

The
PROCEEDINGS
of the
VIRGIL SOCIETY

VOLUME 30

2020

IN MEMORIAM JONATHAN FOSTER

Copyright © 2020 The Virgil Society

ISSN: 0968 2112

Edited by

Daniel Hadas

email: daniel.hadas@kcl.ac.uk

Published by

The Virgil Society, c/o Jill Kilsby, Treasurer,
8 Purley Oaks Road, Sanderstead, Surrey CR2 0NP

Text design and typesetting by

Tetragon, London

Printed and bound by

CPI Group (UK) Ltd, Croydon, CR0 4YY

Cover illustration:

Gillian Cooper

Contents

Language politics in the <i>Aeneid</i> and Friel's <i>Translations</i>	1
FIACHRA MAC GÓRÁIN	
From <i>deus absconditus</i> to Σωτήρ: Octavian in Virgil and early Augustan poetry	27
NIKLAS HOLZBERG	
Who are the victims of Aeneas' human sacrifice?	43
LLEWELYN MORGAN	
The dress of Venus in <i>Aeneid</i> 1.314–417	49
VIOLA STARNONE	
The tears in things: How the Jesuits “ripped up” Virgil	61
YASMIN HASKELL	
Fun with Phyllis and Iollas: The game of the name in <i>Eclogue 3</i>	77
RORY EGAN	
“Amid the tears we sing”: Virgil and humanity	101
LUCY NICHOLAS	

Language politics in the *Aeneid* and Friel's *Translations*

*Revised from a paper given to the Virgil Society on 4 March 2017**

A recent book, entitled *Virgil and Joyce: Nationalism and Imperialism in the Aeneid and Ulysses*, interprets the two titular authors' works against each other. Joyce's allusions to Virgil are read as contributing layers of meaning to the later text, but they also suggest re-reading the *Aeneid* in the light of *Ulysses*. "Eyes that have read Joyce's novel pick out aspects of the *Aeneid* that may not otherwise stand out".¹ Particular lines, passages and aspects of both texts are charged with new meaning when read against each other, and the allusions also prompt a broader "compare and contrast" dialogue between the two texts that affects the interpretation of the earlier one. The interpretative method is a kind of bidirectional intertextuality. In an analogous spirit, I stage here a conversation between Virgil's *Aeneid* and Brian Friel's 1981 play *Translations*, in which I mainly explore what new interpretations of the *Aeneid* are uncovered by Friel's engagement with Virgil. I focus on this retrospective side of the intertextual relationship for two reasons: first, as a complement to those studies that have already considered Friel's classical allusions, and second, because the comparison helps us to look more closely at language difference in the *Aeneid*, an important and understudied theme which intersects in significant ways with the better-studied topic of Virgilian place-names.

Friel's *Translations* "deals with the ways in which the consciousness of an entire culture is fractured by the transcription of one linguistic landscape (Gaelic and classical) into another (Anglo-Saxon and positivist)".² The play's central reception of Virgil contributes to its fabric, but also helps us to interpret Virgil's poetry itself. Friel had thought carefully about the *Aeneid* while writing *Translations*, in ways that were informed by George Steiner's *After Babel*, a book that argues in Heideggerian terms that all interpretation, all understanding, is a form

* My thanks to Jim Adams and Stephen Colvin for bibliographical advice. For enriching comments on earlier versions I warmly thank the Virgil Society's audience, James Clackson, Carlotta Dionisotti, Aifric Mac Aodha, Melanie Marshall, Charles Martindale, Damien Nelis, Derval Tubridy, and especially Daniel Hadas, the editor of *PVS*.

¹ Pogorzelski (2016) 16.

² Kearney (1983) 24.

of translation.³ Accordingly, Friel's play sees the *Aeneid* as part of an exercise in translation *à la* Steiner that works on several levels – personal, cultural, and political – but his vision is inflected with the Irish experience of colonialism and language politics.

Several years before writing *Translations*, Friel penned a self-portrait in which he recalled reading Virgil at school.

“Before I leave my childhood and youth I want to look back briefly at that bizarre process called my education. For about fifteen years I was taught by a succession of men who force-fed me with information, who cajoled me, beat me, threatened me, coaxed me to swallow their puny little pies of knowledge and attitudes.

“And the whole thing, I know now, was an almost complete waste of time. I'm not resentful about this. I don't feel scarred or damaged by it. [...]

“Arma virumque cano
Troiae qui primus ab oris
Italiam fato profugus Lavinaque venit litora [*sic*]
[...]

“And so on, and so on.

“Yes, on second thoughts I am slightly resentful. And the little grudge I bear is directed against those men who taught me the literature of Rome and Greece and England and Ireland as if they were pieces of intricate machinery, created for no reason and designed for no purpose. They were called out of the air, these contrivances, and planked [*sic*] in front of us, and for years we tinkered with them, pulling them apart, putting them together again, translating, scanning, conjugating, never once suspecting that these texts were the testimony of sad, happy, assured, confused people like ourselves. And there we were, so engaged in irregular verbs and peculiar declensions that we never once smelt blood or felt gristle”.⁴

Blood and gristle! As belated compensation for what felt like a sterile education, Friel later found meaningful interlocutors in Virgil and other classics such as Chekhov, Turgenyev, and Ibsen.⁵

³ Steiner (1975); for Steiner's influence on Friel's thinking, see especially Kearney (1983); McGrath (1989); Pilkington (1990).

⁴ Murray (1999a) 39–40 (originally published in 1972).

⁵ Friel translated two plays by Chekhov, *Three Sisters* (1981) and *Uncle Vanya* (1998). He wrote other plays based on works by Chekhov: *The Yalta Game* (2001) is based on ‘The Lady with the Dog’; *Afterplay* (2002) enacts a meeting between Sonya from *Uncle Vanya* and Andrey from *Three Sisters*; and *The Bear* (2002) is based on a short story of the same name. The spirit of Chekhov breathes through others of his plays, especially *Aristocrats* (1982). From Turgenyev he translated *Fathers and Sons* (1987) and *A Month in the Country* (1992); and from Ibsen *Hedda Gabler* (2008).

His revisitings of these texts, where he adapts them to Irish contexts, raise questions about the ownership of the Classics and the possibility of translation itself. His *Living Quarters* (1977), subtitled ‘after *Hippolytus*’, transplants Euripides’ play to rural Donegal. He took on Russian plays partly because he found that most English translations misrepresented the experience of the characters and compounded popular clichés.⁶ In turn, his own Hiberno-English versions drew barbs from the likes of Paul Muldoon, who in *The Prince of the Quotidian* (1994), wrote:

“The last time I saw *Three Sisters*
was in a ‘vershin’ by Monsignor Friel who was,
I recall, at pains to prove that Chekhov was more Irish
than a rush.”⁷

Translations is set in 1833 in a hedge-school⁸ in the fictional village of Ballybeg / Baile Beag (the Irish for “Small Town”), an Irish-speaking community in rural Donegal, on the eve of the potato famine. English soldiers have come to Ballybeg to map the locality, an exercise in colonial cartography which involves translating all place names from Irish into English. Most of the characters are locals: Hugh the hedge-schoolmaster, Manus his son and deputy, and several pupils, Maire, who has ambitions to emigrate to America; Sarah, who has a speech impairment; Jimmy Jack, a bachelor in his sixties who is in love with Pallas Athena; the bumptious Doalty, who resists the English presence; and the irreverent Bridget. Two English soldiers, the efficient and imperious Captain Lancey and the dreamy Lieutenant Yolland, are stationed in Ballybeg while working on the map. Hugh’s other son Owen is a complex character: he lives in Dublin and speaks fluent English, and puts his local knowledge and language skills at the service of the English soldiers (who call him Roland), making himself a quisling in the eyes of his own people.⁹ During the course of the play, Lieutenant Yolland goes missing, and in

⁶ See his note on ‘Translations’ (from Russian) in Murray (1999a) 179–80, and many *obiter dicta* in Delaney (2000). Here are two revealing examples. From an interview with Elgy Gillespie (1981): “Of course [the] Fen [translation] is perfect for England, but if you do use that one you must get your actors to assume English accents because it’s English music. As English as Elgar. The officers say ‘Jolly good, wasn’t it splendid!’” (156). From an interview with Donal O’Donnell (1981): “What has happened up to this is that Irish actors have to assume English accents, so you end up with being an Irishman pretending you’re an Englishman pretending you’re a Russian! In some way the whole thing gets further and further away from us, I think” (150–51).

⁷ Muldoon (1994) 22. “Monsignor Friel”: Friel spent time as a seminarian at Maynooth; “vershin” ~ “version” in countrified Irish pronunciation, alluding also to the character Lieutenant-Colonel Vershinin in *Three Sisters*; “rush” suggests “Russian”, as if Chekhov were more Irish than Russian.

⁸ Hedge-schools were informal schools, which sometimes convened outdoors, that provided education to Catholics. They were illegal, as the penal laws enacted during William III’s reign forbade Catholics to be educated. For a recent re-appraisal of hedge-schools and the teaching of Classics in 18th- and 19th-century Ireland, see O’Higgins (2017).

⁹ For the notion of the translator as a traitor in Greek and Roman sources, see Mairs (2011).

response Captain Lancey threatens a violent reprisal unless he is found (though it is clear that Yolland has been killed). These characters dramatize a range of perspectives on the play's core themes of language and translation, through both individual utterances and interactions. At the public and political end of the spectrum, the play leaves it in no doubt that the translation of place-names for colonial purposes was an act of cultural violence, to which the Irish characters respond with different degrees of resistance, acquiescence, assent, or a mixture of these. Maire, for example, sees English as the passport to success through emigration, but Hugh cautions that even if he manages to teach her English, it may not enable her to "interpret between privacies".¹⁰ At the private end of the spectrum, Yolland shows a conqueror's rueful but fruitless reflection on the injustices of the military operation, and it is notable that the play's emotional climax comes when he and Maire (who speaks only one sentence of English) share a love scene in which they communicate by speaking Irish place names.

It becomes clear very quickly that the Irish characters are to be understood as speaking Irish, even though the script is written in English. Language difference between characters within the fiction of the play is a source of comedy and pathos: it leads to some mutual unintelligibility, as well as feigned misunderstanding, suspicion, alienation, attraction, romanticization, deliberate mistranslation and miscommunication. The theatrical conceit whereby the actors speak English but some characters are to be understood as speaking Irish itself thematizes the relationship between the two languages. (The play also refers occasionally to the impending potato famine, a cataclysm that dealt a blow to the vitality of the Irish language in Ireland, which introduces a sense of foreboding).¹¹ The palimpsestic quality of the play – English laid over Irish – has been interpreted in various ways that largely complement one another, and that are rooted in a broad understanding of Friel's preoccupation with language and communication, and in the politics of language in Irish literature.¹² Some have read it as a harbinger of the eventual eclipsing of Irish by English among the majority of speakers.¹³ Others have seen it as looking forward to the phenomena of Hiberno-English language and literature, where English-language culture is lived, and literature written, on an Irish-language palimpsest. Others still see the language game as a metaphor for colonial hybridity.

¹⁰ Friel (2000) 89–90: "But don't expect too much. I will provide you with the available words and the available grammar. But will that help you to interpret between privacies? I have no idea. But it's all we have. I have no idea at all".

¹¹ See Ó Tuathaigh (2015).

¹² See Kearney (1983); McGrath (1990); Murray (1999b); He (2010); also Pilkington (1990); Peacock (1993). For the play's critical reception see Longley (1985) 28–29 and Pilkington (1990) 283–84.

¹³ Cf. Friel, 'Extracts from a sporadic diary', written during the composition of the play (Murray, 1999a, 75): "I don't want to write a play about Irish peasants being suppressed by English sappers. I don't want to write a threnody on the death of the Irish language. I don't want to write a play about land-surveying. Indeed I don't want to write a play about naming places. And yet portions of all these are relevant. Each is part of the atmosphere in which the real play lurks".

Friel himself insisted that the play was about language and the possibilities of communication, but in a political context. In an interview, at the Dublin premiere of *Translations*, with Mary McAleese, then a journalist and later President of Ireland, Friel put the emphasis on the issue of the English language as spoken in Ireland both as a legacy of the English presence, and as a barrier to communication:

“I suppose the play has to do with two issues that I think have never been properly resolved in this country; one is the English presence, and the other, I think, has to do with another issue that is more concerned with ourselves, which is the problem of expressing ourselves through an acquired language, and [that] in some way is also inhibiting the relationships between this island and England ... You and I could list a whole series of words for example that have totally different connotations for English people than they have for us, words like ‘loyalty’, ‘treason’, ‘patriotism’, ‘republicanism’, ‘homeland’, so that in fact there are words which we think we share, and which we think we can communicate with, which in fact are barriers to communication”.¹⁴

In several interviews around the time of the play’s premiere, Friel remarked that the “sad irony, of course, is that the whole play is written in English. It ought to be written in Irish”,¹⁵ which was indeed the language spoken by Friel’s grandparents, as he recalled in a 1982 interview with Fintan O’Toole:

“I had grandparents who were native Irish speakers and also two of the four grandparents were illiterate. It’s very close, you know, I actually remember two of them. And to be so close to illiteracy and to a different language is a curious experience. And in some way I don’t think we’ve resolved it. We haven’t resolved it on this island for ourselves”.¹⁶

(The Irish-language reception history of *Translations* is an interesting story in its own right).¹⁷ All of these considerations about language in *Translations* are relevant to a reading of the *Aeneid*.

¹⁴ Radio Teilifís Éireann on 7 October 1980; see <https://www.rte.ie/archives/2015/1002/731966-brian-friels-translations/>.

¹⁵ Murray (1999a) 80 (interview with Ciaran Carty, 1980); see also Murray (1999a) 85 (interview with Paddy Agnew, 1980): “Of course, a fundamental irony of this play is that it should have been written in Irish”.

¹⁶ Murray (1999a) 108.

¹⁷ See de Buiteléir (2007). There was a monolingual Irish translation by Breandán Ó Doibhlin (*i.e.* one in which all characters spoke Irish, preserving the linguistic uniformity of Friel’s original), and a bilingual one by Gearóid Ó Cairealláin of Aisling Ghéar theatre company (in which the English characters spoke English and the Irish characters spoke Irish). Though Friel had previously refused permission for bilingual translations, exceptionally, he gave his blessing to Ó Cairealláin, whose work he respected (Brid Ó Gallchoir of Aisling Ghéar, *per litteras*, 1 February 2017). The polyglossia of this translation brought out the violence of the cultural encounter between the English and Irish characters.

Of all Friel's plays, *Translations* is the richest in explicit references to Greek and Latin texts.¹⁸ The teaching of Greek and Latin in the hedge-school is the main vehicle for classical allusions, as Hugh puns in Latin or quizzes his pupils about the source and meaning of Greek and Latin quotations and etymologies. His first words upon entering the stage introduce us to his conversational tendency: "*Adsum*, Doalty, *adsum*. Perhaps not in *sobrietate perfecta*, but adequately *sobrius* to overhear your quip. Vesperal salutations to you all".¹⁹ The punning etymologies of Hugh's pig-Latin-Irish-English would not work, at least not in their current form, if Hugh's script were truly written in Irish – because the etymologies exist in English but not Irish – and yet he asserts the greater proximity of the classical languages to Irish than to English, as he reports to his pupils of his conversation with Captain Lancey: "I went on to propose that our own culture and the classical tongues made a happier conjugation".²⁰ Hugh persistently quips in classical quotations: "Sophocles from Colonus would agree with Doalty Dan Doalty from Tulach Alainn: 'To know nothing is the sweetest life'".²¹ Beyond these language games which pervade the play, it is clear that Hugh and Jimmy Jack (and to a lesser extent the other Irish characters) find Greek and Roman authors meaningful outside the classroom. Jimmy Jack frequently quotes Homer, in line with his marital designs on Pallas Athena; he knows the first book of Horace's *Satires* off by heart. Hugh brands Captain Lancey's eviction threat an "*Edictum imperatoris*".²² Hugh reminisces to Jimmy Jack about how they set off for the 1798 rebellion with the *Aeneid* in their pockets, but later turned back. Hugh quotes the exilic Ovid in frustration that he has been excluded from teaching in the new national school: *barbarus hic ego sum quia non intellegor ulli*.²³ The final scene ends with Hugh struggling to remember a passage from the beginning of the *Aeneid*.

"*Urbs antiqua fuit* – there was an ancient city which, 'tis said, Juno loved above all the lands. And it was the goddess's aim and cherished hope that here should be the capital of all nations – should the fates perchance allow that. Yet in truth she discovered that a race was springing from Trojan blood to overthrow some day these Tyrian towers – a people *late regem belloque superbum* – kings of broad realms and proud in war who would come forth for Lybia's downfall – such was – such was the course – such was the course ordained – ordained by fate ... What the hell's wrong with me? Sure I know it backways. I'll begin again. *Urbs antiqua fuit* – there was an ancient city which, 'tis said, Juno loved above all the lands.

¹⁸ Friel (2000) 92–94 is an appendix of Greek and Latin used in the text, with translations into English.

¹⁹ Friel (2000) 21.

²⁰ Friel (2000) 23.

²¹ Friel (2000) 22.

²² Friel (2000) 91.

²³ Friel (2000) 87; Ov. *Ti.* 5.10.31; some editors of Ovid read *qui* for *quia*.

Begin to bring down the lights.

“And it was the goddess’s aim and cherished hope that here should be the capital of all nations – should the fates perchance allow that. Yet in truth she discovered that a race was springing from Trojan blood to overthrow some day these Tyrian towers – a people kings of broad realms and proud in war who would come forth for Lybia’s downfall ...

Black”²⁴

A number of scholars have analyzed and interpreted these and other classical references in *Translations*,²⁵ and it will be helpful to review the chief lines of interpretation before turning to the effect of reading Virgil through Friel. Each allusion – and there are dozens – can be interpreted in its own context, and they sometimes respond to the historical background of the play. Thus, when Jimmy and Doalty discuss Virgil’s advice that black, rich soil that is crumbly under the plough is most suitable for growing corn, Jimmy exclaims that they should be growing corn rather than potatoes “in that upper field of yours”,²⁶ a clear foreshadowing of the failure of the potato crop in the following decade, with its cultural and linguistic repercussions. It is clear also from the examples in the previous paragraph that the Irish characters use classical quotations to express their political and cultural situation *vis-à-vis* the English incursion. On one assessment, the classical quotations unify the Irish characters against the adversity of English imperialism, even though the survival of their culture will be through the medium of English.²⁷ As the play’s first reviewers complained,²⁸ it is not realistic that Friel’s English characters do not understand Latin, but the distinction within the play’s fiction sets up a dichotomy between the Gaelic and classical world that is passing and the ascendant world in which English will dominate. Yet, even though it is the Irish characters who visibly marshal classical materials to make sense of their situation, it is the English soldiers who control the classical legacy of empire.²⁹ The closing quotation from the beginning of the *Aeneid* is a good example of this: it suggests an allegorical musing on Hugh’s part in which the English stand for the Romans, and the Carthaginians (whose overthrow is glimpsed in prospect) for the Irish. Most probably, it is the horrible vision of Ireland’s downfall that causes Hugh to falter in recollecting the passage.³⁰

²⁴ Friel (2000) 90–91.

²⁵ See Arkins (1991); Cullingford (1996); DeHoratius (2011); Maley (2011); Hinds (2011) 79–83; Saunders (2012); Passaretti (2014).

²⁶ Friel (2000) 14; *Geo.* 2.203–05.

²⁷ DeHoratius (2001), an attempt at a comprehensive reading of the classical intertextuality in the play.

²⁸ Pilkington (1990) 285–86.

²⁹ Saunders (2012).

³⁰ Arkins (1990) 208; cf. Cullingford (1996) 231, arguing that the English are the descendants of the Trojan-Romans via Brutus.

*

Friel's use of the *Aeneid* in *Translations* may serve as a spur to rethink the politics of language in the *Aeneid* itself. In the most general terms, Friel's play reminds us that the *Aeneid* dramatizes a series of cultural translations into Latin, and that translation, whether ancient or modern, is always political.³¹ More specifically, I shall argue that the linguistic uniformity of the *Aeneid* lends itself to political interpretation comparable with what has been proposed for Friel's *Translations*. By "linguistic uniformity" I mean the fact that all characters in the *Aeneid* speak polished Latin, whether they be Trojan, Greek, Tyrian, Latin, or from Italy beyond Latium, even though characters from different lands are distinguished by other features, such as dress or customs.

The difference in orientation of point of view between the two works matters greatly for language politics: the *Aeneid* is an integrationist narrative that foregrounds the perspective of the victors, while giving some voice to the conquered, all in Latin. *Translations* is animated by the point of view of the conquered, even though it enacts a story of cultural violence in the language of the conqueror. To be sure, linguistic uniformity is the norm in classical epic, and on that score, unremarkable. But my argument is that Friel's *Translations* helps us to see that Virgil encourages us to think of the politics of linguistic assimilation, by pointing to language difference at critical moments, even as his poem's characters speak uniformly in the language of Roman conquest.

It need hardly be pointed out that Virgil's picture of language is a Latin version of the Homeric convention. In the *Iliad* Greeks and Trojans speak fluent Greek, and the issue of a language barrier between them is simply not raised, despite several references to language difference in the poems, including among the Trojan allies, and the use of the adjective βαρβαρόφωνος of the Carians in the Catalogue of Ships.³² Short of actual language difference, it has been persuasively argued that "in the *Iliad*, Greeks and Trojans talk differently", in that "Achaean are proficient at blame, while Trojans perform praise poetry".³³ Aside from the two epics, in the Homeric Hymn to Aphrodite (5.111–16), Aphrodite comes to Anchises disguised as a Phrygian, and explains to him that she is familiar with his language as well as with her own, because she had a Trojan nurse as a child. But of course their conversation, like the whole poem, is written in Greek. Ennius adopted the Homeric custom in that his "foreigners" speak Latin,³⁴ and he even reports a response from the Delphic Oracle to Pyrrhus in Latin hexameters, which led Cicero to doubt the veracity of the episode partly on the grounds that Apollo never spoke Latin.³⁵

³¹ See Mairs (2018).

³² Language difference at *Il.* 2.802–06; βαρβαρόφωνων at 2.867; see also 4.433–38; *Od.* 19.172–77. Ross (2005) argues that linguistic disunity among the Trojans' allies implies a kind of pan-Hellenic unity. See Hall (1989) 19–21.

³³ Mackie (1996) 1; 83.

³⁴ *E.g.* Pyrrhus at *Ann.* 183–90 Sk; Hannibal at *Ann.* 234–35 Sk.

³⁵ See Cic. *Div.* 2.56.116 = *Enn. Ann.* 167 Sk.

A more naturalistic convention is used in some non-epic genres. For Aristophanes, dialect and language are markers of geographical and social origin, often with comic effect.³⁶ Plautus seems to have used Punic to characterize Hanno in *Poenulus*.³⁷ Prose historians may discreetly hint at language difference between opponents, such as when Polybius’ and Livy’s Scipio and Hannibal communicate through interpreters before the battle of Zama, increasing the sense of Hannibal’s otherness.³⁸

Despite the many peoples who communicate with each other in the *Aeneid*, Virgil avoids the narrative awkwardness of interpreters.³⁹ And he eschews any hint of macaronic speech presentation (*i.e.* alternating languages), which would have compromised epic decorum. Indeed, macaronic exchanges are the stuff of travesty: burlesque scenes in which the Trojans have to mug up quickly on Latin so that they can talk to Latinus later provided a comic take on the absurdness of Trojans (and everyone else) speaking Latin.⁴⁰ Dante, bolder than Virgil in his use of linguistic conventions, raises eyebrows by having “Virgil” and “Dante” converse in the vernacular. Dante also admits different languages into his *Divine Comedy*, from Provençal to Latin, but only at carefully chosen moments. For instance, in *Inferno* Canto 31, when we meet the diaspora of Babel, Nimrod, who initiated building the tower, speaks a line of gibberish. Virgil rebukes him for his unintelligibility. Isolation is Nimrod’s punishment, but the episode also points to how Latin unifies all of the characters and peoples in Virgil’s own epic.

Although more constrained than Dante by the convention of linguistic uniformity, Virgil chose to advertise language difference on three occasions in the epic. Let us review these.

On the night that Troy is breached, the Trojan Coroebus and his men put on the armour of some Greeks that they have killed, with a view to military advantage. The ruse is initially

³⁶ Colvin (1999); Willi (2003).

³⁷ See the discussion of Giusti (2018) 75–87, esp. 83, with further references.

³⁸ Polybius 15.6.3 and Livy 30.30.1; on Livy’s possible use of Polybius, see Adler (2011) 84. On Roman enemies’ actual speeches not having been in Latin, see Adler (2011) 7. Adler *passim* also considers the historicity of the speeches in historiography, but I am surprised he does not make more of the fact that speeches that were originally not in Latin were reported in Latin in Roman historiography. On ancient testimonies to oral translation see Wiotte-Franz (2001).

³⁹ Ahl (2007) however translates *centum oratores*, in the embassy to Latinus at 7.152, as “a hundred men, gifted in language”, and annotates thus: “the Latin has *oratores* (trained public speakers). Virgil’s world is not, like Homer’s, united under one language”. He substantiates this with the references to language difference which I shall discuss shortly.

⁴⁰ See Paulouskaya (2017) 119–21 for macaronic moments in *Aeneid* travesties in German, Russian and Ukrainian. Aloys Blumauer (18th century Austrian poet) and Ivan Korlyarevsky (18th–19th century Ukrainian poet) have the Trojans learning Latin with contemporary schoolbooks. In Irish poet Donncha Rua McNamara’s 18th-century rewriting of the *Aeneid*, *Eachtra Ghiolla an Amaráin / Adventures of a Luckless Fellow*, Charon speaks only Irish and Latin (see McElduff, 2011, 235). On the mixing of high and low language in Virgil travesties see Hardie (2014) 173–88, esp. 183.

successful, as the disguised Trojans slaughter many Greeks and scatter others, but it backfires when they get pelted by weapons from their own side, and then recognized as impostors by Greeks whom they had previously chased through the city (2.420–23):

*Illi etiam, si quos obscura nocte per umbram
fudimus insidiis totaque agitavimus urbe,
apparent; primi clipeos mentitaque tela
agnoscunt atque ora sono discordia signant.*

(“Even the troops that we once, in disguise, under cover of night-time, Chased through the shadows, dispersed in their panic all over the city, Now reappear. They are first to detect that our shields and our weapons Lie about who we are, and to note that our language is different”).

(trans. Ahl, 2007)

Does *ora sono discordia* suggest a different language or simply a different dialect or pronunciation? Opinions vary.⁴¹ Ahl’s translation preserves the ambiguity. The passage may look back to the Homeric tradition of linguistic variety among the Trojan allies, as Horsfall (2008, *ad loc.*) implies. To me it seems less absurd that the Greeks and Trojans should speak two different languages than that they should speak different versions of the same language (indeed, which language would that be?). Either way, the nod to linguistic difference draws attention to the convention of linguistic uniformity, especially in a passage in which a Trojan is narrating a story in Latin to Tyrian Dido about linguistic difference between Greeks and Trojans.

On the shield of Aeneas Augustus is depicted surveying a parade of the vanquished as part of his triple triumph. The peoples differ as much in dress and armour as they do in language (8.720–23):

*Iipse sedens niveo candentis limine Phoebi
dona recognoscit populorum aptatque superbis
postibus; incedunt victae longo ordine gentes,
quam variae linguis, habitu tam vestis et armis.*

⁴¹ Horsfall (2008) *ad loc.* mentions two stories in Livy where language difference betrays a military ruse (10.4.8–10; 23.34.6); cf. also Monda (2011) 200–01; Casali (2017) 236: “Ma anche qui in effetti il riferimento è più a diversità di pronuncia che non a una vera e propria diversità di lingua”. For biblical parallels see the shibboleth episode at *Judges* 12, and for Galileans being recognizable for their distinctive speech see *Matthew* 26.73 and *Mark* 14.70.

(“Great Caesar sits sublime upon his throne,
 Before Apollo’s porch of Parian stone;
 Accepts the presents vow’d for victory,
 And hangs the monumental crowns on high.
 Vast crowds of vanquish’d nations march along,
 Various in arms, in habit, and in tongue”).

(trans. Dryden)

Leaving aside the question of how language difference could (not) have been represented on the shield, this passage is the one that most evokes, in linguistic terms, the distinction between Greeks / Romans and barbarians. Indeed, the *gentes* enumerated in the following lines would have spoken a variety of languages before and after being conquered by Rome. But in fact, as Katharine Toll points out, Augustus had not conquered all of the peoples listed in ll. 724–28, and their foreignness is exaggerated.⁴² Virgil has visibly widened the gap between conventional epic usage and the polyglossia of the empire.

Finally, towards the end of the poem, Juno strikes a deal with Jupiter: she will give up her opposition to the Trojans if Jupiter grants that the Latins not have to change their name, language or dress (12.821–28, 834–37):

[Juno]

*‘Cum iam conubiis pacem felicibus (esto)
 component, cum iam leges et foedera iungent,
 ne vetus indigenas nomen mutare Latinos
 neu Troas fieri iubeas Teucrosque vocari
 aut vocem mutare viros aut vertere vestem.
 Sit Latium, sint Albani per saecula reges,
 sit Romana potens Itala virtute propago:
 occidit, occideritque sinas cum nomine Troia.’*

...

[Jupiter]

*‘Sermonem Ausonii patrium moresque tenebunt,
 utque est nomen erit; commixti corpore tantum
 subsident Teucri. Morem ritusque sacrorum
 adiciam faciamque omnis uno ore Latinos.’*

⁴² Toll (1997) 45–47.

("[Juno:]

'When, and so be it, they settle their peace in fulfilment of marriage,
When they shape treaties and laws in their confederation together,
Don't require those who were born here, the Latins, to alter their ancient
Name, become 'Trojans', be known as 'The Teucrians', or alter their language.
Don't make them change their traditional dress. Let Latium continue,
Let there be Alban kings who will span all the centuries. And let
Roman stock get its strength from Italian concepts of courage.
Troy is destroyed. Now permit Troy's name to share her destruction'

[Jupiter:]

'Italy's people will keep both native language and culture.
Further, their name will remain as it is. Inter-marriage will thin out
What's left of Teucrians: namely, their blood. I'll add rituals and customs,
And I'll ensure that they'll all be collectively known as "The Latins"').

(trans. Ahl, 2007)

("The Ausonians will keep their speech and customs
And name unchanged. The Trojans will fade out
As they breed in. I'll introduce their rites,
But make one Latin people, with one language").

(trans. Ruden, 2008)

I give several translations of the last sentence (834–37) to record interpretative divergence over *faciamque uno ore Latinos* – one ethnonym or one language?⁴³ Whichever it is (and I favour "one language"), the scene retroactively implies that the Trojans and the Latins have been speaking different languages, even though we have read or heard them and their allies speaking Latin *to each other*.⁴⁴ What we have here is similar to the linguistic palimpsest in Friel's *Translations*, with the significant difference that it is the language of the conquered and not the conquerors that wins out in Italy, and in which the dialogue is written. The Julians of Virgil's day emphasize their Trojan ancestry, even though Juno has ensured that the Trojans do not pass on their language, dress or customs to their descendants.⁴⁵ *Uno ore* and

⁴³ Tarrant (2012) 304: "uno ore: 'speaking one language', but perhaps evoking the more common sense of the phrase, 'with one voice / unanimously'". Fletcher (2014, 251) translates: "And I will make them all Latins with one face".

⁴⁴ Tarrant (2012, 304) puts the lines in the context of contemporary interest in language as a marker of identity, citing Dench (2005) 298–361. See also Zetzel (2018) 31–77.

⁴⁵ See Bettini (2005) and (2006) on this contradiction.

epic linguistic uniformity imply the ascendance of Latin after the settlement between Jupiter and Juno, and in historical time, the dominance of Latin on Italian soil to the exclusion of other languages. W. R. Johnson recognizes the paradox; as he puts it, “the Trojans will start speaking Latin, which will manifest their complete unity with the natives. One in body, language, customs, soul”.⁴⁶ Juno’s bargaining also ensures that it is the non-barbaric language that becomes established.

What can we conclude from these three scenes? One way of resolving the contradiction between Latin uniformity and references to language difference is to imagine that all or at least some of the languages in play, at any rate Latin⁴⁷ and Trojan (as seemingly in Homer), may be versions of Greek. Sure enough, Virgil’s Latin engages closely with Greek on many levels, and it is possible to infer correlations between linguistic, intertextual and cultural translations from Greek to Latin in the *Aeneid*, mirrored also by the presence of the Greek diaspora in the poem, itself a sign of the cultural hybridity between Greek and Italian elements in Virgil’s culture. After all, Latin literature was born in translation, as Denis Feeney has recently reminded us.⁴⁸ Beyond this metaphorical level, though, it does not seem satisfying to think of Latin and other languages in the *Aeneid* as versions of Greek.

More generally, the passages suggest that Virgil is more interested in language, language difference, and imperial sociolinguistics than has sometimes been realized. In each of the three scenes, two or more language communities come face to face through conflict, and the language difference marks their relative otherness. But the passages occupy differing positions on a spectrum from enmity to assimilation. The Greeks and Trojans of book 2 are mortal enemies, even though Aeneas’ Trojans will eventually unite with the Greek diaspora on Italian soil, under Latin auspices. The foreign peoples on the shield in book 8 have been conquered by Rome, and while they are being paraded as enemies, the triumphal procession signals subjugation and incorporation into the Roman empire. Their languages mark them out as different, and one wonders how much the drift of the poem implies that all conquered peoples should assimilate to Latin, even though Greek and other languages remained dominant in the East. This procession is, of course, part of the shield that Aeneas carries into battle, and into the single combat that will seal the bargain of Jupiter and Juno. Finally, in that bargain, the Latins and the Trojans are about to be reconciled and twinned in the polity that will lead to the foundation of Rome. The Trojans will contribute their blood only, but will assimilate to Latin language and culture, and the Latin name. Read together, the three passages suggest that language difference

⁴⁶ Johnson (2001) 13.

⁴⁷ See Stevens (2006–07) on ‘Aeolism’, the theory that Latin is a dialect of Greek; *contra* Gitner (2015).

⁴⁸ Feeney (2016).

marks conflict and enmity, and that linguistic assimilation is concomitant with political assimilation.

Most remarkable of all is the gap that Virgil opens up between the epic convention of linguistic uniformity and the many languages of the poem's fictional reality; this gap points to the dominance of Latin in the world outside the text. As Andrew Wallace-Hadrill has put it:

“Establishing one language as dominant is key to hegemonic practice ... It is precisely the fact that using one language is ‘normal’ or ‘unmarked’ that establishes the rules of the game, the underlying power relationship. By using the dominant language, you buy into the rules of the game. But the fact it is unmarked means you take the dominance for granted.”⁴⁹

Of course, Wallace-Hadrill is talking about Roman history rather than epic convention, but the aetiological character of the *Aeneid*, whereby Virgil uses myth to explain what came later, suggests that the insight may also be relevant to the language politics of the poem.

Virgil's use of myth reflects on Roman history and contemporary realities. It is worthwhile probing what the external correlative of the poem's language politics might be. There seem to be several intertwined strands: Rome's conquest and later unification of Italy; Rome's assimilation of peoples beyond Italy; and the spread of Latin that was consequent on the expansion of the Roman empire, at least in the West.⁵⁰ The question is made more complex and interesting by the fact that Virgilian aetiology has a central linguistic element, which often involves a discourse of naming. My argument, inspired by Friel's *Translations*, is that the *Aeneid* encodes memories of Latin eclipsing other languages, that linguistic assimilation to Latin which was part of the work of empire, and that Virgil's poetry suggests that there is more than one way of looking at the process.

Scholars continue to investigate ways in which the *Aeneid* contributes to ideas of Roman identity by commemorating history.⁵¹ Place-names in the *Aeneid* have a very special significance in this regard,⁵² and it is on this theme that the *Aeneid* and Friel's *Translations* converge most closely. Names preserve local history, and evoke foundation, refoundation, colonization. They stake claims of ownership, and sometimes prior ownership.⁵³ One need only think of

⁴⁹ Wallace-Hadrill (2008) 64.

⁵⁰ On the dominance of Greek in the East and even in parts of Italy, see e.g. Wallace-Hadrill (2008) 57–63, who points out that command of Latin was not necessary to be a Roman, which was a juridical category.

⁵¹ See Toll (1997); Ando (2002); suggestive comments throughout Dench (2005); Reed (2007); Reed (2010); Fletcher (2014); Zetzl (2019).

⁵² On names and naming in the *Aeneid* see Jenkyns (1998); Fletcher (2014). Sullivan (2014) (with further references) is an excellent overview.

⁵³ See e.g. Goldschmidt (2013, 116–19) on Acestes and Segesta in Sicily, and the Trojans' (and therefore Romans') pre-Carthaginian claim on the island.

the etymologies in Evander’s tour of Rome,⁵⁴ or his story of how names changed⁵⁵ in Latium depending on who was in power (8.328–32):

*Tum manus Ausonia et gentes venere Sicanae,
saepius et nomen posuit Saturnia tellus;
tum reges asperque immmani corpore Thybris,
a quo post Itali fluvium cognomine Thybrim
diximus; amisit verum vetus Albula nomen.*

(“Then came Ausonians, and Sicanian tribes –
The land of Saturn often changed its name –
Then there were kings, and giant, cruel King Thybris,
After whom we Italians called this river;
The Albula has lost its ancient name”).

(trans. Ruden, 2008)

Ruden translates Virgil’s *verum ... nomen* as “ancient name”, collapsing any distinction between “etymological name” and “true name”, with a passing nod at the root (> “true name”) of the word “etymology” itself. Evander, an Arcadian, has translated himself into an Italian (*Itali ... diximus*), and has internalized Latin as well as Greek etymologies. On this passage Richard Jenkyns has commented:

“Virgil expresses a sense of the power of names: there is such a thing as a ‘true’ name. This combines with a sense of the aboriginal: the true name is the old, the primal name, undiscovered by later incomers. ‘Amisit’ evokes a nostalgia, a vague sense of loss, and a sense of the hidden, as though the name could not be found, buried as it is in the darkness or dimness of the past”.⁵⁶

But Evander’s history reminds us that name-changes are often violent affairs, as in Friel’s *Translations*. Juno’s words on the death of Troy are apposite: *occidit, occideritque sinas cum nomine Troia* (12.828).

Names can also tell of history in the future tense. Anchises lists for Aeneas the names of the Alban colonies (6.773–76):

⁵⁴ 8.321–58; Ahl (2007) aims to capture as much as possible of the etymologies in his translation. For the etymologies see O’Hara (2017).

⁵⁵ On name-changes in the *Aeneid* see Fletcher (2014) 19; 72.

⁵⁶ Jenkyns (1998) 553.

*Hi tibi Nomentum et Gabios urbemque Fidenam,
 hi Collatinas imponent montibus arces,
 Pometios Castrumque Inui Bolamque Coramque;
 haec tum nomina erunt, nunc sunt sine nomine terrae.*

(“These, when you are gone,
 Will build Nomentum and Gabii and the city of Fidena,
 Fortify hill towns, wall the citadels
 Of Collatia, found Pometii, Bola and Cora
 And Camp Inuus: unheard-of today, unsigned,
 Their name and fame will come”).

(trans. Heaney, 2016)

They will be names then; now they are lands without names: one thinks of Owen’s quip in *Translations*, “We name a thing and – bang – it leaps into existence”.⁵⁷ Poignantly, though, by Virgil’s time, these colonies had themselves been abandoned.⁵⁸

Heroes’ names point to their Roman descendants, as well as to Italian geography and historical events.⁵⁹ Aeneas’ love and affection for Italy grow as the poem proceeds,⁶⁰ and yet Virgil shows us a disunited and even riven land. Elena Giusti writes of “the presentation of the wars in Latium as not only a proto-Civil and proto-Social, but also proto-Hannibalic War”.⁶¹ But we could go further back and discern in Virgil’s Latian wars, and in the wars which precede the “long peace” (7.46) of Latinus, dim reflections of Rome’s conquest of Italy, a process narrated in the first decade of Livy’s history.⁶² Indeed, the Italian books of the *Aeneid* provide a blueprint for integration with Rome, even though it is the victorious Trojans that assimilate into the host culture of Latin, which will itself in due course eclipse other Italic languages. But there is resistance along the way: Katharine Toll has traced a pattern of gradual amalgamation of peoples throughout the *Aeneid*. Enemies are prospective allies; “Italy’s *externi* were to be *externi* only transitorily”.⁶³ This entails that all wars with one’s neighbours may be refigured as civil wars from the perspective of later unification. The poet

⁵⁷ Friel (2000) 45.

⁵⁸ Barchiesi (1988) 297–98.

⁵⁹ See Adams Holland (1935); Reed (2007), esp. 1–7.

⁶⁰ Fletcher (2014).

⁶¹ Giusti (2018) 229.

⁶² The book of Alessandro Barchiesi’s Sather lectures, *The War for Italia: Conflict and Collective Memory in Vergil’s Aeneid*, is eagerly awaited; see already Barchiesi (2008). On strife in mythical Italy see Moorten (1989) and Thomas (2004–05).

⁶³ Toll (1997) 48. On the “unity” of Italy in the *Aeneid* and the ways in which the poem remembers the Social War, see also Johnson (2001); Ando (2002); Marincola (2010); Fletcher (2014).

addresses this paradox in his question to Jupiter as the fighting is renewed in the final book of the epic (12.503–04):

*Tanton placuit concurrere motu,
Iuppiter, aeterna gentis in pace futuras?*

(“Was it your will, O Jupiter, that peoples who were to live at peace for all time should clash so violently in war?”)

(trans. West, 1990)

The passages on language difference, especially those from books 8 and 12, imply a Latin linguistic nationalism that is a correlative to the linguistic and cultural unification of Italy, and beyond this to the spread of Latin as the empire expanded: as enemies become allies, the warring peoples are united under the banner of Latin. But what are the dynamics of volition in this process? If the conquered peoples on the shield are speaking their own languages, what pressure is applied to make them speak Latin? It bears repeating that Juno's intervention to ensure the survival of Latin is critical – the historical norm is that the conquered people take on the language of the conqueror – and of a piece with her violent opposition to the Trojans throughout the epic. But how does the spread of Latin in the *Aeneid* relate to the situation in Italian history? And is there any evidence of historical resistance to Latin?

Ancient historians who have discussed the unification of Italy do indeed point out that one outcome of the process was the emerging dominance of Latin throughout the peninsula. Henrik Mouritsen summarizes the historiographic understanding as follows:

“In the late republic, Italy was transformed politically as well as culturally. By the late 3rd century BC Italy still presented a picture of diversity rather than uniformity. The peninsula was split into a large number of states – in alliance with Rome but maintaining full internal sovereignty. The political complexity was matched by an equally strong **cultural plurality in languages and customs**. Two hundred years later this situation had changed completely. Gone was the political diversity: the peninsula now constituted a single political entity with a common citizenship. Also the ‘ethnic’ plurality was difficult to trace; it had largely been replaced by a **uniform Roman culture**.”⁶⁴

⁶⁴ Mouritsen (1998) 2 (bold emphases added), who analyzes the ancient and modern historiography on the unification of Italy.

Though a detailed study of the relations between Rome and Italy is beyond my scope here, I wish to emphasize several points. One is that Roman Italian identities could be complex: on the one hand, an Italian like Cicero could talk about having two *patriae*, one by nature and the other by citizenship.⁶⁵ Secondly, a dominant feature of the narrative of Rome's conquest and unification of Italy is resistance to Roman rule, and power struggles with Rome over autonomy and / or enfranchisement, culminating in the Social War.⁶⁶ A third point is that we have no real evidence for a concerted policy of Romanization, least of all for insistence on the use of Latin. But this does not mean that Roman imperialism did not have a linguistic dimension, either within or beyond the Italian conquest.⁶⁷ As part of this matrix, scholars have identified a sociolinguistics of provincial Italian resistance to the dominance of Latin. The epigraphic record shows the use of Oscan or Paelignian, which some scholars have argued is in explicit defiance of Latin during the period of the Social War, though there may be alternative explanations for the language choice.⁶⁸ Should we, then, be looking for vestiges of Italian resistance to Latin in the *Aeneid*?

It is well to remember that Virgil was born in Cisalpine Gaul less than twenty years after the Social War, just after Italic languages fade in the epigraphic record. It would be easy to imagine him telling an interviewer about the local languages other than Latin that he heard spoken, whether Italic languages, Celtic in northern Italy or Greek in the south. Thus, whether or not Virgil was born a Roman citizen,⁶⁹ he experienced directly the interface of Latin with Greek, and very likely with Celtic and Italic languages.⁷⁰ There are Italic glosses and traces of the Italic languages in the *Aeneid*.⁷¹ These often occur in place-names and etymologies, which (as Jim O'Hara has done most to show) are the linguistic face of aetiology.⁷² Italic languages "[figure] in scholarship mostly with regard to individual lexical items."⁷³ But how should their

⁶⁵ See *Leg.* 2.5 with Jenkyns (1998) 92–99; Ando (2002) 133–34; Fletcher (2014) 4–7. On this feature of municipalization, see Bispham (2007) 440–42.

⁶⁶ See Bispham (2007) 559: *index rerum*, s.v. 'Italy, resentment of Roman hegemony in'.

⁶⁷ On imperialism and the spread of Latin, see Farrell (2001), who begins with Juno's bargain.

⁶⁸ For a circumspect overview, see Clackson (2015) 73–78, but also his interlocutors. On regional Italic identities as distinct from Roman ones, with emphasis on language and literary representation, see Dench (2005), esp. 329–44. On "regionalism" in the Latin poets see also Adams Holland (1979). On language contact between Latin and Etruscan see van Heems (2012). Recently on "Romanization", with some treatment of language politics, see Aberson *et al.* (2016), and Aberson *et al.* (2020).

⁶⁹ See Toll (1997) 36.

⁷⁰ See Adams (2003) 111–84 on contact between Latin and Italic languages.

⁷¹ Bartelink (1965) 85–91; Horsfall (2000) *index s.v.* 'glosses, non-Greek, alleged or likely'; Adams (2008) 182, 435; Ferriss-Hill (2011); O'Hara (2017) 91–92. Adams (2008, 182) cautions: "Dialect words cited from the Republic often raise a problem of interpretation, which has come up in relation to Sabine. If a word is described by a source as in use among an Italian people, was it current in their Latin or had it merely once been current in the Italic of their area?" My argument here depends on residual currency or readers' or listeners' memories.

⁷² See O'Hara (2017) and also Paschalis (1997).

⁷³ Rau (2014) 680.

presence be interpreted beyond lexical analysis? Ennius is reputed to have said that he had three hearts because he had a deep understanding of three languages: Greek, Oscan and Latin.⁷⁴ Did these three hearts always beat in harmony, or always with equal fervour? Did Ennius ever feel divided in loyalty to his patron Fulvius or to his Greek or Italic kinsmen? Would Virgil or his readers have felt “traces of ... conflictedness”⁷⁵ about Roman versus Italian identity? What did Virgil feel about the linguistic interface between Latin and its Italic predecessors? Did the “two voices of Virgil’s *Aeneid*”⁷⁶ ever speak in different tongues?

In a carefully documented study of the Sabine glosses in the *Aeneid*, Jennifer Ferriss-Hill has detected a “program of Sabellic etymologizing” and has argued that the glosses impart a native Italian flavour to the epic’s second half, some of these glosses occurring in the catalogue of Italian warriors in book 7.⁷⁷ Along similar lines, William Warde Fowler wrote of the catalogue:

“Here the most obvious motive in the poet’s craft is the wish to move the feeling of his Italian reader as he sees the stately procession of Italian warriors passing before him, or perchance to fill his mind with pride and pleasure at finding among them the ancient representative of his own city or district.”⁷⁸

These are compelling arguments, but they seem to me to be predicated on a unitarian view of Italy. Instead, I wonder whether a speaker of Sabellic – a sympathizer of the Italian Allies, say – would be equally if not more likely to lament the extinguishing of their language by Latin than to celebrate its cameo appearance in the new national epic. To take one example (7.516–17):

*audiit et Triviae longe lacus, audiit amnis
sulpurea Nar albus aqua fontesque Velini ...*

(“The white sulphur-laden streams of the river Nar heard it and its springs in lake Velinus ...”)

(trans. West, 1990)

⁷⁴ Aul. Gel. 17.17.2: *Quintumque Ennium tria corda habere sese dixisse, quod tris linguas percullisset, Graecam, Oscam, Latinam.*

⁷⁵ Johnson (2001) 7. See Jenkyns (1998, 73–127) for the interplay of love of one’s locality and love of country: “A Transpadene was well placed to apprehend a sense of national unity-in-diversity” (108).

⁷⁶ Parry (1963).

⁷⁷ See Ferriss-Hill (2011) and the sources which she cites. Adams (2008, 435–37) also notes that Virgil uses “regional” language on several occasions in the *Georgics*, perhaps to add local colour to his descriptions: *trabea* (1.166); *bufo* (1.184); *rustum* (2.413).

⁷⁸ Fowler (1918) 27.

Virgil glosses *Nar* with *sulpurea*, by describing the water with a translation of the Sabine word; Servius *ad loc.* tells us that the Sabines call sulphur *nar* in their language.⁷⁹ Friel's *Translations* celebrates the Gaelic origins of Irish place-names and produces emotive effects from their very sound. Virgil acknowledges the Italic roots of toponyms, but this may have elicited (and been designed to elicit) a mixed response from those whose ears remembered the local language or dialect: pride, but also a twinge of nostalgia at the passing of the local language, perhaps even resentment at the ineluctable might of Rome.

I have focussed so far on Italy, but the passage on conquered peoples' foreign tongues suggests that the argument may apply elsewhere, especially in the western empire where Latin most spread. Let us consider the glosses on Punic, Dido's language.⁸⁰ Virgil puns several times on the Punic root of Karthago, which means "new city".⁸¹ Of course, the name means nothing in Latin, and so we are in similar territory to the phonetic Anglicizations of Gaelic place-names in Friel's *Translations*.⁸² In an epic that looks to the foundation of Rome, the wordplay on "new city" is pointed: Carthage is the first city that we see rising in the *Aeneid* – *o fortunati quorum iam moenia surgunt* (1.437) – but it will be destroyed by Rome, as we glimpse in prospect at the reaction to Dido's suicide after Aeneas abandons her for Italy (4.670).

Aeneas marvels at this new city rising (1.421):

Miratur molem Aeneas, magalia quondam

("Aeneas marvels at the size [of the city], once huts").

Servian notes tell us that *magalia* is Punic, quoting Cato the Elder and Sallust.⁸³ But why *quondam*, since Aeneas had no prior acquaintance with whatever buildings predated the monumental city? Perhaps we should read *quondam* as a metalinguistic tag that puts *magalia* in virtual quotation marks: *back then* they called them *magalia*, but that was before the spread of Latin in North Africa.⁸⁴

⁷⁹ Ferriss-Hill (2011) 267, who also points out that Virgil seems to have used as his model Ennius, *Annales* 222 Sk, *sulpureas posuit spiramina Naris ad undas*.

⁸⁰ These are listed at O'Hara (2017) 91.

⁸¹ E.g. 1.12 *Urbs antiqua fuit*; 1.298 *novae ... Karthaginis*; 1.366 *moenia surgentemque novae Karthaginis urbem*; 1.522 *o regina, novam cui condere Iuppiter urbem ...*

⁸² The process of Anglicization is enacted at length in the first scene of Act 2. From the stage directions (Friel, 2000, 38): "Yolland's official task, which Owen is now doing, is to take each of the Gaelic names – every hill, stream, rock, even every patch of ground which possessed its own distinctive Irish name – and Anglicise it, either by changing it into its approximate English sound or by translating it into English words. For example, a Gaelic name like Cnoc Ban could become Knockban or – directly translated – Fair Hill".

⁸³ Cf. Serv. *ad Aen.* 1.421–22; 4.259; *Geo.* 3.340.

⁸⁴ On the survival of Punic see Adams (2003) 200–45 and Clackson (2015), esp. ch. 6. On the linguistic ecology of ancient Lybia, which involved Berber / Lybiac as well as Punic and Latin, see Selden (2014) 209–17.

Why did Dido speak Latin, along with everyone else in the *Aeneid*? Beyond narrative convention, characters' Latinity looks forward to the spread of Latin in the Roman empire, leading to the development of hybrid cultures.⁸⁵ By puncturing the poem's linguistic uniformity with occasional references to language difference, Virgil makes a remarkable proleptic statement of imperial whitewash and supremacy. If Dido and the others were ever to speak in their own voices, which surely the passages on language difference suggest that they once did, they are unable to do so now. Julius Caesar reported that the Gauls worshipped Mercurius above all gods (*deum maxime Mercurium colunt*, *BG* 6.17), but what account would the Gauls themselves have given? Or how would Dido have described her sacrifices to Ceres, Lyaeus, and Juno? The *Aeneid* is a linguistic palimpsest that subtly advertises how it silences the non-Latin voices subsumed by Rome, creating a hybrid culture in which Latin dominates. The story of Rome's conquest of Italy can only be told in Latin, since the rival sources barely survive. Latin and Romano-centric sources likewise dominate the story of Rome's conquest of the empire. But with its references to language difference, the *Aeneid* hints that even Rome's mythical prehistory could have been told in other ways by other people, and that it would have been a different story if told in other languages, whether Italic or from beyond Italy: with different symbols and systems of signification, different key terms and ways of thinking, which now we can only guess at. Virgil's aetiological epic thus provides the basis for later historians who ventriloquize foreign leaders criticizing Rome in Latin: Hannibal, Boudicca, Calgacus, Caractacus. Their speaking Latin indicates the dominance of Rome, and prompts reflections on what story they would have told if they had been speaking in their own language. As Augustine wept for Dido, we may weep for these enemies of Rome, but most of all because they cannot, never could, speak in their own voice.

University College London

FIACHRA MAC GÓRÁIN
(f.macgorain@ucl.ac.uk)

⁸⁵ For the case of Gaul, see Woolf (1998).

Bibliography

- M. Aberson, M. C. Biella, M. Di Fazio, P. Sánchez & M. Wulschleger (eds) (2016) *L'Italia centrale e la creazione di una koiné culturale? I percorsi della 'romanizzazione'*, Bern.
- M. Aberson, M. C. Biella, M. Di Fazio & M. Wulschleger (eds) (2020) *Non sumus romani qui fuimus ante. Memory of Ancient Italy*, Bern.
- J. N. Adams (2003) *Bilingualism and the Latin Language*, Cambridge.
- J. N. Adams (2008) *The Regional Diversification of Latin 200 BC–AD 600*, Cambridge.
- L. Adams Holland (1935) 'Place names and heroes in the *Aeneid*', *AJP* 56, 202–15.
- L. Adams Holland (1979) *Lucretius and the Transpadenes*, Princeton.
- E. Adler (2011) *Valorizing the Barbarians: Enemy Speeches in Roman Historiography*, Austin TX.
- F. Ahl (trans.) (2007) *Virgil. Aeneid. A New Translation*, Oxford.
- C. Ando (2002) 'Vergil's Italy: ethnography and politics in first-century Rome', in D. S. Levene & D. P. Nelis (eds), *Clio and the Poets: Augustan Poetry and the Traditions of Ancient Historiography*, Leiden, 123–42.
- B. Arkins (1991) 'The role of Greek and Latin in Friel's *Translations*', *Colby Quarterly* 27.4, 202–09.
- A. Barchiesi (1988) 'Alcune mosse dei Romantici verso un immaginario virgiliano', in *L'Età augustea vista dai contemporanei e nel giudizio dei posteri*, Mantua.
- A. Barchiesi (2008) '*Bellum Italicum*: l'unificazione dell'Italia nell'*Eneide*', in G. Urso (ed), *Patria diversis gentibus una? Unità politiche e identità etniche nell'Italia antica*, Pisa, 243–60.
- G. J. M. Bartelink (1965) *Etymologisering bij Vergilius*, Amsterdam.
- M. Bettini (2005) 'Un' identità "troppo compiuta": Troiani, Latini, Romani e Iulii nell'*Eneide*', *MD* 55, 77–102.
- M. Bettini (2006) 'Forging identities: Trojans, Latins, Romans and Julians in the *Aeneid*', in M. Jehne & R. Pfeilschichter (eds), *Herrschaft ohne Integration? Rom und Italien in republikanischer Zeit*, Frankfurt am Main, 269–92.
- J. Clackson (2015) *Language and Society in the Greek and Roman Worlds*, Cambridge.
- S. Colvin (1999) *Dialect in Aristophanes: The Politics of Language in Ancient Greek Literature*, Oxford.
- E. B. Cullingford (1996) 'British Romans and Irish Carthaginians: anticolonial metaphor in Heaney, Friel, and McGuinness', *PMLA* 111, 222–39.
- N. de Buitelér (2007) 'Translating In? Brian Friel's *Translations* in Irish-language performance', *Platform 2.2 Receiving Reception*, 7–25 (online).
- E. F. DeHoratius (2001) 'A modern *Odyssey*: the intertextuality of Brian Friel's *Translations* and its classical sources', *IJCT* 7, 366–85.
- P. Delaney (ed.) (2000) *Brian Friel in Conversation*, Ann Arbor MI.
- E. Dench (2005) *Romulus' Asylum. Roman Identities from the Age of Alexander to the Age of Hadrian*, Oxford.

- J. Farrell (2001) *Latin Language and Latin Culture*, Cambridge.
- D. Feeney (2016) *Beyond Greek. The Beginnings of Latin Literature*, Cambridge MA.
- J. L. Ferriss-Hill (2011) 'Virgil's program of Sabellic etymologizing and the construction of Italic identity', *TAPA* 141, 265–84.
- K. F. B. Fletcher (2014) *Finding Italy: Travel, Nation, and Colonization in Vergil's Aeneid*, Ann Arbor MI.
- W. W. Fowler (1918²) *Virgil's 'Gathering of the Clans' Being Observations on Aeneid VII.601–817*, Oxford.
- B. Friel (1981, reset 2000) *Translations*, London.
- A. Gitner (2015) 'Varro *Aeolicus*: Latin's affiliation with Greek', in D. J. Butterfield (ed), *Varro Varius: The Polymath of the Roman World*, Cambridge, 33–50.
- E. Giusti (2018) *Carthage in Virgil's Aeneid: Staging the Enemy under Augustus*, Cambridge.
- N. Goldschmidt (2013) *Shaggy Crowns: Ennius' Annales and Virgil's Aeneid*, Oxford.
- E. Hall (1989) *Inventing the Barbarian*, Oxford.
- C. He (2010) 'The dilemma of colonial hybridity in Brian Friel's *Translations*', *Études irlandaises* 35.1 (online).
- S. Heaney (trans.) (2016) *Aeneid. Book VI*, London.
- G. van Heems (2012) 'Coexistence et concurrence entre les langues: de l'étrusque au latin', *Lingua latina* 8.
- S. Hinds (2011) 'Black-Sea Latin, Du Bellay, and the barbarian turn: *Tristia, Regrets, Translations*', in J. Ingleheart (ed), *Two Thousand Years of Solitude: Exile after Ovid*, Oxford, 59–83.
- N. Horsfall (2000) *Virgil, Aeneid 7: A Commentary*, Leiden.
- N. Horsfall (2008) *Virgil, Aeneid 2: A Commentary*, Leiden.
- R. Jenkyns (1998) *Virgil's Experience: Nature and History, Times, Names, and Places*, Oxford.
- W. R. Johnson (2001) 'Imaginary Romans: Vergil and the illusion of national identity', in S. Spence (ed), *Poets and Critics Read Vergil*, New Haven CT, 3–16.
- R. Kearney (1983) 'Language play: Brian Friel and Ireland's verbal theatre', *Studies: An Irish Quarterly Review* 72, 20–56.
- E. Longley (1985) 'Poetry and politics in Northern Ireland', *The Crane Bag* 9, 26–40.
- H. Mackie (1996) *Talking Trojan: Speech and Community in the Iliad*, New York.
- R. Mairs (2011) 'Translator, traditor: the interpreter as traitor in classical tradition', *G&R* 58, 64–81.
- R. Mairs (2018) 'The politics of classical translation', in F. Fernández & J. Evans (eds), *The Routledge Handbook of Translation and Politics*, 401–09.
- P. Maley (2011) 'Aeneas in Baile Beag: Friel's *Translations*, *The Aeneid*, and the humanism of the Field Day theatre company', *New Hibernia Review / Iris Éireannach Nua* 15.4, 111–26.
- J. Marincola (2010) 'Eros and empire: Virgil and the historians on civil war', in C. S. Kraus, J. Marincola & C. Pelling (eds), *Ancient Historiography and its Contexts*, Oxford, 183–204.
- S. McElduff (2011) 'Not as Virgil has it: rewriting the *Aeneid* in 18th-century Ireland', *IJCT* 18, 226–45.
- F. C. McGrath (1989) 'Irish Babel: Brian Friel's *Translations* and George Steiner's *After Babel*', *Comparative Drama* 23, 31–49.
- F. C. McGrath (1990) 'Brian Friel and the politics of the Anglo-Irish language', *Colby Quarterly* 26, 241–48.

- S. Monda (2011) 'The Coroebus episode in Virgil's *Aeneid*', *HSCP* 106, 199–208.
- R. F. Moorten (1989) 'The innocence of Italy in Vergil's *Aeneid*', *AJP* 110, 105–30.
- P. Muldoon (1994) *The Prince of the Quotidian*, Oldcastle.
- C. Murray (ed.) (1999a) *Brian Friel. Essays, Diaries, Interviews: 1964–1999*, London.
- C. Murray (1999b) 'Palimpsest: two languages as one in Brian Friel's *Translations*', *Hungarian Journal of English and American Studies* 5.1, 85–95.
- J. J. O'Hara (2017²) *True Names: Vergil and the Alexandrian Tradition of Etymological Wordplay*, Ann Arbor MI.
- L. O'Higgins (2017) *The Irish Classical Self: Poets and Poor Scholars in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries*, Oxford.
- G. Ó Tuathaigh (2015) *I mBéal an Bháis: The Great Famine and the Language Shift in Nineteenth-Century Ireland*, Cork.
- A. Parry (1963) 'The two voices of Virgil's *Aeneid*', *Arion* 2, 66–80.
- M. Paschalis (1997) *Virgil's Aeneid: Semantic Relations and Proper Names*, Oxford.
- B. Passaretti (2014) 'Classical languages and cultural memory in Brian Friel's *Translations*', *Lingue antiche e moderne* 3, 181–202.
- H. Paulouskaya (2017) 'Virgil travestied into Ukrainian and Belarusian', in P. Mack & J. North (eds), *The Afterlife of Virgil*, London, 101–22.
- A. J. Peacock (1993) 'Translating the past: Friel, Greece and Rome', in *idem* (ed), *The Achievements of Brian Friel*, Gerrards Cross, 113–33.
- L. Pilkington (1990) 'Language and politics in Brian Friel's *Translations*', *Irish University Review* 20, 282–98.
- R. J. Pogorzelski (2016) *Virgil and Joyce. Nationalism and Imperialism in the Aeneid and Ulysses*, Madison WI.
- J. Rau (2014) 'Italic Dialects', in R. F. Thomas & J. M. Ziolkowski (eds), *The Virgil Encyclopedia*, Cambridge MA, vol. 2, 680–81.
- J. D. Reed (2007) *Virgil's Gaze: Nation and Poetry in the Aeneid*, Princeton.
- J. D. Reed (2010) 'Vergil's Roman', in J. Farrell & M. C. J. Putnam (eds), *A Companion to Vergil's Aeneid and its Tradition*, 66–79.
- S. A. Ross (2005) 'Barbarophonos: language and panhellenism in the *Iliad*', *CPh* 100, 299–316.
- S. Ruden (trans.) (2008) *The Aeneid. Vergil*, New Haven CT.
- T. Saunders (2012) 'Classical antiquity in Brian Friel's *Translations*', *Nordic Irish Studies* 11, 133–51.
- D. Selden (2014) 'Apuleius and Afroasiatic poetics', in B. T. Lee, E. Finkelpearl & L. Graverini (eds), *Apuleius and Africa*, 205–70.
- G. Steiner (1975, 1992², 1998³) *After Babel: Aspects of Language and Translation*, Oxford.
- B. Stevens (2006–07) 'Aeolism: Latin as a dialect of Greek', *CJ* 102, 115–44.
- M. B. Sullivan (2014) 'Names', in R. F. Thomas & J. M. Ziolkowski (eds), *The Virgil Encyclopedia*, Cambridge MA, vol. 2, 877–81.
- R. Tarrant (2012) *Virgil. Aeneid Book XII*, Cambridge.
- R. F. Thomas (2004–05) 'Torn between Jupiter and Saturn: ideology, rhetoric and culture wars in the *Aeneid*', *CJ* 100, 121–47.

- K. Toll (1997) 'Making Roman-ness and the *Aeneid*', *CA* 16, 34–56.
- A. Wallace-Hadrill (2008) *Rome's Cultural Revolution*, Cambridge.
- D. West (trans.) (1990) *The Aeneid. A New Prose Translation*, London.
- A. Willi (2003) *The Language of Aristophanes. Aspects of Linguistic Variation in Classical Attic Greek*, Oxford.
- C. Wiotte-Franz (2001) *Hermeneus und Interpres: Zum Dolmetscherwesen in der Antike*, Saarbrücken.
- G. Woolf (1998) *Becoming Roman: The Origins of Provincial Civilization in Gaul*, Cambridge.
- J. E. G. Zetzel (2018) *Critics, Compilers, and Commentators: An Introduction to Roman Philology, 200 BCE–800 CE*, Oxford.
- J. E. G. Zetzel (2019) 'Rome and its traditions', in F. Mac Góráin and C. Martindale (eds), *The Cambridge Companion to Virgil*, Cambridge, 263–78.

From *deus absconditus* to Σωτήρ: Octavian in Virgil and early Augustan poetry

Revised from a paper given to the Virgil Society on 13 May 2017

The very earliest in the array of texts traditionally subsumed under the broad term Augustan poetry, Virgil's *Eclogue* 1, opens with a dialogue between two shepherds: Meliboeus, who finds himself forced to flee his homeland, and Tityrus, who is permitted to stay and thus go on doing what the writer of the poem also does – producing bucolic verse. How it has come about that he can stay while Meliboeus must go is explained by Tityrus as follows in ll. 6–10:

*O Meliboee, deus nobis haec otia fecit.
Namque erit ille mihi semper deus, illius aram
saepe tener nostris ab ovilibus imbuet agnus.
Ille meas errare boves, ut cernis, et ipsum
ludere quae vellem calamo permisit agresti.*

Then, right in the middle of the *Eclogue*, he describes his encounter in Rome with said benefactor (42–43):

*Hic illum vidi iuvenem, Meliboee, quotannis
bis senos cui nostra dies altaria fumant.*

Who, then, is this “youth” whom the bucolic poet Tityrus reverences as he would a god? Given that, when the figure's creator, the bucolic poet Virgil, was writing the proem to his second work (*Georgics*), around 29 BC, he chose to apostrophize as a god-to-be Caesar Octavian, who had been in his twenties when the *Eclogues* were composed,¹ Servius saw no reason to doubt

¹ I take them to have been published between 35 and 33 BC; for a discussion of dating criteria and theories, see Luther (2002).

in his commentary on Virgil that Tityrus' always-a-god-to-me *iuuenis* was the triumvir.² The majority of modern Virgilians are happy to accept this, but there are, of course, exceptions. Among the alternative candidates suggested, it is probably Asinius Pollio who, more than any other, merits serious consideration, he too being one of Virgil's patrons.³ However, his name appears at two quite prominent moments in the *Eclogues* – 3.84–88, then 4.12 – and is even mentioned three times in the first of those. Why, then, should we imagine that Virgil suppressed the name in the very first poem of the collection? Especially, moreover, as we have two other *Eclogues* in which the poet introduces a nameless figure – in 4 a boy and in 8 a laurel-crowned victor – and those, many have maintained, stand for Octavian. Virgil's *Eclogues* would then thrice feature an anonymous who can reasonably be identified as Octavian. That, in turn, seems all the more probable in the light of the following observations: Horace, as we shall see, avoids any explicit naming of the *imperator* in several of his poems, and Virgil, at one point in the *Aeneid* (1.286–90), famously leaves us in the dark as to whether the Caesar he mentions is the dictator himself or his adopted son. Furthermore, the other poets whose works have come down to us from the thirties and twenties of the first century B C, Horace, Tibullus and Propertius, can quite generally be said to display conspicuous hesitancy and restraint when talking about or even just alluding to Octavian.⁴ Thus he seems to be featured in early Augustan poetry as *deus absconditus* and only later, in poems composed after the *Aeneid*, expressly revered as Σωτήρ. I should like in the following to offer evidence that supports this but, for reasons of space, shall be confining myself to texts which predate the *Aeneid*.

The coming of the *puer*, it is said in *Ecl.* 4, will herald the beginning of a new Golden Age in 40 B C, the year of Pollio's consulship, and for the child himself await both the life of the gods and sway over a world to which his father's *virtutes* will have brought peace (7–17):

*Iam nova progenies caelo demittitur alto.
 Tu modo nascenti puero, quo ferrea primum
 desinet ac toto surget gens aurea mundo,
 casta fave Lucina; tuus iam regnat Apollo.
 Teque adeo decus hoc aevi, te consule, inibit,
 Pollio, et incipient magni procedere menses.
 Te duce, si qua manent sceleris vestigia nostri,
 irrita perpetua solvent formidine terras.*

² Servius, *ad loc.*

³ Cairns (2008).

⁴ This is also true of Livy, who probably wrote his first pentad in the mid-twenties of the century and who seems similarly reluctant to mention Augustus. The proper name only appears there twice (1.19.3; 4.20.7), then later just one more time (28.12.12), and the *Iulia gens* is referred to but once (1.3.2).

*Ille deum vitam accipiet divisque videbit
permixtos heroas et ipse videbitur illis
pacatumque reget patriis virtutibus orbem.*

Unsurprisingly, it is hard to keep track of the countless theories put forward regarding this puzzling divine *puer* predicted to rule the world, and I shall not be attempting here to discuss all the solutions ever championed and refuted. I am in any case quite convinced that there is only one person this could be: the divine being who, yet again, cannot be named, simply has to be Octavian once again (and the pacifier, of course, his adoptive father Caesar). The prophetic words are clearly placed in a 63-BC mouth, one speaking, then, in the year of Octavian's birth and anticipating the year 40 BC. For the first 45 verses of the poem we seem, at first reading, to be hearing Virgil himself looking into the future, but then, after the last sentence of the prophecy, we suddenly hear that the Fates told their spindles, *talia saecula ... currite* (46). Those sound like closing words, and so we now realise, on second reading, that, in ll. 4–45, the bucolic poet is retelling the Fates' song about the Golden Age for which the birth of the *puer* will pave the way, and which will come about once the latter has turned twenty-three.⁵

The bewreathed victor in *Ecl.* 8 is identified by a number of scholars as Octavian, and that for reasons which I also find irrefutable.⁶ Virgil asks him (7–8):

*en erit umquam
ille dies, mihi cum liceat tua dicere facta?*

This clearly echoes a very similar wish in *Ecl.* 4.54–55:

*O mihi tum longae maneat pars ultima vitae,
spiritus et quantum sat erit tua dicere facta.*

That too suggests that we can take both the boy and the *imperator* to be Octavian, mindful that Virgil, who quite consciously structured his life's work as a three-phase progression,⁷ declared his intention to tell of Caesar's heir and his deeds again in the *Georgics* – more about that presently – then brought the plan in his own particular way to fruition with his *Aeneid*.⁸

⁵ Binder (1983), also Snijder (2010), where Binder's hypothesis is further underpinned with new arguments.

⁶ See esp. Mankin (1988) and, for the oft-disputed verses 9–10, Köhnken (1984).

⁷ Putnam (2010) 19.

⁸ One further indication that Octavian is the addressee in *Ecl.* 8.6–13: *a te principium; tibi desinam* in l. 11. Virgil is "quoting" Theocr. 17.1 there – Ἐκ Διὸς ἀρχώμεσθα καὶ ἐς Δία λήγεται, Μοῖσαι – and Zeus, of course, is sometimes, e.g. for Horace, the heavenly being that corresponds to the earthly emperor Augustus (see below on C. 1.12.49–52). Theocr. 17, moreover, addresses Ptolemy II Philadelphus, whose relations with the Hellenistic poet were not unlike those between Virgil and Octavian / Augustus (suggested to me by Regina Höschle).

Quite soon after Virgil's *Eclogues* had come out, Horace published his first book of *Satires*. The poems are dedicated to Maecenas, with Octavian mentioned only once, and even then more or less casually (*Sat.* 1.3.4). At one point, moreover, it is clear that his name is left out deliberately: in *Sat.* 1.5, the *Iter Brundisinum*. There, in ll. 27–33, Horace talks about his stay in Anxur, remarking:

*Huc venturus erat Maecenas optimus atque
Cocceius, missi magnis de rebus uterque
legati, aversos soliti componere amicos.
Hic oculis ego nigra meis collyria lippus
illinere. Interea Maecenas advenit atque
Cocceius Capitoque simul Fonteius, ad unguem
factus homo, Antoni, non ut magis alter, amicus.*

In connection, then, with the meeting arranged for Octavian and M. Antonius, at which Maecenas and the other men specified here were supposed to mediate between the two, only Antonius is mentioned by name, while Octavian is kept anonymous, concealed among the *amicos* (27).⁹ And the poet can quite literally close his eyes to this politically charged situation, forced as he is to cover them with ointment.¹⁰

Even after the Battle of Actium, fought on 2 September 31 BC, and the surrender of Alexandria twelve months later, one Roman poet can still be seen to avoid the mention of the victor's name: Tibullus, the first book of whose elegies must now, in the light of Peter Knox's findings, be dated to the year 29 / 28 BC rather than the hitherto generally accepted 27 / 26.¹¹ In elegy 1.7, the poet addresses his patron Messalla, and speaks not only of the awaited triumph granted the latter by Octavian – the occasion was Messalla's victory over the Aquitanian Gauls, which Knox dates with convincing arguments to 30 BC, although the actual procession was not to take place until 25 September 27 – but also, before that section, of “new triumphs” already celebrated (5–8):

*novos pubes Romana triumphos
vidit et evinctos brachia capta duces:*

⁹ For Luke Houghton, “there is surely humour in Horace's repeated frustration of the reader's expectation that he will name Octavian immediately after Maecenas. Lines 27 and 31 both end *Maecenas ... atque*, setting up the expectation of Octavian at the start of the following line, but once the suspense of the line-ending is resolved, on both occasions the name is revealed to be (the rather less exalted) Cocceius” (*per litteras*).

¹⁰ Oliensis (1998) 28.

¹¹ See Knox (2005).

*ac te victrices laurus, Messalla, gerentem
portabit niveis currus eburnus equis.*¹²

These previous *triumphi* can only be Octavian's three successive victory parades of 13, 14, and 15 August 29 B.C. And just as the *imperator's* name is not used here, it is also missing in Tibullus 1.10.67–68, verses which probably allude to the closing of the temple of Janus in 29 B.C.:¹³

*At nobis, Pax alma, veni spicamque teneto,
profluat et pomis candidus ante sinus.*

In contrast to Tibullus, Horace explicitly styles Octavian the victor after Actium: in *Epod.* 9, which he published about 29 B.C., he relives the situation that found him and Maecenas, both apparently eye-witnesses to the naval battle, standing on board one of the ships directly involved in the action, and waiting anxiously for the outcome. The epode begins with a question (1–4):

*Quando repostum Caecubum ad festas dapes
victore laetus Caesare
tecum sub alta – sic Iovi gratum – domo,
beate Maecenas, bibam ...?*

Three or four years later, Horace offers his own answer to this in his famous Ode 1.37, a poem which was written in 26 / 25 B.C.,¹⁴ but is set in the year 30 B.C., with the poet passing in review Rome's political situation after the death in August of Cleopatra, and calling for a celebration (1–5):

*Nunc est bibendum, nunc pede libero
pulsanda tellus, nunc Saliaribus
ornare pulvinar deorum
tempus erat dapibus, sodales.*

antehac nefas depromere Caecubum ...

¹² Knox makes a compelling case for reading *ac* for *at* in l. 7 and *portabit* for *portabat* in l. 8. The triumphs celebrated by Octavian and Messalla are, as Tibullus writes (very obviously echoing Virgil's fourth *Eclogue*), said to have been prophesied by the Parcae; that too can be seen to signal that the *puer* is meant to be Caesar's heir.

¹³ Cairns (1999) 230.

¹⁴ Hutchinson (2002).

Not long before the *Epodes* were published, Octavian had appeared as *victor* at the end of Virgil's *Georgics* (4.559–62):

*Haec super arborum cultu pecorumque canebam
et super arboribus, Caesar dum magnus ad altum
fulminat Euphraten bello victorque volentes
per populos dat iura viamque affectat Olympo.*

It is likely that Horace is taking up that theme in *C.* 1.37. I would argue that the poet who had sung the praises in *Ecl.* 8 of the triumphant but not-to-be-named *imperator* now provides his friend with, so to speak, a licence to use the name in a similar context.

At the beginning of his didactic poem, Virgil ends his twelve-god address by introducing Octavian as a thirteenth divinity (*Geo.* 1.24–25):

*Tuque adeo, quem mox quae sint habitura deorum
concilia incertum est, ... Caesar ...*

When Virgil then goes on to list the jurisdictions from which the *imperator* will be able to choose once immortalised – the lands or the seas or, by becoming a new sign of the zodiac, the heavens (25–39) – his thoughts must be taken as a continuation of *Ecl.* 4.15 and its mention of the *deum vita* in store for the *puer*. Coming to the end of the apostrophe, Virgil asks Octavian for his support with the work now undertaken, for the kind of assistance, that is, conventionally granted *e.g.* by a Muse (40: *da facilem cursum atque audacibus adnue coeptis*). Livy is possibly alluding to this at the end of his *praefatio*, when he writes: *cum bonis potius ominibus votisque et precationibus deorum dearumque, si, ut poetis, nobis quoque mos esset, libentius inciperemus, ut orsis tantum operis successus prosperos darent*. He is, it seems, all but saying that he is emphatically not addressing himself to Octavian / Augustus.

The end of *Geo.* 1 sees Virgil urgently entreating the gods that the *imperator* be in a position to intervene. Although the work was published after Actium, the poet is still afraid here that the civil war may not be over yet (498–501):

*Di patrii Indigetes et Romule Vestaque mater,
quae Tuscum Tiberim et Romana Palatia servas,
hunc saltem everso iuvenem succurrere saeclo
ne prohibete.*

Readers who, like me, believe Octavian to be the *iuuenis* of *Ecl.* 1.42 may rightly feel some self-satisfaction at finding the *imperator* labelled a *iuuenis* here, and will possibly even allow themselves their own little triumph when, as we shall see below, Virgil talks of Augustus at one point in the *Aeneid* as a *vir*. Clearly the sequence “one-time *puer* turned *iuuenis* in the *Eclogues* – *iuuenis* in the *Georgics* – *vir* in the *Aeneid*” represents the three-phase rise from bucolic verse through didactic poetry to epic.¹⁵

Right in the middle¹⁶ of this triad – it is famously included in Virgil’s epitaph¹⁷ as the succinct *pascua rura duces* – the poet declares, at the beginning of *Geo.* 3, that he is going to present a work about Octavian’s deeds, albeit announcing this not explicitly, but allegorically: he plans, he says, to erect a temple on the banks of the Mincius, the river that flows through his own native Mantua (13), and in it the *imperator* is to be enthroned (16), with the great doors showing battles and Roman heroism (26–27). The consensus of opinion (or something very close to it) is that the allegory, as it were, prefigures the poet’s *Aeneid*, and there is indeed one very persuasive argument in support of that – the programmatic pictorials for the temple, Virgil says, will depict more than battles and victories (34–36):

*Stabunt et Parii lapides, spirantia signa,
Assaraci proles demissaeque ab Iove gentis
nomina, Trosque parens et Troiae Cynthius¹⁸ auctor.*

If Virgil is alluding here to the Trojan epic he plans yet to write, he does not explicitly say as much, and that would be an omission rather reminiscent of the youth-boy-*imperator* guessing game created for readers in *Eclogues* 1, 4, and 8.

While Virgil is announcing allegorically his intended glorification of Augustus’ deeds, Horace, in turn, is being asked by the lawyer Trebatius to write a work devoted to the same subject, a suggestion, or rather challenge, voiced at the beginning of the first poem in *Satires* 2, which was published after the Battle of Actium. Horace, however, declines (10–20):

‘... aude
Caesaris invicti res dicere, multa laborum
praemia laturus.’ Cupidum, pater optime, vires
deficiunt. Neque enim quivis horrentia pilis

¹⁵ See Farrell (2002) and Putnam (2010) on this threefold progression. In the second book of *Epistles*, Horace addresses himself in three stages to the *vir* Augustus, the *iuuenis* Florus, and the *pueri* of Calpurnius Piso (see Holzberg, 2009).

¹⁶ See Kyriakidis & De Martino (2004) on the significance of work and book middles for various Roman poets.

¹⁷ See now Kahane (2017).

¹⁸ Just as Apollo appears here in connection with Octavian, so too is he associated with the *puer* in *Ecl.* 4.17.

*agmina nec fracta pereuntis cuspidē Gallos
aut labentis equo describit volnera Parthi.
'Attamen et iustum poteras et scribere fortem,
Scipiadam ut sapiens Lucilius.' 'Haud mihi dero,
cum res ipsa feret: nisi dextro tempore Flacci
verba per attentam non ibunt Caesaris aurem,
cui male si palpere, recalcitrat undique tutus.'*

This helps us to understand why the poets so obviously held back when the *imperator* was in play: he might, or so Horace worries, react less than graciously, indeed almost violently, to overly direct tributes inopportunistically paid. Thus Horace confines himself in his second book of *Satires* to merely using Octavian's expected defeat of the Parthians as the vague future date with which Tiresias opens his prophecy in 5.62–64:

*'Tempore quo iuvenis Parthis horrendus, ab alto
demissum genus Aenea, tellure marique
magnus erit ...'*

Once again the *imperator* remains unnamed, referred to instead as *iuvenis*, as he quite certainly is in Virgil's *Geo.* 1.500 and very probably also in *Ecl.* 1.42.

In declining to eulogize Octavian's deeds, Horace is bringing into play the Callimachean motif of *recusatio*,¹⁹ and Propertius, who in his first book of elegies – it was published soon after Actium – only mentions the *imperator* once (in 21.7),²⁰ follows Horace's precedent at the beginning of his second *liber*, which dates from around 24 B.C. There, in 1.17–18, 25, 39–42, Propertius says to Maecenas:

*Quod mihi si tantum, Maecenas, fata dedissent,
ut possem heroas ducere in arma manus ...
bellaque resque tui memorarem Caesaris ...
Sed neque Phlegraeos Iovis Enceladique tumultus
intonet angusto pectore Callimachus,
nec mea conveniunt duro praecordia versu
Caesaris in Phrygios condere nomen avos.*

¹⁹ Wimmel (1960), still the most thorough study of this motif.

²⁰ The poet does complain in elegies 1.21 and 22 about the consequences of the *bellum Perusinum* (fought in the winter of 41 / 40 B.C.), but it is impossible to determine whether he sided with Octavian or with L. Antonius, or whether he actually took any side at all.

On 13 January 27 BC, not long before the publication of Propertius' book 2, Octavian formally declared the civil wars over, had himself charged by the Senate with the duties of a *princeps* and, three day later, accepted the honour of the title Augustus. However, while peace reigned at home, Rome was still under threat from foreign nations, and so, in the second poem of *Odes* 1, published only shortly after 13 January 27 BC,²¹ Horace wonders which god the Roman people can appeal to for help with their "collapsing" empire, considers several immortals, then finally comes down in favour of Mercury. He combines this pondering with a variant of the "mystery identity" guessing game: this time, we are presented with a "real" *deus absconditus*, the suggestion being that the son of Maia should come down to earth disguised as Augustus – naturally again a youthful one, since the messenger of the gods is himself a *iuuenis*. And here we have the only passage in books 1–3 of the *Odes* where Horace addresses the *princeps* directly, or rather, as we may reasonably conclude from the poet's previous restraint in the face of Octavian, *dares* to address him (41–52):

*sive mutata iuvenem figura
ales in terris imitaris, almae
filius Maiae, patiens vocari
Caesaris ultor,*

*serus in caelum redeas diuque
laetus intersis populo Quirini,
neve te nostris vitiis iniquum
ocior aura*

*tollat. Hic magnos potius triumphos,
hic ames dici pater atque princeps,
neu sinas Medos equitare inultos
te duce, Caesar.*

It seems to me characteristic of Horace's so often very subtle Callimachean *lusus* that, in a certain sense, he has his readers play the guessing game again in a later poem, hiding Augustus there too. In *C.* 2.7,²² we are briefly left to wonder who it was who pardoned Horace's friend Pompeius almost twenty years after he had fought at Philippi on Brutus' side (1–5):

²¹ Hutchinson (2002).

²² On this poem see Moles (1987).

*O saepe mecum tempus in ultimum
deducte Bruto militiae duce,
quis te redonavit Quiritem
dis patriis Italoque caelo,*

Pompei, meorum prime sodalium ...?

Caesar's renowned *clementia* was exercised in this case by his adopted heir, of course, and that is implied in the style of these lines, where the back (dark) vowel *u* in the two verses which refer to Philippi and Brutus is superseded by the front (bright) *i* in ll. 3–4. One beneficiary of this *clementia* was Horace quite soon after Philippi, and he represents that in ll. 13–14 as a Homeric tableau, the hero – even if Horace the ῥήψασπις was himself more of an anti-hero – being snatched to safety in the midst of battle by a god:

*me per hostis Mercurius celer
denso paventem sustulit aere ...*

And why does the poet pick Mercury as his “rescue god” although Homer assigns the latter no such σωτήρ role? Not only because this divinity is Horace's guardian-in-the-sky, but also because he has already been asked in *C.* 1.2 to intervene and come to the rescue in the guise of Augustus.²³

Gradually, then, the Augustan poets see the *iuvenis* who, as already visible in *Ecl.* 1.42, embodies the element of *iuvare* (the accepted etymology of *iuvenis* at the time),²⁴ as a helper, in the sense of “saviour”, and thus a god revered as such. To that end the youth must naturally become a *vir* now, and Horace therefore has to ask at the beginning of *C.* 1.12, with a lofty Pindaric touch:

*Quem virum aut heroa lyra vel acri
tibia sumis celebrare, Clio?
quem deum?*

This poem consists of fifteen stanzas structured as five triads. The first triad (1–12), in which the poet expands the question he has begun to ask the Muse in l. 1, is followed by a triad on

²³ First noted in Zgoll (2004) 191.

²⁴ On this see most recently Bing (2016), who uses the popular etymological explanation *iuvenis* / *iuvare* to argue persuasively that Virgil's helper *deus* in *Ecl.* 1 is an allusion to Lucretius' representation of Epicurus, whose name means “helper”, as “divine”.

Jupiter and four other gods (13–24); the third and fourth stanza groups talk about various Greek and Roman heroes from Hercules to Julius Caesar (25–48), then, in the final triad (49–60), Horace tells us who the *vir* is: Augustus.²⁵ The first of the last three stanzas creates a direct connection between its addressee Jupiter and the *princeps* – as the god reigns on high, so Augustus on earth (49–52):

*Gentis humanae pater atque custos,
orte Saturno, tibi cura magni
Caesaris fatis data: tu secundo
Caesare regnes.*

Reversing the man-hero-god sequence seemingly established in ll. 1–3, the poet lets all lead up to the man and, at the end of the ode, places an entire triad of stanzas centred around him and only him. By thus associating him in one poetic breath with gods and heroes, Horace, like Ovid, pre-eminently steeped in Virgil, evokes ll. 15–17 of the fourth *Eclogue*. Indeed, I would even say that the entire *C. 1.12* can be read as a prodigious extension of Virgil's three verses (15–18):

*Ille deum vitam accipiet divisque videbit
permixtos heroas²⁶ et ipse videbitur illis
pacatumque reget patriis virtutibus orbem.*

If I am right here, then I and my reading of *puer* as Octavian are in sooth among goodly company.²⁷

Being, as it were, on the crest of a wave, I can also now point to what I see as the distinct possibility that Horace's *Quem virum aut heroa* (*C. 1.12.1*) is alluded to by Virgil with his *Arma virumque cano* (*Aen. 1.1*). These three words open the long-awaited grand epic, and whoever heard or read them, as yet unaware of what the *Aeneid* held in store, was surely supposed to be instantly reminded both of the temple envisaged at the beginning of *Geo. 3* and of the three stanzas giving prominence to a *vir* in Horace's ode – associations which would

²⁵ Still essential reading on the ode: Schmidt (1984).

²⁶ See also *Ecl. 4.26 heroum laudes*, there linked with *facta parentis* (suggested to me by Luke Houghton).

²⁷ Augustus is probably also the *vir iustus et tenax propositi* with whom Horace opens the third of the "Roman Odes" (3.3). Heinze already suspected as much in 1929 (= Heinze, 1972⁴, 200), and I would add that, after the *vir iustus et tenax propositi* characterisation, the poet implicitly predicts, in the third stanza, that the ruler will also join the ranks of bygone heroes such as Pollux and Hercules, etc. – here the reader is once more reminded of *divisque videbit permixtos heroas* – because he is a master of the same *ars* as them, and that here, for the first time in his work, Horace calls the *imperator* Augustus (l. 11). Janka (2000) tries to identify the *vir* with Virgil, but I find his arguments less than convincing.

lead readers to assume that the man Virgil now wanted to sing about was Augustus.²⁸ Even if the fourth word in the arms-and-the-man line, *Troiae*, does admittedly very soon betray that said *vir* is going to be Augustus' Trojan forefather, we do nevertheless find ourselves, a mere 256 verses later, reading the first of three glimpses into the future²⁹ that show us the *princeps*-to-come and his exceptional deeds. And here, at the very latest, we get it: Aeneas is meant to prefigure Augustus. Then, however, in ll. 286–96 of this prophecy from the mouth of Jupiter, we puzzle once more:

*Nascetur pulchra Troianus origine Caesar,
imperium Oceano, famam qui terminet astris,
Iulius, a magno demissum nomen Iulo.
Hunc tu olim caelo, spoliis Orientis onustum,
accipies securus; vocabitur hic quoque votis.
Aspera tum positis mitescent saecula bellis.
Cana Fides et Vesta, Remo cum fratre Quirinus
iura dabunt; dirae ferro et compagibus artis
claudentur Belli portae; Furor impius intus,
saeva sedens super arma, et centum vinctus aenis
post tergum nodis fremet horridus ore cruento.*

Which Caesar does Jupiter mean here? Those who, like myself, take it to be Augustus argue for one that ll. 291–96 clearly refer to the *princeps*'s closing of the temple of Janus in 29 B.C. But the *tum* in l. 291 could also point to a time *later* than the period alluded to in ll. 286–90, and everything that Jupiter says there is true both of the dictator and of his adopted son. Considering that scholars who specialise in Augustan literature still cannot agree which of the two men Virgil is talking about here,³⁰ we ought perhaps to deduce from the previous shrouding of Augustus' person we have seen above that Virgil deliberately leaves the question indeterminate. He very likely hopes that the puzzle will cause us to muster up the *res gestae* of both, especially as the younger *Caesar* picked up where the older one left off. After all, Virgil does say in l. 17 of the fourth *Eclogue* (which I make so bold as to cite one more time): the boy *pacatumque reget patriis virtutibus orbem*.

²⁸ The entire poem is virtually teeming with allusions that are often puzzlingly coded. The first and last letters of ll. 1–4, for example, can be read βουστροφῆδόν as the acrostich A STILO MAR V (Castelletti, 2012), while ll. 1–7 are made up of forty-eight words, exactly as many, that is, as there are in books in Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey* together (Lansing, 2008).

²⁹ The other two: 6.756–886 and 8.626–728.

³⁰ Most recently thrashed out by Zieske (2010).

In the second glimpse of the future offered in the *Aeneid*, the parade of heroes in the sixth book (756–846), Caesar and Augustus appear as two clearly differentiated figures. And now Anchises, the commentator during this parade in the Underworld of Rome’s future greats, uses words which make it sound as though he is about to offer the solution to the conundrum posed by *Ecl.* 1 with its *deus* and *iuuenis* and by *Ecl.* 4 with its *puer* (791–95):³¹

*Hic vir, hic est, tibi quem promitti saepius audis,
Augustus Caesar, divi genus, aurea condet
saecula qui rursus Latio regnata per arva
Saturno quondam, super et Garamantas et Indos
proferet imperium ...*

Back in 29 B C, Horace had bemoaned at the beginning of *Epod.* 16 the way in which the scourge of civil war was now affecting a second generation, all the more lamentable – as the allusion there to Virgil’s fourth *Eclogue* implies – because this was happening in spite of the *gens aurea* proclaimed around 35 B C in that same poem (l. 29):

*Altera iam teritur bellis civilibus aetas
suis et ipsa Roma viribus ruit ...*

Now, however, in the era predicted by Anchises (*i.e.* the late 20s B C), the *puer* has become a *vir* and the *aurea saecula* can finally begin. The double deictic *hic* used by Virgil in *Aen.* 6.791 signals – much like an epiphany-heralding *ecce* – that the Augustan poets are now no longer supposed to represent the *princeps* as they would a *deus absconditus*, but instead should eulogize him as Σωτήρ,³² *pater patriae*, and future god. Thus we find that, in the surviving Augustan poetry from the period after the publication of the *Aeneid*, panegyric predominates when mention is made of the *princeps*: in Horace’s case above all in the *Carmen saeculare* (17 B C) and in book 4 of the *Odes*³³ (11 / 10 B C), but also here and there in both books of the *Epistles* (19 / 18 and 11 / 10 B C); in Propertius it is evident in the fourth book of his elegies (shortly after 16 B C) and in Ovid at the end of the *Metamorphoses* (around AD 8), at more than a few points in the *Fasti* (also *circa* AD 8) and frequently in the exile poems (between

³¹ Luke Houghton *per litteras*: “Might not the reference to Augustus as *vir* in a context already evocative of the fourth *Eclogue* also hint at the fulfillment of the predication at Verg. *Ecl.* 4.37, *hinc, ubi iam fermata virum te fecerit aetas ...* ? (There is also *quae sit poteris cognoscere VIRtus* at *Ecl.* 4.27 and *pacatum reget patriis VIRtutibus orbem* at *Ecl.* 4.17, but these are perhaps less compelling).”

³² On Aeneas as the prefiguration of this role see Noonan (2007).

³³ In the twelfth of the poems there, Horace welcomes as guest from the Underworld his friend Virgil, calling him a *iuvenum nobilium cliens*, a subtle allusion to *Ecl.* 1.42.

AD 8 and 14). For the banished poet writing in Tomi and, in a moment of longing for Italy, as he expresses the wish that the world of Virgil's *Eclogues* could be moved to the far-off Black Sea where he must now live, Augustus has changed – forty years after the appearance of the earliest Augustan poetry – from an *otia*-securing, helping *deus* to a wrathful god willing merely to spare Ovid's life.³⁴ But that is another story.

University of Munich

NIKLAS HOLZBERG
(nc.holzberg@gmail.com)

³⁴ On the shift in meaning of the term *otia* in Ovid's exile poems, see Holzberg (2016). When the poet describes the fact that he is still alive as "a gift from the god" (*munus dei*, *Trist.* 1.1.20), he is quite evidently referring to Augustus and alluding at the same time to *Ecl.* 1.6 (*O Meliboee, deus nobis haec otia fecit*).

Bibliography

- G. Binder (1983) 'Lied der Parzen zur Geburt Octavians. Vergils vierte Ekloge', *Gymnasium* 90, 102–22.
- P. Bing (2016) 'Epicurus and the *iuuenis* at Virgil's *Eclogue* 1.42', *CQ* 66, 172–79.
- F. Cairns (1999) 'Tibullus, Messalla, and the *spica*', *Emerita* 67, 219–30.
- F. Cairns (2008) 'Asinius Pollio and the *Eclogues*', *CCJ* 54, 49–79.
- C. Castelletti, (2012) 'Following Aratus' Plow: Vergil's Signature in the *Aeneid*', *MH* 69, 83–95.
- J. Farrell (2002) 'Greek Lives and Roman Careers in the Classical *Vita* Tradition', in P. Cheney & F. A. de Amas (eds), *European Literary Careers: The Author from Antiquity to the Renaissance*, Toronto, 24–46.
- R. Heinze (1972⁴) 'Der Zyklus der Römeroden', in *idem*, *Vom Geist des Römertums. Ausgewählte Aufsätze*, ed. E. Burck, Darmstadt, 190–204.
- N. Holzberg (2009) 'Satire und Selbstreflexion in Horaz' zweitem Epistelbuch. Die großen Literaturbriefe – linear gelesen', in F. Felgentreu, F. Mundt & N. Rücker (eds), *Per attentam Caesaris aurem: Satire – die unpolitische Gattung? Eine internationale Tagung an der Freien Universität Berlin vom 7. bis 8. März 2008*, Tübingen, 116–30.
- N. Holzberg (2016) '*Non sum qui segnia ducam otia*: Muße und Musen in Ovids Exilelegien', in F. C. Eickhoff (ed), *Muße und Rekursivität in der antiken Briefliteratur. Mit einem Ausblick in andere Gattungen*, Tübingen, 163–76.
- G. O. Hutchinson (2002) 'The Publication and Individuality of Horace's *Odes* Books 1–3', *CQ* 52, 517–37, repr. in *idem*, *Talking Books. Readings in Hellenistic and Roman Books of Poetry*, 2008, Oxford, 131–68.
- M. Janka (2000) 'Horazens sogenannte Romulusode (c. 3,3) als *revocatio amici*? Vergil und die *lyra iocosa* des Musenpriesters Horaz', *Philologus* 144, 277–302.
- A. Kahane (2017) 'Virgil's Epitaph, Donatus' *Life*, Biography and the Structure of Time', *PVS* 29, 162–85.
- P. E. Knox (2005) 'Milestones in the Career of Tibullus', *CQ* 55, 204–16.
- A. Köhnken (1984) "'Sola ... tua carmina" (Virgil, *Ecl.* 8, 9 f.)', *WJA* 10, 77–90.
- S. Kyriakidis & F. De Martino (eds) (2004), *Middles in Latin Poetry*, Bari.
- R. H. Lansing (2008) 'Vergil's Homage to Homer in *Aeneid* 1.1–7', *Vergilius* 54, 3–8.
- A. Luther (2002) 'Historische Studien zu den *Bucolica* Vergils', Vienna.
- D. Mankin (1988) 'The Addressee of Virgil's Eighth *Eclogue*: A Reconsideration', *Hermes* 116, 63–76.
- J. L. Moles (1987) 'Politics, Philosophy, and Friendship in Horace, *Odes* 2,7', *QUCC* 25, 59–72; repr. in W. S. Anderson (ed), *Why Horace? A Collection of Interpretations*, 1999, Wauconda IL, 130–42.
- J. D. Noonan (2007) '*Sum pius Aeneas*: Aeneas and the Leader as *conservator* / σωτήρ', *CB* 83, 65–91.
- E. S. Oliensis (1998) *Horace and the Rhetoric of Authority*, Cambridge.

- M. C. J. Putnam (2010) 'Some Virgilian Unities', in P. R. Hardie & H. Moore (eds), *Classical Literary Careers and Their Reception*, Cambridge, 17–38.
- P. L. Schmidt (1984) 'Structure and Sources of Horace, *Ode* 1,12', in H. D. Evjen (ed), *Mnemei. Classical Studies in Memory of Karl K. Hulley*, Chico CA, 139–49.
- H. Snijder (2010) 'The Cosmology of Octavian's Divine Birth in Vergil's Fourth *Eclogue*', in C. Deroux (ed), *Studies in Latin Literature and Roman History*, Brussels, 178–95.
- W. Wimmel (1960) *Kallimachos in Rom. Die Nachfolge seines apologetischen Dichtens in der Augusteerzeit*, Wiesbaden.
- C. Zgoll (2004) *Phänomenologie der Metamorphose. Verwandlungen und Verwandtes in der augusteischen Dichtung*, Tübingen.
- L. Zieske (2010) 'Iulius Caesar in Vergils *Aeneis*: ein Beitrag zu Vergils dichterischer Haltung', *Gymnasium* 117, 129–40.

Who are the victims of Aeneas' human sacrifice?

Revised from a paper given to the Virgil Society on 12 May 2018

Twice in the *Aeneid*, the killing of Pallas by Turnus provokes an outburst of rage in Aeneas. The second time is at the very end of the poem, the sight of Pallas' *balteus* on the stricken Turnus, just as the latter's appeal for mercy is starting to move the Trojan hero. Abruptly reminded of his dead protégé, Aeneas invokes Pallas' name and plunges his sword into Turnus' body.

The first time is when news reaches Aeneas of Pallas' death at Turnus' hands (10.515–20):

*Pallas, Evander, in ipsis
omnia sunt oculis, mensae quas advena primas
tunc adiit, dextraeque datae. Sulmone creatos
quattuor hic iuvenes, totidem quos educat Ufens,
viventis rapit, inferias quos immolet umbris
captivoque rogi perfundat sanguine flammās.*

("Pallas, Evander, all was before his very eyes, the table which he had first then approached as a newcomer, and the right hands given [in pledge]. Four young men, sons of Sulmo, he seizes alive at this moment, [and] as many raised by Ufens, to sacrifice them as offerings to the shades and soak the flames of the pyre with prisoners' blood").¹

It is a profoundly disconcerting moment in the epic. On the one hand, Aeneas is motivated by the most commendable of principles, his debt to the hospitable Greeks who had welcomed him to the site of Rome, as they had earlier welcomed Hercules (*per patris hospitium et mensas quas advena adisti*; "by my father's hospitality, and the table you approached as a newcomer", 10.460). But his selection of live humans for sacrifice is as shocking to us as it would have

¹ All translations are my own.

been to Romans, who believed, fondly no doubt, that human sacrifice was something their barbarian enemies indulged in, never Romans (Livy 22.57.6).² It follows that the implication in *immolat* (12.949), Aeneas' word, that his slaying of Turnus is a sacrifice, introduces a comparable disquiet to that culminating moment in the poem.

This short article will draw out the implications of a detail of the passage in book 10 that is typically underemphasised, the names that Virgil provides for the progenitors of the sacrificed *iuvenes*, Sulmo and Ufens. The greater degree of identification represented by these names marks an important departure from Virgil's model in the *Iliad*. When Achilles takes Trojan prisoners for sacrifice (*Il.* 21.26–33), and then slaughters them at Patroclus' funeral (23.175–83), the victims are identified only as “twelve fine sons of great-souled Trojans” (23.175, 181) and “twelve youths” (21.27), and while Homer allows himself a rare, explicit note of condemnation of Achilles' action (“bad were the deeds he planned in his mind”, 23.176), the naming of the captives' fathers in Virgil is a personal detail bound to sharpen the transgressive character of Aeneas' behaviour. But the simple fact of naming is not the limit of Virgil's bold innovation here. The focus of this article will be the specific names that Virgil chooses to associate with Aeneas' sacrifice, which will prove to be remarkably provocative in their own right.

Sulmo, one of the major population centres of the Paeligni in central Italy, is best known as the home town of Ovid, and, as the early life of that poet illustrates, with his faltering steps towards a political career in Rome, Sulmo and its elite were by the time of Augustus an integral part of the Roman state. It had not always been so, and some explanation of a character named Sulmo's role in the *Aeneid* (he features only here and when he is killed by Nisus at 9.410–15) is to be found in Virgil's persistent evocation of recent conflict within the Italian peninsula in his own Italian war. Sulmo, and the Paeligni in general, had been among the rebels in the Social War: the cause of their *libertas* “had driven” the Paeligni “to honorable arms”, in Ovid's words, “when anxious Rome feared its allied bands” (*Am.* 3.15.8–10). But we also have a rather obscure notice in Florus' epitome, recording Sulla's revenge on Sulmo after his recapture of Rome in 82 B.C. Florus' turn of phrase, which may reflect an authoritative account of these historical events that lies behind Livy, is in the circumstances quite suggestive (2.8.27–28):³

Possis singulorum hominum ferre poenas: municipia Italiae splendidissima sub hasta venierunt, Spoletium, Interamnium, Praeneste, Florentia. Nam Sulmonem, vetus oppidum socium atque amicum – facinus indignum – non expugnat aut obsidet iure belli; sed quo modo morte damnati duci iubentur, sic damnatam civitatem iussit Sulla deleri.

² S. Farron, ‘Aeneas' human sacrifice’, *AClass* 28 (1985), 21–33, offers ample evidence of Greek and Roman aversion to the sacrifice of humans.

³ My thanks to Ed Bispham for this parallel.

“One could endure the punishment of individuals, [but] the most renowned towns of Italy were put up for auction – Spoletium, Interamnium, Praeneste, Florentia. As for Sulmo, an allied and friendly town of long standing, Sulla, instead of storming or besieging it according to the rules of warfare, committed an act of base injustice in condemning the city and ordering its destruction, even as those who are condemned to death are ordered to be led to execution”).

Whether or not Aeneas’ treatment of the sons of Sulmo directly echoes a Roman dictator’s alleged treatment of the people of Sulmo, this passage seems to represent at least as compelling a point of reference as one favoured by some scholars since Heinze. That is the report of human sacrifice undertaken by Octavian after the capture of Perugia in 40 BC, that Suetonius (*Aug.* 15) and Dio (48.14.4; cf. *Sen. Clem.* 1.11.1 on the *Perusinae arae*) record, without directly endorsing it.⁴

Sulmo represents a place implicated in intra-Italian conflict in previous generations, yet by Augustus’ day fully integrated into the Roman polity. Had Ovid pursued the senatorial career that his father had in mind for him, he would have been the first Paelignian member of the Roman Senate. It is paradoxical that violence of such terrifying barbarity in the *Aeneid* is associated with a salient instance, Augustan Sulmo, of successful integration. But here and in the closing scene of the poem, and indeed in the persistent presence of Hercules, a god who embodies both violence and a unifying presence within Italy,⁵ as a precedent for Aeneas, “the incomprehensible currents of violence for order ... are at the heart of the poem and its empire”.⁶

The name of the other father, Ufens, carries that paradox to a higher level still. *Ufens* denotes in the *Aeneid* both a river in southern Latium, mentioned in relation to Turnus’ forces from Latium (7.802), and a warrior from Nersa in the central Apennines who commands a contingent of rugged Aequiculi (7.744–49) and is one of Turnus’ closest lieutenants, a *ductor primus* alongside Messapus and Mezentius (8.6; cf. 12.641–42). Ufens survives his sons (Sulmo had predeceased his) but dies at the hands of the Trojan Gyas at 12.460. A perceptive comment of Servius (*ad* 8.6) identifies Messapus and Ufens as complementary figures, the former, son of Neptune, an expert in horses, and Ufens, the mountaineer, a *pedes egregius* (“excellent footsoldier”).

But on the reasonably secure assumption that one “Ufens” unavoidably evokes the other, this name could hardly be more intrinsically Roman. The *tribus Oufentina* was established

⁴ R. Heinze, *Virgils epische Technik*, 1915³, Leipzig, 210–11, n.2; Farron (n.2, above), 26–28; S. J. Harrison, *Vergil, Aeneid 10*, 1991, Oxford, *ad loc.* and 304 for the unconvinced.

⁵ Ll. Morgan, ‘A yoke connecting baskets: *Odes* 3.14, Hercules, and Italian unity’, *CQ* 55 (2005), 190–203.

⁶ D. C. Feeney, *The Gods in Epic*, 1991, Oxford, 150.

in 318 BC (Livy 9.20.6) and was one of the thirty-five voting tribes of Rome, created for Roman settlers at Terracina and in the Privernum area and named after the local river, later admitting citizens from further afield.⁷ Festus (212 L), following the Augustan antiquarian Verrius Flaccus, gives a slightly distorted account of the tribe's establishment, and quotes the satirist C. Lucilius:⁸

Oufentinae tribus initio causa fuit nomen fluminis Ofens, quod est in agro Privernate mare intra et Terracinam. Lucilius [1133 W]: 'Priverno Oufentina venit fluvioque Ofenté. Postea deinde a censoribus alii quoque diversarum civitatum eidem tribui sunt adscripti.

("The explanation of the Oufentine tribe was in the first place the river-name Ofens, which is in the territory of Privernum between the sea and Terracina. Lucilius: 'from Privernum comes the Oufentina and from the river Ofens.' Afterwards others of different communities were also allocated by the censors to the same tribe").

A fascinating study of an early first-century BC epitaph of a member of the Oufentina tribe, found near Cartagena (Carthago Nova) in Spain, identifies one [?F]avonius Rufus as a Roman expatriate in Hispania Citerior (no doubt involved in the silver mining for which the area was celebrated), on the basis that "in general there were few communities that were registered in the Oufentina, most of them from Latium and none from outside Italy".⁹ (The Favonii were native to Terracina). When Aeneas sacrifices the sons of Ufens, in other words, Virgil deploys a name expressive of Roman citizenship itself.

The names Sulmo and Ufens carry implications both unavoidable and acutely challenging to a Roman reader of this national epic. Not only is the hero indulging in barbaric ritual practice, but in the process the founder of Rome is apparently attacking the very fabric of Rome. These names evoke elements integral to the Augustan polity, and in the case of Ufens a fundamental component of the *populus Romanus*, one of the voting tribes. In the event, the victims are not personally sacrificed by Aeneas, though his responsibility for their death is clear (11.81–82), but one implication of their dispatch along with Pallas' body is that their death will take place on the very site of Rome.¹⁰ It is well appreciated that Aeneas' conflict in Italy,

⁷ H. Mouritsen, 'The *civitas sine suffragio*: ancient concepts and modern ideology', *Historia* 56 (2007), 141–58, at 144.

⁸ The fragment of Lucilius originates in a satire, celebrated in antiquity, in which he had assailed the Roman people "tribe by tribe" (Hor. *Serm.* 2.1.69–71) – the explanation of the scholiast to Persius at Persius 1.114, *secuit Lucilius urbem*, is "because he tore to pieces the thirty-five tribes that constitute the city as a whole".

⁹ B. Díaz Ariño & J. A. Antolinos Marín, 'Una inscripción funeraria republicana procedente de Los Beatos (Cartagena, Murcia)', *ZPE* 179 (2011), 291–294, at 293.

¹⁰ My thanks to Daniel Hadas for this observation.

between communities that will after its conclusion combine to create Rome, has much of the character of a civil war, albeit in mirror image. But how uncompromisingly Aeneas himself is implicated in the moral crisis of civil war, *continua per viginti annos discordia, non mos, non ius* (“unbroken conflict for twenty years, no custom, no law”, Tac. *Ann.* 3.28), perhaps needs underscoring. Aeneas is not only sacrificing human beings, but (fellow-)Romans. This is not, furthermore, some oblique hint of the costs of Empire, nor a subtle further voice. Virgil could hardly have communicated this morally reprehensible dimension of Aeneas’ mission more emphatically (though we must never lose sight of his praiseworthy motivation – Virgil relishes the paradox, it seems).

To return to where we started, while we may be inclined to treat Aeneas’ inordinate violence after the death of Pallas as an isolated aberration occasioned by intense grief, this passage is intimately related to the final scene of the *Aeneid*: it is with Aeneas’ grief and guilt in respect of Pallas, and the transgressive violence it once again provokes in the hero, that Virgil also chooses to end his poem. The ambiguity of Evander’s words at 11.172, *magna tropaea ferunt quos dat tua dextera leto* (“great are the trophies those men bring whom your hand puts to death”), even hints at Pallas’ agency in the deaths of the young men. Who exactly it is that Evander at his son’s funeral is describing as dying by Pallas’ right hand is unclear: either Pallas’ victims in battle, or rather the young men that we have been concerned with, part of the cortège that had accompanied Pallas’ body. If we countenance the latter possibility, there is an implication comparable (even down to the sacral language of *dare leto*) to Aeneas’ claim as he deals a fatal blow to Turnus (12.948–49): *Pallas te hoc vulnere, Pallas / immolat* (“It is Pallas, Pallas who sacrifices you with this blow”).

At the end of the *Aeneid*, as in these scenes of sacrifice (or preparation therefor), the high piety with which the hero fulfils his obligations to Evander and his son coexists with the extreme impiety, a sacrifice of humans (combined in Turnus’ case with a rejection of a suppliant’s plea for mercy), with which he kills.

Brasenose College, Oxford

LLEWELYN MORGAN
(llewelyn.morgan@bnc.ox.ac.uk)

The dress of Venus in *Aeneid* 1.314–417

*Revised from a paper given to the Virgil Society on 1 December 2018**

While exploring the *silva* around Carthage, Aeneas encounters his divine mother under the appearance of a virgin huntress (*Aen.* 1.314–417). A survey of the bimillenary reception of the scene, from the early imperial period down to the present day, shows a persistent disquiet about it.¹ This disquiet – mainly caused by the fact that Aeneas, in the woods, meets a beautiful maiden who is actually his mother – is particularly clear when readers deal with passages concerning the dress of Venus (and more broadly her physical features). Here I will take under scrutiny the interpretive responses given to both the description of Venus' disguise (in particular 320, *nuda genu nodoque sinus collecta fluentis*) and to the mention of her dress in the end of the episode (*pedes vestis defluxit ad imos*, 404). Often, as we shall see, interpreters tend to add erotic details that are absent from the narrative, and to enhance the idea of nudity, imagining Venus as topless in her false appearance, and even as completely naked in her final revelation.

From the earliest interpretations, Venus' girt-up dress (*nodoque sinus collecta fluentis*), the nudity of her knee (*nuda genu*) and the mention of her calves (*purpureoque alte suras vincire coturno*, 337) have acted powerfully on readers' imagination. Already the late-antique commentator Tiberius Claudius Donatus underlines the sexual appeal of the disguise:

Nam cum se ei obtulisset media in silva composita ad fallendum femina, sub virginis habitu et forma quasi venatrix, motus in libidinem non est, cui dabant omnia audendi facultatem, locus, virginitas, pulchritudo, vestitus ... Ecce quanta inritamenta libidinis Aenean non moverunt: nam fuit pulchra, bene vestita, capillis diffusis et genu nuda.

Through the centuries, these details are often insisted upon and even expanded. Renaissance commentators, for example, are obsessed by Venus' boots. They seem particularly interested in

* I wish to thank all the participants in the Virgil Society meeting and the editor for their suggestions.

¹ The survey is conducted in detail in Starnone (2020), of which this text summarises a section.

determining the meaning of the adverb *alte* in 337,² and, consequently, the amount of naked leg on display. For the Italian Corradus (the author of a commentary on the first book of the *Aeneid*, published in 1555), for example, *alte* means “up to the knees, but in such a way that the knees themselves were bare”: *usque ad genua, ita tamen ut genua ipsa essent nuda*. The French Turnebus (*Adv.* 28.16, end of the 16th century) assures us that the virgin’s *coturni* were sufficiently high so as to cover her naked legs: *cum usque ad genua esset sublata vestis, ideo altos gerebat cothurnos, ne cruribus nudis cerneretur*. Even when the interpreters are eager to see the virgin huntress as a masculine, severe, and chaste figure, her attire does not cease to bother them. For Christian Gottlob Heyne, the adjective *Spartana*, with which Venus in disguise is introduced (1.316), may evoke lustful images of Spartan maidens exercising naked in the *palaestra*,³ and thus it may induce the reader to imagine also *this* virgin as completely naked:

*De Spartanarum puellarum exercitatione, quam huc vocant interpretes, palaestrica nota res. Enimvero tum nudaerant, ut tot loca docere possunt ... In nostro autem poeta vestitae illae sunt et arcu pharetraque instructae. Itaque ad communem potius puellarum Lacaenarum habitum erit referendum, cum militaria opera tractarent, atque ideo brevibus tunicis, iisque ad femur usque dissutis, uterentur, ut nudum femur in incessu appareret.*⁴

But let us turn to *Aen.* 1.320, *nuda genu nodoque sinus collecta fluentis*. Apparently, in order to disguise herself, Venus has modified her dress. Virgil says that she has her knees bare (*nuda genu*), having collected (*collecta*) the flowing folds [of her robe] (*sinus fluentis*) in a knot (*nodo*). As is well known, this line is indebted to a passage from a hymn to Diana attributed to the late Republican poet Laevius (fr. 32.1 Bläns. = 12a.1 Court): *balteus et revocet volucres in pectore sinus*.⁵ Diana’s *volucres sinus*, hitched back upon the chest by a *balteus*, become Venus’ *sinus fluentis*, gathered in a knot. In addition, among the possible literary echoes in Virgil’s passage, there is Catullus’ description of Ariadne undressed by the waves (64.63–69):

*Non flavo retinens subtilem vertice mitram,
non contacta levi velatum pectus amictu,
non tereti strophio lactentis vincta papillas,*

² Famously, 337 recalls the description of a marble statue of Diana in the *Eclogues* (*levi de marmore tota / puniceo stabis suras evincta coturno*, 7.31–32): Venus aims to look like her divine opposite, often represented with tucked up robe, naked knees, high buskins. See Austin (1971) *ad Aen.* 1.320.

³ On the basis of Prop. 3.14, often quoted by early-modern commentators along with Eur. *Andr.* 595–601, where the old Peleus complains about the debauchery of the Spartan women.

⁴ Heyne (1767–75) *ad loc.* See also Forbiger (1837) *ad loc.*: *Male autem interpretes quidam haec ad Spartanarum puellarum exercitationem palaesticam referunt, in qua nudaerant conspiciebantur ... immo Wagner verissime docet comparationem cum puella Lacaena institutam ad arma tantum spectare.*

⁵ On the connections between this fragment and Virgil’s line see e.g. Courtney (1993) *ad loc.*

*omnia quae toto delapsa e corpore passim
 ipsius ante pedes fluctus salis alludebant.
 Sed neque tum mitrae neque tum fluitantis amictus
 illa vicem curans.*

Ariadne's *fluitantis amictus* may well have inspired Venus' *sinus fluentis*: Virgil would have transferred Catullus' literal image (Ariadne's clothes are actually floating in water) to a metaphorical level; and perhaps also Catullus' *non tereti strophio lactentis vincita papillas* has left a vague trace on the Virgilian *nodoque sinus collecta fluentis*. In short, Virgil seems to have alluded to Laevius' hymn through Catullus' description of Ariadne, blending the fluttering folds of Diana's robe with Ariadne's dress fluctuating in water and – possibly – the memory of her naked breasts.

However, even though Virgil insists on the body of Venus throughout the episode, the only explicit allusion to nudity is the expression *nuda genu*.⁶ Nevertheless, the repetition of sounds *nu / nud / nd* seems to work as an amplifier of this detail of nakedness.⁷ Ovid, describing Medea in the *Metamorphoses*, captures this effect and makes it explicit, turning the alliteration *NUDA NODO* into a polyptoton: *vestes induta recinctas, / NUDA pedem, NUDOS umeris infusa capillos* (7.182–83).⁸ Similarly, in vernacular translations, nudity is empowered: the word *nuda* almost spills over the female figure and ends up affecting other body parts. See e.g. Ercole Udine (1597): “e col ginocchio allor volle mostrarse / tutto d'ogni coperta nudo e scarco”; Angilu di Capua (early 14th century): “e tutte le gambe mostrava, e le braccia semigliantemente portava sansa niuno coprimento”.⁹ In some cases, the expression *sinus fluentis* – also due to the effect of *NUda geNUNODO*, still resounding in *siNUs* – is surprisingly interpreted as “flowing breasts” (based on the secondary meaning of *sinus*),¹⁰ rather than “flowing folds”, and – possibly due to the proximity of *nuda* – as “flowing, naked breasts”. Perhaps already Juvenal, when describing the slave Psecas, beaten by her mistress, played with the Virgilian *nuda* and *sinus*: not only does he employ the polyptoton of *nudus*, just like Ovid in the *Metamorphoses*; he also extends nudity from the *umeri* to the *mamillae*: *nuda umeros Psecas infelix nudisque mamillis* (6.491).¹¹ But

⁶ On the seductive power of Venus' knee see Heuzé (1985) 329–31. Henry (1873) *ad loc.* has the following note: “I have myself seen peasant women in Italy returning from work in the fields, so ‘*succinctae*’, i.e., wearing a second or lower girdle, or page, between which and the ordinary girdle their long skirts were partially pulled out, so as to overhang the lower girdle all round by some four or five inches, and expose the knee”.

⁷ See Reckford (1995–96) 20.

⁸ Cf. also the description of the arrival of Venus in the Virgilian cento *Iudicium Paridis*: *NUDA genu, NUDOS cervix cui lactea crinis / corripit in NODUM* (21–22).

⁹ Ed. Spampinato (2002).

¹⁰ Cf. e.g. *OLD s.v.* 1.b.

¹¹ The humanist Giovanni Pontano, in his poem *Urania* (c. 1476), while imitating the Virgilian description of Venus (both in disguise and in her true appearance), adds a reference to the breasts: *Has inter succincta sinus, redimita papillas, / et roseum spirans fragranti vertice odorem / errat nuda genu per florida prata Voluptas* (1.183–85, Ed. Weh, 2017).

the interpretation of *sinus* as “breast” emerges more clearly in vernacular literature. Aldobrando Cerretani’s 1540 translation reads: “il colmo seno acceso / raccolto ne stringeva in dolce nodo”.¹² The Spanish humanist Cristóbal de Villalón, in his philosophical dialogue *El Scholástico* (1550), while describing a fountain sculpted with scenes from the *Aeneid*, inserts the detail of the naked breast into the description of Venus in disguise (2.87–88): “traía los cavellos sueltos, que mucho la perfeçonavan, y su pecho descubierto, regaçadas todas sus faldas y presas atrás con un cordón de oro”.¹³ In the humanist commentary of Giovanni Fabrini, Carlo Malatesta and Filippo Venuti (1581), the passage is explained as follows: “[*collecta sinus*] havendo ligato il seno [*fluentes*] piene di sugo [*nodo*] con un nodo”. “Piene di sugo” literally means “full of juice” and it translates *fluentes*, showing that the commentators have interpreted *sinus* as “breast”. In the same years, Francis Bacon, in the *Discourse in the Praise of the Sovereign*, states that he aims to use the verses of Virgil, “the chastest and the royalest” among poets, in order to describe the beauty of Queen Elizabeth. Each of her physical features is then expressed through Virgil’s words:

Of her gait: *Et vera incessu patuit Dea.*

Of her voice: *Nec vox hominem sonat.*

Of her eye: *Et laetos oculis afflavit honores.*

Of her colour: *Indum sanguineo veluti violaverit ostro si quis ebur.*

Of her neck: *Et rosea cervice refulsit.*

Of her breast: *Veste sinus collecta fluentes.*

Of her hair: *Ambrosiaequae comae divinum vertice odorem spiravere.*¹⁴

Here Bacon replaces *nodo* with *veste* and, like the interpreters listed above, reuses *sinus fluentes* just as if *sinus* meant breasts rather than folds.¹⁵ In 1869, the commentator Andreas Weidner advances a similar interpretation: “Um den Busen zu heben, wurde unterhalb desselben ein Busenband aus feinem Leder (*strophium*) um den Körper geschlungen. Dies hat man hier unter dem *nodus* zu verstehen”. By *nodus*, in Weidner’s opinion, Virgil would mean *strophium*

¹² Ed. Borsetto (2002).

¹³ Ed. Martínez Torrejón (1997). On this passage see Bollard (2005) 67–69.

¹⁴ Ed. Spedding (1861), 138.

¹⁵ In the Marian sermons by Beniamino Zacchi da Pontevico (1660, 55), the partial nudity of Venus in disguise is once again stressed: “In una folta bosaglia vidde a comparirgli una bellissima ninfa, che portando scalzo il piede pareva una novella Diana che facesse la caccia de’ cuori; teneva il braccio scoperto fino al gombito, che, mostrando l’avorio polposo della carne, faceva comparire ancora la porpora del sangue gentile, che la mostrava campionessa del Cielo; portava una faretra in mano, ma dall’arco dell’occhio scoccando quadrella amorose uccideva chiunque in lei la pupilla fissava; havea la piazza del seno scoperta senza velo alcuno, che mostrando le rotonde mamme acerbe, conperse di neve e cinabro, invitava Cupido a far seco la lotta”. See also e.g. Victor Alexandre Chrétien Le Plat du Temple in his travesty *Virgile en France* (1807, 24): “Et le tulle gazait ses seins rebondissans [*sic*]”; Angelo Vitelleschi’s 1856 translation: “gli ondegianti seni / stretti con nodi della veste”; the Spanish translation by García *et al.* (2009): “en un nodo recogido su escote flotante”.

(recalling the Catullan Ariadne: *non tereti strophio lactentis vincta papillas*, 64.65). This reading resurfaces in an article by Kenneth Reckford, who explains *sinus fluentis* as follows: “I suggest... that *sinus* is a slippery word in Latin poetry, and that these particular *sinus fluentis* indicate not only the folds of Venus’s garment that are gathered up here, but also the characteristic swell of her bosom”.¹⁶

The sudden metamorphosis of the virgin into Venus is narrated in blurred and vague terms. In particular, the description of the dress is notoriously ambiguous.¹⁷ Clearly, the expression *pedes vestis defluxit ad imos* (404) is meant to recall the aquatic metaphor of *sinus fluentis*.¹⁸ But what exactly happens before the eyes of Aeneas? Ancient commentators agree that when the disguise fades away, the knot is untied, restoring its size and length to the dress (Servius *ad loc*: *VESTIS DEFLUXIT quia dixit supra ‘sinus collecta fluentis’*; Tiberius Claudius Donatus *ad loc*: *relaxata veste usque ad vestigia ipsa contacta est. Supra enim dixit ‘nuda genu nodoque sinus collecta fluentis’*). This idea that Venus would cover herself up is in line with similar images used by other Augustan poets to describe the long and wavy garments of gods: the saffron robe of Tibullus’ Osiris (1.7.46), which will be all “poured” over his soft feet, *fusa sed ad teneros lutea palla pedes*;¹⁹ the flowing dress of Bacchus that “wounds” the god’s feet in Propertius (3.17.32): *et feries nudos veste fluente pedes* (two examples including both a water metaphor – *fusa; fluente* – and the mention of feet).²⁰ Furthermore, this interpretation of *vestis defluxit* is shared by most of Virgil’s imitators. Seneca’s Tiresias wears a robe that “streams” all over his feet: *lugubris imos palla perfundit pedes* (*Oed.* 553).²¹ The Cupid of Dracontius, turning into a nymph in order to seduce Hylas, loosens his flowing dress to his feet: *pedes fluitans vestis laxatur ad imos* (*Romul.* 2.84). Prudentius represents the passage of the soldiers from war to peace by portraying their dress, which, at the end of the battle, flows down to their feet: *vestis ad usque pedes descendens defluit imos* (*Psych.* 634). And finally Isidore of Seville seems to reuse Virgil’s language to describe the length of the *tunica talaris*: *talaris tunica dicta eo quod ad talos usque descendat et ad pedes defluat* (*Orig.* 19.22.7).

¹⁶ Reckford (1995–96) 20.

¹⁷ On this ambiguity see e.g. Reckford (1995–96) and *infra*.

¹⁸ Venus, after fleeing away from Aeneas and Achates, “pours” around them a thick “mantle” of fog: *et multo nebulae circum dea fudit amictu* (1.412). The aquatic imagery in association with (metaphoric) garments is still vital after the encounter in the woods. Cf. also 1.319, where *diffundo* is referred to the virgin’s *coma*.

¹⁹ According to Murgatroyd (1980) *ad loc*, the application of *fundo* to clothes is rare and it first appears in this passage (cf. *TbLL s.v. ‘fluo’*, 1568.20–33). Cf. also Tib. 1.10.68, on *Pax*: *perfluat et pomis candidus ante sinus*.

²⁰ Cf. also Hor. *Sat.* 1.3.31, where we find the expression *toga defluit*, comically portraying a man who wears a trailing *toga*.

²¹ Cf. also Sen. *Oed.* 418–23 (about Bacchus disguised as a virgin): *Qualis iratam metuens novercam / creveras falsos imitatus artus, / crine flaventi simulata virgo, / lutea vestem retinente zona: / inde tam molles placuere cultus / et sinus laxi fluidumque syrma*.

But the same expression – *pedes vestis defluxit ad imos* – also produces opposite images. For example, when Manilius describes Andromeda in chains, he blends memories of the Ovidian Daphne, undressed by the winds while fleeing away from Apollo (*Met.* 1.527–30), of Ariadne undressed by the waves, and of the flowing dress of Venus: *Defluxere sinus umeris fugitque lacertos / vestis et effusi scapulis haesere capilli* (5.556–57).²² The Virgilian *sinus fluentis* and *vestis defluxit* are here reused to describe the *sinus* that slip away from Andromeda’s shoulders and her dress fleeing from her arms. The female figure is left naked in front of a male observer, Perseus. A passage from the *Historia Augusta* about Eliogabalus’ eccentricities contains an even more explicit reminiscence in the same vein (*Heliog.* 5.4–5):

Agebat praeterea domi fabulam Paridis, ipse Veneris personam subiens, ita ut subito vestes ad pedes defluerent, nudusque, una manu ad mammam, altera pudendis adhibita, ingenicularet posterioribus eminentibus in subactorem reiectis et oppositis.

The Virgilian *pedes vestis defluxit ad imos* is barely modified into *vestes ad pedes defluerent*.²³ The charade of the *princeps* clearly testifies that Virgil’s expression could be perceived not as a movement aiming to cover nudity but, on the contrary, as a movement aiming to display it.²⁴

²² Also Ovid’s description of the desperation of Narcissus is, I think, reminiscent of the scene: *Dumque dolet, summa vestem deduxit ab ora / nudaque marmoreis percussit pectora palmis. / Pectora traxerunt roseum percussa ruborem* (*Met.* 3.480–82); Narcissus’ final liquefaction (*sic attenuatus amore / liquitur*, *Met.* 3.489–90) “literalizes” Virgil’s metaphorical *defluxit*. Both Ovid and Manilius, in their rewritings, seem to allude to Aeschylus’ description of Iphigenia’s dress, as well as to Euripides’ Polyxena exposing her naked body to the sacrificers: see *infra*.

²³ The description is probably indebted to a passage by Apuleius (*Met.* 10.31; see Optendrenk, 1969, 133, n.2), which may have been influenced in turn by the Virgilian scene: *Introcassit alia, visendo decore praepollens. gratia coloris ambrosei designans Venerem, qualis fuit Venus, cum fuit virgo, nudo et intecto corpore perfectam formositatem professa, nisi quod tenui pallio bombycino inumbrabat spectabilem pubem*. In addition to staging the paradox of a Venus who is still a virgin (*qualis fuit Venus, cum fuit virgo*) – a paradox which is already in the *Aeneid* – Apuleius mentions *ambrosia* (cf. *Aen.* 1.403) and finally focuses on the almost complete nudity of the female figure.

²⁴ On the hypothetic nudity of Venus revealed there is a funny repartee between two readers of *The Gentleman’s Magazine*. A reader calling himself “an academic” suggests interpreting *cervix* as bosom (1799, 69.2, 1045): “I take the epithet [*scil. rosea, Aen.* 1.402] to be applied not to the whole of the Goddess’s bosom; but to that part of it, of which the budding rose affords the most appropriate emblem – the *venustae, tenellae, sororiantes, extantesque in pectore candidissimo mamillae*”. Here is the other reader’s mocking reply (1800, 70.2, 841): “We cannot... admit the interpretation of your correspondent, unless we suppose the *venustae, tenellae, sororiantes, extantesque in pectore candidissimo mamillae* of the goddess, of which he so luxuriantly speaks, were placed *in cervice*, or *behind*; but this ... we know to be not altogether in the order of nature; nevertheless, in a studious secluded member of C.C.C.C. [*i.e.* Corpus Christi College, Cambridge] who may reasonably be presumed to be not much versed in the contour and anatomy of the female form, the error is not only excusable, but even amiable. It gives one an exalted idea of the close attention to study, perfect abstraction, strict discipline, and rigid monachism, of that learned seminary”. In recent years, the tendency to imagine Venus as naked in the conclusion of the episode has spread: see *e.g.* Reckford (1995–96); La Penna (2002) 105–06; Oliensis (2009) 62–63.

Already the humanists²⁵ connected the final part of the scene with Helen's recognition of Aphrodite in *Iliad* 3 (397–98): here the goddess, in the guise of an old woman, is recognized, among other things, by her desirable breasts (στήθεά θ' ἰμερόεντα). Aristarchus athetized these lines along with the angry exchange that follows (396–418). One of the reasons for the removal was, as Richard Hunter puts it, “the improbability of the verses describing the god's lovely body”.²⁶ But for other scholiasts the verses were appropriate (Schol. B *ad loc*): οὐδὲν ἄτοπον γυμνὴν φαίνεσθαι τὴν θεόν.²⁷

Kenneth Reckford, who maintains that *pedes vestis defluxit ad imos* is deliberately ambiguous, has linked the scene to the Homeric Hymn to Aphrodite,²⁸ one of the texts that does indeed seem to have influenced Virgil's orchestration the most. Here the goddess, after disguising herself as a virgin in order to seduce Anchises without scaring him with her divine aspect (81–83), allows the young man to undress her (λύσε δὲ οἱ ζώνην ἰδὲ εἴματα σιγαλόεντα / ἔκδυε καὶ κατέθηκεν ἐπὶ θρόνου ἀργυροῦλου / Ἀρχίσης, 164–66), and later she reclothes herself with divinity (αὐτὴ δὲ χροῖ ἔννυτο εἴματα καλά. / ἔσσαμένη δ' εὖ πάντα περὶ χροῖ δῖα θεάων, 171–72). Even though Virgil does not show any significant textual similarities with the Hymn, the dialectic between disguise / unclothing / reclothing seems to be the same.²⁹

But there is, I think, another Greek passage, which, in addition to *Iliad* 3 and the Hymn, has acted on Virgil's *pedes vestis defluxit ad imos*. When in the parodos of Aeschylus' *Agamemnon* the chorus recalls Iphigenia's sacrifice, it uses the much debated expression κρόκου βαφᾶς δ' ἐς πέδον χέουσα (239).³⁰ Here we find a water metaphor, χέουσα (the verb is glossed by Peter Paul Dobree as *defluere sino*),³¹ which seems to be referred to a dress: κρόκου βαφᾶς literally means “crocus' dyes”, hence “robes dyed with the color of the crocus”. Presumably, the expression alludes to a movement towards a place, namely a downward movement headed to the ground, which is named as πέδον, etymologically connected with πούς, and – we may add – phonetically close to the Virgilian *pedes*. The Aeschylean association between χέω and a feminine garment seems to derive in turn from a scene from *Iliad* 5, repeated at *Iliad* 8:³² the virgin Athena, turning from pacific to belligerent goddess,

²⁵ See e.g. Ursinus (1567) *ad loc*. See also Reckford (1995–96) 8.

²⁶ Hunter (2017) 60.

²⁷ Aphrodite-Venus, of all goddesses, is most generally thought of as naked, but only from the Hellenistic age onwards. Earlier she tends to be enveloped in floor-length draperies. In the Augustan period, due to Venus' role as ancestor of the *gens Iulia*, her iconography starts being modified and the goddess re-acquires maternal traits (see e.g. Reckford, 1995–96, 8).

²⁸ *ibid.* 21–22.

²⁹ Reckford (1995–96, 4–7) also traces the Virgilian description back to the Catullan Ariadne.

³⁰ On the interpretative problems of this passage see Medda (2012). See also *infra*.

³¹ Dobree (1833) 23.

³² See e.g. Medda (2017) *ad loc*.

lets her fine peplos fall down on her father's threshold (πέπλον μὲν κατέχευεν ἑανὸν πατρὸς ἐπ' οὐδὲι, 5.734 / 8.385), and then she reclothes herself for war (ἦ δὲ χιτῶν' ἐνδύσα Διὸς νεφέληγερέταο / τεύχεσιν ἐς πόλεμον θωρήσσετο δακρυρόεντα, 5.736–37 / 8.387–88). The poet, in order to depict the movement of the dress, chooses the verb χέω, which generates, as Kirk (1985) writes *ad Il.* 5.734, “a voluptuous description”. Athena, in substance, as the scholia *ad Il.* 5.734 underline, remains momentarily naked (γυμνήν δὲ ἡμῖν Ἀθηνᾶν διὰ τῆς λέξεως παρέστησεν).³³ But the scholiast commenting upon the parallel line at *Il.* 8.385 felt differently: he praised the poet for his ability not to strip the virgin (θαυμασίως οὐ γυμνοῖ τὴν παρθένον).³⁴ Modern scholars are cautious: they usually insist on the rapid gesture of Athena; the passage from the peplos to the chiton and the armour would be so quick that it would not give any glimpses of her naked body.³⁵ The Aeschylean text has aroused a more violent critical debate. According to the scholia,³⁶ the virgin Iphigenia threw her crocus-dyed robes to the ground;³⁷ therefore, she stripped (either partially or completely) in front of her father and the other sacrificers. This is, possibly, the reading by Euripides, who, when imitating this passage in the *Hecuba*, stresses the theme of nakedness: Polyxena tears her dress apart (the water metaphor is suppressed), exposing her breasts and her beautiful chest to the sacrificers: λαβοῦσα πέπλους ἐξ ἄκρας ἐπωμίδος / ἔρρηξε λαγόνας ἐς μέσας παρ' ὀμφαλόν, / μαστοῦς τ' ἔδειξε στέρνα θ' ὡς ἀγάλματος / κάλλιστα (558–61).³⁸ But while Polyxena's breast-baring is usually interpreted as a masculine gesture, and considered bold and praiseworthy, the idea of Iphigenia exposing her virginal body to male observers that included her father has been perceived as so outrageous that readers have searched for solutions that might mitigate or erase their disquiet.³⁹

As we have seen, the gesture attributed to the Virgilian Venus, untying the knot of her dress in front of Aeneas, has had a similar destiny from its very first interpretations. But there are other significant similarities between Aeschylus and Virgil, as against Homer and Euripides. Both Athena and Polyxena remain naked, but only momentarily: Athena, as we have seen, immediately puts on male garments; Polyxena, while dying, worries “to conceal what needs to be concealed from the eyes of men” (κρύπτουσ' ἃ κρύπτειν ὄμματ' ἀρσένων χρεῶν, 570). In Aeschylus and Virgil, there is no change of clothes: both the dress of Iphigenia and the

³³ Ed. Erbse *ad loc.*

³⁴ Ed. Erbse *ad loc.* In the adverb θαυμασίως we can also perceive an undertone of surprise and disappointment.

³⁵ See e.g. Loraux (1989) 264–65; Llewellyn-Jones (2001) 244.

³⁶ Scholl. T 239b ἐς πέδον] εἰς τὴν γῆν; 239c χέουσα] ῥίψασα. See Medda (2012) 106.

³⁷ The Aeschylean passage seems to be among the possible influences of the famous Pompeian fresco from the House of the Tragic Poet (now at the Museo Archeologico Nazionale, Naples), where Iphigenia is depicted with bare breasts, while her saffron robe is slipping to the ground. See e.g. Scarcia (2008).

³⁸ See e.g. Battezzato (2018) *ad loc.* On the confusion between Iphigenia and Polyxena, especially in iconography, see Scarcia (2008) 71, n.7.

³⁹ See e.g. Medda (2012) 106–11; Wohl (1998) 72–73.

girt-up dress of Venus just flow down “with the shimmering motion of water”.⁴⁰ Furthermore, Polyxena exposes her breasts to the enemy, that is to the Greek soldiers;⁴¹ Athena instead removes her robe *πατρὸς ἐπ’ οὐδὲι* and then she wears Zeus’ chiton and her armour; but the father, even though his presence is evoked twice, does not witness the daughter’s change of clothes.⁴² Conversely, both Iphigenia and Venus perform their revealing gestures right in front of male next of kin: a father, Agamemnon, and a son, Aeneas.

One final observation. Virgil in the *Aeneid* frequently draws on Aeschylus’ *Oresteia*;⁴³ usually he alludes to the Aeschylean description of the sacrifice of Iphigenia through Lucretius’ famous narrative,⁴⁴ which, as Alessandro Perutelli has demonstrated, alludes in its turn to the *Agamemnon*.⁴⁵ What is relevant here is that Lucretius, too, in his account, uses a water metaphor (*profundo*)⁴⁶ with reference to Iphigenia’s garments,⁴⁷ namely the *infula* that the sacrificers envelop around her head: *cui simul infula virgineos circumdata comptus / ex utraque pari malarum parte profusast* (1.88–89). Even though Lucretius does not mention Iphigenia’s nudity,⁴⁸ the headband, surrounding her hair, “pours”, as if it were liquid, along her cheeks.⁴⁹

In conclusion, the Virgilian episode – the first moment in the poem in which Aeneas finds himself confronting the feminine –, concerned as it is with the gaze of the hero on the female body, is particularly useful for reconstructing what the readers see when they imagine what Virgil is narrating. From the very beginning, the text sounded unstable and destabilized the imagination of interpreters. Two possible literary echoes – the naked Ariadne and the naked Iphigenia – contribute to the general sense of unease. Nudity spreads: it invests the arms, the legs, the bosom of the virgin. The expression *sinus fluentis* prompts readers to visualize Venus’ breasts as well as the dress that covers them. A similar fluctuation characterizes *pedes vestis defluxit ad imos*. If the hypothesis that the poet was influenced by the parodos of the *Agamemnon* is legitimate, it proves that he has deliberately constructed an ambiguous text. This ambiguity would be dictated by the way in which Virgil, in this scene, applies the epic canon (the hero encounters his patron goddess in disguise) while subverting it (the

⁴⁰ Austin (1971) *ad Aen.* 1.404.

⁴¹ Euripides, in the *Andromache*, stresses the erotic undertones of this gesture, when he attributes it to Helen, staging Menelaus seduced by the sight of her breasts (629). See Castellaneta (2013) 98–106.

⁴² See Kirk (1985) *ad Il.* 5. 734–37.

⁴³ See Hardie (1991).

⁴⁴ See e.g. Hardie (1984).

⁴⁵ Perutelli (1998).

⁴⁶ The Greek equivalent of the verb is *προχέω* (*IbLL* 10.2.1740.70).

⁴⁷ See Bonanno (2004) 103. Lucretius, by turning the dress of Iphigenia into a sacred garment, seems to perceive the (perverse) ritual connotation of the Aeschylean *χέω*, possibly alluding to libations (cf. Eur. *Hec.* 529; 535–37).

⁴⁸ But see Fraccaroli (1885) 522: “Che Ifigenia doveva in qualche modo scoprirsi sull’altare, lo sentì anche Lucrezio, I, 88”.

⁴⁹ *effundo* is used a few lines below in its literal sense of “shedding tears” (Lucr. 1.91).

patron goddess is the mother of the hero and she appears to her unaware son in the guise of a beautiful virgin).

VIOLA STARNONE
(viola.starnone@alumni.sns.it)

Bibliography

- L. Battezzato (ed.) (2018) *Euripides: Hecuba*, Cambridge.
- K. Bollard (2005) 'Ekphrasis and the Renaissance Student: Classical versus Biblical Authority in Villalón's *El Scholástico*', in F. A. de Armas (ed), *Ekphrasis in the Age of Cervantes*, Lewisburg PA, 59–77.
- D. Bonanno (2004) 'Ofelia, Ifigenia, Salomè, o dell'impossibile innocenza', *L'immagine riflessa* 13.1, 91–112.
- L. Borsetto (ed.) (2002), *I sei primi libri dell'Eneide di Vergilio tradotti a più illustre et onorate donne. L'Eneida in toscano del generoso et illustre giovine il signor cavalier Cerretani (rist. anast. delle edd. Zoppino, 1540 e Torrentino, 1560)*, Padova.
- S. Castellaneta (2013) *Il seno svelato ad misericordiam. Esegese e fortuna di un'immagine omerica*, Bari.
- Corradus = Sebastiano Corradi (1555) *Commentarius in quo P. Virgilii Maronis liber primus Aeneidos explicatur*, Florence.
- E. Courtney (ed.) (1993) *The Fragmentary Latin Poets*, Oxford.
- P. P. Dobree (1833) *Adversaria II*, Cambridge.
- G. Fabrini da Fighine, C. Malatesta da Rimini & F. Venuti da Cortona (1581) *L'opere di Virgilio Mantoano commentate in lingua volgare toscana*, Venice.
- A. Forbiger (ed.) (1837) *P. Virgilii Maronis opera, pars II (Aeneidos l. I-VI)*, Leipzig.
- G. Fraccaroli (1885) 'Emendamenti ed osservazioni al primo cantico dell'*Agamemnone*', *RFIC* 13, 501–22.
- L. Rivero García, Juan A. Estévez Sola, Miryam Librán Moreno, Antonio Ramírez de Verger (eds and trans.) (2009), *Publio Virgilio Marón. Eneida, Vol. I (libros I–III)*, Madrid.
- P. Hardie (1984) 'The Sacrifice of Iphigeneia: An Example of "Distribution" of a Lucretian Theme in Virgil', *CQ* 34, 406–12.
- P. Hardie. (1991) 'The *Aeneid* and the *Oresteia*', *PVS* 20, 29–45.
- J. Henry (1873), *Aeneidea, or Critical, Exegetical, and Aesthetical Remarks on the Aeneis*, vol. 1, London.
- P. Heuzé (1985) *L'image du corps dans l'œuvre de Virgile*, Paris.
- C. G. Heyne (ed.) (1767–75) *P. Virgilii Maronis opera*, London.
- R. Hunter (2017) 'Eustathian Moments', in F. Pontani, V. Katsaros & V. Sarris (eds), *Reading Eustathios of Thessalonike*, Berlin, 9–78.
- G. S. Kirk (1990), *The Iliad: A Commentary, Vol. II: books 5–8*, Cambridge.
- A. La Penna (2002) 'I volti di Venere nell'*Eneide*', in *Arma virumque: Studi in onore di Luca Canali*, Pisa, 97–107.
- V. Le Plat du Temple (1807) *Virgile en France ou La nouvelle Énéide*, Vol. 1, Brussels.
- L. Llewellyn-Jones (2001) 'Sexy Athena: The Dress and Erotic Representation of a Virgin War Goddess', in S. Deacy & A. Villing (eds), *Athena in the Classical World*, Leiden, 233–58.

- N. Loraux (1989) *Les expériences de Tirésias, le féminin et l'homme grec*, Paris.
- J. M. Martínez Torrejón (ed.) (1997), *Cristóbal de Villalón. El scholástico*, Barcelona.
- E. Medda (2012) 'Ifigenia all'altare. Il sacrificio di Aulide fra testo e iconografia', *Eikasmos* 23, 87–114.
- E. Medda (ed.) (2017) *Eschilo, Agamennone*, Roma.
- P. Murgatroyd (1980) *A Commentary on the First Book of the Elegies of Albius Tibullus*, Pietermaritzburg.
- E. Oliensis (2009) *Freud's Rome. Psychoanalysis and Latin Poetry*, Cambridge.
- T. Optendrenk (1969) *Die Religionspolitik des Kaisers Elagabal im Spiegel der Historia Augusta*, Bonn.
- A. Perutelli (1998) 'Ifigenia in Lucrezio', *SCO* 46.1, 193–207.
- K. Reckford (1995–96) 'Recognizing Venus (I): Aeneas Meets His Mother', *Arion* 3, 1–42.
- R. Scarcia (2008) 'Ifigenia: iconografia del sacrificio', in L. Secci (ed), *Il mito di Ifigenia da Euripide al Novecento*, Rome, 57–74.
- S. Spampinato (2002), *La versione quattrocentesca dell'«Istoria d'Eneas» di Angelo di Capua: edizione interpretativa, studio linguistico-letterario e concordanza*, Catania (Diss).
- J. Spedding (ed.) (1861) *The Letters and the Life of Francis Bacon*, vol. 1, London.
- V. Starnone (2020), *Nessuno guarda Elissa. Due passi del primo libro dell'Eneide e il disagio degli interpreti*, Pisa.
- Turnebus = Adrien Turnèbe (1599) *Adversaria*, Strasbourg.
- E. Udine (trans.) (1597), *L'Eneide di Virgilio ridotta in ottava rima*, Venice.
- Ursinus = Fulvio Orsini (1567) *Virgilius collatione Graecorum illustratus*, Antwerp.
- A. Vitelleschi (trans.) (1856), *L'Eneide di Virgilio*, Roma.
- D. Weh (ed.) (2017) *Giovanni Pontanos "Urania" Buch 1: Einleitung, Edition, Übersetzung und Kommentar*, Wiesbaden.
- A. Weidner (1869) *Commentar zu Vergil's Aeneis. Buch I und II*, Leipzig.
- V. Wohl (1998) *Intimate Commerce: Exchange, Gender, and Subjectivity in Greek Tragedy*, Austin TX.
- B. Zacchi da Pontevico (1660) *L'eccellenze della Sacra Cintura di Maria vergine Santissima Madre di Dio e di consolazione*, Bologna.

The tears in things: How the Jesuits “ripped up” Virgil

Revised from a paper given to the Virgil Society on 20 January 2019

Virgil was the Roman poet most revered by early modern Jesuits, yet his significance for the Society of Jesus is in some ways as elusive as his presence was ubiquitous. In their *Ratio Studiorum* (‘Code of Studies’, Rome, 1599) we read the following rule for the penultimate class of the lower curriculum, “Humanities” (sometimes called “Poetry”):

“Virgil, with the exceptions of some eclogues and the fourth book of the *Aeneid* is the matter for poetry, along with Horace’s selected odes. To these may be added elegies, epigrams and other poems of recognized poets, provided they are purged of all immoral expressions”.¹

At the Roman College at the turn of the 18th century, Rainier Carsughi exhorted his “Rhetoric” (final year of high school) students, in a didactic poem on the ‘Art of Writing Well’, to “praise excellent poets but worship Virgil” if they aspired to write “divine poetry”.² It is not clear whether Carsughi means by “divine” here poetry which is devoted to sacred themes, or simply that which is serious or sublime.

The first Jesuits inherited the cult of Virgil from Italian Renaissance humanism. Marco Girolamo Vida (?1485–1566), humanist churchman and ultimately bishop of Alba, composed a delightful Georgic on silkworms as well as his more ambitious epic *Christiad*, and rounded off his three-book *De arte poetica* with a hymn to Virgil.³ But already in the

¹ A. P. Farrell (ed. and trans), *The Jesuit Ratio studiorum of 1599*, Washington DC, 80. In the previous class, “Upper Grammar”, the first semester should be dedicated to the expurgated elegies and epistles of Ovid; in the second, some “easier” books of Virgil, such as *Geo.* 4 and *Aen.* 7, and some *Eclogues*, may be introduced, along with (expurgated!) selections from Catullus, Tibullus and Propertius.

² Carsughi’s *Ars bene scribendi* (Rome, 1709) is available, with a short introduction, at <http://mateo.uni-mannheim.de/desbillons/rainer.html>.

³ R. G. Williams (ed), *The De arte Poetica of Marco Girolamo Vida*, 1976, New York. It would be otiose to produce the titles of the many Renaissance epics, including biblical ones, modelled on Virgil, but among the better-known works available to early Jesuit poets were Girolamo Fracastoro’s on Joseph, Jacopo Sannazaro’s on the Virgin Mary, and Scipione Capece’s on John the Baptist. See C. Kallendorf, *In Praise of Aeneas: Virgil and Epideictic Rhetoric in the Early Italian Renaissance*, 1989, Hanover.

first phase of the Jesuit order (that is, in the second half of the 16th century), some neo-Augustinian scruples were being raised against the divine Maro by Jesuit book censor and bibliographer Antonio Possevino (1533–1611), in his *Bibliotheca selecta de ratione studiorum in historia, in disciplinis, in salute omnium procuranda* (Rome, 1593). Surprisingly, perhaps, more space is devoted by Possevino to cautioning us against the dangers of Virgil than even Lucretius.⁴

Possevino's reservations largely concern the *Aeneid*, yet one suspects the Jesuits probably wrote at least as much in imitation of the *Georgics*.⁵ René Rapin's four books of *Horti* (Paris, 1665) and Jacques Vanière's sixteen on agriculture, *Praedium Rusticum* (Toulouse, 1730), were international hits beyond the Society. Indeed, the Jesuits regularly used the *Georgics* as a model not only for poems about agriculture but also on the arts and sciences. The anthology *Poemata didascalica* (Paris, 1749; expanded edition, Paris, 1813) is full of shorter to mid-length didactic poems, on butterflies and birds, typography and tar-water, earthquakes and comets. At the Jesuits' Roman College in the later 18th century, longer poems were penned on even more technical scientific subjects, including electricity, optics, astronomy and aeronautics. While many of these are prima facie "Lucretian", Giuseppe Maria Mazzolari, professor of Rhetoric at the Collegio Romano, expressed mild irritation when his *Electricorum libri VI* (Rome, 1767) was compared to the *De rerum natura*, claiming that he had only ever aspired to be Virgilian. For present purposes, however, I set aside this considerable didactic-poetic production, to explore Jesuit engagement with Virgil's apex poem, the *Aeneid*. I will focus on two poems from the early and final days of the "Old" Society (that is, before its restoration in 1814): Francesco Benci's *Quinque martyres* (Venice, 1591) and Emmanuel de Azevedo's *Heroum libri iv* ("Louvain", 1789). Quite apart from their Virgilian credentials, these works offer revealing snapshots of Jesuit hopes and concerns at critical historical moments for the order.

College / Collage

More than a decade before Possevino's *Bibliotheca selecta*, and indeed eight years before the promulgation of the *Ratio studiorum*, Francesco Benci (1542–1594), professor of Rhetoric at the Roman College, published a Latin epic in six books on the five Jesuit missionaries martyred in Southern India, at Cuncolim, in 1581. As Paul Gwynne has shown in his recent edition of the *Quinque martyres* (Venice, 1591; Rome, 1592), Benci worked faster than might be assumed

⁴ See Y. Haskell, 'Practicing What They Preach? Vergil and the Jesuits', in J. Farrell & M. Putnam (eds), *A Companion to Vergil's Aeneid and its Tradition*, 2010, Malden, 203–16.

⁵ I have discussed their contributions to the didactic genre in the 17th–18th centuries in *Loyola's Bees: Ideology and Industry in Jesuit Latin Didactic Poetry*, 2003, Oxford.

from the poem’s date of publication.⁶ He was at the time of composition a busy teacher and bureaucrat, tasked with collating a vast correspondence for the young Society’s annual report (the *Litterae annuae*). Gwynne suggests that the poet had to rely on “economical” methods of composition, including cento, to patch together his epic.⁷ An edition of Benci’s poems and dramas seems not to have been entertained for Harvard’s *I Tatti Renaissance Library*, but it is worth underlining that the Jesuit was a close successor to the High Renaissance biblical epicists Vida, Sannazaro, Fracastoro, and Scipione Capece, and a contemporary and correspondent of Pier-Angeli da Barga, whose *Syrias hoc est expeditio illa celeberrima Christianorum principum, qua Hierosolyma ducta Goffredi Bulioni ... a Turcorum tyrannide liberata est* (Florence, 1591) was composed during the same period as *QM*.⁸ That said, Benci strikes out in new directions vis-à-vis these Renaissance Christian epic poets. He appears to be the first neo-Latin epicist to have set his sights on a new world beyond the Americas.⁹ His poem, moreover, is not merely epideictic in the ways Kallendorf has indicated of earlier Renaissance epic, that is, concerned with praise and blame;¹⁰ it is *protreptic*. Its readers, in the first instance Jesuit schoolboys and seminarians, are expressly called upon not just to admire its great-souled heroes, but to *emulate* them, to aspire to martyrdom and sainthood (*QM*, bk 1.20–37).¹¹ A question arises as to the work’s (and for that matter later Jesuit epics’) literary status as poetry versus propaganda. While similar questions have of course been posed of the *Aeneid*, the emotions which Jesuit epics aim to invoke are more explicitly described and indeed *prescribed* for their readers.¹²

⁶ For Benci’s poem I refer throughout to Gwynne’s edition and translation, *Francesco Benci’s Quinque Martyres: Introduction, Translation and Commentary*, 2018, Leiden (hereafter *QM*).

⁷ *QM*, 48; 53–55. In fact Possevino, in his *Bibliotheca selecta*, had commended the Renaissance centonists Lelio and Giulio Capilupi as a workaround for Virgilian imitation. He also prepared an edition of Lelio’s *Centones* and dedicated it to Joachim Du Bellay (Rome, 1555). See G. H. Tucker, ‘Mantua’s “Second Virgil”: Du Bellay, Montaigne and the curious fortune of Lelio Capilupi’s *Centones ex Virgilio* [Romae, 1555]; in G. Tournoy & D. Sacré (eds), *Ut Granum Sinapis: Essays on Neo-Latin Literature in Honour of Jozef Ijsewijn*, 1997, Leiden, 264–91. On efficient production of Latin verse in the Renaissance, see P. Gwynne & B. Schirg (eds), *The Economics of Poetry. The Efficient Production of Neo-Latin Verse, 1400–1720*, Oxford, 2018.

⁸ See A. Winkler, ‘Pietro Angeli da Barga’s *Syrias* (1582–91) and Contemporary Debates over Epic Poetry’, in F. Schaffnerath & A. Winkler (eds), *Neo-Latin and the Vernaculars: Bilingual Interactions in the Early Modern Period*, 2019, Leiden, 212–318.

⁹ His star student Giulio Cesare Stella launched a series of Renaissance Columbus epics with his *Columbeidos libri priores duo* (Rome, 1585), which Benci tidied up (Rome, 1589) to bring into line with Tridentine doctrine. See H. Hofmann, ‘*Adveniat tandem Typhis qui detegat orbis*: Columbus in Neo-Latin Epic Poetry (16th–18th Centuries)’, in W. Haase & M. Reinhold (eds), *European Images of the Americas and the Classical Tradition*, 1994, Berlin, 420–656 (469). Gwynne claims Benci as the first Jesuit epic poet, but that title may belong to the missionary José d’Anchieta, whose *De Gestis Mendi de Saa* (Coimbra, 1563) was written in America. See A. Rolim de Moura, ‘“Love of War” and “Fierce Tigresses”: Statius, Lucan and Anchieta’s *De Gestis Mendi de Saa*’, *New Voices in Classical Reception Studies* 11 (2016), 1–17.

¹⁰ See Kallendorf (n.3 above).

¹¹ Cf. Gwynne, *QM*, 69–70.

¹² See further Y. Haskell and R. Garrod (eds), *Changing Hearts: Performing Jesuit Emotions between Europe, Asia and the Americas*, 2019, Leiden.

The title of my paper puns on two senses of “tears”. First, obviously, the Virgilian *lacrimae rerum*, shorthand here for that crucial affective dimension of Jesuit epic. But there is also the not-unrelated issue of how Jesuit poets, over the course of two centuries, “ripped up” the *Aeneid*, shuffling its pieces to present us with an ever-changing kaleidoscope of historical scenes and intertextual memories. But which pieces did they prefer? Gwynne points out that Benci was lecturing on Virgil at the Collegio Romano at the time he was composing *QM*.¹³ The nexus between writing and teaching is important.¹⁴ It may well be instructive, where archival sources permit, to plot the relative density of Virgilian intertexts against the set books taught by Jesuit poets – poets who were usually time-strapped teachers of the Rhetoric class. It is surely no accident, for example, that the second book of the German Jesuit Jacob Bidermann’s (1578–1639) epic on the Massacre of the Innocents, *Herodiados libri iii* (Dillingen, 1622), includes a long set-piece on gladiatorial games for Herod. *Aen.* 5 was one of the recommended texts for students of the Upper Grammar class. The demon Phorbos in Benci’s poem, modelled on Virgil’s Allecto, will have been instantly recognizable to students who had recently read *Aen.* 7. Of course, the reasons for selecting this or that section for imitation go beyond mere curricular coincidence. Narrative resonance with the chosen historical or hagiographical theme was undoubtedly more decisive. But we also find Virgilian verses and characters teleported into unfamiliar settings or in disorientating disguises. Thus if both Possevino and the *Ratio studiorum* cautioned against the reading of *Aen.* 4, Dido would go through several curious incarnations on the Jesuit epic page and college stage.¹⁵ Is it possible to discern a distinctive pattern in the Jesuit epic patchwork through so many permutations and over such a long time period; and if not, at least a characteristic *modus (re)componendi*?

Gwynne identifies three types of Virgilian imitation in Benci.¹⁶ The first, the fitting together of Virgilian *membra* (i.e. half lines or *clausulae*), with perhaps a piece here and there culled from another epic poet, approaches what we think of as cento. In the second, a line or a line and a half is lifted from Virgil and then very lightly modified, e.g. the mood of a verb. The third is where Benci imitates his model in a more sustained way, revealing a “more creative and

¹³ *QM*, 46. A copy of student notes to his lectures survives in the Vatican Library (Vat. Lat. 756).

¹⁴ See Y. Haskell, ‘*Latinitas Iesu*: Neo-Latin writing and the literary-emotional communities of the Old Society of Jesus’, in I. G. Županov (ed), *Oxford Handbook of the Jesuits*, 2019, Oxford, 553–74.

¹⁵ See, for example, the musical drama *Pietas in Peregrinos* by Johann Baptist Adolph and Georg Bernhard Staudt, where Dido lets Aeneas go with a good grace, to fulfil his mission (in *Dramata varia a gymnasio domus professa Societatis Iesu a. 1687–1704 acta cum musica Bernardi Staudt*, Vienna, Austrian National Library Cod. 9813 Han, vol. 5). Possevino’s Tridentine scruples about *Aen.* 4 did not deter Charles de la Rue, Jesuit editor of the Dauphin edition of Virgil’s *Opera omnia*, from describing this book as “the one possessing the most art and sweetness, and the most tender and violent emotions: especially in the eight speeches of Dido” (C. Ruæus, *P. Virgilii Maronis Opera ... Ad Usum Delphini*, 1675, Paris, 55). Cf. the extensive commentary on book 4 by Spanish Jesuit Juan Luis de la Cerda, *Aeneidos libri sex priores* (1628², Cologne, 370–487).

¹⁶ *QM*, 48–52.

nuanced reading of the source”. Here Gwynne gives the example of the demon Phorbus, who infiltrates the Hindu population of Cuncolim and sows resistance to the Christian missionaries: his snaky appearance recalls the fury Allecto, while his opening speech incorporates parts of Juno’s opening harangue against the Trojans.¹⁷ Gwynne concedes that “not all the echoes of classical epic illuminate the narrative”, and sometimes the “intertextual context ... adds little or nothing to [B’s] narrative. Nevertheless, in their entirety, these examples all offer insight into the poet’s method of composition. With the narrative idea fixed, we must imagine Benci sifting, physically or mentally, through the works of Virgil for an apposite verse, preferably a line end, and adapting it to his present needs”.¹⁸

It should be noted that Benci also had recourse to the full range of Roman epic, from Lucretius to Lucan, and to Christian narrative poets such as Prudentius, Sedulius, Juvenecus and Arator.¹⁹ Nor did he hesitate to borrow from *neo*-Latin poetry, especially Vida’s *Christiad*,²⁰ and even from Fracastoro’s famous didactic poem on syphilis. Moreover, Benci and his Jesuit successors do not merely imitate, but seek to improve, Virgil – if not stylistically then morally and spiritually. The French Jesuit Laurent Lebrun (1608–1663) is frank in the prologue to his twelve-book *Ignatiad*, the final poem of his *Virgilius Christianus*,²¹ when he proposes that Ignatius is not merely a more pious hero than Aeneas, he is an even better soldier; that the founding of the Society of Jesus was a more noble end for an epic than the founding of Rome, and so on.²²

Whose side are you on?

The Jesuits were, of course, far from the first centonists, and modern classicists may be less interested in how they cobbled together Virgilian verses than in how they engaged with the *Aeneid* as a whole: whether they appropriated or resisted its secular imperialism; how, and to what ends, they recast its heroes, gods and goddesses, its supporting characters; and perhaps

¹⁷ *QM*, bk 2.398–409, discussed at *QM*, 50.

¹⁸ *QM*, 58.

¹⁹ See Gwynne *QM*, 35–45.

²⁰ Gwynne (*QM*, 59) suggests that Vida’s poem is a more plausible structural model for *QM* than the first six books of the *Aeneid*.

²¹ *Virgilius Christianus: Eclogae XII. Psycurgicon sive De cultura animi Solom. Eccl. cap. XII. Ignatiados libri XII. Opuscula selecta XII*, 1661, Paris, 201–28 (= the third part of Lebrun’s propaedeutic discourse on epic).

²² The 17th-century Neapolitan Jesuit Niccolò Giannettasio styled himself “Parthenius” after his city of birth, but also to honour the Virgin and Virgil’s teacher. His unfinished epic on the wanderings of St Francis Xavier is discussed by Elisabeth Klecker, in ‘*Amor addidit alas: ein neulateinisches Epos über die Missionsreisen des H. Franz Xaver S.J.*’, in R. Haub & J. Oswald, S.J. (eds), *Franz-Xaver – Patron der Missionen: Festschrift zum 450. Todestag*, 2002, Regensburg. Giannettasio’s *Nautica*, though a didactic poem, takes its bearings from the heroic Virgil, as Claudia Schindler has demonstrated in ‘*Niccolò Partenio Giannettasios Nauticorum libri VIII: Ein neulateinisches Lehrgedicht des 17. Jahrhunderts*’, *NLJ* 3 (2001), 145–76.

especially, whether they amplified Virgil's "other" voices: the Didos, Camillas, Amatas, and Turnuses. In *The Other Virgil*, Craig Kallendorf limns the early modern backstory to that familiar struggle for the soul of the *Aeneid* in 20th-century Virgilian criticism, the debates over its "optimism" or "pessimism" about the new Augustan order.²³ In particular, Kallendorf's discussion of anti-imperialist readings of Alonso de Ercilla's vernacular epic, *La Araucana*, published in three instalments (Madrid, 1569, 1578, 1589), on the Spanish conquest of Chile, provides a useful comparator for early modern Jesuit epics of spiritual conquest. The jury is out on whether Ercilla had serious moral misgivings about the Spanish imperial enterprise, in which he himself participated, but he certainly inspires sympathy for the native Araucanans and their chief – perhaps more than Virgil did for his indigenous Italians.

It may not be surprising to learn, however, that this sort of moral ambiguity is generally absent from Jesuit Latin epic. Benci's aims and allegiances are clear from the outset. His primary goal is to recruit for the missions and inspire future martyrdoms for the greater glory of God; and indeed, as Gwynne points out, to strengthen the case for beatification and canonisation of the Cuncolim five, whose leader, Rodolfo Acquaviva, was the nephew of the Jesuit Superior General, Claudio Acquaviva.²⁴ Fundamentally, then, our poet harnesses the cultural power and prestige of the *Aeneid* to tell an edifying story of Christian triumph over heathen superstition. As such, and in its overwhelmingly negative representation of Indian religion, *QM* is a confronting text for the post-colonial reader.²⁵ We are led to understand the rejection of Christian cult not as an historical instance of misguided political resistance to the religion of a colonial oppressor, but rather as the manifestation of a diabolical and perennial revolt against the one true God.²⁶ I bypass for present purposes the interesting issue of the representation of gods, angels and demons, Christian and pagan, in Benci's and later Jesuit epic, but it may well be wondered whether there is any trace in the poem of that famous Jesuit missionary principle of "accommodation" to local beliefs and customs.²⁷

²³ *The Other Virgil: 'Pessimistic' Readings of the Aeneid in Early Modern Culture*, 2007, Oxford.

²⁴ *QM*, 2 and *passim*.

²⁵ For the historical detail of his narrative, Benci relied heavily on the official report of the Cuncolim massacre from Alessandro Valignano, Provincial of Goa, Claudio Acquaviva (reproduced in an appendix to *QM*, 690–708). Benci also drew on other sources for ethnographic and natural-historical detail. I am grateful to Paolo Aranha for bringing to my attention to Casanatense MS 1889, which contains illustrations, probably by a local artist, of some of the religious practices described by Benci. (Benci cannot however have seen this particular manuscript, as it was held in Lisbon until 1628). See 'The Codex Casanatense 1889', (special issue of) *Anais de Historia de Alem-Mar* 13 (2012).

²⁶ Cf. Jacob Masen's "Miltonian" *Sarcotis*, first published in the third part of his *Palaestra Eloquentiae Ligatae*, (Cologne, 1657).

²⁷ For a recent review of Jesuit views of "accommodation", which go back to a letter of St Ignatius in 1549 to Alfonso Salmeron and St Peter Canisius on adapting to the "wits and affections" of those with whom they had to deal in their mission to Ingolstadt, see A. I. Prieto, 'The Perils of Accommodation: Jesuit Missionary Strategies in the Early Modern World', in *Journal of Jesuit Studies* 4 (2017), 395–414.

And if not sympathy for the devil *per se*, do we catch any echoes of Virgil’s “other voices” in Benci’s representation of the Indians who passionately defend their ancestral gods against the Portuguese?

In book 1 we first meet the Italian Rodolfo Acquaviva, *primus inter pares* of the epic’s five heroes, who is impatient for martyrdom after a frustrating sojourn at the court of the Mughal Emperor Akbar in Northern India, a narrative element which corresponds, structurally, to Aeneas’ detention by Dido. Akbar is, of course, no love interest for Rodolfo, even if the emperor does attempt to “seduce” the missionary with gifts, favours and intellectual delights. The Muslim Akbar (1542–1605) – a captivating historical figure, who hosted not only Jesuits, but Jains, Hindus and even atheists at his interfaith conferences in Fatehpur Sikri – receives a subtly different character portrait from the Hindus of the South and from his co-religionary, the “savage” Idal Khan, sultan of Bijapur, who wages a border war with the Christians for control of Salcete. Notwithstanding his host’s great magnanimity and learning, however, Acquaviva longs to give him the slip, frustrated by the lack of spiritual fruit the missionaries have gleaned at court: “What is the point of such love, such devotion in my heart, if they are not used and all this work is thrown aside? See! We left the Mughal territory unscathed and we have not yet suffered wounds. We stood ready for the fight, but lost no blood”.²⁸

Acquaviva’s prayers and meditations are answered by the apparition of his guardian angel, the counterpart of Mercury in *Aen.* 4, except that here, significantly, the divine intervention has been solicited *by* the hero. The future martyr is granted a dream vision, under the careful supervision of his angel, of the torture and deaths of the early Christians and English Jesuits. As Acquaviva contemplates these grim tableaux of execution, corresponding to contemporary Jesuit painting commissions in Rome,²⁹ the angel instructs him (and, by extension, us) to look, hear and *feel*, prescribing the correct – if to modern minds almost incomprehensible – responses to these “wondrous” sights (bk 1.307–512). Benci’s epideictic poetic practice draws on Ignatius’ *Spiritual Exercises*, with its systematic exploitation of the senses and passions

²⁸ *Quo tam cupido, / Quo studium hoc animis, si cessant omnia, et omnis / Amissus labor? En Mogorum decessimus oris / Incolumes; nec dum nobis ad vulnera ventum est. / In pugna stetimus, sine sanguine* (bk 1.93–96; Gwynne’s translation with some alterations).

²⁹ At bk 1.245–52, as Gwynne points out, the poet compares the heavenly vision granted to Rodolfo with the frescoes by Niccolò Circignani at Santo Stefano Rotondo, in the Hungarian College in Rome; the English martyrs celebrated at bk 1.516–41 correspond to a series of five large copperplate engravings attributed to Giovan Battista de’ Cavalieri (c. 1525–1601), printed first in Richard Verstegan, *Descriptiones quaedam illius inhumanae et multiplicis persecutionis, quam in Anglia propter fidem sustinent Catholice Christiani* (Rome, 1584), and later included in an edition of *Ecclesiae militantis triumphus* (Rome, 1585). Cf. Jeronimo Nadal’s *Adnotationes et meditationes in Evangelia* (Antwerp, 1594). See Gwynne, *QM*, 78–85. For an overview of Jesuit art in Rome at the time of the poem’s composition, see also G. A. Bailey, *Between Renaissance and Baroque: Jesuit Art in Rome, 1565–1610*, Toronto, 2003.

to lead us to predetermined spiritual ends.³⁰ While we are broadly reminded of the parade of heroes in *Aen.* 6, the angelic ekphrasis, guiding the hero's / reader's attention point by point – leaving nothing, as it were, to the wandering imagination – is in harmony with an emerging rhetorico-spiritual strategy in the Society of Jesus to channel and focus emotion through multi-media imprinting, a strategy that would find impressive expressions in Jesuit art, emblematics and school drama.³¹ The angel's instructions to Acquaviva (and elsewhere, the poet's to the reader) are, however, only one aspect of the assiduous parsing of characters' thoughts and emotions throughout the poem – a feature of Benci's and later Jesuit epics that is much more conspicuous than in the *Aeneid*.³² Few heroes of Jesuit epic, at any rate, could be accused of the taciturnity of Aeneas, even if their "speeches" are sometimes delivered in the form of private prayer.³³

Benci also influences us to come to the "right" conclusions about Christians and Indians by cross-hatching contemporary figures and events with classical, especially Virgilian, characters and episodes. Sometimes the Virgilian typology is evident from direct verbal allusions; elsewhere, as in the aforementioned parallel between Akbar and Dido, it is more situational. Faithfulness to the letter or even spirit of the Virgilian narrative is, of course, less important for Jesuit poets than the events of sacred history or hagiography. Yet the retrofitting of current or historical events to Virgilian episodes and characters undoubtedly enhances their memorability and imbues them with both ideological colour and affective power. Gwynne has observed (*QM*, 26) that the journey of the five companions to the rebellious city of Cuncolim in the third book, which had fortuitously included a ferry crossing, broadly recalls the katabasis of Aeneas in *Aen.* 6. But even before the Jesuits' arrival in Cuncolim, Benci has primed us to regard its citizens as living in a spiritual Hell on Earth. At the beginning

³⁰ Gwynne (*QM*, 28) finds allusions to the *Spiritual Exercises* in book 4, where Acquaviva retells, for the benefit of his companions, the lecture he gave to the Emperor Akbar on Christ's life and passion. On affective imprinting through *performance* of emotions, see the Introduction to Haskell & Garrod (n.12 above).

³¹ This is a large topic, but see e.g. R. Dekoninck, *Ad Imaginem. Statuts, fonctions et usages de l'image dans la littérature spirituelle jésuite du XVIIe siècle*, 2005, Geneva; J. O'Malley, S.J. (ed), *Art, Controversy and the Jesuits: The Imago primi saeculi (1640)*, 2015, Philadelphia; W. de Boer, K. A. E. Enenkel & W. Melion (eds), *Jesuit Image Theory*, 2013, Leiden; R. Dekoninck, M. Delbeke, A. Delfosse & K. Vermeir, 'Performing Emotions at the Canonization of Ignatius of Loyola and Francis Xavier in the Southern Low Countries', in Haskell & Garrod (n.12 above) 187–210.

³² Gwynne aptly observes that the poet's primary purpose is "to evoke the [martyrs'] emotions and feelings (*sensus*) experienced throughout their dangerous mission and make the action present for his Jesuit readership as a means of preparing this audience for martyrdom" (*QM*, 69). I suggest that the poem might also be understood as a demonstration of the Ignatian method for making "elections" in the *Spiritual Exercises*. Thus Vicente acts as spiritual director to Rodolfo, e.g. in bk 2.200–01: "Why do you hesitate? Do your emotions take your thoughts in different directions? Trust in God. The Lord himself commands this" (*Quid dubitas? Rapiunt animum in contraria sensus? Fide Deo, Deus ipse iubet*).

³³ D. Feeney, 'The taciturnity of Aeneas', *CQ* 33.1 (1983), 204–19. See e.g. the long passage of internal dialogue by Acquaviva at *QM*, bk 1.80–205.

of the third book he gives us a glimpse of the Virgilian Tartarus in his description of the central temple, which encloses shrines to the “monstrous gods” served by “foul-smelling priests” (*monstriferum (heu scelus indignum!) sacraria divum, / ... et passim grave olentes ... ministri* (bk 3.41–43).³⁴ In good Ignatian fashion the poet invites us to “composition of the place” and “application of the senses” – to the darkness, the smoke, the heavy perfume, swarming bodies, clapping, shrieking – to assist us to imagine ourselves, as it were, at the very gates of Hell.³⁵ As in Virgil’s limbo, we encounter boys and girls on the threshold of the Underworld, but here indiscriminately mixed with old men and married women (*Ipsius ante adyti fauces caecumque cubile / Agminis horrifici, Stygiarum lustra ferarum, / Permisti senibus pueri, nuptisque puellae*, bk 3.49–51). Their animalistic dancing and “lascivious songs” striking the “confused air” (*lascivis cantibus auras / confusas feriunt*, 57–58) are inspired by the demon Phorbus, who will foment blind rage in the Hindu population by appealing to the honour of their (imaginary) idols.

The full extent of the influence of *QM* on the Jesuit epic tradition has yet to be determined.³⁶ If, as Gwynne suggests, it became the model for later epics on the Society’s martyrs, I confess that I am aware of surprisingly few devoted to such themes.³⁷ The best-known is the *Paciecidos libri xii* (Coimbra, 1640) by Bartolomeu Pereira, professor of Scripture at the Jesuit college of Coimbra, which celebrates the life and martyrdom in Nagasaki in 1626 of the poet’s cousin, Francisco Pacheco (1592–1626). Pereira’s epic was published in the year of the Society’s first centenary, in the context of a ferment of festivities and self-congratulation,³⁸ yet after the Japanese mission had stalled. As Carlota Urbano has noted, Pereira looks forward at the end of his poem to a renewed missionary push into Japan, so that the seeds of the martyrs sown during the “Christian century” may not perish without spiritual fruit.³⁹ Like the *Aeneid*, the *Paciecid* is in twelve books and celebrates a single hero whose glorious name is commemorated

³⁴ Variation on Gwynne’s translation. The climax of the third book (589–782) is the description of a Hindu festival, culminating in grisly self-sacrifice, which can be seen as a diabolical inversion of the parade of heroes in Virgil’s Underworld. Gwynne (*QM*, 510) also draws attention to the Lucretian rites of Cybele.

³⁵ “Like that infernal place and those accursed doors that administer punishment to the guilty under a dark night, they bristle with perpetual shadows and a gloomy light” (*non secus infernae sedes, scelerataque claustra / Quae poenas sontum exercent sub nocte profunda, / Perpetuis horrent tenebris, ac lumina furvo*, bk 3.46–48). Cf. Ignatius’ meditation on Hell in the *Spiritual Exercises* (First Week, 5th Exercise).

³⁶ See Gwynne’s useful leads in his chapter on the poem’s reception, including passages culled for poetic handbooks, and its use as a quarry for centonic compositions, both within and beyond the Jesuit order (*QM*, 94–103). I have found no obvious homage to Benci in book 3 of Carolus Werpaeus’ *De raptu Manresano Sancti Ignatii de Loiola* (Antwerp, 1647), which is dedicated to the Jesuit missionaries in the East.

³⁷ Gwynne, *QM*, 101. Gwynne rightly notes *QM*’s instant success and healthy publication history, its exploitation in poetic textbooks, and its possible influence on contemporary and later vernacular epics, including Tasso’s (*QM*, 94–103).

³⁸ See e.g. O’Malley (n.31 above).

³⁹ C. Urbano, ‘The *Paciecidos* by Bartolomeu Pereira S.J. – an epic interpretation of evangelisation and martyrdom in 17th century Japan’, *Bulletin of Portuguese-Japanese Studies* 10–11 (2005), 61–95.

in its title. Klecker has demonstrated that a subtle Virgilian thread winds through it, even down to the placement of half-lines.⁴⁰ Yet the poem has a larger and much more miscellaneous cast of characters and pullulates with mythical creatures, dramatic interludes, personified vices and virtues, and gods of both the East Asian and Olympian pantheons, putting us now in mind of Ovid and Prudentius, now of vernacular romance, especially Camões.⁴¹ It is beyond the scope of this paper to pursue Bencian allusions in Pereira,⁴² but it is certainly worth noting, with Gwynne, that both poems conclude with the reception of their heroes into paradise – the five martyrs by the Heavenly Father and the early Jesuits; Pacheco by the recently canonized Ignatius and Francis Xavier. Whether Pereira took his cue from Benci, or whether both were independently inspired by the Renaissance supplement to the *Aeneid* by Maffeo Vegio⁴³ – in which Aeneas and Lavinia marry and are posthumously deified – is, perhaps, less important than the fact that both Jesuits eschew anything like the moral cliff-hanger of Aeneas' killing of Turnus. It is true that at the end of Jacob Bidermann's *Herodiad* the soul of the poem's eponymous antihero flees ignominiously to the Underworld, like Turnus in the closing lines of the *Aeneid*, but there is no question of Herod's fate being undeserved.⁴⁴

Notwithstanding differences in style and storyline we can begin to identify some recurring features of Jesuit Latin epic and a Jesuit way of proceeding with the *Aeneid*. We have already noted the common genesis of these poems in the environs of the Jesuit college; the didactic captioning of characters' emotions; and the attempt to draw readers – the young men of those colleges – into the spiritual-heroic enterprise.⁴⁵ Finally, Jesuit poets often subvert the Virgilian model as they emulate it, challenging its secular imperialism and the ethos of classical heroism. If Benci's martyrs are *de facto* Trojans, and Acquaviva their Aeneas, who must lead them into battle against the hot-headed Hindu Turnus, Alexindas, the Jesuits' spiritual victory over the Indians is (perversely) their temporal defeat. In both Benci's and Pereira's epics, we

⁴⁰ See E. Klecker, 'Ein Missionar in Japan auf den Spuren des Aeneas: die *Paciecis* des Bartholomaeus Pereira, S.J. (Coimbra, 1640)', in D. Briesemeister & A. Schoenberger (eds), *De litteris neolatinis in America Meridionali, Portugallia, Hispania, Italia cultis*, 2002, Frankfurt, 99–112. Klecker points out, for example, that the *Paciecis* begins not with the departure of the hero from his homeland or arrival in Japan, but with his flight by sea (101). Note, however, that the books of Pereira's poem do not map neatly onto Virgil's, and Pacheco, as Klecker shows, shares characteristics of *both* Aeneas and Dido.

⁴¹ On Camões, see Urbano (n.39 above) 80; 83.

⁴² The subject of a promised article by Gwynne.

⁴³ See Gwynne *QM*, 101–02. Klecker (n.40 above) identifies Maffeo Vegio's Renaissance supplement to the *Aeneid* (Venice, 1471) as Pereira's model (death and apotheosis of Aeneas); and for the triumph at the end of the poem, that of Scipio Africanus in Silius Italicus' *Punica* (105; 106, n.25). On Maffeo Vegio see A. Cox Brinton, *Maphaeus Vegius and His Thirteenth Book of the Aeneid: A Chapter on Virgil in the Renaissance*, 2002, London, and the translation in M. Putnam, *Short Epics* (I Tatti Renaissance Library, vol. 15), 2004, Cambridge MA.

⁴⁴ In his *Virgilianae Vindicaciones* (Rome, 1621), Tarquinio Galluzzi, Professor of Rhetoric at the Roman College, devotes some pages to the ending of the *Aeneid*, and whether the poem was finished, but does not comment on Aeneas' rage.

⁴⁵ Klecker (n.40 above) draws attention to the exemplary mode in Pereira's *Paciecis*.

are confronted with the paradox of the Christian side “winning” by suffering torture, death, and – e.g. in the case of the cow-killing Pietro Berno – posthumous defilement. The heroes’ deaths are anticipated from the opening words of *QM*: *felices sociorum obitus* (“the blessed [or happy?] deaths of those companions”).⁴⁶ The ironic tension between the worldly imperial destiny of the Trojans and the heavenly humility of the Christians is brought out even more dramatically in Bidermann’s *Herodias*, whose eponymous “hero”, Herod, is of course no *pius Aeneas*, but an evil *tragic* king, a Senecan monster prepared to murder even his own son. The poem’s true heroes are the innocent babies and defenceless mothers who are slaughtered in manifold and macabre ways in the first book – in ways designed to recall the “beautiful” deaths of the warriors of classical epic and to inflame the emotions of the target audience of schoolboys and seminarians.⁴⁷

A Society of heroes

The decentred and inverted heroism of Bidermann’s *Herodiad* finds a late echo in the *Heroum libri iv* (“Louvain”, 1789) by the Portuguese Jesuit Emmanuel de Azevedo, exiled in the Veneto during the second half of the 18th century.⁴⁸ Azevedo’s epic on the expulsion of his Ibero-American brothers from the Spanish Empire in 1767 forms the first half of a diptych of poems on the long Suppression of the Society of Jesus – the other is the Ovidian *Epistolae ad heroas* – with a dedication to Catherine the Great’s favourite, Grigory Potemkin.⁴⁹ The two halves of the volume are in fact closely related; an elegiac mood punctuates the epic and an heroic one the verse epistles, in which Azevedo exhorts his exiled Jesuit brothers to face their reduced circumstances with courage and constancy. The heroes of Azevedo’s epic are the young American Jesuits who weather not only the storms of a perilous sea voyage to Italy, but the hostility and cajolery of state officials, commoners, members of other religious orders, and even their own relatives, who try to force or persuade them to forsake their vows. They endure continuous humiliation with fortitude, and meet treacherous attempts to divide them with renewed fervour and affirmations of solidarity.

⁴⁶ As Gwynne notes (*QM*, 398), the form *felices* “is loaded with meaning”. It not only echoes the title of the printed account of the massacre by the provincial of Goa, Alessandro Valignano (see n.25 above), but is used only twice in the *Aeneid*, at 3.493–95 (Aeneas hailing Andromache and Helenus) and at 6.669, of the “blessed spirits”; in collocation with *obitus*, where it recalls and contrasts with Dido’s *difficilis obitus* at 4.694 (the only instance of the form *obitus* in the *Aeneid*).

⁴⁷ It is tempting to see a baroque pun on classical “heroism” in the very title of the poem.

⁴⁸ See Y. Haskell, ‘Suppressed Emotions: The Heroic *Tristia* of Portuguese (ex-)Jesuit, Emanuel de Azevedo’, *Journal of Jesuit Studies* 3.1 (2016), 42–60. I am planning an edition and commentary of Azevedo’s poem.

⁴⁹ While the volume was only published in 1789, the *sphragis* and notes to the epic’s fourth book gesture to the suppression of the Society as a future possibility rather than a foregone conclusion. The poem was substantially composed before 1773.

This friendship and unanimity of the young Jesuits is, in fact, the poem's leitmotif. Like Bidermann and Benci, Azevedo celebrates a *collective* heroism, even if he assigns principal hero status to the reluctant leader of the exiled band, Vicente à Castro, the poem's *de facto* Aeneas. The prefatory *argumentum* makes this clear:

“We begin in the first book with their deeds in Porto Sta Maria, where they gathered after they had all been stripped of their vestments. *As Vicente à Castro assumed the role of their Superior, he will be the principal hero of the Poem; but since the outstanding glory of constancy was common to the rest of them, we call them all heroes*”.⁵⁰

Azevedo reveals his Virgilian hand from line one of the poem:

*Gesta, virosque cano, per quos juvenilibus annis
Crevit honos, crevere sacrae decora alta cohortis,
Cui nuper nomen dederant, non fraudibus ullis
Decepti, qua jussa vocant caelestia, pergunt.
Injectos superant obices felicibus ausis.⁵¹
Nec potuere minae, aut series diuturna malorum
Frangere constantes animos, & nescia vinci
Pectora; multum illi & terra jactantur & alto
Vi Procerum. Tantaene animis illustribus irae?*

(“I sing of deeds and men through whom glory grew in young years, [through whom] the lofty ornaments of the sacred band –to which they had recently dedicated themselves – increased. Undeceived by any trickery they go wherever heaven commands. They overcome interposed obstacles with blessed exploits. Neither threats nor an endless series of misfortunes could break their constant

⁵⁰ My translation and emphasis. The synopsis (8) continues: “Among the many people from whom they received gifts and tokens of love we first mention D. Anna Maria Borgia, so that an opportunity for mentioning her ancestor may be introduced. In the second book, Castro narrates to this lady what has happened to himself and his companions since their prescribed exile. In the third book the young men are invited to dinner by the lady and observe the stories of their own Provinces depicted in tapestries, which we judged a good digression for the purposes of poetic ornament. As for those things which transpired among the students [*Tyrones*, sc. “scholastics”, Jesuits aspiring to the priesthood, having pronounced their first vows], we deduced probable events from the circumstances; for the rest, all are completely in conformity with true history, albeit painted with a poetic brush. The students bid farewell to Borgia and their other benefactors and board the ship. And finally in the fourth book their journey from the port of Cadiz to Italy is described”.

⁵¹ In *obices felicibus ausibus* might there even be a reminiscence of the opening words of Benci's *QM*, *Felices sociorum obitus*?

souls, their invincible breasts. They were tossed about by land and sea through the power of princes. Could such anger dwell in noble hearts?”)

(1–9)

*Diva mihi causas memora, quid crimine ficto
Saeva lues inimica probi tot adire labores
Insignes pietate animos, tot volvere casus
Impulerit; cur tanta Erebo concessa potestas.*

(“Goddess, tell me the reasons, why, on account of false charges, a cruel plague, the enemy of virtue, drove souls outstanding in piety to undergo so many trials, unleashed so many misfortunes on them. Why was so much power granted to [the agents of] Hell?”)

(15–18)⁵²

*Urbs antiqua fuit, Trojae tenuere coloni
Exilio expulsi, & fatis maria omnia circum
Jactati, postquam cessit constantia fraudi,
Et celsa ultrices rapuerunt maenia flammae.
Huc extra Herculeis vada circumscripta columnis,
Roscida purpurei fugiens cunabula Solis,
Advectus tuta requievit sede Menestheus.*

(“There was an ancient city, occupied by colonists exiled from Troy, tossed by the fates on all seas, after steadfastness gave way to treachery, and avenging flames overcame the lofty walls. Here Menestheus⁵³ was conveyed, fleeing the dewy cradles of the bright Sun, beyond the straits bounded by the pillars of Hercules, and found safe harbour”).

(39–45)

⁵² Azevedo prudently avoids blaming the kings of Portugal and Spain for the Jesuits’ troubles, nor does he name their state agents, the Marquis of Pombal and Count of Campomanes, implacable enemies of the Society. Instead, the poet summons up the forces of Hell – furies and personified vices – who are despatched by the *Moderator Averni* to spread suspicion and envy of the Jesuits among the fickle public, state and Church officials, and other religious orders. In a long digression on the ambiguous goddess “Freedom” he cocks a snook at the *philosophes*.

⁵³ There was a tradition that the Athenian general, Menestheus, returning from Troy, founded the city which is now El Puerto de Santa María, on the banks of the Guadalete in the province of Cádiz. Azevedo conflates him with the Trojan captain Mnestheus in *Aen.* 5 and 9.

As will be seen in the phrases in bold, Azevedo borrows heavily from the opening of the *Aeneid*.⁵⁴ While a Virgilian shopfront is not unusual in Jesuit (and for that matter other neo-Latin) epic, Azevedo works further allusions to *Aen.* 1 into his first book.⁵⁵ The poem as a whole takes its bearings from the first third of the *Aeneid*, including some passages of extended imitation.⁵⁶ The role of Dido, for example, is played by Anna Maria Borgia, a descendant of the noble family which gave the Society of Jesus one of its first saints, Francis Borgia, canonized in 1670. The absent presence of *Aen.* 2 looms over the poem, although the Suppression of the Jesuits / Fall of Troy is at least hinted at in the *sphragis*. There Azevedo reports that (the Jesuitophile) Pope Clement XIII has died, but surely God will not allow his successor to abandon the American refugees in their hour of need:

*Quaerentes lege obstringi sine lege vagari
 Permittet? Dabit in praedam nil tale merentes?
 Absit ut haec Domino fingam tribuenda benigno.
 Forsitan Omnipotens voto indulgere precantis
 Differet, & laceram ventos submergere navem
 Jactabit saeva impietas; sed amabile quamvis
 Differat auxilium, praesens in tempus omittet,
 Dum minus expectas, ut plus confidere discas
 Cum desperatis coeunt damna omnia rebus;
 Forsitan extinctam dabitur lugere Parentem
 Ob juvenes; sed vivet adhuc composita sepulchro;
 Sic quondam Deus ipse suis praedixit amicis,
 Cum teneram adjuvit signis, dextraque potenti;
 Nosque sui similes voluit, sociosque vocari,
 Et vexilla dedit, qui victa a morte resurgit
 Passus acerba prius ...*

⁵⁴ While the Virgilian allusions are more attenuated for stretches of poem, they are obvious in book openings and at other narrative nodes. Thus the second book begins, like *Aen.* 2, *Conticuere omnes*, as Castro begins to relate his story to Borgia; the third *Incluta sic Heros intentis omnibus unus / Gesta renarrabat comitum, cursusque docebat ~ Sic pater Aeneas intentis omnibus unus* (*Aen.* 3.716–18); the fourth *Panditur interea domus omnipotentis Olympi ~ Panditur interea domus omnipotentis Olympi / conciliumque vocat divum pater* (*Aen.* 10.1–15).

⁵⁵ On the broader phenomenon and recurring features of neo-Latin epic, see most recently F. Schaffnerath, 'Narrative structures in Neo-Latin epic: 16th-19th century', in C. Reitz & S. Finkmann (eds), *Structures of Epic Poetry*, vol. 3, 2020, Berlin, 301–30.

⁵⁶ This is not to suggest that the order of events / verses in the *Aeneid* is preserved by Azevedo. In 1.743, for example, we have a reminiscence of *Aen.* 4.1: *At Matriona gravi jamdudum saucia cura ...*

(“Will [Our Father] permit those seeking to be bound by law [*i.e.* by their religious vows] to wander without law? Will He give over to plunder those who have done nothing to deserve this? Let me not imagine our dear Lord capable of such things! Perhaps the Almighty will defer answering our prayers, and cruel irreligion will boast that the winds have sunk our battered raft – but even if He defers His loving aid, he shall withhold it [only] for the present, until you least expect it, so that you may learn to increase your faith, as all your misfortunes converge in desperate times, [and] it will perhaps be your lot, young men, to grieve for your dead Parent [*sc.* the Society] – yet she will continue to live when she is laid in the tomb! God Himself once foretold this to His friends, sustaining her in her youth with signs and powerful right hand. He wanted us to be like Him, and to be called companions, and He who rises again, having conquered death, having endured bitter sufferings before, gave us our standards!”)

(1018–32)

Constraints of space preclude unravelling the *other* narrative thread that is tied off in these lines, a thread that winds not only through the present poem but through several other Jesuit epics (and is conspicuous *e.g.* in the Society’s 1640 anniversary emblem book, published in Antwerp, the *Imago primi saeculi*): the parallel between the history of the Society and the life of Christ. The sufferings and inevitable (?) death of the Society of Jesus are recast by Azevedo as the passion and necessary prelude to its glorious resurrection.⁵⁷ And if the public vilification, ignominious banishment of, and stripping of the habit from Jesuit scholastics seems to be of a different order from the torture, deaths, and posthumous defilement suffered by the martyrs of Benci’s *QM*, Bidermann’s *Herodiad* or Pereira’s *Paciecid*, Azevedo pulls out all the Virgilian stops to render these young men true heroes of the faith in that long tradition of Jesuit epic.

University of Western Australia, Perth

YASMIN HASKELL
(yasmin.haskell@uwa.edu.au)

⁵⁷ Another Suppression Jesuit epic, Nikodemus Musnicki’s *De Christi ab inferis reditu* (1805, unpublished) is an allegory for the “death” of the Society which looks forward to its “resurrection”. See F. Schaffenrath, ‘Das Höllenfahrtsepos *De Christi ab inferis reditu* (1805) des Nikodemus Musnicki SJ’, in A. Steiner-Weber (ed), *Acta Conventus Neo-Latini Upsaliensis*, vol. 2, 2006, Leiden, 943–53; *idem*, ‘Unedierte lateinische Jesuiteneplik aus dem Fondo Gesuitico der Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale di Roma’, *NLJ* 9 (2007), 328–42.

Fun with Phyllis and Iollas: The game of the name in *Eclogue 3*

Revised from a paper given to the Virgil Society on 11 May 2019

Damoetas

*Phyllida mitte mihi; meus est natalis, Iolla.
Cum faciam vitula pro frugibus, ipse venito.*

(“Send Phyllis to me; it is my birthday, Iollas. When I sacrifice a heifer for the harvest, come yourself”).

Menalcas

*Phyllida amo ante alias, nam me discedere flevit
et longum ‘formose, vale, vale,’ inquit, ‘Iolla.’*

(“I love Phyllis most of all; for she wept that I was leaving, and in halting accents cried, ‘Iollas: farewell, farewell, my lovely!’”)¹

(*Ecl.* 3.76–79)

This essay is essentially a reading of the four verses printed above. The accompanying translation can be taken as representative of conventional modern readings from which I shall, respectfully, deviate. I begin by invoking two early and informed readers of the poem, to sound the keynote.

*molle atque facetum
Vergilio adnuerunt gaudentes rure Camenae.*

(*Hor. Sat.* 1.10.44–45)

¹ Translations by Fairclough & Gould (1999). All following translations are mine.

(“The Muses who take joy in rustic themes have endowed Virgil with subtleness and wit”).

felix Aeneados auctor ...

*Phyllidis hic idem teneraeque Amaryllidis ignes
bucolicis iuvenis luserat ante modis.*

(Ov. *Tr.* 2.1. 533–38)

(“This same person (the blissful one who wrote the Aeneid) had previously as a youth playfully treated the passions of Phyllis and the gentle Amaryllis in the pastoral style”).

Both Horace and Ovid are clearly referring to Virgil and his *Eclogues*. Horace’s reference can pertain nicely to the entire collection, but his notice of the happy Camenae suggests a specific reminiscence of the third *Eclogue*, where, in the only mention of the Camenae in his entire oeuvre, Virgil cites the pleasure that they take in amoebic singing (*amant alterna Camenae*, 59). In the case of Ovid there can be no doubt that the reference is precisely to the context in *Ecl.* 3 where Damoetas and Menalcas exchange their remarks on Phyllis, which are immediately followed by a reference to Amaryllis in their next exchange. Both Horace and Ovid will be called to the stand again, but they are primarily cited at this stage as contemporary witnesses to a witty playfulness that I find pervading the Phyllis-Iollas couplets.

Ecl. 3 opens, impromptu, with the rustics Menalcas and Damoetas engaged in a crude and structurally ragged flyting bout, that continues for 54 verses distributed unequally (in favour of Menalcas) and irregularly. After that Palaemon intervenes as umpire to program an orderly protocol, a more decorous and witty tenour for the competition and, as a set theme, the spring-time fecundity of the countryside, all under the loving patronage of the rustic Muses (55–59):

*Dicite quandoquidem in molli consedimus herba.
Et nunc omnis ager, nunc omnis parturit arbos,
nunc frondent silvae, nunc formosissimus annus.
Incipe, Damoeta; tu deinde sequere, Menalca.
Alternis dicetis; amant alterna Camenae.*

(“Proceed with your discourse once we are seated together on the soft grass. Right now every field, every tree is burgeoning anew; now the woods are in

leaf and this is the most beautiful time of the year. You lead off, Damoetas, and you then follow, Menalcas. You will converse turn and turn about; the rustic Muses love those exchanges”).

For the next 48 verses the singers adhere to the format dictated by Palaemon, while also maintaining thematic connections to the natural aspects of the rustic environment and to the pastoral life of the herds and herders that it sustains. As they resume their verbal thrust and counter-thrust after the interval, the tone is more civil, less strident, and they have evidently taken Palaemon’s reference to the Camenae in earnest: at one point each of them even approvingly cites Pollio, that urbane paragon of literary sophistication, as an approving colleague in their service to the rustic Muses. The ready acquiescence of the herdsmen in Palaemon’s program has already lent a comedic tinge to the whole performance when, immediately after Palaemon has prodded them with the flattering association with the Camenae, Damoetas boldly proclaims Jupiter’s interest in his songs (60–61), and Menalcas responds by claiming to be a beneficiary of the Olympian musician Apollo (62–63). In each case we note that the singer is also careful to link the divinity to the Palaemonian theme of the fertility of the land. The braggadocio of those couplets also marks, not quite so preposterously, the ensuing sequence of four exchanges (64–75) in which the interlocutors sing of their amatory aspirations and endeavours, the proverbial springtime preoccupations of the young, which are all duly linked in some way to the flora and fauna of their environment. The brashly optimistic tone, along with the amatory-pastoral theme, pervading those four exchanges leads smoothly into Damoetas’ couplet that opens the next one (76–79, quoted above). In Menalcas’ response, however, even as the rustic theme and context are maintained, there is a transition to a less sanguine perspective on amatory matters.

The repetition in this exchange of *Phyllis* and *Iollas* is enough by itself to arrest the attention of auditor or reader, particularly so since *Iollas* is an onomastic rarity, occurring in only one other place in the *Eclogues* (2.57) and nowhere in extant Greek or Latin poetry before Virgil. *Phyllis*, by contrast, has a rather storied profile in a variety of situations in both Greek and Latin literature and lore, that include several appearances elsewhere in the *Eclogues*. The poet offers nothing explicit as biographical, legendary or fictional background that would make either name essentially appropriate to its context in *Ecl.* 3, but it must be an axiom of poetic interpretation, *a fortiori* of Virgilian interpretation, that a writer’s silences in such matters invite the reader to probe for reasons, rather than to assume that fictional names have been chosen indifferently. A major objective of my reading, then, is to demonstrate that the names *Phyllis* and *Iollas* accommodate poetic effects of sound, sense and allusion that would not be present if any other names stood in their place. In the case of *Iollas* the prime factor will be

the combined peculiarity of its very rareness and its distinctive vocal features, while for *Phyllis* the greater weight will attach to its full range of semantic and narrative associations. I begin the discussion with a review of some of the more conspicuous aspects of the deployment of the names in the pair of couplets above.

Palaemon's ruling that Menalcas follow Damoetas is observed almost to the letter as far as the two names are concerned, for Damoetas brackets the first line of his couplet and Menalcas his whole couplet with virtually identical sounds: ***Phyllida** mitte ... natalis **iyolla*** and ***Phyllida** amo ... inquit **iyolla***.² The responsorial thematics are fortified prosodically and phonetically, most conspicuously in the echo (appropriately delayed for a few seconds as echoes are) at verse-end of *see-yole-la* by *tee-yole-la*. The effect is accommodated by the trisyllabic and purely vocalic (consisting entirely, that is, of vowels, a semivowel and a liquid) *Iolla*. This is all calculated to catch the ear, and Menalcas' literatim, verbatim and measure for measure appropriation of Damoetas' syllables must be at least partially intended to serve as a foil against which other factors stand in counterpoint. So, for example, the second time that the sequence *ee-yole-la* is uttered, it is part of a direct quotation from the tearful female Phyllis. Can we not then surmise that the poet / performer and his character voiced it, along with the rest of the quotation, in a prolonged, ululating falsetto, that contrasts with the same performer's earlier voicing of the male Damoetas' brusque and birthday-cheery imperative? There are other questions here regarding variable phonetic features in the delivery of the couplets. Some of them (pitch, timbre, volume), being unmarked in the text, are subject to speculation. Others, though, identifiable through familiar conventions of orthography and prosody, will be applied below towards awakening long dormant sound effects. In anticipation of that, it might be helpful to note here something that no knowledgeable person would deny, however much modern readers of ancient poetry might ignore it: the primary path of verbal communication, poetic or otherwise, leads from mouth to ear rather than from text to eye. Since the present reading of the Phyllis-Iollas lines involves a concentrated application of "ear-philology" as a complement to the traditionally dominant "eye-philology",³ a preliminary review of several inter-related topics relevant to Virgilian phonetic poetics will be in order.

One poetic device that Virgil exploits with some frequency is a type of phonomimesis, whereby the sound pattern of a syntactically conventional, concept-bearing, phrase presents an audible image of the semantic content of that same phrase. "The sound must seem an

² Here and throughout this piece I use a couple of makeshift conventions to represent the sounds of Virgil's Latin in a manner intelligible, I hope, to most anglophone eyes and ears. The long syllables of the Latin are presented in bold type. Despite some arbitrariness in the transcriptions of Latin syllables I have assumed that these renderings are more generally congenial than a consistently unambiguous rendering in the IPA symbols would be.

³ I borrow the terms from Jespersen (1922) 24. Cf. Stanford (1967) 1 and *passim*.

echo to the sense”, as Alexander Pope expressed it, with his own apt assonance, in a passage partially inspired by Virgil.⁴ The term preferred here for the device is *Lautmalerei* (“sound painting”).⁵ In anticipation of its application to our passage in *Ecl. 3*, there is an instructive indication of both its traditional place in pastoral poetry and Virgil’s commitment to it in the couplet that opens the entire book of *Eclogues*. The first line contains a catchy imitation of a shepherd’s piping, as Meliboeus addresses Tityrus, who reclines in the shade of a beech tree and, in obeisance to the rustic Muse, plays on his humble pipe:

*Tityre tu patulae recubans sub tegmine fagi
silvestrem tenui Musam meditaris avena.*

The *Lautmalerei* of the first three and a half feet – **tee-tew-re too pah-too-lye re-koo-ban soo** – evidently involved some artful attention to phonetic composition, since it is built into a sequence that resonates, in circumstance, sense, and *sound*, with the opening verses of the first *Idyll* of Theocritus, where Thyrsis addresses a herdsman who is piping in accompaniment to the sound of a pine tree.

Ἄδῦ τι τὸ ψιθύρισμα καὶ ἅ πίτυς, αἰπόλε, τήνα,
ἅ ποτὶ ταῖς παραῖσι μελίσδεταί, ἄδῦ δὲ καὶ τὴ
συρίδες.

The salient imitative syllables can be graphically approximated as **ba-dew tee top seet-hew-brees-ma kye ba-pee-tew sye ... ba-dew de kye-tew / soo-ree**.

Such effects frequently elude both the casual reader of a text and the scrutiny of eye-philologists, even in situations where words or syllables embedded in a phrase or sentence would be pronounced in the same way that they are in isolation. The potential for the eye

⁴ *The sound must seem an echo to the sense:
Soft is the strain when Zephyr gently blows,
And the smooth stream in smoother numbers flows;
But when loud surges lash the sounding shore,
The hoarse, rough verse should like the torrent roar;
When Ajax strives some rock’s vast weight to throw,
The line too labors, and the words move slow;
Not so, when swift Camilla scours the plain,
Flies o’er the unbending corn, and skims along the main* (*Essay on Criticism* 2.365–73).

⁵ I prefer it as a more precise term than “onomatopoeia”, which also commonly refers to the imitative coining of individual words. The distinction can be conveniently illustrated by the final two lines of Tennyson’s ‘Come Down O Maid’: *The moan of doves in immemorial elms / and murmuring of innumerable bees*. Both “moan” and “murmuring” are pre-existing words of onomatopoeic origin that the poet has here placed within a sequence of *Lautmalerei*.

to miss the *Lautmalerei* increases, though, when any of the manifold varieties of sandhi are in play; that is when, in the process of articulation, adjacent phonemes interact to produce audible effects that differ from those of the words in isolation. In such cases, for Latin as customarily read today, the once audible consequences are often lost, being unmarked in the text. Sandhi, a common and usually inadvertent function of speech, can be a significant factor in the multi-stage transmission of words from author's mind to text, from text to reader's eye, from reader's eye to reader's mind, and thence to reader's mouth and on to auditor's ear and mind. The sort of distortions that occur in the transitions can be well exemplified by an English specimen of what our contemporary lexicon recognizes as "mondegreens". The word was devised by Sylvia Wright, an American journalist, who based it on a personal childhood experience. As she listened to her mother reading a sequence from a poem on the death of the Earl of Moray, *They hae killed the Earl o' Moray and they laid him on the green*, her ears and mind received the last seven words as *and the Lady Mondegreen*.⁶ Like the words in the silent text, the sounds that she heard are semantically and syntactically coherent, albeit in quite different ways. Like instances of sandhi in general, mondegreens are common and are most often created involuntarily. A skilled writer, though, can contrive (rather than simply fall into) phrases that say one thing in a silent script and something else in oral delivery and / or auditory perception. The effects of the contrivance might of course be enhanced when the same person is both the writer and the performer.

The composer of the *Eclogues* would also have been the first person to perform them aloud, quite likely without resorting to the text from which subsequent oral performers extracted their own approximation of the poet's intended sounds.⁷ Now, after many centuries over which text and eye have almost completely replaced voice and ear in the communication of Latin poetry, it might be helpful to recall for present purposes some anecdotal testimony from two millennia ago. A poet named Julius Montanus, a contemporary of Virgil, is said to have reported on his personal experience of Virgil's inimitable virtuosity in oral delivery ([Suetonius], *Life of Virgil* 29–30):

Pronuntiabat autem cum suavitate et lenociniis miris. Ac Seneca tradidit Iulium Montanum poetam solitum dicere involaturum se Vergilio quaedam, si et vocem posset et os et hypocrisin; eosdem enim versus ipso pronuntiante bene sonare, sine illo inanes esse mutosque.

⁶ See Konnikova (2014); *OED*³, *s.v.* 'mondegreen'.

⁷ A partially analogous experience for contemporary Anglophones might be reading a text of, say, 'Fern Hill' before or after hearing it as recorded by Dylan Thomas.

(“[Virgil] used to pronounce his words with a polish and wonderfully engaging properties. Indeed Seneca has reported that the poet Julius Montanus was accustomed to saying that he would have appropriated certain effects from Virgil if only he had also been able to appropriate his voice and articulation and dramatic skill; for the same verses that had a fine sonority when he himself was pronouncing them were weak and indistinct without him”).

While Montanus’ reported words offer no specific details on Virgil’s distinctive technique, his general testimony is cited here in anticipation of observations below on vocal effects in the Phyllis-Iollas couplets. In addition to the articulation of sound, other linguistic factors, lexical and syntactic, will also be entertained in the process of teasing out several allusive poetic effects involved with *Phyllis*. A related and overarching consideration, though, lies in the realm of myth and literary tradition.

Ecl. 3 makes no overt reference to the myth of the ill-starred Thracian princess Phyllis, and it presents nothing explicit to identify its Phyllis with anyone outside the fictional environs of the poem. Consequently that myth has seldom figured in modern interpretations.⁸ Conversely, the poem is rarely, if ever, cited as witness to the myth. But, with the ludic modality and mythical subject matter noted by Ovid in mind, I assume an allusive presence for the Phyllis myth that informs both Menalcas’ response (78–79) to Damoetas and his subsequent reference to Phyllis as he exchanges riddles with Damoetas in their final pair of couplets (104–07). Brief prolegomena are in order, then, on the lineaments of the myth and what is known of its literary history.⁹ We are told that the desirable Thracian princess Phyllis passed up on numerous royal Thracian suitors and married an Athenian prince named Demophon (or, in some sources, Acamas), a son of Theseus, who on the way home from the war at Troy stopped briefly in Thrace. He not only married Phyllis but also received her father’s kingdom as dowry. Soon after their marriage he departed, but with the promise of returning by a specified date after attending to obligations back home in Athens. As the couple parted company, Phyllis gave him a little receptacle containing a mystery object, and instructed him to open it should he ever waver in his intention to return. After the time for that return had passed, she went repeatedly to the sea-shore in desperation and called out to him over the waves to no avail. She eventually concluded that he would not return, and cursed him for his faithlessness, before hanging herself from a leafless almond tree. Among various continuations and conclusions to the story, the almond tree figures etiologically in several ways: Phyllis was transformed into an almond tree; the almond trees in the vicinity lost their leaves in sympathetic grief for the

⁸ A recent exception is Fabre-Serris (2013).

⁹ Notwithstanding the absence of the passages from *Ecl. 3* and *Tristia*, Knaack (1909) remains paradigmatic here for its compendious survey of the ancient literary witnesses

death of Phyllis; or Demophon, proving faithful after all, returned too late and embraced the almond tree, which immediately burst into leaf as if, says Servius (on *Ecl.* 5.10), the transformed Phyllis sensed the presence of her husband. In a different conclusion to Demophon's side of the story, localized for some reason in Cyprus, he opened the container and went into a panic when he saw what was in it, and then mounted his horse, which bolted away and threw him off, causing him to fall, fatally, on his sword.

As an appendix to the preceding summary I mention an inconspicuous, but for us potentially significant, phrase that appears in a couple of Greek mythographic reports of the story.¹⁰ They simply say that what the receptacle contained was something sacred to "mother" Rhea. A chain of associations suggests to me that under the circumstances the sacred object had something to do with almonds and the curse of Phyllis. Mother Rhea, although we are not told so in any account of the Phyllis myth, had a vital association with almonds and an almond tree. She was a Thracian avatar of the Anatolian "great mother" goddess known as Agdistis and Cybele, in whose complicated family genealogy almonds and the almond tree figure prominently as powers of fertility and regeneration.¹¹

Although no full narrative of the Phyllis myth survives in a major literary work, we do have several prosaic para-literary summaries from mythographers and scholiasts. There is also ample evidence, from poetic allusions or briefly noted details, that the myth was well known in Augustan times. Particularly noteworthy here is Ovid's *Heroides* 2, a poetic epistle from the aggrieved princess to the unfaithful Demophon. That long poem, hardly a narrative itself, presumes readers with a background knowledge of the overall story, and the same may be said regarding Ovid's briefer notices of Phyllis elsewhere.¹² Another indication to that effect is presented in a passage of the *Culex* (130–34) where neither Phyllis nor the almond tree is even mentioned, but both are clearly identified by association with Demophon and by their position in a catalogue of transmuted trees. A further example of a brief allusion that must expect a reader's knowledge of the background narrative occurs in the following couplet from Propertius (2.24.44–45):

*Parvo dilexit spatium Minoida Theseus,
Phyllida Demophoon, hospes uterque malus.*

("For a brief time Theseus was affectionately attentive towards Minos' daughter and so was Demophon towards Phyllis, each of the men a dishonourable guest").

¹⁰ [Apollod.] *Bibl. epit.* 6.16; Tzetzes, Σ *Lycoph.* 49–62.

¹¹ Pausanias 7.17.10–12.

¹² *Ars* 2.353–55; 3.38, 459–60; *Rem.* 55–56, 591–608; *Tr.* 2.1.533–38.

Such examples invite, if not compel, us to recognize (as Ovid did in his *Tristia*) an allusive presence for the Phyllis of myth among the trees and lovers of the third *Eclogue*.

Other matters preliminary to the reading of the Phyllis / Iolla couplets are intertwined lexical and orthographic complications. The micro-lexicon of almonds has run a complicated course through the long history of the Latin language and its vernacular offshoots.¹³ The best attested set of terms are formed from the base *amygdal-* (Greek ἀμυγδαλ-), which has a presumed origin in western Asia, whence it spread westwards in step with the cultivation of the tree itself. Variants of *amygdal-* occur only very rarely in Latin verse, and are relevant here only for their presence in prose accounts of the Phyllis myth. The two terms that will bear significantly on the reading of the exchange of Damoetas and Menalcas, though, are *amand-* and *phyllis*. While the apparatus of Latin scholarship does not generally acknowledge the currency of either term until several centuries later than Virgil's time, I have previously recognized *phyllis* as a dendronym in both the third *Eclogue* and the seventh (7.59, 63).¹⁴ One of my subsidiary points then was that Latin poetic language appears to play recurrently on the name *Phyllis* on the basis of popular etymologizing linking the Greek and Latin roots φιλ- and *am-*. Consider, *Phyllis amat corylos: illas dum Phyllis amabit ...* (*Ecl.* 7.63). I shall presently expand on that conceit while positing *amanda* as a synonym of *phyllis* in *Ecl.* 3.

The semiology of *phyllis* is further complicated on another plane: not only is it one of a cluster of almond terms, but “almond” is only one of a varied cluster of meanings, several of which are potentially at play, simultaneously or sequentially, in the exchange between Menalcas and Damoetas. If the poet has left open a range of interpretive options to both auditor and reader, editorial discretion, or indiscretion, and orthographic conventions can arbitrarily restrict those options for the modern reader. This is a point too clear to require argument but also too fundamental to leave unmentioned. Every modern text of the poem, by capitalizing words to mark them as proper nouns, effectively disqualifies them in the mind of a compliant reader as common nouns, or as any other homonymous parts of speech. The ancients, having no such convention, could not visually distinguish *Phyllida* from *phyllida* nor *Iolla* (a name) from *iolla* (an exclamatory shout?) in contexts where either is semantically and syntactically feasible. While the poet-performer could mark his intention by vocal inflection, subsequent generations of readers had no marker to guide them. How, then, to take a not entirely hypothetical instance, when Servius (on both *Ecl.* 3.76 and *Ecl.* 3.107) glosses Virgil's *Phyllida* as *amicam communem* (i.e. “prostitute”),¹⁵ do we know whether he means

¹³ For a copiously documented study see Aebischer (1978). The standard inventory of terms found in classical and late antique texts is presented in André (1967) 178.

¹⁴ Egan (1996) 236–37.

¹⁵ On *Phyllis* as “prostitute” see Prop. 2.24.44; Mart. 10.81.1–4; 11.29.1–2, 8. On *amica communis* meaning “prostitute” cf. Petr. 105.3.

that a particular person named Phyllis is an *amica communis* or that *phyllis* is a metonym and synonym for *amica communis*? And, Servius aside, how, indeed, can we dismiss the possibility that Virgil and / or his character Damoetas, had neither of these options in mind? The early texts lacked any orthographic distinction between proper and common nouns, so that *P/phyllis*, in this case, contained potential for poetic ambiguity or polysemy. In what follows, then, I shall recognize *P/phyllis* as both a personal name and as a common noun, metonym and synonym for “almond tree”, on the analogy of numerous other instances of phytonyms explained by mythical metamorphosis (e.g. narcissus, hyacinthus, anemone). That, it should be noted, can coexist with the meanings suggested by Servius’ glosses.

Finally, something must be said about the natural history of the almond tree and cultural lore that derives from it. A salient and well recognized feature of the annual cycle of the almond tree is its early (sometimes as early as January in the northern hemisphere) and spectacular blooming. Pliny, in a lapidary observation, is one among numerous voices from the classical world to recognize this: *floret prima omnium amygdala mense Ianuario* (16.103.1). The tree’s early blossoming is all the more conspicuous since it precedes its leafing-out and transforms the skeletal and wintry blackness of the bare branches into a brilliant display of whites and pastels. Nowadays the event is celebrated around the globe by annual almond blossom festivals in the temperate latitudes where almonds are cultivated. Although there is no direct report of such celebrations in the ancient Greek or Roman world, we can at least surmise that they arose there some time soon after almond cultivation was introduced to the Mediterranean world from the East. There is indeed some cross-cultural evidence from the west Asian homeland of the almond to encourage such conjectures. The fortuitous survival of evidence of a link between almonds, the Phyllis myth and the oriental fertility goddess Rhea-Cybele has already been mentioned, but there is also some leading cultural information from other quarters of the Near East. There is for instance a Jewish spring-time celebration of new-life linked to the blossoming of the almond in the early spring month of Shevat (January-February). This holiday, which has been traced back to late antiquity, is sometimes referred to as the “birthday of the trees”, and is formally known as *Tu B’Shevat*. Other evidence, some as early as the book of Exodus (25.33–34; 37.19–20), demonstrates for some scholars, suggests for others, a nexus of associations involving almond-trees, the Menorah and the “Tree of Life”. Scholars have explored such matters in the wider context of Near Eastern tree cults.¹⁶ I make this sketchy notice with general thoughts in mind of the almond within an east-west cultural *koinē* and in anticipation of possible implications for the collocation of *Phyllis* with Damoetas’ birthday.

¹⁶ Points of entry to the extensive scholarship on such matters are afforded by Yarden (1971); Taylor (1995) 42–48; Haklilli (2001) 36–40.

Guided now, by a dossier of information on *P/phyllis* that, to judge from the contemporary or near-contemporary literary allusions cited above, had become traditional by Virgil's time, we can turn to a line-by-line reading of the Phyllis-Iollas couplets.

Phyllida mitte mihi; meus est natalis, Iolla.

Owing to the morpho-semantic variability, documented for *P/phyllis* and conjectured below for *I/iolla(s)*, this first verse of Menalca's couplet admits of several interpretations including the following, or variations thereof:

1. Send Phyllis to me, Iollas. It's my birthday!
2. Send me a party girl, Iollas. It's my birthday!
3. Provide an almond tree for me, Iollas. It's my birthday!
4. Send me Phyllis – oo-la-la! It's my birthday!
5. Send me a party girl – oo-la-la! It's my birthday!
6. Provide an almond tree for me. Whoopee! It's my birthday!

The first three renderings treat *Iolla*, conventionally, as the vocative of a person's name, while assigning three different meanings to *P/phyllis*. The first one overall follows the traditional interpretation whereby Iollas is a person in control of access to the desirable Phyllis as her master and / or lover. The plausibility of this is supported by the fact that an Iollas has also been named with a similar function as impediment to a would-be lover's access to the desirable youth Alexis in *Ecl.* 2 (1–2 with 56–57). The second rendition differs from the first by regarding *P/phyllis* as a metonym for “prostitute”, on the model of the passages cited from Propertius and Martial¹⁷ and the *amica communis* of Servius' gloss. The third introduces “almond tree” as a translation of *phyllis*, based partly on the conjecture of that tree as an accessory at birthday celebrations or possibly cult festivals (remember mother Rhea of the myth). Besides that, though, the presence of Phyllis as dendronym and metonym for “spring-time” (cf. *Ecl.* 7.59) is appropriate, almost mandated, given the context in which Palaemon's programmatic reference to the fecundity of every tree (*omnis parturit arbos*, 56) is followed by a succession of tree or flower names (*arbos*, 56; *sylvae*, 57; *lauri*, 63; *hyacinthus*, 63; *salices*, 65; *silvestri ex arbore*, 70; *phyllida* 76, 78; *arboribus*, 81; *arbutus*, 82; *salix*, 83).¹⁸ The second triad of renditions retains these possible meanings for *P/phyllis*, while in each case replacing

¹⁷ See n.15 above.

¹⁸ For *Phyllis* in another cluster of dendronyms see *Ecl.* 7.52–68 and Egan (1996) 236–37.

I/iolla, as a personal name, with expressive exclamations. The latter are somewhat arbitrarily chosen, but “whoopee” is meant to convey a generally celebratory tone, while “oo-la-la” suggests concupiscent anticipations of the desirable birthday companion.

The poet has left several possible ways of construing Menalcas’ line, and individual auditors or readers will, whether reflexively or upon deliberation, choose among them. So far unmentioned is the likelihood of the Thracian princess Phyllis playing, at least fleetingly, in an interpreter’s thoughts. Any notion, though, that she could be, in anything like a literal sense, the object of Menalcas’ present imperative must be immediately dismissed as absurd, given the timing and *mise en scène* of the pastoral drama. So we must put Thracian Phyllis on file until we hear from Damoetas, who, as immediate auditor of Menalcas’ words, also has a complicated menu of interpretive options. Indeed, as he pursues his unique task of capping his rival’s words, he conspicuously and selectively quotes and adapts some of them. In the process, as I shall presently argue, he replaces or supplements Menalcas’ local *P/phyllis* of the moment by giving a presence, even a voice, to the remote Phyllis of the mythical past.

The standard interpretation of the next verse – *cum faciam vitula pro frugibus, ipse venito* – flows along with that for the preceding one, with a second imperative apparently addressed to one Iollas. It is conventional to read Damoetas’ words as inviting this Iollas to attend a later celebration of an agricultural ritual, possibly the Ambarvalia. The invitation is understood as an implicit notice that Iollas’ presence is not wanted at the birthday festivities that would be graced by Phyllis; and also as a facetious allusion to the mandatory abstinence from erotic activities on such ritual occasions.¹⁹ But the invitation is also fully consistent with the theme of the renewed fecundity of the land, earlier introduced by Palaemon. On top of that, the ludicrous impertinence and implausibility of a herdsman’s invitation to an event involving the expensive sacrifice of a heifer points up the witty insincerity of words ostensibly calculated to gratify Iollas and make him amenable to the request for Phyllis. By any interpretation applied to it, l. 77 not only adheres to Palaemon’s program but also conforms to the prevailing ludic tone that will be maintained in Menalcas’ reply. Apart from that, the second verse of Damoetas’ couplet has no apparent bearing on Menalcas’ response. It is as if Menalcas, after hearing l. 76 through to its end, immediately set about composing his capping reply, before hearing l. 77. In that reply, as already noted, he opens and closes his whole couplet with the same words that Damoetas used to open and close the first verse:

*Phyllida amo ante alias, nam me discedere flevit
et longum ‘formose, vale, vale,’ inquit, ‘Iolla.’*

¹⁹ This explanation is found as early as Servius *ad loc.* and routinely adopted by modern interpreters.

In revisiting this couplet the first thing to recall is that it not only begins with three syllables identical to those that open the preceding couplet, but its first two and a half pre-caesuran feet also form a prosodic match to their counterpart in the previous couplet. In emulating Damoetas, however, Menalcas exercises considerable, although generally unnoticed, poetic variation. His first line begins with a string of four words, a formation highly marked by sandhi, since it contains three consecutive elisions at word boundary, which reduce the ten syllables presented to the eye down to the seven that meet the ear. *Phyllida amo ante alias* thus represents vocables that the same alphabet might with greater phonetic accuracy represent as *phyllidamandalias* or, when conventionally marked for scansion, as *phÿllidā / māndālī / ās //*. In these transcriptions I replace the *t* of *ante* with *d* to reflect the likely voicing of the stop consonant positioned between the sonant *n* and the following vowel. The transcriptions, like the oral delivery that they represent, obscure the word boundaries. The consequence is that both the transcription and the sound offer at least two options for the recovery of a sequence of separate words on the part of an auditor without a text:

1. *Phyllida amo ante alias*: I love Phyllis more than (or before) the others.
2. *Phyllida amandam alias*: Phyllis (*i.e.* “almond tree”) alias Amanda (*i.e.* “almond tree”).

The Latin of option 1 visually presents itself to a reader who, however, when reading aloud will also hear (but perhaps not heed) the Latin of option 2. Only the first one is by itself a complete and intelligible syntagm, and that continues to be true when the whole sentence has been completed after the caesura. That, however, does not mean that it is the first or only option to enter the mind of an auditor and perhaps lodge itself there. Certainly the continuation of Menalcas’ sentence after the caesura disqualifies *Phyllida amandam alias* syntactically, but it cannot retroactively obliterate perceptions initially formed by the sounds of those words. What, then, might those perceptions and their basis have been for Latinophone auditors?

At the caesura, an interval of silence whose duration would be controlled by the poet / performer, the auditor who has heard *Phyllida amandam alias* will momentarily await a continuation of the sentence that might complete and validate those words syntactically. Then, by the time at which that transitory possibility has been eliminated, the juxtaposition of *P/ phyllida* and *amandam* informed by *alias* has already awakened the knowledgeable auditor’s memory to the mythical connection of Phyllis with the almond tree. It has, indeed, opened the whole traditional dossier on “Phyllis”, with its numerous associations: amatory, botanical, pastoral, seasonal, metonymic, lexical and tragically lamentable, as Menalcas redirects his rival’s citing of *P/ phyllis* from its primary focus on personal amatory and celebratory concerns of the moment towards the wider realms of folkloric, literary, and linguistic tradition.

Should there be any suspicion that what is here perceived as the poet's clever manipulation of the synonymous dendronyms *phyllis* and *amanda* is nothing more than this auditor's accidental mondegreen, that doubt can be allayed with the aid of two other Augustan poets who were well acquainted with *Ecl.* 3 and its themes. In the final two verses of *Heroides* 2, Ovid's patently Phyllis-centred poem, the heroine anticipates her suicide caused by Demophon and writes her own projected epitaph:

**PHYLLIDA DEMOPHOON LETO DEDIT HOSPES AMANTEM.
ILLE NECIS CAUSAM PRAEBUIT, IPSA MANUM.**

Compare the words in bold type bracketing the hexameter to Virgil's *Phyllida amandam*. Note also the assonantal match, virtually a rhyme, of the closing syllables of each verse: *hospes amantem* and *ipsa manum*, both phrases referring to Phyllis, who is about to become an almond tree.²⁰ The second helpful Augustan poet, Horace, presents some more subtle and perhaps more complex evocations of the Phyllis of *Ecl.* 3. There are many phrases and motifs common to the Phyllis couplets of Damoetas and Menalcas and one of Horace's *Odes* (4.11).²¹ Of particular relevance in the latter is an inamorata who is addressed both as *Phyllis* (3) and as *Amanda* (34).²² This beloved Horatian Phyllis Amanda, like her Virgilian namesake, features in a verdant spring-time setting on a festive occasion, a birthday celebration no less, with an auspicious ritual animal sacrifice. Horace's Phyllis Amanda, moreover, is one who sings in troubled circumstances at the end of the poem, in contrast to the buoyant ambience of its beginning. Horace even seems to recall Virgil's Phyllis Amanda by inverting one of his tropes: whereas Menalcas claimed Phyllis as his first love (*amo ante alias*), she is announced by the poetic voice of the *Ode* as a last love (*finis amorum*, 32).²³ I conclude that the words of Virgil, Horace and Ovid and their respective contexts attest to a lexical cluster, already current in Augustan times, linking the name of the mythical Phyllis and two poetic terms for the almond-tree.

For any auditor attuned to them, the allusions encapsulated in *phyllidamandalias* inevitably inform the remainder of Menalcas' couplet, which features more phonetically based word-play:

*nam me discedere flewit
et long/um for/mosew, wa/lew, wale', / inquit, I/olla.'*

²⁰ I am grateful to Luke Houghton for pointing out the emphatic assonance at the end of the pentameter and also for several other perceptive comments following my oral presentation to the Virgil Society.

²¹ Various affinities of the Horatian *Ode* and the Virgilian *Eclogue* are noted by Thomas (2011) 216, 218.

²² I construe a vocative, *Amandā*, here but my point would not be entirely disqualified by the conventional reading of an ablative *amandā* in agreement with *voce* in the following verse.

²³ Cf. Thomas (2011) 218.

The weeping Phyllis here, in her purported lengthy and / or long-distance (*longum*) farewell to Menalcas, must call to mind her Thracian namesake, who mourned her beloved Demophon for a long time and at a long distance, as she made repeated visits to the seashore where she cried out over the waves for him.

Having previously suggested that the performer's discretionary vocal interpretation of Phyllis' words might have appropriately adapted them to the context, I turn now to consideration of related features of prosody and effects of sandhi. Menalcas' introduction and quotation of Phyllis' words recall Pope's dictum on poetic sound that seems an echo to the sense. The pairing in l. 78 of the long final syllable of *alias* with a caesural pause introduces an extended prosodic sequence leading down to the beginning of the third foot of l. 79:

/-ās || nām / mē || dīs/cēdērē / ||| flēvīt // ēt || lōn/gūm || fōr/mō-

11 of the 14 syllables at the end of one verse and the beginning of the other are long while, of the 3 short syllables, the 2 in *discedere* are mandated by the metre. Since, moreover, the sequence includes four caesurae (||), one diaeresis (|||) and a pause at verse end (//), the total of fourteen syllables would probably take an unusually long time to voice even without any deliberate exaggeration of the effect by the performer. Hardly accidental to it all is the placement of *longum* spanning the first two feet of l. 79 and set off, for emphasis, we might suppose, between two unusually early caesurae. This prosodically marked isolation of *longum* presents the word as an echo of both the sound (*i.e.* the prolongation of the sequence in its delivery) and the sense of its context. It also draws the listener, phonetics and prosody aside, into questions of semantics: does the adverbial *longum* relate to the temporal duration of Phyllis' weeping, the distance from which she weeps and speaks, or to the time that she uses to utter the words that the poet and Menalcas attribute to her in l. 79? All three possibilities might enter the mind of any reader familiar with an element in the story of the forlorn Thracian princess, as expressed in something like the same terms that Ovid would apply to her repeated lamentations on the seashore just before her death and metamorphosis (*Rem. Am.* 595–98):

*Et modo, qua poterat, longum spectabat in aequor,
nunc in harenosa lassa iacebat humo.
'Perfide Demophoon!' surdas clamabat ad undas,
ruptaque singultu verba loquentis erant.*

The same three possibilities are also enlivened by the sounds of the words attributed to Phyllis in l. 79, '*formose, vale, vale*,' inquit, '*Iolla*'. Let us, as a temporary expedient, isolate her words in *oratio recta*:

formose vale vale Iolla

As noted earlier, *Iolla* contains no obstruents; only vowels, a semi-vowel and sonants. That observation can, once *inquit* has been excised, extend back over the whole hypothetical sequence above. Another feature of the sequence is that at three different word boundaries the vowel *e* is followed by a semi-vowel. Adjusted for sandhi effects, then, the words can be phonetically approximated as follows

for-moe-sew-wa-lew-wa-ley-yee-yole-la.

While the single grapheme *i* of *Iolla* is metrically one short syllable, it is here transcribed by the sequence *y-ee-y* which recognizes three different articulatory functions: first a glide (*y*) between the *e* of *vale* and the vocalic *i* (*ee*), then the vocalic *i* (*ee*) itself, and finally a glide (*y*) between the vocalic *i* and the *o* of *iolla*. The postulated four-word sequence of sandhi-adjusted sounds evokes moaning, whooping, howling, ululating or yodelling. The effects would be enhanced should a poet / performer ornament the delivery with variations of volume and with abrupt rising and descending fluctuations in pitch. Those are characteristics of yodelling, that timeless pastime of herders in the mountains, most typically, for many, those mountains fringing Virgil's Transpadane homeland. That same area was also the current, or recent, administrative domain of Pollio, that enthusiast for pastoral poetry with the yodesque name that will soon be sounded out in three successive couplets (*Ecl.* 3.84–89). Other circumstances specific to the content of Menalcas' couplet are consistent with the yodelling model, for the quoted words of Phyllis are voiced over a long distance and / or over a long interval of time. Moreover the couplet's closing trisyllabic *ee-yole-la* resembles not only common yodelling phrases, but also the onomatopoeic words for the activity in several languages of the Alpine region.²⁴ These words include the common German *jodeln*, but also such lesser known German items as *jolen*, *jola* and *jobla*, which bring us phonetically closer to Latin *iolla*. It is not, indeed, an altogether implausible conjecture that a Latin verb for yodelling (and there surely was at least one)²⁵ was **iollare* and, further, that it might, after mutating phonetically during the centuries of its "hibernation" in the spoken language, have an attested modern reflex in French *iouler*, where the initial *i* is also syllabic. This all indicates an early and enduring pan-Alpine set of mimetic yodel terms extending across the

²⁴ See for example the opening paragraphs in Baumann (2016) and earlier literature cited there.

²⁵ *iubilare* (conjectured as derivative of the exclamatory *io*) has previously been identified in that role. Cf. Baumann (2016) with earlier literature; also McKinnon (1996) 215–16. A key text here is Paul. exc. Fest. 74.23 (92 L): *Iubilare est rustica voce inclamare*. Note, though, the earlier Varro, *LL* 6.68.1–4 with what seems to be a citation from a comedy: *ut quiritare urbanorum, sic iubilare rusticorum; itaque hos imitans †Aprisius ait: 'io bucco! Quis me iubilat?'*

geo-linguistic interface of the Italo-Romance and Germanic languages, and now first attested, possibly, in the third *Eclogue*.

To this point the description of the sound effects in l. 79 has been premised on a text that lacks the metrically and syntactically crucial *inquit*. The question now is how the presence of those two syllables might affect the perceived sound effects. Between the second *vale* and *inquit* there is a hiatus, an event unmarked by any grapheme in either ancient or modern Latin texts and so, as commonly assumed, devoid of anything *clearly* audible. And yet this hiatus prevents the two adjacent syllables from merging, unmetrically, into one. The absence of a visible sign only disguises the reality that hiatus commonly involves activity of the speech organs with attendant sandhi effects. In Latin, and numerous other languages, that activity might be the articulation of an unwritten “epenthetic” glide mediating the transition from one vowel to the other, as seen above in *iolla*. A second possibility, seemingly more congenial to our particular Virgilian context, is an intervening glottal stop (*i.e.* ʔ in IPA notation), articulated by the abrupt and complete blocking of air-flow at the larynx followed by an equally abrupt release into the following vowel. The percussive release, often called a “glottal attack”, intensifies the volume at the onset of the second vowel. Within the environment of the *vale-inquit* assemblage, the abrupt insertion of the glottal stop would foreshorten the ordinarily long vowel of *valē* (a “shortening in hiatus” as Latinists frequently call it), while the resumption of voicing in the “attack” would lend audible emphasis to the long initial syllable of *inquit*. This is all to suggest that *inquit*, despite interrupting the pure vocalicity of Phyllis’ utterance with two obstruents (ʔ and *t*), actually enhances the yodelling effects. Indeed glottal stops or “attacks” are recognized by yodelologists (who also use such descriptors as “jolts”, “yips” and “clicks”) as necessary and defining features of the technique.²⁶ Another consideration is that, in performance, the short second syllable of *inquit* might well be muted or slighted by its position following the long and plosively “attacked” first syllable. In sum, a comparison shows that, if anything, Virgil’s complete hexameter more effectively presents Phyllis’ yodelling than her own words do by themselves.²⁷ For good measure, I present below two representations of the full line, the latter showing, instead of a glide in the transition from the *i* and the *o* of *Iolla*, another glottal stop and hence an additional yodelling “yip” or “jolt”:

for-moe-sew-wa-lew-wa-le ʔ eenk wit ee-yole-la.

for-moe-seu-wa-leu-wa-le ʔ eenk wit ee ʔ ole-la.

²⁶ See *e.g.* Plantenga (2004) 12–15.

²⁷ Compare, too, versions with only epenthetic glides (underlined) in the hiatus:

for-moe-sew-wa-lew-wa-ley yeenk wit ee-yole-la.

for-moe-seu-wab-leu-wa-lew weenk wit ee-yole-la.

Since a yodeller's sounds, however emotionally expressive they might be, are nearly always nonsensical, they in effect use the human voice as a musical instrument.²⁸ If, then, in the example of Virgilian *Lautmalerei* cited earlier from the opening of *Ecl.* 1, the poet uses Meliboeus' meaningful Latin words to imitate the pure sounds of Tityrus' pipe, he here exercises a more complicated variety of sound-painting, by exploiting sandhi effects so that Phyllis' intelligible Latin words also function as pure nonsensical vocalizing in keeping with the conventions of the yodelling mode.

There is still more to be said about the sounds that Phyllis uttered, but at this point in the analysis of the couplet, when philological diagnostics might overburden the poetry itself, a retreat to a summary review of the lines is in order. With l. 76, then, Damoetas introduces *Iollas*, ostensibly as a name, but also a distinctive and perhaps loudly delivered exclamatory vocable. The earlier words of that line continue the previously established combination of amatory and arboreal themes, which are linked by the name of *P/phyllis, amica communis* and dendronym, which also carries a (temporarily) latent hint at the mythical Thracian princess of the same name. In his response Menalcas, as the rules dictate, picks up on Damoetas' words, by repeating the names of Phyllis and Iollas, by extending the arboreal and amatory themes once again when he glosses *Phyllida* with *Amandam*, while echoing Damoetas' sounds and words. He also takes a cue from Damoetas as he brings to the fore the old myth of Phyllis, by explicitly presenting a person so named who calls out sadly to a departed lover. Finally, there is also reason to suppose that he mischievously reconstrues *I/iolla* by foregrounding its distinctiveness as pure sound and slighting or ignoring its prior function as a personal name.²⁹

Over the short span of four verses in the Phyllis-Iollas exchange, the mood has changed from Damoetas' evident amatory optimism to the lamentation of the deserted lover Phyllis. The latter tone carries over strikingly into the immediate sequel, as Damoetas begins the next exchange with the two words *triste lupus* at the opening of a verse containing no fewer than six *u*-sounds:

Triste lupus stabulis, matūris frūgibus imbres

For this one time at least Damoetas is taking his cue from Menalcas, specifically from his quotation of the yodelling phrases of the sorrowful Phyllis. As convention dictates in amoebic exchanges, Damoetas puts a different twist on his rival's words, specifically here on his sound effects, as he responds with imitative allusion (*Lautmalerei* again) to the howling of

²⁸ Cf. Plantenga (2004) 12.

²⁹ Understanding *Iolla* as an exclamatory sequence of yodel sounds avoids what I see as the inherent awkwardness of traditional interpretations that entail transferring the name of Iollas to Menalcas.

wolves, introduced by their inherently onomatopoeic zoonym *lupus* (cf. *bubo*, *cuculus*, *turdus*, *turtur*, *ulula* etc.) and sustained by the four *u*-sounds in the next three words. In noting that, we can safely assume that the comparison of yodelling to the howling of wolves and other canids was as ageless as the phenomena themselves and as commonplace in antiquity as it is in modern times.³⁰

While the same verse, as it opens with *triste*, transfers the sadness of the aggrieved Phyllis to the threatened farm animals, the second verse of Damoetas' couplet also seems to include some more subtle retrospectives on the mythical Phyllis, through its allusion to trees and to the anger of a bitter, or embittering, beloved (paronomastically in *Amaryllidis*). Phyllis aside, the same couplet introduces to the dialogue the appropriately pastoral motif of concern for domesticated animals, which is, over the course of the next eleven couplets (82–104), recurrently linked to the previously established leitmotif of flourishing plant life. In that extended sequence, Phyllis is not named, although her various functions as the arboreal harbinger of spring, as embittered lover, and as yodeller (a function echoed by the repetitive *Pollio ... Pollio ... Pollio* in 84, 86 and 88) might maintain a lingering presence for her. She does, in any case, eventually return to prominence.

In introducing the final pair of couplets Damoetas abruptly breaks the pattern of the dialogue by challenging his rival with a riddle (104–05):

*Dic quibus in terris (et eris mihi magnus Apollo)
tris pateat caeli spatium non amplius ulnas.*

(“Say in what lands the breadth of the sky extends over no more than three *ulnae* and you will be the mighty Apollo in my mind”).

Menalcas counters, not with any apparent attempt to solve that riddle but by echoing Damoetas' introductory phrase and posing another riddle that also remains unanswered when Palaemon abruptly pronounces the competition closed (106–07).

*Dic quibus in terris inscripti nomina regum
nascantur flores, et Phyllida solus habeto.*

(“Say in what lands flowers bloom with the names of royalty engraved on them, and take sole possession of Phyllis”).

³⁰ Cf. Plantenga (2004) 16.

With the reintroduction of *P/phyllis*, my hope, notwithstanding the risk of falling into “hermeneutic traps”³¹ set by riddles, is that the expanded perspective on the various mythical, arboreal, and amatory associations of *Phyllis* presented above opens some new approaches.³² Hitherto the new reference to Phyllis has hardly figured in explanations of the riddle *per se*, being seen solely as a statement of the consequences of Damoetas’, presumably unlikely,³³ success in solving it. Specifically, Menalcas is promising to reward such success by relinquishing as a favour to Damoetas his own previously expressed amatory interest in Phyllis. This is a patently feasible, even inevitable, reading of Menalcas’ final phrase: *Phyllida solus habeto*. The riddling context of that phrase, however, imposes a caveat on any pat and obvious way of understanding it, for intentional verbal ambiguities are a convention of the genre, whereby facile assumptions divert the aspiring solver from the path to solution. Being mindful, then, of the variable semantic possibilities of *P/phyllis*, we have reason to consider any connections that that word might have to the riddle’s other terminology. The latter, it should first be noted, contains nothing but quotidian lexical items, most of which, however, being semantically varied and flexible, are prone to riddling.

To anyone with a background awareness of *Phyllis* as almond-tree, the conjunction of *flores* and *Phyllida* is immediately striking, for the tree’s blossoms and their early blooming, symbolic of new life, are a conspicuous feature of almond lore, and one that links them to the myth of the Thracian princess. The mythical Phyllis, moreover, was both the daughter of one king and the wife of another, by virtue of her marriage to Demophon, who received her father’s kingdom as a dowry and also succeeded his own father as king of Athens. Could it be, then, that the names of kings, or of royal persons in general,³⁴ inscribed on, or in, flowers newly come to life (*nascantur*) have something to do with the Thracian princess and / or the almond tree? As a first response to that question I once again invoke words that Ovid assigned to the princess Phyllis, specifically the final two couplets of *Heroides* 2, her letter to Demophon:

Inscribere meo causa invidiosa sepulcro.

Aut hoc aut simili carmine notus eris:

*PHYLLIDA DEMOPHOON LETO DEDIT HOSPES AMANTEM
ILLE NECIS CAUSAM PRAEBUIT, IPSA MANUM.*

³¹ For the phrase see Henderson (1998) 225, commenting on this sequence.

³² I forego engaging here in a historical review and critical assessment of earlier proposed solutions, nearly all of which have nothing to do with the overall sphere of Phyllis lore. A single exception is Dix (1995), which also affords a convenient point of entry to earlier literature on the riddles.

³³ The implication here is that the chance of Menalcas solving the riddle and gaining unchallenged possession of Phyllis is as absurdly remote as that of Damoetas solving the first riddle and earning an exalted comparison to the perspicuous god Apollo.

³⁴ These need not literally be restricted to “kings”. See *OLD s.v. rex*, 2.e “ruling couple”; 6.b “royal household”.

Having resolved on suicide, Phyllis sets out in the first couplet the general character of her epitaph and in the second one a provisional version of its wording. The hexameter of the final couplet contains at least two names of royal persons (Phyllis and Demophon) and the suggestion of a third name in *amantem*, the near homonym of *Amanda*, which can be both an alias of Phyllis and a synonym of *phyllis* as a term for “almond tree”. (I observe once again that attention to *amantem* at the end of one line is maintained or reinforced when its three syllables are virtually repeated homophonetically by *ipsa manum* at the end of the next line.) While Ovid’s Phyllis can predict her own self-determined death and anticipate the wording and format of her own epitaph at her place of interment, she has no apparent foreknowledge of her metamorphosis into the almond tree. Ovid, though, and his readers must know from the mythographic tradition that her *sepulcrum* inscribed with the names of royalty will be the flowering almond tree. I conclude from this that the words of Phyllis’ Ovidian epitaph advance, in their own oblique or riddling way, a solution to the riddle posed by Virgil’s Menalcas. That is to say that the words of the two poets complement one another, at least in the minds of readers informed on the circumstances of the death and metamorphosis of Phyllis. It is almost certain of course that those poets and their contemporaries were conversant with more informants and information than we are. On that point I now introduce for consideration some still extant, and quite possibly relevant, ancient lore about inscription-bearing almond trees.

The following words are excerpted from a passage on the planting and cultivation of almonds in the handbook on agriculture written by Palladius, probably in the fourth or fifth century. This is the same Palladius who, in a poem on the grafting of fruit trees, had used *Phyllis* to mean “almond tree” (*Insit.* 149).

Graeci adserunt nasci amygdala scripta, si aperta testa nuculeum sanum tollas et in eo quodlibet scribas et iterum luto et porcino stercore involutum reponas.

(“The Greeks claim that almond trees sprout up with writing on them, if you take an intact kernel from an opened shell, inscribe whatever you want on it and put it back again after coating it with mud and pig excrement”).

(*Op. ag.* 2.13)

In this prosaic context, where Palladius uses only the vulgate term for the tree, his brief words are enough to indicate, perhaps to confirm, independently of cryptic Latin verses on Phyllis by Augustan poets and the philological ruminations that they now elicit many centuries later, that the concept of almond trees engraved with words was known to some readers in antiquity.³⁵

³⁵ A similar recipe is ascribed to Democritus by the 10th century *Geoponica* (10.14.2).

Palladius is working within a didactic tradition on the cultivation of fruit trees, but in this instance, apart from the presumed fertilizing benefits of the manure, his information seems to belong more to the realm of magic and fantasy. In fact, in the light of its conjunction with the lettered flowers of the Phyllis poetry, the engravings on the almond seed and tree suggest a cursing ritual, and bring to mind the mythographic reports of Phyllis cursing Demophon, after previously giving him the receptacle containing an object sacred to Rhea (an almond?). As tempting as it might be to speculate further on almond-related parallels with the myth of Rhea-Cybele and Attis and on the latter's implications for the genesis of the Phyllis myth, that would divert us unnecessarily from the Virgilian riddle of Menalcas. On that topic we need only reiterate that a coalition of Virgil, Ovid and Palladius points to the names of Phyllis and Demophon being delineated by the blossoms of the almond tree.³⁶

A possible answer to Menalcas' riddle, then, is that names of royal personages appear on Phyllis' name-sake tree, either in the earth at the Thracian location of her death and metamorphosis, or anywhere else that almond trees grow. With that answer in mind, we can retroactively adjust the understanding of Menalcas' two imperatives, so that the second one advises or hints at a condition for executing the first: "Tell me in what grounds flowers grow inscribed with the names of royalty and – do be exclusively attentive to Phyllis". By this reading of *Phyllida solus habeto*, Damoetas is advised to concentrate his bewildered thoughts on *Phyllis*. That directive itself, though, necessarily embeds a secondary riddle and a possible red herring if *Phyllis* remains fixed in the front of Menalcas' mind as the lamentable heroine of the almond tree, whereas Damoetas is fixated solely on his chosen birthday companion, that local (*amica communis*?) named Phyllis.

As soon as the umpire Palaemon has heard what he rules to be the final words from the competitors – *Phyllida solus habeto* – it is as if he has recognized the crux in Menalcas' riddle and extended it back over the whole contest. As he declines to judge in favour of either contestant, the prevalent riddling and ludic spirit infectiously pervades his own words (108–11):

*Non nostrum inter vos tantas componere lites:
et vitula tu dignus et hic et quisquis amores
aut metuet dulcis aut experietur amarus.
Claudite iam rivos, pueri, sat prata biberunt.*

("It is not for me to resolve the issues of such magnitude between you. You are each deserving of a heifer and so will anyone be who is either fixated on sweet

³⁶ Would this entail some readable pattern on the individual blossoms or, as seems more plausible, were the configurations of the tree's blossom-bearing branches read as letters?

amours or involved with bitter ones. Now shut off the irrigation channels, boys; the pastures have drunk their fill”).

In declining to judge either contestant superior he commends (with sarcastic hyperbole?) the merits of both and the magnitude of their competitive efforts, before undercutting the compliment by recalling, with *vitula*, the herdsmen’s preposterous braggadocio earlier in the poem (cf. *vitulam*, 29 and 48).³⁷ The imperative of the final verse also has its belittling effect, as Palaemon abruptly admonishes the performers to stop spouting off. The words with which he does so have an additional effect as reminder of both the verse’s fictional setting in the pastoral landscape and its actual setting in a pastoral poem.

Still to be considered here is another omnibus clause that, *inter alia*, subverts the compliment. Damoetas and Menalcas are of course themselves among those who have experienced the joys or sorrows of love. As early as their exchange of couplets on Phyllis, in fact, we have heard Damoetas’ pleasant romantic anticipation of the one Phyllis lead into Menalcas’ reminiscence of the bitter amatory experience of another Phyllis. The disparaging factor in ll. 109–10 then lies in the allusion to the proverbial concept of bittersweet eros; *everyone* experiences either sweet or bitter *amores*, or both, and anyone who sings of them is as worthy of a big prize as Menalcas and Damoetas are. The bittersweet love topos might seem routine or hackneyed and the same must be said of the comic and commonplace word-play on *amores* and *amaros*³⁸ highlighted at the end of successive verses. The blatant triteness with which Virgil has Palaemon present these clichés focuses attention on them as he, *mollis atque facetus*, refreshes them from a new, context-specific, perspective. At this point I reiterate that Palaemon’s closing remarks immediately follow the poem’s final mention of the enigmatic *Phyllis*. Can it be then, given all the circumstances involving the various sounds and senses of *P/phyllis*, *amanda*, *amor* (with its other cognates) and almond trees, that it is only by coincidence that *dulcis* and *amarus*, the two descriptors that Palaemon applies to *amor*, are also common descriptors for almonds and almond trees? It is, after all, a botanical reality of which Greeks and Romans were well aware that almond trees and their fruit, like *amor*, exist in two varieties, which the Romans distinguished as *dulcis* and *amarus*.³⁹ Palaemon seems to have joined the game.

University of Manitoba

RORY EGAN

(rory.egan@umanitoba.ca)

³⁷ Are we to understand that Palaemon overheard that part of the dialogue?

³⁸ Discussed with reference to this passage in Snyder (1980) 114–15. Note also, among several occurrences in comedy, Plaut. *Cist.* 68–69; *Trin.* 260.

³⁹ See e.g. Pliny, NH 17.237.4: *amygdalae – ex dulcibus enim transfigurantur in amaras*; 17.252.3: *amygdalae ex amaris dulces fiunt*. Greek scientific writers regularly differentiate the bitter (πικρός) and sweet (γλυκύς) varieties. See e.g. Arist. fr. 277 Rose (= *Geopon.* 3.3.4); Theophr. *Caus. pl.* 2.15.1; *Hist. pl.* 3.17.6; Diosc. *De materia medica* 2.113.1.

Bibliography

- P. Aebischer (1978) 'Les formes vulgaires du lat. amygdala 'amande' et leurs répartitions dans les langues romanes', in *idem*, *Études de stratigraphie linguistique*, Bern, 123–135.
- J. André (1967) *Les noms de plantes dans la Rome antique*, Paris.
- M. P. Baumann (2016) 'Jodeln', in L. Lütteken (ed), *MGG Online*, Kassel / Stuttgart / New York (<https://www.mgg-online.com/>).
- T. K. Dix (1995) 'Vergil in the Grynean Grove: Two Riddles in the Third Eclogue', *CP* 90, 256–62.
- R. B. Egan (1996) 'Corydon's Winning Words in *Eclogue* 7', *Phoenix* 50, 233–39.
- J. Fabre-Serris (2013) 'Onomastics, Intertextuality and Gender. "Phyllis" in Roman Poetry (Gallus, Vergil, Horace, Propertius and Ovid)', in D. Lateiner, B. K. Gold & J. Perkins (eds), *Roman Literature, Gender and Reception: Domina Illustris*, London, 119–135.
- H. R. Fairclough & G. P. Goold (ed. & trans.) (1999) *Virgil. Eclogues, Georgics, Aeneid I-VI*, Cambridge MA.
- R. Haklilli (2001) *The Menorah, the Ancient Seven-armed Candelabrum: Origin, Form and Significance*, Leiden.
- J. Henderson (1998) 'Virgil's Third Eclogue: How do You Keep an Idiot in Suspense?', *CQ* 48, 213–28.
- O. Jespersen (1922) *Language: Its Nature, Development and Origin*, London.
- G. Knaack (1909) 'Phyllis', in W. H. Roscher (ed), *Ausführliches Lexikon der griechischen und römischen Mythologie*, vol. 3.2 Leipzig, 2484–87.
- M. Konnikova (2014) 'Excuse Me While I Kiss this Guy', *The New Yorker*, December 10.
- J.W. McKinnon (1996) 'Preface to the Study of the Alleluia', *Early Music History* 15, 213–49.
- B. Plantenga (2004) *Yodel-ay-ee-oooo: The Secret History of Yodeling around the World*, London.
- J.M. Snyder (1980) *Puns and Poetry in Lucretius' De rerum natura*, Amsterdam.
- W. B. Stanford (1967) *The Sound of Greek*, Berkeley.
- J. E. Taylor (1995) 'The Asherah, the Menorah and the Sacred Tree', *JSOT* 66, 29–54.
- R. F. Thomas (ed.) (2011) *Horace. Odes Book IV and Carmen Saeculare*, Cambridge.
- L. Yarden (1971) *The Tree of Light: A Study of the Menorah, the Seven-branched Lampstand*, London.

“Amid the tears we sing”: Virgil and humanity

*Revised from a paper given to the Virgil Society on 19 October 2019**

Foreword

Since the paper on which this essay is based was delivered, and in a bewildering matter of months, coronavirus has ripped through our lives and overturned everything. It has shaken confidence in modern certainties and, in ways that many of us are completely unused to, occasioned daily unease about what tomorrow will usher in. In such times, our faith in science and its ability to ameliorate the crisis is urgently felt. But alongside that, literature and music, even if they have previously always brought diversion and solace, have come to assume a yet greater significance. Poets like Virgil have tapped out templates of such profundity that they can stand as guides amid the current precariousness and heightened awareness of fragility. Virgil's works confront us with mortal defectiveness, impotence and the cruel satires that Fate loves to indulge in. Yet alongside this searing vision of the human condition, Virgil offers a series of wider-reaching vantage points, achieved through the constant sense of motion and the cycles of flux and reflux that undergird his verse. Scored into the lines of his hexameters is hope; even as the serpent hisses, the light gleams. In short, the perspectives that Virgil offers from his own time provide a stabilising resource, because they invite us, adrift as we feel, into a matrix of humanity that seems to have changed very little.

*

The keynote of this essay, “Virgil and Humanity”, will, to some eyes, look ludicrously broad and perhaps even hubristic. Naïve as the choice may prove to be, the remit can be explained. The focus on breadth was driven in part by a theory that recently emerged from an area of research that could not, at least on the face of it, be further removed from Classics:

* Fulsome thanks to Daniel Hadas, Gareth Williams, Peter Wilkinson and Andrew Longmore, who kindly read and improved earlier versions of this article. Translations are from the Loeb Classical Library, trans. H. R. Fairclough, rev. G. P. Gould (1999–2000), with some slight changes.

the field of neuroscience. The theory in question concerns the configuration of the brain. It posits that the two hemispheres of the brain are in tension: the logical half on the left and the creative half on the right.¹ The logical part draws us into detail and enables close investigation of minutiae, but it won't tell us about how to feel our way around or to see the bigger picture. This happens via the other part (the right) which enlarges the horizons of, and is adventurous in, the imagination. This part has a much stronger relationship with external reality as represented by the senses, making it in effect the mediator of experience. According to Iain McGilchrist, a chief proponent of this theory, modern and postmodern worlds are, to our detriment, becoming increasingly dominated by the left brain. While the thesis is not without its limitations or detractors, it nonetheless raises valuable questions about the ways we evaluate literature.² It also validates the idea that the holistic view may help unlock a fuller "personality" of a piece of writing, one which looks very different to that afforded by a more reductionist approach. Virgil's rich verse merits a wide range of approaches, but if we do not balance an increasing number of granular and narrowly focused treatments with more comprehensive overviews, we risk neglecting the broader experience of reading Virgil and failing to attend to what moves us emotionally as well as intellectually.

Thus influencing this essay have been the insights of scholars who seem most predominantly to prioritize the outward-looking hemisphere on the right of the brain. I have been drawn, in particular, to the scholarship of Richard Jenkyns and Richard Thomas, both of whom have in various ways argued that Virgil enriches our lives through the aesthetic qualities of his poetry, qualities which in turn generate their own meaning.³ Another source of inspiration has been Italo Calvino, whose soul-stirring short essays on literature, organized around spacious themes such as lightness and quickness, visibility and multiplicity, provide ways to understand poetry's capacity for impression rather than argument.⁴ Following their lead, I will submit that it pays to consider generally why Virgil's poetry digs deep into our

¹ I. McGilchrist, *The Master and His Emissary: The Divided Brain and the Making of the Western World*, 2009, New Haven CT.

² The work has been criticized for the (overly) broad psychological and cultural conclusions McGilchrist draws. His analysis also falls within what has been termed "the mereological fallacy" by philosophers who believe such assertions are conceptually mistaken, insofar as they unreasonably inflate the conception of the "brain" by assigning to this one part of the body powers and activities that belong to the whole living being (for example, M. R. Bennett & P. M. S. Hacker, *Philosophical Foundations of Neuroscience*, 2003, Oxford).

³ R. Jenkyns, 'Pathos, Tragedy and Hope in the *Aeneid*', *JRS* 75 (1985), 60–77; *idem*, *Virgil's Experience: Nature and History*, *Times, Names and Places*, 1998, Oxford; R. F. Thomas, 'Aesthetics, Form and Meaning in the *Georgics*', in B. Xinyue & N. Freer (eds), *Reflections and New Perspectives on Virgil's Georgics*, 2019, London, 44–64.

⁴ I. Calvino, *Six Memos for the Next Millennium*, trans. G. Brock, 2016, London. These "memos" were the fruits of Calvino's 1985–86 Charles Eliot Norton Lectures at Harvard. They assessed literature and the whole range of human thought under the headings 'Lightness', 'Quickness', 'Exactitude', 'Visibility' and 'Multiplicity', five highly personal meditations before death intervened; the last theme was to have been 'Consistency'.

hardwiring. I will suggest that vested in his verse is a set of realities around which every life clusters, a consideration of which will in turn enable a different beam of light to be shone over the Virgilian landscape.

There are two aspects of this broad-ranging premise which require clarification. The first pertains to the Virgilian focus. This essay in no way seeks to imply that the fundamental truths Virgil's poetry embodies are exclusive to him. Great literature of any kind, and composed in any age, can expand our vision sufficiently to facilitate a deeper apprehension of universal principles, and this essay will indeed enlist a range of other poets of different periods along the way. Yet the Virgilian corpus, I would aver, offers a panorama whose richness of aspect helps unite the particular and the general with singular efficacy and immediacy. This is achieved in part through Virgil's intense attentiveness to the natural world. It is also because Virgil plunges us into real life, the lives of the dispossessed, the disoriented, the vanquished, the triumphant, the dying, the lovelorn. His poems don't offer words, words, words, but blood. They captivate, arrest and affect at the deepest level, because they are constructed around stories we all inhabit. I have read Virgil with students at every stage and age, and while points of connection vary, reactions are invariably rooted in the poems' bearing on the actuality of our own existence. Like a Heraclitean river, it is not possible in the case of Virgil to step into the same poem twice. Yet in the lines of his verse we always find a thread of reality that attaches itself to our world.

The second point concerns Virgil's ability (or not) to transcend the centuries. While there is certainly a timeless quality to Virgil's verse, I do not propose that it can be liberated from its own historical, cultural or artistic context, or that a study of Virgil's poetry through the lens of sensibility needs to jettison a rich body of secondary literature which historicizes and interrogates the many intertextual possibilities inherent in his verse. Indeed, such historical and intertextual factors in many ways enhance the poetry's beating pulse. The climate in which Virgil wrote his poetry surely conditioned, to some extent at least, the fundamental emotions that steered its composition.⁵ His three great *opera* were composed when Rome was emerging from an interminable era of trauma – years of debilitating civil war. Then, as now, what prevailed was an awareness of crisis, and whenever blight strikes, the effect, I think, is similar: it forces us to take stock, to reassess the basics. One way to do that is to cleave to the voices of the past, and at root, intertextuality is just that: a borrowing of our forebears' ideas, which are themselves enfolded in experience. The past, unlike the future, contains facts not guesses; we turn to it *not* because it inoculates us against suffering, but because it helps irrigate the present through insights born out of encounter, and props us up with its ballast

⁵ Susanna Braund suggests that the primary factor in any Virgilian “philosophy” was an allegiance to Rome and Italy (S. M. Braund, ‘Virgil and the Cosmos: Religious and Philosophical Ideas’ in *The Cambridge Companion to Virgil*, ed. F. Mac Góráin & C. Martindale, 2019², Cambridge, 279–98).

of perspective. Textual *imitatio* can be a dazzling means to demonstrate learning, certainly, but it is also an atavistic impulse.

I divide this essay into five areas that seem to reflect most effectively the great abstractions that Virgil's verse accommodates: (1) rootedness and movement; (2) cycle of life; (3) bitter-sweetness; (4) human connections; and (5) human limitation. Each is treated as distinct, but they are ultimately also all related to each other. The themes of this exegesis are proffered tentatively and experimentally, not definitively. They represent an entirely personal view of Virgil's poetry, and are offered with caution rather than certitude.

1. Rootedness and movement

Principio sedes apibus statioque petenda ("First seek a settled home for your bees", *Geo.* 4.8). This prescription, found in the fourth book of Virgil's didactic work, the *Georgics*, about the centrality of the hive, the home of the anthropomorphic bees, reads almost like one of the Ten Commandments. The ache for home lives in us all, and we have all witnessed the mass migrations across the globe of people desperate to "get home" as the dangers posed by Covid-19 became clearer. Whether home is a person, a place, a country of birth or a constructed image of safety, it is a principle that is firmly enmeshed in our emotional hardware. Thus, some of the most touching passages in the fourth book of the *Georgics* are those which pertain to the apian homestead, for example the descriptions of the bees insulating their hives (37–41) and the portraits of homely sanctuary (*effossis...latebris / sub terra fovere larem*. "they have made a snug home in tunnelled hiding places underground", 42–43. *intima more suo sese in cunabula condent*. "as is their wont, they will burrow themselves far within their cradling cells", 66), sketches made all the more poignant by an awareness of the predators that lurk close by. Our deep yearning for a base is perhaps what lends Virgilian descriptions of the soil, the natural home of trees and plants, their pathos. A connection with the soil of our origin is vividly conveyed in the second book of the *Georgics*, not least through its incorporation of the physical, including *manibus, digitos* and *oculis* ("hands, fingers, eyes"), which enable the reader to touch, handle and behold the *tellus* ("earth") being described (248–55). The sense of the soil as nature's most basic shelter is exquisitely conveyed shortly afterwards in the depiction of seeds of the vine leaving their *matrem* ("mother", 268).

The theme of rootedness also bulks large in Virgil's great epic, the *Aeneid*. As has been observed elsewhere, the work is, in essence, a *nostos* ("homecoming") story.⁶ Unlike Odysseus, of course, Aeneas does not *know* the homeland Rome he quests for as he roams. Yet it is this paradox that frees Virgil up to explore the longing for hearth and home to even greater effect.

⁶ A. Barchiesi, *Homeric Effects in Vergil's Narrative*, 2017, Princeton, 118.

One of the most affecting passages in *Aen.* 1 is when Aeneas gazes down on Carthage as it is being built. Aeneas observes the foundations of great buildings, gates and paved high-roads and city walls, but his (and our) eye is also drawn to a group of men as they select sites for enclosed dwellings, in short, to the creation of home: *pars optare locum tecto et concludere sulco* (“some choose the site for a dwelling and enclose it with a furrow”, 425). Aeneas is compelled to cry aloud *O fortunati, quorum iam moenia surgunt* (“Happy they whose walls already rise”, 437), a sentiment that reverberates with the human longing for stable ground and a permanence; it is a yearning rendered all the more potent insofar as Aeneas’ statement, while at one level specific, relating as it does to the concrete progress of the Carthaginians, may also be read generally: “happy are *all* those ...”

Destiny also plays a major role in pushing Aeneas and the Trojans on to Italy. Through it, Virgil explores the instinctive connections we have with a place we can call home in yet more complex ways. “Home” in Virgil, can stand for a place from where one’s ancestors came, an inherited bond with a land otherwise completely unknown. And so we see the repeated use in the epic of the patronymic *Dardanius* to describe the Trojans, which, when combined with Latinus’ disclosure in book 7 that Dardanus was by origin from Italy (*his ortus ... agris*, literally, “sprung from these fields”, 206), underscores this idea of ancient ties and roots with the ground itself. It comes as a moment of great succour when, in response to Aeneas’ helpless questioning, *Quem sequimur? quove ire iubet? ubi ponere sedes?* (“Whom should we follow? To where do you bid us go? Where fix our home?”, 3.88), a disembodied voice in the temple of Apollo says (3.94–96):

*Dardanidae duri, quae vos a stirpe parentum
prima tulit tellus, eadem vos ubere laeto
accipiet reduces. Antiquam exquirite matrem.*

(“Long-suffering sons of Dardanus, the land which bore you first from your parents’ stock shall welcome you back in her fruitful bosom. Seek out your ancient mother”).

The immense reassurance in the notion of homecoming is again captured exquisitely in the most simple of utterances by the aged king Latinus: *Hinc Dardanus ortus, / huc repetit* (“From here was Dardanus sprung and to here he returns”, 7.240–41). The weight of meaning invested in the single word *huc*, placed emphatically at the start of the line, is extraordinary: it transforms Italy from an alien land into a comforting haven.

Set against this strong instinct for rootedness is movement. Virgil’s poetry vibrates with motion. Such movement stirs us because it is a fundamental condition of existence:

all life is a constant journey, and, even as we cling to fixity, we are programmed to move and grow.

Virgil so often presents us with people on the move, their progress accentuated by its relativity to others' immobility. In the first *Eclogue*, for example, Meliboeus and Tityrus happen upon each other and briefly speak, but their trajectories are completely different (1–4; 64–66):

*Tityre, tu patulae recubans sub tegmine fagi
silvestrem tenui Musam meditaris avena;
nos patriae fines et dulcia linquimus arva.
nos patriam fugimus; tu, Tityre, lentus in umbra ...*

*At nos hinc alii sitientis ibimus Afros,
pars Scythiam et rapidum cretae veniemus Oaxen
et penitus toto divisos orbe Britannos.*

(“You, Tityrus, lie under the canopy of a spreading beech, wooing the woodland Muse on slender reed, but we are leaving our country’s bounds and sweet fields. We are outcasts from our country: you, Tityrus, at ease beneath the shade ...

But we must go hence – some to the thirsty Africans, some to reach Scythia and the chalk-rolling Oaxes, and the Britons, wholly sundered from all the world”).

In the opening lines we find Tityrus *recubans* – he is staying in Italy, whereas Meliboeus is leaving the *patria*, as captured in the verbs: *linquimus* and *fugimus* and later *ibimus*. In a similar way, of course, the entire *Aeneid* is constructed around a migration from Troy to Italy and proleptically to Rome. Aeneas and Dido famously meet, but like Meliboeus and Tityrus, only one of them is on the move.

Kinesthetic qualities are evident everywhere in Virgil’s verse, and there is movement of every type and tempo and in all directions. Along the horizontal axis, Virgil takes us, in the space of two hexameter lines on a fast-paced race around the geographical points of the compass: East and West, North and South (*Geo.* 3.276–78):

*saxa per et scopulos et depressas convallis
diffugiunt, non, Eure, tuos, neque solis ad ortus,
in Boream Caurumque, aut unde nigerrimus Auster
nascitur.*

(“they flee over rocks and crags and lowly dales, not towards your rising, East Wind, nor to the Sun’s, but to the North and the Northwest, or thither where rises the blackest South”).

In this case, it is the heat of love and passion that drives the velocity. Venus has inflamed a team of mares with an overwhelming and extreme desire, but as Virgil himself comments just prior to this account, *amor omnibus idem* (“We all feel the same love”, 3.244). The verb *ruunt* (“they rush”), which appears directly before this broad assertion, further conveys the inescapable gallop that being in love entails.

Virgil’s verse can also operate both vertically and horizontally, as in the beautiful image of a spreading tree in the second book of the *Georgics*. Here the great oak “strikes its roots as far down into the Hadean pit as it lifts its crest to the airs of heaven” (*quantum vertice ad auras / aetherias, tantum radice in Tartara tendit*, 291–92). The alpha to omega reach captured in the use of *vertice* and *radice* and *huc illuc* (297) conjures the life force inherent in nature, but the movement described is gradual, more stretch than sprint, and is representative, as Virgil implies, of the development of maturity and fortitude that can only happen over a span of years.

Philip Hardie has recently placed the spotlight on the notion of “heavenly ascent”,⁷ and such upward movement is indeed a key engine of poetic vigour. Poetry has the ability to take us unfettered and in a single breath from the bestial floor to the celestial heights.⁸ In Virgil we see this mode of blossoming out from the prosaic to the heavenly in many places, whether in corn being uprooted and tossed on high (*Geo.* 1.319–20) or in the acceleration of young charioteers (*Geo.* 3.108–09): in both cases Virgil takes us from *humilis* to *sublimis*. Such a propulsion is felt too in *Ecl.* 6. Here we are thrust at the start of the poem into the base world of the satyr Silenus, inebriated, crude, rude and prostrate, everything at ground level, accentuated by the lines ending in forms of the verb *iaceo* and which in turn play on Iacchus / Bacchus, patron of cups. Then in a matter of verses up to the higher plane we ascend, as Virgil opens up for us the cosmos through the mouth of Silenus (13–17; 31–34):

*Pergite, Pierides. Chromis et Mnasyllus in antro
Silenum pueri somno videre iacentem,
inflatum hesternis venas, ut semper, Iaccho;
serta procul tantum capiti delapsa iacebant,
et gravis attrita pendeat cantharus ansa.*

⁷ I heard his thoughts on this in a talk entitled ‘Heavenly Emotions’, which he gave in November 2018 at the Institute of Classical Studies (London).

⁸ A nod to the final line of Yeats’ great poem ‘The Magi’ (“The uncontrollable mystery on the bestial floor”), which so potently combines the hope of heavenly Christ and the grubbiness of the stable birthplace.

*Namque canebat, uti magnum per inane coacta
 semina terrarumque animaeque marisque fuissent
 et liquidi simul ignis; ut his ex omnia primis,
 omnia et ipse tener mundi concreverit orbis.*

(“Proceed, Pierian maids! The lads Chromis and Mnasyllus saw Silenus lying asleep in a cave, his veins swollen, as ever, with the wine of yesterday. Hard by lay the garlands, just fallen from his head, and his heavy tankard was hanging by its well-worn handle.

 For he sang how, through the vast void, the seeds of earth, and air, and sea, and liquid fire withal were gathered together; how from these elements all nascent things, yes, all, and even the young globe of the world grew together”).

As human beings, we are the only species whose consciousness extends to a contemplation of the universe. In a sense the cosmos is within us, and Virgil, through the poetic movement in *Ecl.* 6 (and elsewhere), expresses that propensity for emotional elevation to wondrous effect. Indeed, the many striking shifts in scale from micro to macro and vice versa that permeate his poems seem to point to a Virgilian cognizance of the potential for magnitude within the slightest frames (most famously, for example, *ingentes animos angusto in pectore versant*. “They [the bees] have mighty souls beating in their tiny breasts”, *Geo.* 4.83). Virgil’s poems compel us to look upwards and outwards. Through the perpetually moving ebbs and flows of his verse, he offers views from a copious range of angles and enables us to inhabit a space larger than ourselves.

2. Cycle of life

This impression of a constantly dynamic process evident in Virgil’s verse leads onto my second theme – the cycle of life. There is a time-laden quality in all of Virgil’s writing. To read any passage is to enter into a system of which we are all part: a *cursus vitae* in which day becomes night, spring becomes winter, youth becomes old age and birth moves towards death. The perpetual motion of time’s passage is powerfully encapsulated in Virgil’s pronouncement *sed fugit interea, fugit inreparabile tempus* (“But time meanwhile is flying, flying beyond recall”, *Geo.* 3.284), a line whose very verbal rhythm enacts the inexorable march of the minutes. The flow of life, which encompasses all of nature and all its creatures, can be felt on every page of Virgil. The effect is achieved, for instance, through the most delicate descriptions of the progression of the hours, as in *Ecl.* 8 (14–15; 17):

*Frigida vix caelo noctis decesserat umbra,
cum ros in tenera pecori gratissimus herba ...*

Nascere, praeque diem veniens age, Lucifer, alnum ...

(“Scarce had night’s cool shade left the sky, when the dew on the tender grass
is sweetest to the flock ...

Rise, o morning star, heralding the genial day ...”).

The annual cycle is similarly woven into the fabric of Virgil’s verse. In the second book of the *Georgics* the year is said to roll back upon itself over its own footsteps (*vestigia*), a sentiment which is all the more expressive for the elision between *atque* and *in* at the start of line 402: *Redit agricolis labor actus in orbem / atque in se sua per vestigia volvitur annus* (“The farmer’s toil returns, moving in a circle, as the year rolls back upon itself over its own footsteps”, 401–02). This arc of time is further reinforced through an evocation of seasonal shifts. This is not a feature peculiar to Virgil, of course, and many poets have educed the evolution of the seasons as a metaphor for man’s life. One of the finest expositors of this is Horace. In his Ode 4.7 seasonal changes occur in the very words of single lines, beginning with the snows, that quickly transform into sprigs of grass, only to return again soon to *bruma iners* (“winter inert”). The Virgilian approach also has much in common with the Romantic poets of the early nineteenth century, such as Keats in “The Human Seasons”:

*Four Seasons fill the measure of the year;
There are four seasons in the mind of man:
He has his lusty Spring, when fancy clear
Takes in all beauty with an easy span:
He has his Summer, when luxuriously
Spring’s bonied cud of youthful thought he loves
To ruminat, and by such dreaming high
Is nearest unto heaven: quiet coves
His soul has in its Autumn, when his wings
He furleth close; contented so to look
On mists in idleness – to let fair things
Pass by unheeded as a threshold brook.
He has his Winter too of pale misfeature,
Or else he would forego his mortal nature.*

However, Virgil's treatment of the ever-revolving wheel of life is yet more sinewy. Within both the detail and the broader frameworks of the narrative, he embeds a powerful sense of the complete irretrievability of yesterday and the inevitability of tomorrow. Images of youth and old age are ubiquitous in Virgil's poetry, and regularly juxtaposed. Often, for example, a boy (*puer*) is in dialogue with an old man (*senex*), tableaux that serve to embed an abiding impression of the opposing and evolving parameters of mortal life. But Virgil confronts us not just with our own mortality, but also with its place in a larger continuum of birth, growth, demise and death within the entire edifice of nature. Such essential facts of life are in part elevated by Virgil through his harmonization of the primal world with human evolution. In the second book of the *Georgics*, for example, we read that saplings are the *prolem* ("offspring", 3) of the vines. In the same book, he outlines how adolescent trees burst forth spontaneously and exhibit a *silvestrem animum* ("sylvan spirit", 47–51). In the third book of the *Georgics*, as part of a much longer passage about plague, we read about the return to earth of the dying bull, where the compulsion of downward movement captures so poignantly the moment of decline: *at ima / solvuntur latera, atque oculos stupor urget inertis / ad terramque fluit devexo pondere cervix* ("but his lowest flanks are unstrung, numbness weighs upon the languid eyes and his neck sinks with drooping weight to earth", 522–24). Yet, as the regeneration of the bee community in *Geo.* 4 so powerfully brings into focus, the well-springs of renewal are ever present, enabling the sequence of life to begin all over again.

In all Virgil's poems we are met with the unceasing revolutions of time's wheel and the seeds of life from which we are all sprung, and which sustain us for the appointed duration. Individual lives are finite, but Virgil's verse shows us that life itself is eternal, propelled by its own force, as captured with immediacy in words such as *iniussa* ("unbidden", of the grass growing up, *Geo.* 1.55–56) and *vi propria* ("inborn force", of fruit trees, *Geo.* 2.428).

While nature can provide a valuable illustration of such relentless patterning, man's consciousness of life's iterations invests the process with great tenderness. Readers of Virgil are regularly presented with the ghosts of those who have preceded us. Encounters Aeneas has with the wraiths of the Underworld thus bring us face to face with our own perishability and recyclability. But there are other finely-drawn passages which achieve a similar effect. A good example is the allusion in the *Georgics* to *galeas ... inanis* ("empty helmets") which prompts a re-imagining of a living people whose heads once wore them (1.493–97):

*Scilicet et tempus veniet, cum finibus illis
agricola incurvo terram molitus aratro
exesa inveniet scabra robigine pila,
aut gravibus rastris galeas pulsabit inanis
grandiaque effossis mirabitur ossa sepulcris.*

(“Yes, and a time will come when in those lands the farmer, as he cleaves the soil with his curved plough, will find javelins corroded with rusty mould, or with his heavy hoe will strike empty helmets, and marvel at gigantic bones in the upturned graves”).

A sensitive awareness of humanity’s progression through time is further achieved through references to inter-generational bequests. In *Ecl.* 9, for example, we find the injunction *Inserere, Daphni, pios: carpent tua poma nepotes* (“Graft your pears, Daphnis; your children’s children shall gather the fruits you have sown”, 50). We witness the passing down of song via the shepherd’s flute (*Ecl.* 5.85–87), and the shade that trees will provide to future generations of children (*Geo.* 2.57–58). The *Aeneid* too operates within such a framework: the figures of Anchises, Aeneas, Iulus and his future offspring populate a generational chain. Not only individuals, but entire cities of people too, are stitched into a broader system of existence, as we witness the ruin of Troy, the predicted collapse of Carthage, the prospective rise of Rome, and its own possible fall,⁹ the transfer of Italian land and the displacement that it entails. Virgil’s poetry fills our senses with the rhythm of change, but he also shows us how much *persists* in its oscillations. The Virgilian corpus serves as a literary connector that enables us to yoke nature and humanity, heaven and earth, and make sense of the entirety of the system to which we all belong.

3. Bittersweetness

“Poetry might be defined as the clear expression of mixed feelings”.¹⁰ Auden captures well the thrust of my next category, which suggests that when we read Virgil’s poetry, we feel both hope and despair. Many scholars have identified the prominence of each strain. Yet the Virgilian oeuvre is often assessed according to a binary opposition of optimism and pessimism, with some drawing attention to the poetry’s deeply melancholic tenor – *sunt lacrimae rerum* (*Aen.* 1.462, impossibly difficult to render into English, but literally, “there are tears for [or of] things”, depending on whether the genitive *rerum* is taken as objective or subjective) often being cited – and others arguing for an optimistic reading, one which celebrates the world and professes the “constructive potential” of Virgil’s verse.¹¹ It seems to me that the oxymoron of

⁹ It is difficult to avoid making a connection between Rome and the ultimate demise of all kingdoms in *res Romanae perituraeque regna* (“Roman affairs and the kingdoms bound to perish”) in *Geo.* 2.498.

¹⁰ W. H. Auden, *New Year Letter* included in *W. H. Auden, Collected Poems*, ed. E. Mendelson, 1991, London.

¹¹ The reference to “constructive potential” comes from L. Morgan, *Patterns of Redemption in Virgil’s Georgics*, 1999, Cambridge, *passim*. The broader bibliography for this debate, which subsumes all his works, is too vast to chart here.

bittersweetness (or sweetbitterness) can usefully help to re-centre this debate.¹² For in Virgil, just as in a Lieder song cycle, joy and pain appear inseparably together.

In the *Georgics*, in particular, the adjective *laetus* (“happy / joyful”) is a frequent visitor. The entire work begins with the wonderful trumpet call of *Quid faciat laetas segetes ...* (“What makes the crops joyous ...”, 1.1). Some lines on we read again: *hiberno laetissima pulvere farra, laetus ager* (“With winter’s dust, most joyous is the corn, joyous the field”, 1.101–02). In book 4 the bees are described as *laetae* (55). And yet in both books there are frequent disruptions of joy, and disaster soon strikes. In book 1, just 6 lines on from the second quote above, Virgil refers to how *exustus ager morientibus aestuat herbis* (“the scorched earth swelters with the green blades dying”, 107). And in book 4 threats to the bees’ existence lurk in so many of the lines. Virgil must have been alive to the fact that *laetus* is a quasi-homonym with *letum*, one of Latin’s words for “death”. Indeed in his verse the noun *letum* constantly threatens to cast a dark shadow over the happiness encased in the adjective *laetus*. Joy and grief are in and around Virgil’s words all the time. *Ecl.* 7 is a further evocation of this, a poem in which the upbeat stanzas of Corydon dance a ballet with the negative strains of Thyrsis, the placement of *dulcior* and *amarior* being especially illustrative (37; 41):

Corydon

*Nerine Galatea, thymo mihi **dulcior** Hyblae ...*

Thyrsis

*Immo ego Sardoniis videar tibi **amarior** herbis.*

(“Corydon

Galatea, child of Nereus, sweeter to me than Hybla’s thyme ...

Thyrsis

Nay, let me seem to you more bitter than Sardinian herbs”).

The term *umbra*, which similarly pervades the Virgilian corpus, also captures the liminality of bittersweetness. The term is an ambivalent one, ever shifting as it casts its shadows of varying complexion.¹³ *Umbra* marks the start of a new day: *Frigida vix caelo noctis decesserat*

¹² It is a thesis not unrelated to the *labor-fructus* tension explored in several studies on the *Georgics*.

¹³ Since first writing this, I have discovered L. N. Quartarone, ‘Shifting Shadows on the Landscape’, *Acta Ant. Hung.* 53 (2013), 245–59, which explores in detail the semantic and symbolic range of the term *umbra* as well as its relevance for poetical composition. The astute observation in this article that *umbra* is a theme picked up and pursued in the *Culex* is suggestive of its important symbolic charge in the Virgilian corpus. Quartarone’s conclusion that Virgil was the first poet to truly deploy the multivalence of *umbra* further points to his preoccupation with shading and nuance, paradox and combination.

umbra (“Scarce had night’s cool shade left the sky”, *Ecl.* 8.14), but it is also marks the chill darkness of night: *Et iam summa procul villarum culmina fumant / maioresque cadunt altis de montibus umbrae* (“Even now the housetops yonder are smoking and longer shadows fall from the mountain heights”, *Ecl.* 1.82–83). In the heat of the summer’s scorching sun, *umbra* affords ease – *lentus in umbra*, (“relaxed beneath the shade”, *Ecl.* 1.4) – and shelter: *et quae vos rara viridis tegit arbutus umbra, / solstitium pecori defendite* (“and the green arbutus that shield you with dappled shade, ward the noontide heat from my flock”, *Ecl.* 7.46–47). But it is also a source of harm to men and nature alike – *solet esse gravis cantantibus umbra ... nocent et frugibus umbrae* (“The shade is often perilous to the singer ... hurtful the shade even to the crops”, *Ecl.* 10.75–76) – and, given its application to the underworld (*Aen.* 6, *passim*, and especially *Aen.* 12, whose final word is *umbras*), a compelling reminder of man’s mortality. In short, *umbra* is a word whose bandwidth extends from protection to detriment, and whose influence causes the poetry to hover between light and darkness. It is an apt image for the human condition of mixed blessings, which, as Virgil deftly shows us, are woven into the hourly chimes of everyday.

In his descriptions of nature, supreme joy and extreme pain are conjoined as a predetermined pair. But Virgil’s poems are as much about people and lives, and he insinuates this *glukupikron*¹⁴ combination into all spheres of our earth-born experience. War, for example, a dimension of life that features so prominently in the *Aeneid*, is suffused with both success and sorrow. The opening of book 11, with its delicate concessive clause, captures the point (2–4):

*Aeneas, quamquam et sociis dare tempus humandis
praecipitant curae turbataque funere mens est,
vota deum primo victor solvebat Eoo.*

(“Aeneas, though his sorrows urge him to give time for his comrades’ burial and death has confused his soul, yet as the Day Star rose, began to pay the gods his vows of victory”).

The stark and often sudden reversals of fortune on the battlefield, such as those of Pallas, Camilla and eventually Turnus, where exultant ascendancy so quickly becomes collapse, constitute potent symbols of the mingled yard in which we all dwell. A pictorial record of the hopes and despairs in Virgil would look like a fever chart. *Surgit amari aliquid* (“something bitter arises”, *Lucr. DRN* 4.1131), yes, but Virgil’s verse reminds us that Dawn *always*

¹⁴ Literally “sweetbitter”, a Greek coinage of Sappho to describe the paradox of Eros.

rises again: in among the stench of death and the mass burials of book 11, *Oceanum interea surgens Aurora reliquit* (“Meanwhile dawn rose and left the ocean”, 1).¹⁵

Less straightforwardly, Virgil also presents bittersweetness as a more textured chronological phenomenon. On the one hand, happiness is presented as a reverse construct, as something we once knew, the gall being what we experience in the present. So much of Virgil’s verse is nostalgic, so that joy is often something recalled, rather than experienced. In *Ecl.* 8, Damon remembers falling in love as a young lad in the tranquillity of a garden on a summer’s day (37–41):

*Saepibus in nostris parvam te roscida mala
(dux ego vester eram) vidi cum matre legentem;
alter ab undecimo tum me iam acceperat annus;
iam fragilis poteram a terra contingere ramos:
Ut vidi, ut perii ...*

(“Within our garden hedge I saw you – I was guide for both – a little child with your mother, gathering dewy apples. My eleventh year ended, the next had just greeted me; from the ground I could now reach the frail boughs. In the moment I saw you, I lost my heart ...”).

In *Ecl.* 1 Meliboeus refers heart-wrenchingly to a bygone state of happiness: *Ite meae, felix quondam pecus, ite capellae* (“Away, my goats! Away, once happy flock!”, 74). Frequent allusions to the Golden Age function in a similar way: descriptions of the era of Saturn, albeit they conjure collective or mythical memories that have not directly been experienced, are stirring for the very fact that they tally with our own tendencies to look back to a time of happiness.

On the other hand, Virgil’s verse also projects happiness on to the future from a position of current bleakness. The Golden Age in Virgil is envisioned as an era to come, just as much as one to look back to. So we read in *Ecl.* 4 of a golden race that will emerge from a *ferrea gens* (“iron race”): *aspice, venturo laetentur ut omnia saeclo* (“see how all things rejoice in the age that is at hand!”, 52). Virgil’s verse, unlike his predecessors,¹⁶ allowed for the possible recurrence of a Golden Age; consequently the notion of bittersweetness is incorporated into his broader framework of rotation and rebirth.

¹⁵ See also *Aen.* 11. 182–83.

¹⁶ P. A. Johnston, *Virgil’s Agricultural Golden Age*, 1980, Leiden, 8. It has been argued elsewhere that the very notion of Golden Age in Virgil is far from stable or unified, and contains its own contradictions, its own bittersweetness: C. Perkill, “The Golden Age and its Contradictions in the Poetry of Vergil”, *Vergilius* 48 (2002), 3–39.

4. Human connections

Considerable space in Virgil’s verse is devoted to solo efforts, but his poems also give voice to a truth that the coronavirus outbreak is again calling attention to: that humans’ individuality is best discharged in community, not independence. Some of the most affecting instances in the *Aeneid* are the simplest. They include the episodes when one person takes another’s hand. The fortifying potentiality of confederation that this gesture represents is expressively contained in *iungimus hospitio dextras et tecta subimus* (“We clasp hands in welcome and pass beneath his roof”, *Aen.* 3.83), with the first person plural verbs emphatically framing the moment of concord. Again in book 8, the great friendship between Aeneas and Pallas is immediately sealed in one of the most moving lines of the entire work: *exceptique manu dextramque amplexus inhaesit* (“And with a grasp of welcome he caught and clung to his hand”, 124). The powerful placement of the two hands next to each other (*manus* and *dextra*) and the strength of feeling implicit in *amplexus inhaesit* capture in one stroke the intense need we all feel for bonds and contact.

Perhaps one of the most meaningful forms of communal activity is song, and Virgil’s poems both enact and convey the power of that shared medium. Many of his *Eclogues*, in particular, are constructed around participation in song. *Alternis dicetis; amant alterna Camenae* (“You must sing alternately; the Muses love alternate verses”, *Ecl.* 3.59). As the repetition of *alternis ... alterna* emphasises, antiphonal singing enjoys divine favour, but it is also an activity which, however inherently agonistic, is a cooperative one. In the fifth *Eclogue*, the incorporative *convenimus ambo* (“we have both come together”, 1) sets the tone for the rest of the poem, in which a young man and an old offer alternating ballads about a single subject, Daphnis. Even as choral and musical parts are divided up – *tu calamos inflare levis, ego dicere versus* (“you [are good] at blowing on the slender reeds, I at singing verses”, 2), collaboration is firmly reinforced in the following line: *hic corylis mixtas inter consedimus ulmos?* (“[Why don’t] we sit together here where the hazels mix with elms?”, 3).

Song in concert with others can also help lubricate the grind, as the hauntingly beautiful lines at the end of the ninth *Eclogue* communicate. Here, Lycidas gives voice to an impulse that people have always harboured in bleak times – he suggests that he and Moeris sing together as they go on their way, and that by doing so, they will make the journey less unpalatable (63–65):

*Aut si, nox pluviam ne colligat ante, veremur,
cantantes licet usque (minus via laedit) eamus;
cantantes ut eamus, ego hoc te fasce levabo.*

“Or if we fear that night may first bring on rain, we may yet go singing on our way – it makes the road less irksome. So that we may go singing on our way, I will relieve you of this burden”).

The poem in fact ends with Lycidas’ older companion, Moeris, checking this youthful proposal. Yet, even as he does so, he keeps alive the prospect of singing in unison all the more heartily in due course: *carmina tum melius, cum venerit ipse, canemus* (“our songs we shall sing the better when the master himself has come”, 67). It’s only when there is no fellowship and the situation is utterly hopeless that you can say, as does Meliboeus at the end of the first *Eclogue*, *carmina nulla canam* (“I will sing no more songs”, 77).

For many, romantic love is, even more than fellowship, the most important realization of human connection. Yet, the Virgilian voice is quiet when it comes to the efflorescence of deep intimacy within a partnership. There are many examples of coupling in his works: Dido and Aeneas, Orpheus and Eurydice, Nisus and Euryalus, but the centre of gravity tends not to be the richness of human union but the tragedy of loss. Dido and Aeneas are briefly lovers, but the impossibility of the match is glaringly obvious from the outset. Even as Aeneas tells his story in books 2 and 3, Dido has already heard him refer – and repeatedly so – to his divinely-ordained mission to get to Italy. At the same time as Aeneas seduces the Queen of Carthage with his reminiscences, he rejects her. In the fourth book of the *Georgics*, Virgil introduces Eurydice as the *dulcis coniunx* of Orpheus (“dear wife”, 465), but the dominant focus is on the pain he suffers upon losing her. Even at the moment of reunification (*reddita Eurydice*; “regained Eurydice”, 486), Orpheus has already lost her again: retrieval becoming forfeiture in the space of five lines (486–91). The inevitability of loss is emphatically and chillingly conveyed in the repeated use of the prefix *re-* (*reddita ... restitit ... respexit*; “regained ... he halted ... he looked back”), which reverberate through this passage like a pain in search of its echo.

It takes us nine books of the *Aeneid* to arrive at anything that we might meaningfully regard as a fulfilling and flourishing relationship based on mutuality and equality, in the shape of Nisus and Euryalus. Virgil draws attention to this feature of their friendship with the words *His amor unus erat pariterque in bella ruebant* (“A common love was theirs; side by side they would charge into battle”, 9.182) and he establishes with a compassionate touch the care they hold for one another’s welfare, as their joint plans to carve a path to Aeneas in Pallanteum are laid (84–221). But here also, a sense of doom hangs over the episode from the outset, with Euryalus presciently predicting his own mother’s tears before the expedition has even begun (289). Ultimately Nisus and Euryalus’ love for each other will be played out in a scene of gruesome slaughter.

All the relationships Virgil describes, whether those referred to above, or Aeneas and Creusa in book 2 of the *Aeneid*, or Gallus and Lycoris in *Ecl.* 10, pivot entirely on loss.

In one way, of course, losing a significant other only serves to highlight how precious that person is. Nor am I seeking to suggest that the tragedy of loss is not prevalent in the treatment of relationships in the ancient canon more broadly. But the sheer absence of any accounts of fully-functioning, harmonious unions, and of any exploration of the happiness and gratification they can afford, is striking. There is no obvious equivalent of Odysseus and Penelope in Virgil, no Hector and Andromache, no Baucis and Philemon, no Daphnis and Chloe. We know scarcely anything about Virgil’s own life, and even less about his romantic circumstances. Donatus’ *Vita* of the fourth century AD tells us that “With regard to pleasure, he was partial to boys ... He loved Cebes and Alexander most of all”, but also that Virgil’s life was “upright” in its character and he was consequently dubbed *Parthenias* (“The Virgin”).¹⁷ With only such scraps of evidence, any formal attempt to eke out from Virgil’s verse autobiographical insights would be a clumsy and almost certainly futile exercise. Yet the thought lingers that perhaps Virgil’s life was scarred by unrequited love and / or loss. He conveys so well the inherent tragedy of Orpheus’ backward glance and how a beloved can slip through one’s fingers like thin air, but very little about the love that can flourish and grow without hurry or excess between two partners who have resolved to commit their lives to each other. That the anthropomorphic – and sexless – bee community should be one of the most memorable loci of commingling in the whole of his oeuvre is telling.

5. Human limitation

The final element of Virgil’s verse to broach here is human limitation. A primary function of poetry is to make us hesitate. Poetry creates space, and dispossesses us of the illusion that we can always sort matters out. A vital reason why the Maronian corpus strikes a chord is because Virgil shows us, like Job, that individuals must humbly acknowledge the limits of man’s wisdom. I suggested above that there was one aspect in Virgil’s audit of the human experience that was wholly wanting (namely, romantic love). Yet it is this apparent touch of the imperfect in the almost perfect that serves to inject his works further with the sweetness of their humanity.

In a highly provocative article in the 2017 publication of this journal, Richard Jenkyns probed the phenomenon of the “unspoken” in Virgil.¹⁸ He mounted a strong case for a Virgilian reticence and creation of silences through which the poet’s reach might extend into the more instinctive and subterranean parts of our consciousness. This Virgilian unclarity,

¹⁷ Aelius Donatus, *Life of Virgil*, tr. David Wilson-Okamura, 1996, rev. 2005, 2008, 2014, online at <http://virgil.org/vitae/>, chs. 8–11. Donatus based his account on an earlier biography by Suetonius.

¹⁸ ‘Virgil and the Unspoken’, *PVS* 29 (2017), 103–14.

according to Jenkyns, reflects an ambiguity that lies at the core of our existence. I wonder too whether Virgil's own more candid and explicit acknowledgements of limitation capture another truth about mortal capacity. There are moments in his works where Virgil seems to concede openly that full knowledge of the world exceeds his grasp. In the second book of the *Georgics*, for example, he points to the impossibility of tabulating all the grains of sand and all the waves on the sea and, by extension, of comprehending all the types of vines that exist (103–08):

*Sed neque quam multae species nec nomina quae sint
est numerus: neque enim numero comprehendere refert;
quem qui scire velit, Libyci velit aequoris idem
discere quam multae Zephyro turbentur harenae,
aut, ubi navigiis violentior incidit Eurus,
nosse quot Ionii veniant ad litora fluctus.*

(“But for the many kinds [*i.e.* of vines], or the names they bear, there is no numbering – nor, indeed, is the numbering worth the pains. He who would have knowledge of this would likewise want to learn how many grains of sand on the Libyan plain are stirred by the West Wind, or when the East falls in unwonted fury on the ships, to know how many billows of the Ionian sea roll forward to shore”).

Even as the passage slights the person who would want to catalogue such information, it also stands as a stark renunciation of command and control over a world which we inhabit but have not created. Later in this book Virgil again admits that he may not attain an understanding of the universe which the Muses reveal, but that he will instead “love the waters and the woods” (483–86):

*Sin, has ne possim naturae accedere partes
frigidus obstiterit circum praecordia sanguis,
rura mihi et rigui placeant in vallibus amnes,
flumina amem silvasque inglorius.*

(“But if the chill blood around my heart bar me from reaching those realms of nature, let my delight be the country, and the running streams amid the dells – may I love the waters and the woods, though I be unknown to fame”).

Against a backdrop in modern times of ever diminishing mystery about the earth we tread, Virgil offers a salutary reminder – as, in fact, does the current pandemic – that the unknown virulently or (more optimistically) verdantly persists. Virgil’s poetry yields up so much that can regroup and recentre us, but it also channels a sobering message about our urge to manage and explain.

The poems of Virgil thus also stand as a parable of our own powerlessness. The first book of the *Georgics*, which concludes with the image of a charioteer who has lost control of his charges, is a rousing exposition of this helpless state (512–14):

... ut cum carceribus sese effudere quadrigae,
addunt in spatia, et frustra retinacula tendens
fertur equis auriga neque audit currus habenas.

(“... even as when from the starting gates the chariots stream forth and gather speed lap by lap, while the driver, tugging vainly at the reins, is carried along by his steeds, and the car heeds not the curb!”)

Virgil understood that there is a limit to our powers, writing in *Ecl.* 8: *dicite, Pierides; non omnia possumus omnes* (“Tell, Pierian maids; we cannot all do everything”, 63). Open-endedness is an important feature of his writing generally. Indeed, considerable ink has been spilt over the seeming lack of closure in Virgil’s works. Scholars have commented on Virgil’s violent struggle against the linear and the inevitable progress of epic teleology, their focal point often being the very abrupt ending of the *Aeneid*. Virgil could not, as Homer could not, accomplish closure, because they were both so sensitive to the fact that the world is so insensitively resistant to being controlled and digested. In the third book of the *Georgics*, Virgil suggests that he is building a temple with his verse (13–39). It is a temple – it seems to me – that pays homage to a power beyond his own compass and his own comprehension. Such a message of impairment goes to the heart of the human condition. Virgil’s verse points to the fact that there is more to the world than we know and, in so doing, it provides the most inclusive vision of who we are: the world makes distinctions for no one, and for no one colour, creed, etc.

*

In academic writing, among Virgil’s poems, it is the *Georgics* that is generally termed “didactic”. I would contend that this is too limited an application: the term should be extended to all his works, for Virgil is a teacher in the fullest and most life-giving sense. As I stated at the outset, the categories of this essay are in no way intended to be self-contained; rather they

merge and bleed into each other and form a unified whole with far-reaching effects. While the Roman context of Virgil's works cannot be ignored, the vision he supplies extends well beyond it. Virgil leads us to nature, helps us to become literate in it, and encourages us to see ourselves as part of it, and it as an extension of ourselves. He forces us to think beyond our own small confines, because the individual components of his poetry chime with every fundamental dynamic of the larger life. He leads our gaze upward and outward, and provides distant glimpses of sublimity and the eternal verities of our own fate in this universe. While a vital lesson embedded in his verse is that we are not the first to confront hardship, he does anything but beat the gentleness out of us. Certainly, he shakes us with the acuity of his insight into the combination of delights and problems that beset us all, offering sensation rather than certainty, but within each episode of black chaos, there is always a chorus call of "Let there be light" to soothe us and to steady us. Although the ability to be loved and to reciprocate love, which for so many of us is the most precious part of being human, is less on display in Virgil than we might hope, the intense appreciation he manifests for the fragility of structures, but also for scope for renovation, and the devotion he exhibits for the world that surrounds us, for the air we breathe, for the ground we walk, for the souls we possess, means that any one of his masterful works functions as the most subtle vehicle for reflection on *our* humanity.

Virgil was emphatically not a Christian, Muslim or Jew, but his writing does have all the hallmarks of a song for God. In many ways, the spirit that underlies all his works gestures to the messages found in the Old Testament book of wisdom, *Ecclesiastes* (3.11–19):

*There is a time for everything,
and a season for every activity under the heavens:
a time to be born and a time to die,
a time to plant and a time to uproot,
a time to kill and a time to heal,
a time to tear down and a time to build,
a time to weep and a time to laugh,
a time to mourn and a time to dance,
a time to scatter stones and a time to gather them,
a time to embrace and a time to refrain from embracing,
a time to search and a time to give up,
a time to keep and a time to throw away,
a time to tear and a time to mend,
a time to be silent and a time to speak,
a time to love and a time to hate,
a time for war and a time for peace*

*What do workers gain from their toil? I have seen the burden God has laid on the human race. He has made everything beautiful in its time. He has also set eternity in the human heart; yet no one can fathom what God has done from beginning to end.*¹⁹

King's College London

LUCY NICHOLAS
(lucy.nicholas@kcl.ac.uk)

¹⁹ Translation: New International Version.

