense of epic destiny in Tennyson's *Idylls of the Kings,* see *The Victorians and Ancient Rome* (Oxford, 1997): 149–52.
16. *The Aeneids of Virgil: Done into English Verse by William Morris* (London, 1875).
17. Georgiana Burne-Jones, *Memorials of Edward Burne-Jones,* (London, 1904), vol. 2: 56.
18. *The Aeneids of Virgil: Done into English Verse by William Morris* (London, 1875).
19. Quoted in *Edward Burne-Jones: Victorian Artist-Dreamer* (The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York 1998), cat.119.
20. *The World,* 5 May 1886, quoted in Stanley Weintraub, *Bernard Shaw on the London Art Scene 1885–1950* (Pennsylvania, 1989): 103.
21. *The Times,* 8 May, 1886: 8.
22. Georgiana Burne-Jones, *Memorials of Edward Burne-Jones,* (London, 1904), vol 2: 222.
23. Vern Swanson, *The Biography and Catalogue Raisonné of the Paintings of Sir Lawrence Alma-Tadema* (London, 1990): 254; *Empires Restored, Elysium Revisited: The Art Of Sir Lawrence Alma-Tadema* (Sterling and Francine Clark Institute, Williamstown Massachusetts, 1991), cat. 21.

Proceedings of the Virgil Society 24 (2001) 103–120

The Tears and the Trumpets

A Presidential Address given to the Society on 3 June 2000

D.W. Blandford, in what he admits as a 'red-nosed' epilogue to his essay on the Virgil Society in *Pentekontaetia,* wonders if the Society 'should ... perhaps go for 'street cred' and appeal to YOOF. We could revamp the Society as the Virgil Fan Club, issue lapel badges with the motto 'AMO MARONEM' etc.

I have to confess to wondering if asking me to be your President was part of the same fantasy, as I have, even in my 60's and long past my YOOF, been recently styled in the press as the 'Liam Gallagher of modern poetry'.

This tabloid branding, presumably, was for the outcries in 1987 surrounding my poem *v.* At the same time as I was being branded as a yob from the gasworks I was also President of the Classical Association. Because of the huge controversy the *Independent* published the whole poem on its news pages. On the very day that it appeared I was trying to decipher the *Res Gestae* of Augustus on a temple wall in Ankara, Turkey, where I'd been invited to give a reading of my poetry.

v. is a poem which has the central place in the collection of my poetry published in Italian translation by Einaudi in 1996. Since its publication I've had many invitations to Italy to read my poems: Rome, Venice, Bologna, Torino, Genoa, Milan and Napoli, where I returned the year before last. My first visit to Napoli was in 1987 to make one of my film-poems for the BBC called *Mimmo Perella non è più,* about the burial customs of the modern Neapolitans, showing how bodies are exhumed after a year in the volcanic soil of Naples and deposited in marble lockers in the vast Cemetery of Poggioreale. Each year the remains of the dried

disintegrating corpse are taken out, spoken to gently, dusted with DDT, given new cerements, and put back again. I'm not suggesting that this *rifresco,* as the Neapolitans call it, is analogous to the ritual of this Presidential Address, but the theory behind the *rifresco* is that the more attention you give to the remains of a loved one, the more favours the 'refreshed' spirit will give back; the more disintegrated the leathery remains of skull or pelvis, the more tender the devotion. I believe you could say that, the more deconstructed the *Aeneid,* the more potent and precious the fractured residues. And I have gone in search of Virgil's literal remains as well as his remains in a literary sense. Each time I've been to Napoli I've made my pilgrimage to Merghellina and the Parco Virgiliano. After paying homage to Virgil, and Leopardi next to him, I would eat in the Piazza Sannazaro, where the descendants of the fisherman protagonists of the *Piscatory Eclogues,* inspired by Virgil's, of the square's eponymous poet still land baby octopuses deliciously dished up at *Pasqualino's* near the supposed *tomba di Virgilio* in Merghellina.

I am currently translating a poem by Sannazaro on Cumae. The last time I gave a reading of my poetry in Italy was in September last year at a festival in Mantua. One of the poems I read was *Laureate's Block,* another poem which got me hounded by the same ignorant *Daily Mail* journalists. *Laureate's Block* is a poem I wrote for the *Guardian,* deliberately designed to ruin any chance I might have had of being made Poet Laureate and declaring my republican sentiments with as obvious, if versified, clarity as your first President's declaration that he was 'a Royalist in Politics, an Anglo-Catholic in religion and a classicist in literature'. It's probably being a republican that also makes me, like Shelley, and unlike T.S. Eliot, a great admirer of the iconoclastic Lucan, notwithstanding his subversive vandalising of Virgil, and of that even greater republican poet, John Milton, whose epic probably owes more to Lucan's *Pharsalia* than to Virgil's *Aeneid.* I have a certain wariness or non-laureate's block when I think that Virgil was probably the first poet to set the style of Laureate verse.

There were other poems I read in Mantua which might also identify me as an 'atheist in religion' and, of course, this makes me unsympathetic to the posthumous press-ganging of Virgil into Christianity as *'anima naturaliter Christiana'* , something I also associate with your first President. It is amazing the lengths these posthumous proselytizers will go to, even with less malleable material than Virgil, Franz Werfel (1890–1945),

the German dramatist and poet who translated Euripides's *Trojan Women* just before the outbreak of World War I, could even see in Hecuba an anticipation of the passion of Jesus Christ. 'And thus we see', Werfel wrote, 'the notorious atheist Euripides as a harbinger, a prophet, an early dove of Christianity.'

But most of the poems I read last September in Mantua, republican or atheist as they may well be, all show at least one and one only congruence between your first and your latest poet-President, and that is that I'd also call myself, with some qualifications, 'a classicist in Literature'. Perhaps a classicist who graffitis and vandalises his own carefully wrought edifices and structures. The vandal with the aerosol has to value highly what he desecrates with his daubing, no less than Lord Byron who chiselled his name on columns at Sunion and Delphi, or Giuseppe Boba (1790), Casper Pinottem (1728), G. Mahiev (1735), CFFB (1737), clearly devotees of different nationalities, who chiselled their names or initials just beneath the lead inlaid laurels on the inscription on Virgil's tomb in Merghellina.

I also read one poem in Mantua, probably the only one I've written, in which the influence of Virgil is clear, I will read it at the end of my talk. I didn't go directly to Mantua from England. I was, coincidentally, on my way back from another long filming journey, after the 11 week Odyssey across Europe making my film *Prometheus*. This new film followed the route of the severed head of Orpheus down the Maritsa river, as the Hebrus is now known in Bulgaria, down the Evros, as it's known in modern Greek, and across the sea to the resting place of the head and the lyre of the poet in Lesbos.

I had a complete Virgil with me, and whenever we could get close enough to the river and it was not the militarised border zone between Greece and Turkey, from its banks or from a boat on its current I'd declaim:

> *tum quoque marmorea caput a cervice revulsum*
> *gurgite cum medio portans Oeagrius Hebrus*
> *volveret, Eurydicen vox ipsa et frigida lingua,*
> *a miseram Eurydicen ! anima fugiente vocabat,*
> *Eurydicen toto referebant flumine ripae.*
>
> (*Georgics* 4. 523–527)

When I tell you that the head that we floated down the river from its cascading source high up in the Rhodopes through Plovdiv, past Didimoticho and Soufli, and all the way to Lesbos, was modelled from my own head you will understand the degree of empathy I brought to the project and to what I might say today about Orpheus.

After the poetry reading of last September in the tranquil walled garden of a Mantuan *palazzo* I was given dinner by the festival directors in a *trattoria* which served the local culinary delicacy, which you could translate as 'ass-casserole' or 'donkey stew'. As I ate I found myself quoting, though I know it is not by Virgil, from the *Copa:*

delicium est asinus (26)

In some ways I'd like to think that Virgil *had* written the *Copa* but, although it has been described as 'an elegy bubbling over with the joy of life', the writer (P.J. Enk) goes on to say that it is 'too cheerful, however, to allow ascription to Virgil.' It would be good to think that his life was not all poetry and *'lacrimae rerum',* and that he got out to the taverna now and then. I've eaten in *La Taverna di Virgilio* in Brindisi near the Scalinata Virgilio, which was a cheerful enough place, even though it is in the town of the poet's death.

pone merum et talos, the *Copa* ends;
pereat, qui crastina curat !
mors aurem vellens 'vivite' ait, 'venio'. (87–88)

'Live', says Death,' I'm on my way.'

I'm not much of a gambler but after the reading I had a taste for Mantuan *merum.* (I think it was *Bianco di Custoza* from the hills of Cremona.)

The next morning (or, perhaps, I should say the morning after, since the day brought me some sobering thoughts) as I'd never been to Mantua before, I spent the first of a few days looking round. Because Orpheus was still on my mind after my three-week journey along the Hebrus, I started with the Palazzo Ducale where the first purely secular Italian drama, the *Orfeo* of Angelo Poliziano, was played in 1480, and later what is often regarded as the first Opera, the *Orfeo* of Monteverdi, in 1607. Both *Orfeos* derived from the same Virgilian text I'd carried with me and declaimed

along the Hebrus through Bulgaria and Greece. The lament and echo of the Orphic voice lead to the heart of opera; the very metrical repetition of grief and loss are the direct source of plaintive aria.

Around the same time as Poliziano's *Orfeo,* the Gonzaga Bridal Room, the *Camera degli Sposi* was decorated by Mantegna (1431–1506) and I went, with my binoculars, to examine the ceiling spandrels which depict Arion of Lesbos astride a dolphin, Orpheus charming a lion, Orpheus charming Cerberos and a Fury, *and,* finally, a fallen Orpheus, his hand lolling over the spandrel's border, being brutally clubbed to death by three women. It is this last shocking decoration which inspired Albrecht Dürer, who was in Italy in the 1490s. In Dürer's etching of the same murder, above the scene of Orpheus being clubbed and battered, there is a banderole looped decoratively in the branches of a tree which reads:

Orfeus der erst puseran,

which can only be translated in its crude hostility as 'Orpheus the first faggot.' Like the fragments of Phanocles before him (who was known and used by the brilliant Poliziano) Ovid, though not quite so butchly belligerent as Albrecht, has this version of the poet's murder in *Metamorphoses* 10:

ille etiam Thracum populis fuit auctor amorem
in teneros transferre mares citraque iuventam
aetatis breve ver et primos carpere flores. (83–85)

The implication behind the savage dismemberment of Orpheus was that he was 'unmanly' in some way, *mollis,* not *durus.* It may well be the first story that suggests that the practice of poetry is not really a manly activity. At least not this kind of poetry.

Orpheus is the first non sword-wielding hero in the myths, who either turned to the love of boys or was killed because his grief was excessive, just as the nightingale in the simile in the *Georgics* sings its grief, and gives us a sense of the art of lamentation considered obsessive in contrast to the world where the *durus arator* gets on with the business of cultivation. And the empire-builder with conquest, killing, spoils and triumphs !

The Thrace where Orpheus was born was also the birthplace of Ares, God of War. And for the Greeks the mountains of Thrace always resounded, writes the Bulgarian archaeologist Ivan Mazarov, 'either with

the clash of weapons or the song of the lyre.' Either/or ! 'There is ... something about Orpheus that sets him apart from all the other great figures of Greek myth [which] is pre-eminently heroic myth that enshrines martial values: courage, killing, blood-lust ... All the other great figures of Greek myth, whatever else they may be, are great killers; Orpheus carries with him that essentially powerless power of poetry, as it detaches itself from the heroic mode, and in its very detachment becomes dangerously undermining of the martial ideal, as it gives scope for frailty, tenderness, doubt,. tears and sorrow. This poetry is not like that of Cretheus, the Trojan bard, killed by Turnus in *Aeneid* Book 9:

> *semper equos atque arma virum pugnasque canebat.* (777)

The *arma virum* reminds us too much of the opening of the *Aeneid* itself not to make us wonder why Virgil has his fellow heroic poet die.

The lyre of Orpheus, thrown in the same river as its dismembered player, came with the head to Lesbos where a non-heroic poetry prospered for the first time into the personal lyric: Terpander, Sappho, Alcaeus, a poetry that liberates itself from the metrical military morale-boosting and tunes itself to something more tender than laureate triumph. The torment of Orpheus bloomed into a tenderness unknown in the heroic world, and impossible to maintain for more than a moment among martial clamour. We shouldn't forget how brass, the *aerea cornua,* and percussion drown out the magic lyre of Orpheus in *Metamorphoses* 11:

> *sed ingens*
> *clamor et infracto Berecyntia tibia cornu*
> *tympanaque* (15–17)

How can the lyre make itself heard above the din of clashing steel, the killing and screaming?

After the story of Orpheus Virgil's *Georgics* end with a kind of epilogue in which Virgil, you could say, allows us to hear the lyre and the clash of weapons, and seems to give all the glory to the martial sound and fury, casting himself dismissively as '*studiis florentem ignobilis oti',* in contrast to Octavian, *Caesar magnus,* thundering in war and, as victor, giving laws to 'willing' nations, (though the willingness of the nations might be the first whiff of the laureate spin that colours the *Aeneid.)* The *fulminat*

inevitably drowns out the *carmina.* Art is cast as inglorious compared with triumph and conquest or, indeed, with the agricultural labour of the *durus arator.* The final lines you might almost call Virgil's valediction to the Orphic voice. How does a spirit probably more inclined towards the grief of the nightingale or the sorrow of Orpheus fare among the clash of weapons? Can an Orpheus become a Cretheus? How does this *mollities (morbidezza* as Mackail translates it), this tenderness, that carries with it the brand of weakness or effeminacy among the braying trumpets, fare in an imperialist mission where the sollemnized advice from the Underworld for future Romans begins:

> *excudent alii spirantia mollius aera* (6. 847),

though, of course, the Romans would make their own *aerea cornua* against whose bellicose rasping notes even the lyre of Orpheus is helpless. The Orphic voice which is *mollis* is certainly not a creator of epics. Verse that celebrates Caesar is *durus,* as Propertius writes to Augustus's 'arts-czar' Maecenas, who asks why his poetry is *mollis:*

> *nec mea conveniunt duro praecordia versu*
> *Caesaris in Phrygios condere nomen avos.* (2.1.41–42)

What happens to *versus* when it has to become *durus,* especially when it is composed by one whose spirit seems to be more essentially *mollis?* What compromises have to be made if the lyre enters that world willingly and tries to serve both power and the empathetic, tragic, compassionate heart of poetry? It seems the dilemma of the Virgilian imagination in his imperial epic.

On the same day in Mantua after the *Palazzo Ducale, w*ith the spirit of the grieving, inconsolable, then battered Orpheus and these thoughts much in my head and with my Virgil in my pocket, I went to look for the statue of the poet this Society is devoted to, in a park off the Piazza Virgiliana. The statue seemed to me, I have to say, a monument more appropriate to a conqueror than to a poet, or to a poet who had to raise a naturally more gentle voice to measure up to the clash of weapons, or be heard above the din of *aerea cornua:*

> *aereaque adsensu conspirant cornua rauco.* (7.615)

Part of the explanation is that the statue was erected in anticipation of the bimillennial celebrations of Virgil's birth in 1930 during the dictatorship of Mussolini (1922–1943). The statue is raised many metres above the ground and I had to use my binoculars to have a decent view of the face I was forced to gaze up at in compulsory awe and reverence. The statue is in a declamatory pose, and certainly not reading his work on the same plane as his audience as I had done in the palazzo the night before. At ground level beneath the belittling bard are the coronets of the limescaled sprinklers of two dried up fountains, not an appropriate symbol for a poet whose *Aeneid* has been on the curricula of Europe since Caecilius Epirota put him on the syllabus soon after the epic's publication. There were two used hypodermics in the fountains, a condom and discarded juice cartons.

It is easier to associate the poetry of empire with this imposing figure than the poetry of loss and doubt, and that is probably the point of this particular sculpture, as the rest of the monument makes clearer. Beneath the raised right arm of the declaiming bard is another statue of two men, one, the Roman, with his foot planted triumphantly on the stomach of the other and, on the pedestal, along with more recent red and blue graffiti of gang vendetta and vengeance, is the text from the *Aeneid* the sculpture is meant to illustrate, and the lines I have no doubt the statue of the bard above was meant to be declaiming:

> *Tu regere imperio populos, Romane, memento*
> *(hae tibi erunt artes) pacisque imponere morem,*
> *parcere subiectis et debellare superbos.* (6. 851–853)

[The monument has the now discredited reading *pacis,* not *paci*.]

> *parcere subiectis et debellare superbos*

"*Superbi* were simply those who," in the words of de Ste. Croix, "refused to submit to Roman domination, and beaten down they were."

The verb *debellare,* is, interestingly enough, not used before the Augustan period. The ghost of Anchises is militantly fond of *debellare,* as he also uses it when he appears to Aeneas in Book 5 (730f.), when he tells his son that there is a *gens debellanda* in Latium.

Titus, who sacked Jerusalem in AD 70 with appalling carnage, was called *Vespasianus Iudaeorum debellator (*Tertullian *Apologeticum* 5*)* and

the Vulgate has the word *debellator* coupled, appropriately, with *durus,* for which the Authorised Version has 'fierce man of war' (Wisdom 18.15). These lines on the pedestal are, said Robert Graves, in one of the most virulently hostile diatribes against Virgil outside the Whigs of the 18th century, ' ... a favourite declamation of imperialists who consider themselves heirs of Augustan Rome' .

Certainly prominent among those who considered themselves the heirs of Augustan Rome in more recent times was Mussolini, under whose dictatorship the declaiming bard was erected. 'Five years from now', Mussolini declared on 31 December 1925, 'Rome must appear in all its splendour: immense, ordered, and as powerful as it was at the time of the first empire, that of Augustus.' Mussolini was called 'a second Augustus' by his foreign minister Dino Grandi, who, as Mussolini's spin-doctor, spoke of his invasion of Ethiopia as Italy's 'mission to civilise the black continent'; Mussolini, of course, also heeding the Elysian advice of Anchises inscribed on the monument I was sitting in front of, practised his brand of 'civilised' *debellare* against black *superbi* in Ethiopia with mustard gas. By 1937, the bimillennial anniversary of the birth of Augustus (63BC–14AD), Mussolini's archaeologists and architects created the Piazza Augusto Imperatore, with the reconstructed mausoleum of the emperor and the Ara Pacis enclosed in a building by the Tiber where today it is *Chiuso per Lavori.*

When I last saw it recently a fig tree with small green fruit was growing out of a fissure in the *Res Gestae.* Mussolini subsidized editions of the *Aeneid* to help promote his new 'Augustan' imperialism. It is, unfortunately, inescapably true that it is all too easy to co-opt Virgil into these enterprises. Especially a Virgil like this statue I was trying to crane my neck to look at declaiming *Aeneid* 6. 851–853 to the air way above my head. Definitely declaiming those very lines. The pose says it all.

It was a beautiful September day in Mantua and I had some hours spare before my next appointment with donkey stew, so I sat on a bench in the park and, dwarfed by the monument, alternatively looked at the commemorative image of the declaiming, elevated bard and read his *Aeneid* 6 for the context for the three lines on the pedestal of the triumphant Roman. The sculpted victor with his sandalled foot on his defeated foe has not a shred of *parcere subiectis* in it. Rather the victor (whose visage, coincidentally or not, bears a close resemblance to Mussolini himself) with his sandal on the guts of the defeated looks out towards the

camera or the sculptor like a hunter from the British *raj* snapped with his boot on a dead tiger. Scanning the pair from my bench with my binoculars I noticed that the conquered foe beneath the Roman had a Greek meander pattern on his kilt . Was this, I began to wonder, a conflation of Lucius Mummius, the conqueror of Corinth in 146 BC, and the Italian invader of Corfu in 1923, the first example of the dictator's violence on an international scale, which Dino Grandi, the Fascist spin-doctor, who became Mussolini's Ambassador to the Britain *Il Duce* would always detest for making him back down over Corfu, called 'a real contribution to European peace.' That sort of 'spin' was typical of the first Augustus too !

'Sparing the defeated', which I don't think was on the mind of the sculpted Mussolini look-alike, is a central proud entry on the marmoreal CV of the crumbling *Res Gestae* housing the now closed Ara Pacis, which the second Augustus restored in honour of the first. The words are a chiselled sentence I first read in Turkey:

> *Bella terra et mari civilia externaque toto in orbe terrarum suscepi, victorque omnibus superstitibus civibus peperci.*
> (*Monumentum Ancyranum* 13–15)

The necessity of sparing is put even more passionately and urgently by Anchises earlier in the crucial matter of civil conflict rather than foreign domination. At the end of civil war and vendetta someone has to start the process of reconciliation and disarming. It becomes the victor to throw away his sword:

> *ne, pueri, ne tanta animis adsuescite bella,*
> *neu patriae validas in viscera vertite viris;*
> *tuque prior, tu parce, genus qui ducis Olympo;*
> *proice tela manu, sanguis meus !* (6. 832–835)

The vehement alliteration of the v's and p's is followed by the choking into silence on the broken line, which seems to show Anchises choked and silenced at the sorrow of the Roman Civil War and being unable to continue. I don't want to get sidetracked into the question of half-lines. We might say that, if it was deliberate, it is a brilliant dramatic device. If it wasn't then it shows that Virgil was having trouble with the transition, and it was his own shocked silence, not Anchises's, over what was coming next.

Under the dominating Fascistic statue I felt again one of my greatest moments of unease in the *Aeneid.* Something has always appalled me at how Anchises recovers his didactic composure after his moment of silence by reaching for the inspiring and gloriously triumphant figure of Lucius Mummius, destroyer of Corinth, famous for the Greeks he has butchered. Not one of my heroes! We 'pass again to triumph' says R.D.Williams:

> *Ille triumphata Capitolia ad alta Corintho*
> *victor aget currum, caesis insignis Achivis.* (6.836–837)

Dryden has:

> Another comes, who shall in triumph ride,
> And to the Capitol his chariot guide,
> From conquered Corinth, rich with Grecian spoils.

Lucius Mummius Achaicus destroyed Corinth in 146 B.C. If we quote the simple sentences of Pausanias on this great Roman triumph, it is to measure the poeticising against a more prosaic and disturbing reality, and to realise all that is suppressed in the *durus versus* glorification of triumphant Rome's vengeance for Troy:

> 'Most of the people found in [Corinth] were massacred by the Romans, and Mummius sold the women and children ... The most admired monuments of piety and art he carried off ...' (7.16)

Not much *parcere subiectis* here, though I'll mention the one recorded incident of compassion later.

The myths of Roman clemency have to be maintained for Lucius Mummius as well as Augustus Caesar, and to compensate at least for the sequestration of these monuments of piety and art something presumably far more inspiring and publicly educative was set up, if the inscription found on a pedestal of what had been an imposing equestrian statue in Olympia is anything to go by:

> 'The city of Elis erected this statue of Lucius Mummius ... commander-in-chief of the Romans, on account of his virtue and the kindness which he continues to show to it and to the rest of the Greeks.'

The conflation of Lucius Mummius and the Mussolini look-alike, which was hard to ignore as long as I sat in the park, put me in mind of the Italian newspapers which reported how, after Mussolini's invasion of Greece in 1940, which was a complete flop, 'the Greeks were welcoming the Italian troops and gratefully accepting the imitation bronze busts of the *Duce.*'

Not only was the sacked city re-embellished with equestrian statues of its sacker, but, according to Dio Chrysostom, Corinth was the first Greek city to be blessed with that most Roman of institutions, gladiatorial games. Dio goes on to note with horror and disgust that these barbarities then went to Athens itself, where a still visible marble barrier round the orchestra of the theatre of Dionysus shows 'too plainly the bloody nature of the exhibitions to which that splendid palace of art was degraded', as Mahaffy puts it.

Brutal and even blasphemous fact in the holy place of spell-binding poetry, but it is, though, an inevitable consequence of the choices made by the *durus debellator* dramatised by Virgil in the *Aeneid.* All roads lead to the Colosseum, and to the blood-curdling charade of the death of Orpheus, literally and fatally enacted before 50,000 Romans. In Martial's *De Spectaculis* (AD 80) there is an epigram that tells us of Orpheus literally torn to pieces by a bear in the Colosseum. It is a shocking emblem and blasphemous enactment of where the triumph of *durus* over *mollis* (I think inevitably) leads. I have always read it as an elegy for the death of the imagination, and with the imagination the death of compassion :

Quicquid in Orpheo Rhodope spectasse theatro
dicitur, exhibuit, Caesar, arena tibi.
repserunt scopuli, mirandaque silva cucurrit,
quale fuisse nemus creditur Hesperidum.
adfuit immixtum pecori genus omne ferarum
et supra vatem multa pependit avis,
ipse sed ingrato iacuit laceratus ab urso.
haec tamen ut res est facta, ita ficta alia est.

(Epigramma 21 – *De Orpheo)*

I used the *ficta/facta* contrast also in a play I staged in a Roman amphitheatre in Carnuntum on the Danube between Vienna and Bratislava. I have Commodus say:

> Greek bloodshed is all *ficta,* ours is *facta*
> we Romans really kill the fucking actor.

The road from Lucius Mummius to a mangled Orpheus in the Colosseum is a straight Roman one. How the truly poetic shrivels in triumphalism.

Does the conscience and compassion of Virgil here fall lamentably short in not giving Corinth the poetic equivalent of the temple mural in Carthage that made Aeneas stand and weep? Surely it suppresses the poet's own sensibility nurtured as it undoubtedly was on Greek culture and art. What did it cost Virgil personally to suppress those feelings to create the *durus versus* of Roman triumphalism?

Oddly enough there is a pertinent anecdote about Lucius Mummius the destroyer of Corinth and looter of its art. There is, as with Aeneas and the murals of Carthage, a moment of tears. Perhaps here we can find a momentary flash of *parcere subiectis.* The story is told by Plutarch (*Sympos.* 9.1.2.):

> At the point of destroying Corinth Mummius collected all children of free birth and asked those who knew their letters to write down a line of poetry in front of him. One of them wrote:
>
> Τρὶς μάκαρες Δαναοὶ καὶ τετράκις, οἳ τότ' ὄλοντο.
>
> (*Odyssey,* 5.306)

Mummius is moved, weeps at the child's written line from the *Odyssey,* and spares the family of the child, though all the others, who couldn't write or couldn't remember an apposite quotation, are sold into slavery. The *durus debellator* can't afford to be *mollis* for more than a moment. Though capable at times of such feelings the Roman's capacity for fierce *debellare* might be impaired, and the imperial mission jeopardised, if he surrendered to them. The *parcere subiectis* of Lucius Mummius is a blip in the belligerence. The tears are dried, the city levelled. Aeneas at the very end of the epic is also shown almost surrendering to the kind of compassion he had sensed in the murals of an alien city. By making the helpless

Turnus invoke Anchises, Virgil makes us remember what Anchises told Aeneas: *parcere subiectis.* Aeneas ignores the advice and the compassion which had made him weep in Carthage is suppressed in him, but awakened in the reader. The ending shows the cost of not learning *parcere subiectis.* It is a moment when the *aerea cornua,* the drums and trumpets of empire, are too loud to hear the lyre of compassion, though after the sound and fury of Aeneas killing Turnus we hear the lyre note send the complaining soul off to the shadows.

The unheard or unheeded lyre is the one thrust into the hands of the criminal who had to enact Orpheus by showing the futility of his lyrical art and being torn to pieces.

Though we cannot expect Virgil to have had Sibylline foresight of Nero and Caligula and Commodus, even though he is credited by some with prophetic insight into the coming of Christ, he would have been aware of what are the momentous consequences of 146BC, when both Carthage and Corinth were razed to the ground.

In the conflagration of Corinth, like a Titanic forge, such metals as had not been or could not be looted, gold, silver, copper fused together into a new, and highly valued alloy, which was known from that time on as *Corinthium aes.* Can we take *Corinthium aes* as a metaphor for the alloy out of which the *durus versus* of the Roman epic is made, as something of value from Greece metamorphosed by Roman destruction? Whatever was *mollius* in the art resmelted in conflagration is only apparent when reworked in flashes, flecks and fragments in the refashioned metal. Instead of giving a quality to the whole work its melted residues are hammered into a glint or glimpse of something tenderer that once gave a coherence to the whole.

Though Scipio Africanus was a more restrained looter than Mummius I wonder if it is legitimate to ask if the fresco or panels depicting the Trojan wars before which Aeneas stood and wept was carried off to Rome, where its 'compassion', as Gavin Douglas has it in his translation of the passage, or its '*commiseratio calamitatum*', as Ruaeus paraphrases in the edition of *Aeneid* that John Dryden relied on, might trouble the *durus debellator*'s conscience for decades to come. Or did it lose all detail in the fierce heat and did Priam and the suffering Trojans become fused into a new molten alloy, a Carthaginian brass, out of which less compassionate images could be forged and over which no tears need be shed?

What makes the mural in Carthage a different art from almost anything else in the whole *Aeneid* is that it represents the compassion for the suffering of people who are not kith or kin:

> *sunt hic etiam sua praemia laudi,*
> *sunt lacrimae rerum et mentem mortalia tangunt.* (1.461–2)

The second line has always been detached from its context to give Virgil a universality that has been used to counter the unease we feel about his propagandist purpose, and to create an Orphic voice singing in descant to the clash of arms and although I have long believed like Nicholas Horsfall that 'only rank bad Latin can make of these lines a general reflection on the human condition', it goes on being used in the way it was used last year in the *Daily Telegraph* by Harry Eyres, who, under a headline saying that Virgil was a 'writer whose verse can be read as an elegy for the pain of Kosovo,' says that 'though Virgil does not minimise the blood and sweat needed to complete the huge task of founding the imperial city, what interests him most are the tears ... Tears seem to flow on every page ... '

> *sunt lacrimae rerum et mentem mortalia tangunt.*

Mr. Eyres ought to be careful as it is also possible to find a parallel in the justification of the domination of Greece as revenge for the Trojan War, almost a millennium before, and Slobodan Milosevic's use of the medieval battle of Kosovo to justify his atrocities.

The much mis-used line (*sunt lacrimae rerum et mentem mortalia tangunt)* is even more profound when considered back in its proper context. The murals which move Aeneas to tears are recent and show compassion for the suffering of people unrelated to the artists and the Carthaginians. *hic etiam,* even here, far from Troy, art shows compassion and empathy, *commiseratio calamitatum.* That it is *Tyrian* pity for *Trojan* woes (as Dryden translates) is an essential part of the effect of the work of art on Aeneas and on us. That the sufferer and the sympathiser are distinctly unrelated is the very essence of the idea of shared humanity and mortality. There are certainly other tears in the *Aeneid* but they almost all involve kinship. There are no Roman equivalents of the Carthaginian murals. Such art could induce the *debellator* perhaps [to] *parcere superbis.*

Official Augustan art is like the Shield of Aeneas, or that temple imagined in *Georgics* 3 with Caesar, as usual, in its centre:

in medio mihi Caesar erit templumque tenebit (*Georgics* 3.16),

and with the (no doubt looted)

Parii lapides, spirantia signa. (3.34)

None of it is art of which could be said

sunt lacrimae rerum et mentem mortalia tangunt.

The drama of the *Aeneid*'s ending is precisely that struggle between *mollis* and *durus* which I had found that morning in Mantegna's Orpheus. Are we to look at that end like Aeneas looking at the fresco in Carthage or like Aeneas looking at the moulded figures on his shield? There is a world of difference. You weep at one, and carry the other into the clash of weapons to the sound of the drums and trumpets that drown out the lyre of Orpheus, that I swear I heard softly in my ear as I walked away from the declaiming statue in the Mantuan Park. Was someone at ground level, I wondered, strumming the coronet of the dried up fountain as I walked along the banks of the Mincio to the place of donkey stew (*delicium est asinus*)? If the bronze bard heard it too it might well crumble.

I began by telling you about the poems I read in the Mantuan palazzo singing for my first supper of donkey stew. Another poem I read is probably the only poem I've written I am conscious of being influenced by Virgil. As President of the Classical Association in 1987 I wrote my one and only letter to the *Times*. The correspondence columns had been full of two subjects while I'd been away in Ankara, the future of Latin studies, and the merit and scandal of my poem *v*. I wrote in my letter that without the years I'd spent studying Latin and Greek I would never have been able to write my poem *v*. I can say now that without the years I've spent reading Virgil I could never have written the following poem that I read in Mantua in September and will be reading in Norway tomorrow. It was reprinted recently in *The Faber Book of War Poetry*, edited by the former Home Secretary. Kenneth Baker. I'm pleased to say that it appears with extracts from Books 1 and 2 of the *Aeneid*.

It is called *The Cycles of Donji Vakuf*. And it's about my taking my lyre into the clash of weapons in Bosnia. Somewhere in it you will recognise Virgilian images and also perhaps the contrast of *mollis* and *durus* and something in the consoling mandolin lost to its player that might remind you briefly of the Orpheus who came with me that September morning in Mantua to look at the statue of Virgil:

The CYCLES of DONJI VAKUF

We take *Emerald* to Bugojno, then the *Opal* route
to Donji Vakuf where Kalashnikovs still shoot
at retreating Serbs or at the sky
to drum up the leaden beat of victory.
Once more, though this time Serbian, homes
get pounded to facades like honeycombs.
This time it's the Bosnian Muslims' turn
to 'cleanse' a taken town. to loot, and burn.
Donji Vakuf fell last night at 11,
Victory's signalled by firing rounds to Heaven
and for the god to whom their victory's owed.
We see some victors cycling down the road
on bikes that they're too big for. They feel so tall
as victors, all conveyances seem small,
but one, whose knees keep bumping on his chin,
rides a kid's cycle, with a mandolin,
also childish size, strapped to the saddle,
jogging against him as he tries to pedal.
His machine gun and the mandolin impede
his furious pedalling, and slow down the speed
appropriate to victors, huge-limbe and big-booted,
and he's defeated by the small bike that he's looted.

The luckiest looters come down dragging cattle,
two and three apiece they've won in battle.
A goat whose udder seems about to burst
squirts her milk to quench a victor's thirst
which others quench with a shared beer, as a cow,
who's no idea she's a Muslim's now,

sprays a triumphal arch of piss across
the path of her new happy Bosnian boss.
Another struggles with stuffed rucksack, gun, and bike,
small and red, he knows his kid will like,
and he hands me his Kalashnikov to hold
to free his hands. Rain makes it wet and cold.
When he's balanced his booty, he makes off,
for a moment forgetting his Kalashnikov,
which he slings with all his looted load
on to his shoulder, and trudges down the road
where a solitary reaper passes by,
scythe on his shoulder, wanting fields to dry,
hoping, listening to the thunder, that the day
will brighten up enough to cut his hay.

And tonight some small boy will be glad
he's got the present of a bike from soldier dad,
who braved the Serb artillery and fire
to bring back a scuffed red bike with one flat tyre.
And among the thousands fleeing north, another
with all his gladness gutted, with his mother,
knowing the nightmare they are cycling in,
will miss the music of his mandolin.

TONY HARRISON

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The *Copa:* Poetry, Youth and the Roman Bar

While researching ideas about Roman food I came across the poem known as the *Copa* which is included in the *Appendix Vergiliana.*[1] The *Copa* or *Innkeeper* has intrigued scholars since antiquity because of its depiction of a scene in a Roman inn, and this fascination, coupled with its supposed authorship by Virgil, has ensured its survival to the present day.[2] But what exactly elicits this fascination? There are tough textual problems, controversies over the *persona* of the poet, contradictions in the very description of the inn and thoughts that seem awkwardly expressed. As a result the text has been thoroughly examined and plausible suggestions made about the correct readings. Yet, despite this attention, I do not feel that the poem has been placed in its proper social milieu, nor do I hold as satisfactory the usual interpretation that the bulk of the poem is an address by the innkeeper to some passer-by. My intention is therefore to substantiate this premise by considering the evidence for Roman adolescence and placing the *Copa* within this context, but it lies outside the scope of this discussion to support any claim to authorship by Virgil. Let me first offer a relatively literal translation of the poem.[3]

The innkeeper Surisca has a lovely bandeau tied around
her head,
is skilled at moving her lubricious hips to the castanets,
drunkenly dances sexily in the smoky bar,
thrusts her arms out to the piercing pipes.
What is the point of staying out exhausted in the summer dust,
when you could be lying down on a couch and drinking?

There are box hedges, arbours, wine jugs, roses, flutes, lyres,
and eating areas cool with shady rushes.

Yes, and there plays in the shepherd's way the rustic reed
which warbles sweetly in the Arcadian grotto.
There is cheap wine too, just decanted from a jar sealed
with pitch,
and a stream of water babbling with splashing sighs.
There are violet garlands made from crocus flowers
and crocus garlands entwined with dark red roses
and lilies which, picked from the virgin river,
the daughter of Achelous brings in wicker baskets.
There are lovely cheeses as well which the rush rack dries.
There are waxy plums for an autumn day,
and chestnuts, walnuts and mellow apples that are reddening.
Here is pure Ceres, here is Love, here is Bacchus.
There are both blood-red mulberries and grapes on
pliant stems,
and there is also hanging a green cucumber from its stalk.
There is a guardian of the hut armed with a willow sickle,
but he is not frightening despite his huge groin.
Come here and spend some time in an arbour, now
the exhausted ass sweats.
Look after it, the ass is loved by Vesta.

Now cicadas burst the trees with their repeated refrain,
now a lizard hides in a pot cool in the brambles.
If you have any sense, lie back now and pour from summer
glass,
or you can take and use new crystal goblets if you wish.
Hey, come on, you are tired – rest under the vine's shade
And wreathe your heavy head with a garland of roses
And tear with bites the lips of a supple girl.
Huh, whoever has old-fashioned eyebrows can die.
Why keep sweet-smelling garlands for the ungrateful ashes?
Or do you want them to rest on your garlanded gravestone?

Serve the wine neat and the dice. Whoever worries about
tomorrow can die.
Death is pulling at my ear and says 'All of you live – I am
coming.'

It is more than just a hunch that identifies this as a young man's poem. Literary tradition certainly has it that it was written by Virgil in his youth and tradition can contain a grain of truth although, to be more cautious, the internal evidence ought to be examined. The theme is an inn. Here, obviously, is drink and fun. This is not to circumscribe such themes to an older poet, yet three ideas in particular militate against this: a respectable Roman would, for reasons which will become apparent later, hesitate to write verses about an inn unless as a satirical skit, yet satire this poem probably is not; the sexual undercurrents of the poem do not preclude an older poet, but the absence of experience or explicitness suggest a younger writer; and the reference to 'old-fashioned eyebrows' (*prisca supercilia*, 34) surely has relevance only if the author is by contrast young. Let us test this youthful hypothesis by examining the poem as a whole. By way of comparison a body of poetry written by young Roman men is needed and this requirement is amply fulfilled by the graffiti on the walls of Pompeii.

Adolescence is a time of heated emotions. An anonymous writer of the late empire ascribed the temper, sexual drive and bullying among this age group to yellow bile, one of the four humours that was by nature hot, with blood as the other hot humour lending passion and love.[4] Adolescence can also be a time for experiment with words, trying to understand these heightened feelings whether through diaries, song or poetry. Listen to the lyrics of many popular songs today, and the frustration of thwarted love, jealousy and physical attraction comes over strongly. There is an audience out there avid to match its experiences with those of the singers, both as a way of building up courage with the opposite sex and the reassurance of learning about universal feelings. Adolescence has not changed in its physical and emotional attributes since Roman times – the human body then was physiologically the same as now – even if in many ways the means of expressing it have. Modern parallels can easily be found for the sentiments expressed in this violently charged graffito from Pompeii: [5]

> 'Come over here, whoever is in love. I want to get a club and break the ribs of that goddess of love and put her limbs out of joint. If she has the power to pierce my soft heart, why can I not beat her head in with a club?'

Growing up too quickly in Roman times was a sinister premonition of an early death.[6] As Seneca (*ep.*77.5) wrote:

> 'You know Tullius Marcellinus very well, a reserved young man who grew old prematurely. Overtaken by illness that although not incurable was nevertheless chronic, troublesome and made great demands, he began to debate about death.'

The key word here is 'reserved' (*quietus*). The sequence of events seems to be that Tullius Marcellinus was reserved before his illness, that is his character was at sinister odds with the cheerfulness and exuberance expected of youth, for instead of rushing towards a grave and respectable maturity, a Roman boy was encouraged to work and play hard as soon as he reached puberty. Only by his mid-twenties when he had married would a Roman male be expected to settle down and leave behind the excitement of youth. Enjoy that moment, have sex and set your spirit dancing: so says the nurse in Seneca's *Phaedra* (444–53). Admittedly this play is about Greek mythology, but in its social *mores* it is definitely Roman, Stoicism blending with a peculiarly nihilistic view of the world. The plays of Plautus are full of partying by the young. Plautus has fun with the slave Tranio trying in the *Mostellaria* (367–406) to bustle Philolaches and his wild friends into their house before his master Theopropides arrives back from the harbour. Where the Plautine fantasy lies is in the ubiquity of the fun, for in reality only the wealthy could afford this extravagant life. And money was needed to afford the fine clothes and special haircuts that would bestow social acceptability on young men with their peers. A case in point is the indulgent Micio in Terence's *Brothers* complaining about Demea's harsh attitude to the defrayment of expenses on girls, clothes and drinking.[7] Hormones and consumerism were aided by rhetorical exercises at school which laid demands on the imagination, to create fantastic scenarios involving pirates, murderers, heroic figures from ancient history, and boys and girls who had been sexually compromised.[8] Moreover, some youthful writing was marked by clumsiness of expression, strained syntax, padding and ineffective imitation.[9]

Clumsiness of expression in the *Copa* has led to what Goodyear has described as 'the old and complex controversy' of who should be imagined as speaking in the poem.[10] Various illogical sequences of thought throughout the piece make it difficult to ascertain who exactly is the narrator. Three suggestions have been posited: either the poet is expressing his own thoughts, or he is taking the role of the innkeeper, or there is a mixture of these two ideas, with the poet having the first four

lines and the innkeeper the rest. Coupled to this problem of *persona* is the intention of the piece as a whole, whether it is a literary expansion of the sort of epigrammatic advertisements that really did appear on the walls of bars, or a satire on the pretensions of the lower classes in the style made familiar through the work of Petronius. What by contrast I would like to suggest is that the poem is not only a literary expansion of contemporary graffiti, but also should be read as if delivered by a typical *adulescens* (to borrow a term from comedy). This means doing away with the generally established notion of Surisca addressing a passer-by and instead regarding the poem as a train of thought. Now whether the piece is the actual work of a youth sitting in a bar or of someone who adopted this *persona* cannot be ascertained, although certain characteristics of style as well as Roman social conventions argue for the former interpretation. Certainly lingering in a bar long enough to compose at this length is not impossible, witness an inn by the city wall in the northern part of Pompeii which has a large graffito probably written by a customer to the effect that everyone lingered at Gabinius's inn.[11] And finally, while Drew once held that the poem belongs to the golden age of Latin literature, more recent stylistic and metrical analyses place the writing in the time of Statius and Martial, which makes acceptable comparison with the graffiti of Pompeii.[12]

What are these stylistic elements and social conventions which support the idea that these are the thoughts of a Roman *adulescens?* Rosivach thought the poem would have drawn the aristocratic reader into a plebeian environment.[13] When Surisca describes her garden, the predominantly Greek vocabulary is held to be foreign to such a reader. The wine and women on offer at the establishment are similarly held to be socially unacceptable to the presumed readers of the poem. Surisca is described as running a sort of brothel and it has been argued that in real life an educated reader would rarely have encountered such a person. All this may have been applied in theory to an adult Roman, but for an adolescent of the Roman aristocracy it was expected that there would be considerable contact with the prostitutes who hung around the local inns. Even the moralistic Cato could congratulate a youth on restricting his burgeoning libido to the brothel.[14] A bachelor like Horace might continue without opprobrium to act like a young man: when describing his famous journey across Italy in 36BC, he recounts his frustration at lying awake until midnight in an inn, expecting the appearance of a girl with whom an appointment had been arranged earlier.[15]

Pinning the sobriquet of prostitute on Surisca is therefore missing the point, for any woman working behind a bar was considered in law to be available, although there was no need for such a woman to register with the local town council as the main source of her income was not held to be from serving men but rather drinks.[16] A Pompeian graffito chronicles the rivalry of two men for a barmaid called Iris: Successus the weaver wanted to go out with Iris, but Severus had stepped in, claiming that he was far sexier and better looking, and that Iris anyway preferred him to Successus.[17] In fact slaves and attractive boys could also find themselves fancied, so that it is not surprising to find an example of such love on the wall of a Pompeian peristyle:

> 'If you are trying to feel the flames of love, muleteer, you should hurry more to witness some real sex. My choice is a sexy young man. I ask: "Come on, let us go. You have had a drink, let us go, take the reins and shake them, take me to Pompeii where love is sweet. You are mine."'[18]

That muleteers and weavers feature in this graffito does not mean that they were the writers, for it would be putting too great a faith in Roman schools to suggest that they scratched such verses on the walls. What the graffito does show is the social mix in these bars, with both manual workers and educated clientele, an idea of some relevance given the reference in the poem to an ass, a beast of burden from the world of the peasant rather than the preferred means of transport for someone with money. All these ideas are taken to a humorous extreme in the paintings of the bar on Mercury Street in Pompeii, where a woman is simultaneously drinking a glass of wine, putting a wine jug on a low table, and being taken from behind by an excited young man.[19] The graffiti from Pompeii reinforce this casualness of sex, one man desperately scribbling on a wall:

> 'He loves Felicla, he loves Felicla, he loves Felicla.'

Another man resorted to the four-letter word to describe bluntly what he got up to with presumably the same Felicla.[20] Of course no one is going to write a poem of thirty-eight lines on the wall of an inn; if they tried the innkeeper would no doubt have had them evicted for

vandalism. So on the whole graffiti tend to be short and, at their best, sharply witty. In other words this poem only contains the spirit and nuances of graffiti; it cannot be said to represent an expanded exercise in graffiti on paper.

I want now to look at why I think the poem works as a train of thought rather than as an address by the innkeeper. Read like this there are three parts to the poem. The two words that open the first part state the general theme of the poem: it is about a *copa* or innkeeper called Surisca. But there is more to these words than just a bland translation would suggest, for the foreignness and diminutive nature of the name Surisca ('little Syrian woman') lend a touch of the exotic and erotic, whilst the colloquial spelling of *copa* (*o* for *au*) conjures up the low-life. And just in case there is any doubt as to her intentions, Surisca is introduced as wearing a headband. The headband is described in the diminutive (*mitella,* 1), although this has probably less to do with its size than its teasing appearance, for headbands were often an indication that a woman was a prostitute. Rosivach is perhaps being too fanciful when he argues for the significance of the headband being the only piece of clothing to be mentioned, there being no need to elaborate on sartorial details.[21] Her dancing is provocative. Not only were undulating hips considered alluring, but there is probably a play on words at work here: the adjective *crispus* (2) used to describe these undulations can be linked phonetically with the verb *criso* which can suggest the movements of a woman when making love.[22] Now if the poem is broken up between the voices of the poet and the innkeeper, then an obvious piece of humour is damaged. Rather the poet plays on the erotic opening theme by closing this section of six lines with images of heat, exhaustion and lying down on a couch. It makes for smoother writing if only the poet is putting his thoughts into poetry, perhaps as he sits at the bar, because after this metaphorical climax on the couch the train of thought changes from the torrid to the descriptive, with hedges, cups and cool dining areas shaded by reeds. This couch is for drinkers, but it is not soaked with drink as commentators once assumed.[23] The Romans would not have appreciated sodden furniture, as a wry poem from Pompeii shows:[24]

> 'Water should wash the feet, a slave must wipe away spillages, a cover ought to protect the couch, take care with our linen.'

The second part begins with a description of the inn, the poet playing on several senses, whether sight, sound, smell, touch or taste. Jashemski gives pictures of similar establishments found during the course of excavation at Pompeii.[25] For example, just inside the Herculaneum Gate beneath the city walls diners could recline outdoors under the shade of a vine-covered pergola and travellers could stay the night in rooms over the indoors dining room. Or there was a large hotel belonging to Aulus Cossius Libanus which boasted a bar by the entrance selling food and drinks, a bakery next door, a large indoor dining room and an eating area in the garden. As the archaeological record shows, these Pompeian gardens were planted with fruit trees, vines, flowers and vegetables. The garden in the *Copa* follows a very similar pattern. Roses are a particularly sensual flower. Their mention conjures up an important literary connection, for their delicate red colour and velvet petals were linked in Greek poetry with women's bodies.[26] This allusion is reinforced by the image in the following line (15) of a nymph delivering a basket of fresh lilies. Goodyear is far too harsh in his attack on this escape from reality.[27] Leaving aside fumbling imitation and mockery of ostentation, it could be that the poet is merely dreaming of his perfect girl, the white of her flowers emphasising the freshness of her youth. Roses and flutes are symbols too for the joy of being alive, features of innumerable literary scenes involving love, wine and pleasure.[28] If Virgil lies behind these words, then this is no more than the literary echo expected of a novice poet. Such poems appear all over Pompeii, so Ovid features on a wall near the basilica:

> 'What can be as hard as rock or as soft as water? Yet hard rocks are hollowed out by soft water.'

Similarly Propertius:

> 'Can the porter please stay awake for those bringing presents, but remain asleep if someone skint knocks, deaf to the bolt being drawn back all the way.'[29]

Rosivach picks on the Greek descriptive vocabulary which is concluded with the reference to Arcadia.[30] There is nothing foreign, however, about the choice of Greek terms, for an educated Roman would have moved

between these two languages with ease. Wallace-Hadrill has shown that the way a Roman used his Greek was vitally important.[31] It was fashionable and accepted to hellenize in the gymnasium or the peristyle, but it could be socially awkward to parade hellenization in Roman public life. The inn is at the same time public and private: it is a place to meet friends and a place to lose dignity. Although the number of bars and restaurants in Roman cities mirror what we might expect to find in a similar modern city, the general literary verdict on these establishments was not favourable, nor does the archaeological evidence refute this. An examination of Pompeii has shown that the entrances to the houses of the wealthy were rarely situated near a bar, for bars were the haunt of prostitutes, and distinguished guests and visitors would not want to compromise their reputation by being seen in what might be construed as a sleazy situation.[32] The submergence on the one hand of the Roman bar and restaurants in literary opprobrium, but their apparent physical ubiquity on the other hand, might at first sight appear as somewhat of an enigma. The key to this puzzle is to remember who set down their disapproval on paper, the answer being satirists like Juvenal or politicians like Cicero, both of whom had strong points to make. The link between the opponents of the bar must be the humour arising from an inappropriate action. When Cicero (*Pis.*53) upbraids Piso, the consul of 58BC, who had helped to engineer the orator's exile, a sense of farce accompanies the suggestion that the object of the attack preferred bars to cities, particularly when his inebriated condition is likened less to a distinguished general than a pallid corpse. Similarly when Juvenal (8.171–6) launches his tirade against some provincial governor, he places him in a bar with a selection of seedy characters ranging from sailors to runaway slaves, and once again the comic hyperbole is crowned, this time with the outrageous picture of a priest who is not only dead drunk but castrated to boot.

An inn was inappropriate because of the nature of its clientele. Micio in Terence's *Brothers* (51–77) argues that, by allowing his son a free rein in his youth, he will guide him towards sobriety in later years, which means that he pays for girlfriends and parties and wild nights at the inn. If the inn had an aura of licence, if it was a magnet for wealthy young men and those of the plebeian class, then the derogatory remarks about it hold rather more subtlety than has been acknowledged up to now. A contemporary parallel might be locating a middle-aged politician at a nightclub: there might be a clash of generation, culture and expected behaviour. Yet

there are middle-aged habitués of nightclubs who, in their ordinariness, attract as much bad press as the characters drinking wine in a Roman inn. In addition, the use of Greek terms can be taken as a rebellious note. If it was the custom to adorn a garden with sculpture, then the references to food, love and wine can perhaps be taken as metaphorical statues, a window on the hellenizing world of myth, pleasure and transgression. Before the one real statue is described, the erotic tone is heightened by blood-red mulberries and cucumbers hanging down. Plautus has fun with a cucumber in his *Casina* (912), whilst blood is a symbol of adolescent passion. The climax is reached with Priapus and his enormous erection. Then follow, as in the first part, two lines about sweating and exhaustion. But there are two further points that can be made here: first, the commonplace that many people would have arrived at an inn on an ass; but second and more important, the allusion to the sexual powers of an ass, so forcefully exploited by Apuleius in his *Metamorphoses*.[33] This second part is twenty lines in length.

Totalling twelve lines, the third and final part commences. Now all is peaceful again – cicadas rasp in the bushes and a lizard hides in a cool spot. It is time to drink. If the glasses are crystal, a symbol of wealth, it may be no more than the drunken illusions of the poet as his head grows heavy (*grauidum,* 32). Certainly he loses any inhibitions as the poem reaches its conclusion, for he wants to bite (*decerpens,* 33) the lips of a supple girl. Goodyear here criticises the choice of words with the suggestion that 'love-bites are commonly applied to the neck, rather than the lips or face.'[34] But that is a subjective statement, for in Lampedusa's *The Leopard* Tancredi finds it delicious to bite and taste the blood from the inside of Angelica's lip.[35] The sexual tensions are shattered at this point. Just as Ovid (*Am.*1.5) breaks off his account of exploring Corinna's youthful thighs in a shuttered room during the siesta with the admonition that the reader can imagine the rest, so the poet now berates anyone who raises eyebrows at what is to come. As a Pompeian graffito declaims:

> 'Long life to whoever is in love, death to anyone who does not have a clue about love, so much the more complete obliteration to anyone who blocks love.'[36]

As noted earlier, the adolescence of the poet is reinforced by the contrasting epithet applied to the eyebrows, for they are ancient and

old-fashioned (*prisca,* 34). Young life is for living, drinking and dice, because death will inevitably snatch everything away at the end. As a Pompeian wrote on a wall in a similar vein:

> 'If you can but you don't want to, what is the point of putting off fun, nurturing my hope and always asking me to come back tomorrow? So make him die whom you force to live without you. It will certainly be the duty of the good not to inflict torture. Whatever hope has snatched away, hope as a matter of course returns to the lover.'[37]

Set beside polished literary works, the *Copa* does look decidedly rough in places, although there is clear evidence overall of acceptable poetic thought. Thus Cutolo has argued for an organic approach, positing a series of topoi from Surisca's dance and the inn to the bucolic scene, love and death.[38] His conclusion is that its metrical form places it within the tradition of Latin elegy. Yet what has not been acknowledged is the tripartite division just examined, each of the three sections of six, twenty and twelve lines (i.e. 1–6, 7–26, 27–38) respectively prefaced by idyllic description and concluded on a more fervid note. With the ratio of lines between each section being 3–10–6, a classic numerical pattern is established. There may be some strange words that have caused editorial problems. After wondering whether anyone would dare flaunt a cheap wine (*uappa,* 11) as the toast at an inn or base a joke around it being poured from a jar sealed as if it were a vintage, Goodyear suggests that the sense of the line remains a puzzle, whilst Rosivach writes of an inferior wine being appropriate to a humble establishment.[39] But why not envisage a colloquialism appropriate to youthful argot? The extremely rare diminutive *caseoli* (17) would similarly fit with the sort of colloquial Latin that spawned the Romance languages, paralleling for example *aucella* for *auis* that turns into *oiseau.* If artists could by their pictures break the sexual codes set by the *élite,* then there is no reason why a young poet could not be expected to employ some jarring words.[40]

The style of the *Copa* is therefore reminiscent of graffiti outside the bar of a Pompeian inn. If that statement is taken a little further – and I think it can justifiably be done – it records a man frustrated in love, writing verses suggestive of an educated and consequently wealthy Roman, with lyrics evocative of a contemporary popular song and thus

pointing a finger at an adolescent for whom love was once such an easy game to play. The *Copa* should therefore be read as an elegy to youth. Taken as such, it reflects the carefree life that any wealthy adolescent in the Roman world could expect to enjoy. The *Copa* then has its previous label of a satire on the pretensions of a plebeian clientele removed, and instead it can be read according to a literary tradition, that is an adolescent's dabbling in poetry, love and wine.[41]

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Notes

1. An earlier version of this paper was read at Liverpool University to the 1999 Annual General Meeting of the Classical Association. I am grateful to Jonathan Foster for his perceptive comments on this initial draft.
2. P. Cutolo, 'The genre of the *Copa*,' *Papers of the Leeds International Latin Seminar* 6 (1990), 115.
3. I have generally followed the text as printed by R. Ellis, *Appendix Vergiliana* (Oxford 1907), although I have taken into account emendations suggested by later editors.
4. Ps.Gal.*Hum.* = 19.489K (translated by M. Grant in *Galen on Food and Diet* (London 2000), 14–18). The humoral doctrine of this text by and large complies with notions current in the first century AD.
5. *CIL* 4.1824.
6. E. Eyben, *Restless Youth in Ancient Rome* (London 1993), 10.
7. Ter.*Ad.*60–3. In the course of discussing the ages of man, F. Dupont (*Daily Life in Ancient Rome* (Oxford 1992), 230) underlines the concept of *adulescentia* with its 'pleasures of banquets, female company and nocturnal forays with ... companions into the night-clubs of Suburra.' From the beginning of the first century AD young men's organisations were encouraged so that some control could be exercised over a period of life that occasionally seemed dangerous (A. Frascetti, 'Roman Youth' in G. Levi and J.-Cl. Schmitt (eds), *A History of Young People in the West,* vol.1 (Cambridge, Massachusetts 1997), 81–2).
8. E.g. Sen.*Contr.*1.2.1: A girl is captured by pirates, sold to a pimp and forced to work as a prostitute. She begs her clients for alms. When one particular soldier refuses to give her alms there is a struggle, in the course of which she manages to kill him. After a trial she is acquitted, returns to her family and then tries to become a priestess.
9. Eyben (note 6, above) 194 in discussing the poetry of Propertius.
10. F.R.D. Goodyear, 'The *Copa*,' *BICS* 24 (1977) 118. This is an excellent and detailed commentary on the poem.
11. *CIL* 4.1314 and W.F. Jashemski, 'A Pompeian *Copa*,' *CJ* 59 (1964) 344.
12. D.J. Drew, 'The *Copa* I,' *CQ* 17 (1923) 73 and, contrastingly, R.J. Tarrant, 'Nights at the Copa: Observations on Language and Date,' *HSPh* 94 333. The dating of the poem is

not crucial to the argument here: Pompeian graffiti can be discussed equally well in relation to poetry both of the early and also later 1st century AD.

13. V.J. Rosivach, 'The Sociology of the *Copa*,' *Latomus* 55 (1996) 606.
14. Hor.*S.*1.2.31–2.
15. Hor.*S.*1.5.82–5.
16. R. Lawrence, *Roman Pompeii: Space and Society* (London 1994) 72: 'Women workers in bars or *popinae* were considered to have been prostitutes.' The original source of this statement is *Dig.*23.2.43.
17. *CIL* 4.8259.
18. *CIL* 4.5092.
19. J.R. Clarke, *Looking at Lovemaking: Constructions of Sexuality in Roman Art 100BC–AD250* (Berkeley 1998) 206–12.
20. *CIL* 4.8917, 2200, 2199.
21. Rosivach (note 13, above) 608.
22. Rosivach (note 13, above) 608, n.14 and A. Richlin, *The Garden of Priapus: Sexuality and Aggression in Roman Humour* (New Haven 1983) 54.
23. R.F. Thomas, 'A bibulous couch ([Verg.] *Copa* 5–6)?' CPh 86 (1991) 41–3.
24. *CIL* 4.7698.
25. Jashemski (note 11, above) 339–44.
26. M.E. Irwin, 'Roses and the bodies of beautiful women in Greek poetry,' *EMC* 38 (1994) 1–13.
27. Goodyear (note 10, above) 124: 'Anyone who has perused the *Culex* will hesitate to set limits to the absurdities Latin poetasters can commit when pillaging the works of their betters.'
28. A. Frazoi, *L'ostessa: poemetto pseudovirgiliano* (Padua 1988) 69–70.
29. *CIL* 4.1893 (Ov.*Am.* 1.8.77–8) and 4.1894 (Prop.4.5.47–8).
30. Rosivach (note 13, above) 609.
31. A. Wallace-Hadrill, 'To be Roman, go Greek: thoughts on hellenization at Rome' in M. Austin, J. Harries and C. Smith (eds), *Modus Operandi* (London 1998) 84.
32. R. Lawrence (note 16, above) 75.
33. A wealthy woman falls so desperately in love with Lucius – who has been changed into an ass – that she takes him to bed with her. By describing the subsequent scene of unbridled lust in great detail, Apuleius (met.10.22) underlines the popular belief in rampant asses. See also J. Annequin, 'Lucius-*asinus,* Psyché-*ancilla:* escalvage et structures de l'imaginaire dans les *Métamorphoses* d'Apulée,' *DHA* 24 (1998) 117–8: 'il retrouve alors les amours humains puisqu'une "dame de haut rang et fort riche" vient se donner à lui, il est vrai, plus attirée par sa vigeur d'âne que par son côté humain!'
34. Goodyear (note 10, above) 127.
35. See also Sen.*contr.* 7.5.10 where Licinius Nepos talks of the bites of playful lovers resembling wounds.
36. *CIL* 4.4091.
37. *CIL* 4.1837.
38. Cutolo (note 2, above) 115.
39. Goodyear (note 10, above) 123 and Rosivach (note 13, above) 610.
40. Clarke (note 19, above) 2.

41. To give a modern parallel, *Le Défi* by Philippe Sollers (Paris 1958) contains many of the ideas inherent in the *Copa*. The adolescent subject of this short story wanders 'dans mes labyrinthes où je ne croisais que torbillons qui me parlaient de ma mort.' In a similar vein 'L'habitude m'était venue d'écrire, ce qui me permettait d'entrevoir une solution à mon malheur.'

Proceedings of the Virgil Society 24 (2001) 135–137

Virgil reads; Octavia faints: grounds for doubt

It is curious that, while critical analysis of the details of Virgil's life has been progressing, to good effect, since 1911, there remain many writers on Virgilian topics who continue to believe the details of the VSD (Vita Suetonii-Donati) with awed respect [1]. When, five years ago, I offered an account of Virgil's life which was deliberately couched as sceptically as the material, and the state of research, would allow and which will doubtless have seemed hypercritical to many [2], my discussion (n.1, p.19) of one famous story was, I hasten to acknowledge, inadequate and my only excuse is that everyone else, likewise, had missed the obvious evidence. The Suetonius-Donatus life (VSD) relates (ch.32) that Virgil is said to have read books 2, 4 and 6 of the *Aeneid* to the *princeps,* so movingly that Octavia, when he reached *'tu Marcellus eris',* is said to have fainted and to have been revived with difficulty. That 'is said,' *fertur,* is not a way of saying 'I have read,' but counts only, in the muddy waters of literary biography, as an imprecise 'the story goes'[3]; Servius, moreover (on 6.681), tells the story in a different way and it is not even clear that the books Virgil read, according to Servius, were 2, 4 and 6[4]. So far, nothing new. However, in the early stages of my commentary – 'in progress' – on *Aeneid* 11, I was prompted by M.L.Delvigo's article in *MD* 42 (1999), 199ff.[5] to look at some of the main texts of ancient consolation-literature, if only because the many books on the topic are so unsatisfactorily indexed. Thus the younger Seneca addresses Marcia, daughter of the historian Aulus Cremutius Cordus (the man immortalised by Tac.*Ann.*4.34f.) on the loss of a son and at the outset confronts sagely enough the topic of different human reactions in the face of grief. His *exempla* are, remarkably, Livia, Augustus's wife and the mother of Drusus (who d.9 B.C.) [6], on the one hand, and Octavia, Augustus's sister: of the latter Seneca, like his father well enough informed on Augustan literary

gossip, and unlikely to risk the effect of his *exempla* by a palpably fraudulent invention of his own, writes *..uoluit, nullam sibi de illo* [i.e.Marcellus] *fieri mentionem ... tenebris et solitudini familiarissima, ne ad fratrem quidem respiciens, carmina celebrandae Marcelli memoriae composita aliosque studiorum honores reiecit et aures suas aduersus omne solacium clusit.* So, she sat with her brother and listened to Virgil's wonderful lament, and her reaction was faithfully recorded. Or was it? Given that there are already reasons for registering doubt at the story's reliability [7], we can now add that the whole episode is entirely out of keeping with our specific information on her attitude to such occasions and texts, perhaps, above all, since Virgil had used, and must, in 'court circles' have been known to have used, Augustus's own *laudatio funebris* on Marcellus [8].

In many cases, the romanticising methods of early Virgilian biography are quite easily disentangled, and the perpetrators' sense of humour is indeed a most enjoyable object of study. Here, though, the nexus between the two versions is far less easy to establish.

(1) There are no grounds for suspecting that VSD was right, i.e. that Virgil really recited, despite Octavia's well-known aversion to such performances. It is indeed almost invariably probable, *a priori,* that VSD is wrong, unless there are very good reasons for supposing otherwise (e.g. date of birth, date of death).

(2) If VSD, then, is wrong, does his account in some way derive from the fact related by Seneca? Did the biographer mean to suggest a singular lapse on the poet's part? For months I lived with his jokes and games, and such a suggestion seems entirely improbable. There is in fact a quite substantial corpus of evidence for highly emotional reactions to literature in antiquity [9] and the fainting story looks very much like a familiar enough type of technicolour embroidery upon a typical reading-scene (n.7), whose historical credibility is lessened not only by the evidence of Seneca but by VSD's general anachronistic heavy-handedness in handling the poet's relations with the *princeps* (*Companion,* 18f.).

Nothing of the above has anything, of course, to do with *Aeneid* 6, but it is some comfort to have discovered that my earlier scepticism, though ignorant, was not out of place and that we are just a little freer than we were before to read the text without pseudo-biographical incrustations.

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Notes

1. Cf. the outline survey in (ed.NH) *A companion to the study of Virgil* (*Mnem.*Suppl.151, Leiden 1995), 1. S. MacCormack, *The shadows of poetry* (Berkeley 1998), 1ff. is still a 'believer,' seemingly unaware of the problems, while the *Enciclopedia virgiliana,* shrinking as usual from decision, prints both impeccable accounts of the sceptical position (Naumann, 5*, 570ff., Brugnoli, 5*, 575ff.) and a vast, almost novelettish restatement of all that has ever been said about the poet's 'life' (Della Corte, 5**, 2ff.).

2. *Companion,* 1ff..

3. *Companion,* 19, after H.Naumann, *Das altsprach.Unterricht* 24.5(1981), 8.

4. *Ibid.,* after C.Murgia, *HSCP* 72(1967), 334.

5. On the nice problem of the cloaks at 11.72ff., ingeniously discussed by, *inter alios,* R.O.A.M.Lyne, *Words and the Poet* (Oxford 1989), 186ff..

6. See the ps.Ovidian *Consolatio ad Liuiam,* most easily consulted in vol.3 of the Loeb Ovid.

7. The use of *fertur,* the existence of variant versions, other (fishy) stories about Virgilian recitations, reading-scenes as stock biographical elements (*loc.cit.,* n.3).

8. This has long been known and is a fact, not an hypothesis. I discuss some of the consequences at *CQ* 39(1989), 266, though I seem to have shocked R. Glei in *Vergil's* Aeneid: Augustan epic and political context (ed. H.-P. Stahl, London 1998), 130, n.35.

9. S. Farron, *Vergil's Aeneid: a poem of grief and love* (*Mnem.* Suppl.122, Leiden 1993), 39ff.

Proceedings of the Virgil Society 24 (2001) 139–146

Review

Andrew Laird, *Powers of Expression, Expressions of Power. Speech Presentation and Latin Literature*. Oxford: Oxford Classical Monographs 1999. Price £50.00. ISBN 0–19–815276–0.

This volume represents an examination of a range of texts and genres, both in Latin and Greek, in investigating the problems of the representation of speech in ancient literature. It is perhaps significant that the work's subtitle is 'Speech Presentation and Latin Literature', the 'and' signifying that Laird's interests go well beyond Latin literature. What follows is a long review, but this is an important book, which should do much to stimulate not only Latin studies, but also offers insights on language and ideology of a more general character.

A short introduction begins the book in which L. uses the modern example of two different reports of a meeting between Ian Paisley and John Major in 1994, one from Paisley himself, and one from Sir Patrick Mayhew, the then Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, to show how the presentation of speech, whether direct or indirect, can be a much more subtle process than we might think. This small example is an illustrative foretaste of the book's ability to challenge preconceptions in reading.

The first chapter of the book is entitled 'Speech and Symbolic Power: Discourse, Ideology and Intertextuality'. L. shows how there is a clear need to consider speech as existing in a relationship with power, starting with the example of Telemachus telling Penelope not to speak in *Odyssey* 1. However L. wisely avoids the trap of only considering speech 'in terms of a crude binary system of ownership versus deprivation' (11), exemplifying more subtle encodings and variations of the relationship between speech and power in Horace *Sat.* 1.6, and reminding us forcefully of the ironic poise and fluency in Horace's after-the-event account of his first

tongue-tied meeting with Maecenas: L. usefully reminds us that it is possible to view texts themselves as discourses. Later in this chapter L. offers an extremely valuable discussion of intertextuality. L.'s take on this vexed topic goes beyond the usual Latinist's acquaintance with Conte and Hinds, since L. looks back to Kristeva, and in doing so, notes how later scholars have somewhat hijacked the term, since in its Kristevan conception, intertextuality is a purely linguistic, rather than literary, phenomenon. L.'s point is a simple but striking one: "the very detection of an intertext – no matter how palpable, demonstrable, and well-attested – is in the end ideologically determined" (37). Even "to 'see' a Homeric intertext in Virgil is an act of *interpretation* , not plain description" (38). Though strongly put, this is a useful reminder that interpretations of Virgil that are based solely on the appeal to Homer are perhaps more arbitrary than we might think. The same could perhaps be said too for a reading of Statius's *Thebaid* where Virgil was privileged at the expense of Lucan. The end of this first chapter sees the intriguing suggestion that intertextuality can be seen as allied to speech presentation. Paradoxically, L. situates intertextuality at the least intrusive end of a scale which has direct discourse at the opposite end, where a character's speech intrudes (and replaces) discourse of the narrator; this point is illustrated with a discussion of Donatus's account of Virgil reciting *Aeneid* 6 to Octavia and her tearful reaction.

The second chapter begins with a critique of narratology, which arises from a discussion of Socrates's discussion of narrative in the third book of Plato's *Republic*. Here L. argues that the conventional separation in modern narratology between 'narrative' and 'story' collapses. The case for this is supported by appeal to Plato, where L. convincingly shows how the divide between, for example, *logos* and *lexis* is by no means clear cut. This section of the work is a useful caution against the tendency to see narratology as a method which can be applied to a text in a hermeneutically sealed manner: "narratology has been seen as a fragile dualism open to deconstruction: every 'story' turns out to be a – 'narrative'"(62). The remainder of the chapter examines Plato's strictures against direct discourse in the *Republic*, and at the same time points out that direct discourse is at times the narrative mode of Platonic dialogue. Thus at *Republic* 394b-c, where Socrates discusses the three types of utterance, L. points out that direct discourse is exactly the mode used in this passage by Plato, who, for all his (or Socrates's) scepticism about it,

uses direct discourse to represent the debate in the *Republic* itself. Similarly, as L. points out, the *Theaetetus* is cast in a dramatic form; one might further speculate that Eucleides's account of how Socrates told him about the discussion that took place may indeed raise the possibility that Socrates himself, in reporting the dialogue, may not have used direct discourse. The status of direct discourse as 'what was actually said' is thus problematised.

The third chapter considers 'Speech Modes and Literary Language'. Students will welcome L.'s analysis of the several possibilities open to writers in presenting speech. Instead of the familiar distinction between Direct and Indirect Speech, L. shows that there are more subtle categories such as Reported Speech Acts. L.'s example of a Reported Speech Act is a good one: he cites the song of Iopas at Virgil *Aen.* 1.742–6, and argues that the list of indirect questions in the passage is not mimetic of actual questions asked by Iopas in the course of song, but more a summary of the content. L.'s point could be further strengthened by comparison with similar passages such as Statius, *Theb.* 12.797–809, where Statius declines to continue his story with various subjects such as the funerals of the Argive dead, all of which are expressed in indirect questions. There is an important discussion of Free Direct Discourse, which L. treats not as being constituted simply by the absence of a declarative verb. Instead L. treats the term as embracing utterances which whilst grammatically in direct speech should be considered as not necessarily constituting a verbatim representation of an initial utterance. This alerts us to the possibility of looking more closely at, for instance, the practice in epic of ascribing a single speech to a number of speakers, or to occasions where phrases like "with some such words" appear after (or before) the direct speech, raising the possibility that we are not as close to the original words as we might think. Here L. treats speech modes as a branch of syntax and poses the question as to whether there is such a thing as 'literary syntax'. The answer is similar to L.'s take on intertextuality: "Literary syntax is in the eye of the beholder, and the capacity to behold it is pragmatically – or ideologically – determined" (115). In reaching this conclusion L. rejects the notion that even a device such as Free Indirect Discourse, which can be exemplified by for instance Virgil *Aen.* 4.283–4 *heu quid agat? quo nunc reginam ambire furentem/audeat adfatu? quae prima exordia sumat?,* should be considered as exclusively literary, noting that the device can

even be used in first-person narrations, and by children when ascribing thought to animals or dolls.

The fourth chapter of the book considers historiography. As one might expect, L. builds on scholars such as Woodman who have cautioned against the naïve identification of ancient historical writing as a species akin to the work of a modern professional historian. Again we find L. arguing that the difference between 'fictional' and 'factual' narrative is "culturally determined", depending on whether we decide to view the text as historical or not prior to reading it (120). Addressing the issue of speech presentation, L. examines the use of the phrase *ipsa uerba* by Tacitus at *Ann.* 15.67 to refer to the direct speech given to Subrius Flavus when answering Nero's enquiries about the conspiracy in which he had been involved. L. contrasts the use of direct speech for Subrius Flavus's speech with the use of indirect speech to refer to Seneca's last words at *Ann.* 15.62 and 63, and argues that we should be more careful about avoiding the easy assumption that direct speech in 'factual ' narrative is always to be considered veridical. As L. goes on to show, Tacitus is equally capable of using 'ipsa uerba' to refer to *indirect* discourse, as at *Hist.* 3.39, where he reports a comment of Vitellius. The discussion of the vexed problem of Thucydides 1.22 is similarly subtle: L. points out that the anxieties of scholars about the direct speeches in Thucydides stem from our expectation that they should be true. L. points out (151) that there is a sense in which all historiography is in fact presented discourse, as the narrator presents the utterances, spoken or written, which make up the evidence for each single fact. This allows a striking conclusion (152): "Factual narrative – like any direct discourse it may contain – is rhetorical and provisional. Fictional narrative – like any direct discourse it may contain – is authoritative and absolute."

The fifth chapter deals with Virgil. In the first section L. considers the opening of the *Aeneid* and argues that the manner in which speeches are presented, both on the divine and on the mortal level, contributes to the credibility of Virgil's account. Thus Juno's first speech (*Aen.* 1.37–49) and Aeneas's first speech (*Aen.*1.94–101), are examples of Free Direct Discourse. Here I would insist on understanding *talia* in *Aen.* 1.50 and 1.94 as "such words". L.'s translations, "these things" and "these words" miss the point that L. himself has made earlier (pp. 93–4), that words like *talia* imply a less certain version of the speech.[1] Oddly, the speeches of Neptune (*Aen.* 1.132–41) and Aeneas (*Aen.* 1.198–207), are labelled 'Stan-

dard Direct Discourse' (p. 162), even though Virgil uses the word *talia* on both occasions (*Aen.* 1.131, 1.208), which again suggests the more uncertain category of Free Direct Discourse. A valuable point made about the opening of the poem is the suggestion that Juno is like a divinity in a tragic prologue who "helps to establish the reality of the story in which he or she is about to be involved" (p. 164).

There then follows further discussion of the use of Free Indirect Discourse in the *Aeneid*. L. notes such examples as *heu, quid agat?*, used of Aeneas at *Aen.*4.283 and 12.486, and contrasts it with the Direct Discourse of *quid ago?,* used by both Dido (*Aen.* 4.534) and Turnus (*Aen.* 12.637). L.'s comment is a good example of how the investigation of speech presentation can be so productive: "The implication might be that he [Aeneas] has more self-control than Dido or Turnus because he does not actually give voice to his doubts or anxieties, yet we are still meant to see that he suffers them" (173). L. also points out that there are times when Free Indirect Discourse exists on the margins of speech and silence (183), which then leads into a discussion of silence in the poem.

One famous silence discussed is that of Dido in *Aen.*6. L. sees a contrast between the silence of Ajax in *Odyssey* 11 and that of Dido (p. 184): "In contrast to what we shall see in Virgil, the audience are not really led by Odysseus's closing plea to expect any words in response." While one might take issue with this analysis of *Odyssey* 11 (and note that Odysseus does go on to say that Ajax might have spoken to him in the contested lines at *Od.* 11.565–7), L. nevertheless usefully draws attention to Virgil's creation of the expectation of a reply from Dido, an expectation that is of course frustrated. In this connexion, L. also notes that Dido's averting of her gaze at *Aen.*6.469–70 recalls the movement of her eyes at *Aen.* 4.363–4, where she *does* go on to make a speech. To this I would add that the language of *Aen.*6.467–8, *talibus Aeneas ardentem et torua tuentem*/lenibat dictis *animum lacrimasque ciebat* ironically recalls the language of *Aen.*4.393–4 *at pius Aeneas, quamquam* lenire *dolentem*/*solando cupit et* dictis *auertere curas,* where it is Aeneas who is silent, despite his desire to console. There is thus a further dimension, since Aeneas, who was silent before is given a speech of consolation in Book 6 (which fails), while Dido, who has so much to say throughout Book 4, is silent in Book 6. Another silence discussed is that of Ascanius, when Aeneas bids him farewell in a speech at *Aen.* 12.435–40. Here L., commenting on the link with the scene of farewell between

Hector and his family in *Iliad* 6, argues that Virgil's presentation , where there is no reply, contrasts with *Iliad* 6 where Andromache speaks, and suggests that Virgil "offers a world in which authority has the last word, and in which the emotions of subordinate characters are denied expression" (p. 194). Here one could alternatively – and L. in any case rightly argues that intertextuality is in the eye of the beholder! – develop the well-known parallel between *Aen.*12.435–6 *disce, puer, uirtutem ex me uerumque laborem, / fortunam ex aliis* and Sophocles, *Ajax* 550–1, to argue that the Sophocles is to the fore here, especially as Eurysaces, the son of Ajax, not only makes no reply to his father's speech, but is in fact silent for the entirety of the play. The examination of examples of silence culminates in the silence which surrounds the longest speech of the poem, Aeneas's narrative to Dido in Books 2 and 3, which, L. argues, can be seen as a reminder that epic itself might be a discourse of power: "Both Virgil's text and Aeneas's text alike leave no room for reply" (204).

The next chapter considers the *Satyricon* of Petronius, and concerns itself with the issues of 'taste' and also that of objectivity which have played such an important part in classical studies. L. notes that the divide which has often been felt to exist between Encolpius's narration of the *Cena* and his narrations in the remaining portion of the novel can be understood in terms of speech presentation: thus L. points out how little Direct Discourse there is from Encolpius in the *Cena.* He also remarks on Encolpius's use of verse: "By occasionally using poetry Encolpius becomes a *literary figure* in two senses: he speaks to his addressee as a man of letters and, secondly, as a literary creation, he mediates to the reader of the *Satyricon* the discourse of another artist, Petronius the author" (235). There is also some good discussion of Eumolpus's use of literary texts: L. points out that another level of similarity between Eumolpus's civil war poem and Lucan is the similarity of method in speech presentation (236–9). L. then moves on to the issue of Vulgar Latin in the *Satyricon,* and argues powerfully that the identification of vulgarisms of style is as ideological an act as the identification of intertexts (251–2). L. deftly cuts through the obfuscatory agenda lurking behind the readiness of scholars to distinguish between the elegant Latin of Encolpius and that of the freedmen at the *Cena* , as if the latter were somehow a true representation of 'vulgar' speech (254): "Yet in the last analysis, Echion's speech – form and content – is attributable to Encolpius who relays it to us. We may regard Encolpius as playing up anomalies in Echion's language. His 'por-

trayal' of a freedman's speech has to be a gross distortion: it exposes an assertion of the superior status of speakers like Agamemnon and himself. Such distortion is common even in purportedly disinterested accounts and representations of popular speech today."

The next chapter considers the use of the messenger scene. L. offers interesting comparisons between the use of Fama in Virgil's *Aeneid*, where Fama's narrative is partial, and the veridical Fama of Sannazaro's *De partu uirginis*, and suggests that the portrayal of Fama in both epics could be seen as mimetic of the claims of the poets to be writing a mixture of truth and falsehood (Virgil) and pure truth (Sannazaro). L. is keen to draw a distinction in *Aeneid* 4 between Jove's messenger, Mercury, who has the status of divine truth, and Fama, who is much more provisional, but it is worth noting that even Mercury can be influenced by Fama. Commenting on Mercury's reproach to Aeneas as *regni rerumque oblite tuarum* (*Aen.* 4.267), L. remarks that "the narrator had earlier described Aeneas and Dido as forgetful: here (267) the observation is Mercury's own" (p. 269), but in fact *regnorum immemores* appears in the discourse of Fama at *Aen.* 4.194, so that Fama is seen to have an influence even over the gods. L. notes of Fama on p. 272 that most subsequent Latin poets give indirect discourse to Fama ("because Fama does not have a direct source for her message"); this is a modification of his position at pp. 101 and 237–8, where he remarks that Fama never has direct discourse in Latin epic. In fact there is one curious example worth mentioning in this respect: at V. Fl. 2.142–60, Fama makes a speech to Eurynome, telling her of the return of the Lemnian men with Thracian brides. However there are two oddities: firstly Fama speaks in disguise as Neaera (even mentioning the *fama* of her own divorce at V. Fl. 2.158–9), and secondly, Fama has been told what to do by Venus, so that in his case Fama takes on (and parodies) the role of divine messenger, which may account for her use of direct speech. Discussion of this episode might have sat well alongside L.'s discussion of another false message from Venus at V. Fl. 7.266–83, where Venus is disguised as Circe and claims to pass on a message to Medea from Jason. Other poets considered in this chapter include Statius (where L.'s discussion of Theseus's Jovian manner in his dictation speech in Book 12 is especially successful), Ovid and Milton. In the final pages of the chapter L. notes the similarities between Pan in Plato's *Cratylus* and Virgil's canonical account of Fama in *Aeneid* 4. A brief conclusion to the work then offers directions for further research on speech presentation

and reiterates the importance of speech presentation, which might even be considered identical to "discursive representation in general" (308).

A few minor points are worth mentioning. On p. 11, Hor. *Sat.* 1.6 is incorrectly referred to as *Sat.* 1.5. On p. 102, *Hansard* is oddly used to support the claim that formal minutes tend to "eschew direct discourse", when in fact *Hansard* will even record interruptions to a speech made in Parliament. In discussion of Tacitus's decision not to reproduce Seneca's last treatise (pp. 126–31), it might have been worth mentioning Livy's similar decision not to give Cato's speech on the Rhodians (Livy 43.25). And at page 237, n. 61, there is no translation given of the Latin.

Overall this book represents a highly significant contribution to literary studies. This is also a book which can be profitably be read by students: at a stroke, L. has shown that speech presentation and representation is much more than the dusty categories of Oratio Recta and Oratio Obliqua. This exciting approach may even help teachers of language who have to deal with the mechanisms for presentation of discourse in ancient languages. Latinists (and Virgilians) will find many insights, both on the small and on the large scale here, but they should not be the only ones to do so. Oxford University Press would be well advised to issue this book in paperback.

University of Liverpool **BRUCE GIBSON**

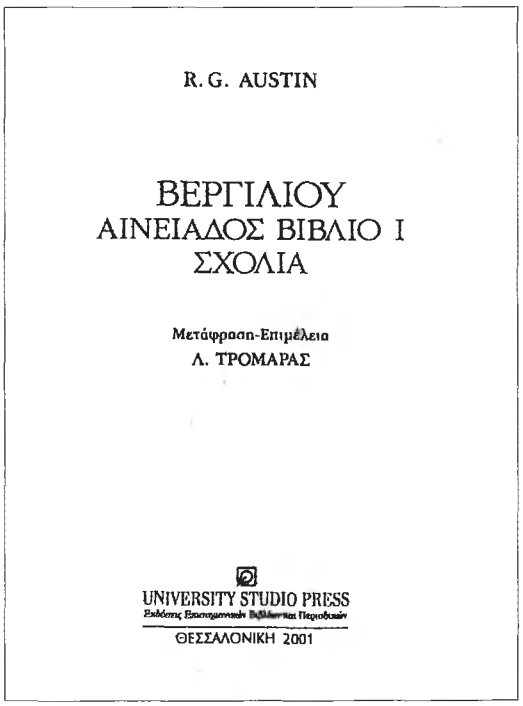
Note

1. Cf. L.'s similar translations of *talibus ... dictis* as "with these words" at *Aen.* 6.467 (p. 185–6), and *talia* as "these things" at *Aen.* 4.362 (p. 187). Contrast however e.g. *talia fatur* at *Aen.* 8.559, correctly translated as "words like these" (p. 189), which precedes a speech of Evander's which is then followed by *haec ... dicta* at *Aen.* 8.583, a case where Virgil's own practice seems to shift from the more ambiguous *talia* before the speech to the unequivocal *haec ... dicta* at the end.

Proceedings of the Virgil Society 24 (2001) 147

Books received

Austin's Aeneid *1 and 4 in Modern Greek*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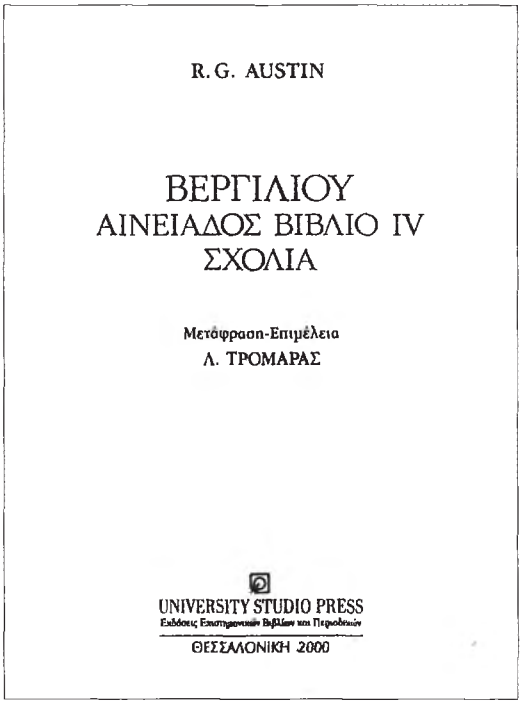
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The Editor thanks Professor W.S. Watt for generously presenting him with copies of the Greek translations of R.G. Austin's Commentaries on *Aeneid* 1 and 4. It is a particular pleasure to note that these have reached us in what the Society was moved at its February meeting to commemorate as Austin's centenary year. The volumes are extremely handsome and include a new and useful feature, an *Index Locorum*. The title pages are here reproduced by kind permission of the Publishers, University Studio Press, Thessaloniki.

Proceedings of the Virgil Society 24 (2001) 149–150

Tribute

William Anthony Camps (1910–1997)

Mr W.A. Camps, Master of Pembroke College, Cambridge, from 1970 to 1981, died in January 1997. He was the longest serving President of the Virgil Society, for thirteen years from 1976 to 1989, during much of which period the Society was reduced to virtual inactivity, its income insufficient to pay for regular publication of Proceedings, its energy insufficient to bring about the election of new officers. Only a (reduced) number of meetings continued to be held each year (see *Pentekontaetia,* pp. 49–52). Tony Camps was not one to attend meetings in London, but he was concerned about the Society, and felt a Presidential responsibility. On one occasion he privately sent me a cheque for the full amount of the previous year's deficit in the accounts, the largest single donation during my time as Treasurer.

He had been my Supervisor and Director of Studies in Pembroke, so that I had had ample opportunity to know him since undergraduate days. He was an unusual man. Behind a hesitant manner and an almost Socratic irony ('Of course I know nothing at all about this, but don't you think that ... ?'), he was a firm and even dominating personality. Having been appointed to a Fellowship in Pembroke in the Thirties, and a University Lectureship just before the war, he spent the rest of his career there, apart from secondment to the Ministry of Economic Warfare during the war years, and two or three short-term visiting appointments at Canadian and American universities in the latter part of his life. To students he was a kind and accurate supervisor, who taught mostly for the First Part of the Tripos, traditional linguistic exercises in prose and verse composition and unseen translation.

For many years he restricted his activities to the College, particularly as Senior Tutor for fifteen years after the war (1947–62). Then, quite late in life, he started to publish in Classics. In 1961, when he was just over 50, he produced a small edition with commentary on Book 1 of Propertius and followed with the other three books, completing the set in 1967. This immediately became an essential part of modern study of that author. Later he published two hand-books, emanating from his teaching over many years, *An Introduction to Virgil's Aeneid* (Oxford 1969, repr. 1979) and *An Introduction to Homer* (Oxford 1980). The latter did not make much impression in the flood of publications about Homer, but the former has been found useful by many students, for whom it was explicitly written. Tony's characteristic qualities (clear thinking and sound judgement) are exemplified in a group of appendices to the book, which include a translation of Donatus's *Life* of the poet, discussion of the two passages which Tucca and Varius are alleged to have removed from the text of the poem (1.1a-d, 2. 567–88), evidence for its unrevised state, echoes of contemporary history. These appendices introduce the reader to serious factual issues related to the *Aeneid,* going beyond literary assessment. They reflect the man himself and his mind.

MALCOLM WILLCOCK