

BOOK XII REVISITED

Epicurean Tension

Vergil is not entirely happy. His residual Epicureanism did not relish wars - or gods who intervene in human affairs. Aeneas is hardly the detached Stoic hero:

terribilis saevam nullo discrimine caedem
suscitat, irarumque omnis effundit habenas. (498-9)

Glover called him the Happy Warrior but he scarcely seems so. As for the gods, Jupiter's apparent fear that Juno may catch cold hanging about the chill damp clouds (796) is matched by Juno's odd disappearance from the heavens altogether (842). The Fury is portrayed with a weird mixture of genuine grimness and ludicrous exaggeration. Her path to earth is first a swift spiral (turbine 855). Then comes the not very happy comparison with a Parthian arrow; then the transformation into a sedentary owl. Vergil is happier with humanity than with heroism or divinity.

Rare Usages

With a poet as careful as Vergil the use of rare words or even their coining represents some constraint; the language does not come naturally to him, and he has to force it into his mould.

- 7 latro unusual of a hunter, and the only appearance of the word in Vergil.
- 120 limus The only literary appearance of the word, authorized here by Servius. Aulus Gellius (12,3,3) attests it from Tiro.
- 121 pilata See also under Ambiguities. The meaning "dense" is attested from Ennius and Varro, but rare; "armed with javelins" is not found before Martial.
- 165 crispans Also 1,313 but otherwise not found earlier; the usage is curious, and Poschl takes it to connote anxiety.
- 364 sternax not elsewhere before Silius; may be a coining of Vergil's.
- 375 bilix hapax legomenon.
- 389 latebra the sing. is not elsewhere in Vergil and is not found previously in verse.
- 451 sidus I take to mean "the sky", a usage not previously attested. The phrase is in any event unusual, even if we take it with Servius of a storm breaking or with R. D. Williams of the sun's light being cut off.
- 517 exosum twice in this book (cf. 818), also in 5,687, but not found before Vergil.
- 596 incessi the first appearance of the word.

605 floros So Servius: the word appears in Aulus Gellius 3,9,3 (though the reading is there uncertain) but nowhere else.

740 futtillis not elsewhere with this connotation.

818 exosa cf. 517.

Prolepsis

The Aeneid shows the past pregnant with the future; it is in fact a proleptic poem, and it is natural in this context for the poet to think and write proleptically. I noted the following examples:

- 44 quem nunc maestum patria Ardea longe/dividit "so that he becomes sorrowful"
- 94 quassatque trementem (sc. hastam) "till it quivers" Then follows a gap of nearly 250 lines with no obvious example: this is the exchange of vows, and the whole point is that the truce is to be broken; prolepsis is inappropriate.
- 332 furentis/ ... immittit equos "driving them to rage"
- 338 fumantis sudore quatit (sc. equos) "till they steam"
- 362 huic comitem Asbyten ... mittit "to accompany him."
- 463 pulverulenta fuga Rutuli dant terga "so that they become dusty"
- 507 crudum if the meaning is "bloody" then proleptic.
- 618 arrectasque impulit auris/ ... sonus "and made them prick up"
- 755 morsuque elusus inani est "and made it vain"
- 788 olli sublimes armis animisque relecti "with arms and spirits restored so that they exulted"
- 841 mentem laetata retorsit perhaps "took pleasure in her changed purpose" i.e. "changed her purpose so that she felt pleasure."

Then comes a change; now Jupiter's purposes are being fulfilled; Vergil now absorbs us in the present in relation to the past, not the future; Turnus is killed for Pallas not Rome. So compare Juturna:

- 875 ne me terrete timentem which must mean "Don't scare me; I'm frightened already"
- 884 manisque deam demittat ad imos possibly "formerly a goddess"; at least "goddess though I am."

Ambiguity

The insights of William Empson's Seven Types of Ambiguity have been scantily applied to classical literature; W. B. Stanford's Ambiguity in Greek Literature is a notable exception. Even the best of poets may nod, but I take it as axiomatic

that an ambiguity will generally be deliberate and that though one meaning may be primary, it is nearly always wrong to assert one to the exclusion of the others. A concatenation of ambiguities, such as we have here represents an ambiguity of purpose. We have seen something of this. Vergil accepts Rome's supernatural destiny, but his divine machinery creaks; he accepts her mission to bring the world to peace (cf. E. 1,6; 4,17) but he is not really happy with battles. Further he must take sides with Aeneas against Turnus and the Trojans against the Rutulians. But running counter to this is the merging of the peoples; running counter to it also is his innate sense of pity, reinforced by early Epicurean teaching. I list the ambiguities I have noted, some of them trivial, some strong.

- 20 impensius punning with expendere in 21
- 46 aegrescit medendo a strong oxymoron
- 62 invisa .../lumina nec ... videbo. There is a double pun: one between videbo "I will see" and invisa "hateful" with a subsidiary ambiguity of "malicious" (cf. 11,364); the other on lumina with the prime meaning of "the light of day" (cf. Lucr. 3,524), but a secondary meaning of "eyes" or "power of sight."
- 67 violaverit with a cross-reference to violentia Turnis 45 cf. 9
- 74 Servius reckoned this one of the twelve intractable passages. There is a pun between mora and mortis, and a double structure "a delay of death is not free for i.e. open to Turnus" and "for Turnus delay is not free from death" (for the genitive cf. 10,154).
- 78-9 The writing is careful though forced. non Teucros agat in Rutulos is balanced by nostro dirimamus sanguine bellum, Teucrum arma by Rutulii (which must be the right reading rather than Rutulium). But the balance is, so to say, off balance. 78 refers to Aeneas and the Trojans; we expect 79 to refer to Turnus and the Rutulians, but dirimamus is ambiguous between plural for singular referring to Turnus and a genuine plural for Turnus and the intrusive Aeneas. The contrast between Teucrum arma and Rutulii is deliberate; he regards the Trojans as the aggressors.
- 100 A richly ironic line. Aeneas may use the curling-tongs, but his blade will be hot with Turnus's blood, and murra anticipates the death of Turnus's closest friend Murranus (529,639)
- 121 pilata "armed with javelins"; but Servius attests the meaning "close-packed" from Ennius and Varro. One wonders if there is not an additional play on "bald" by contrast with those who have wreathes of vervain.
- 123 exercitus ambiguous between noun and participle. The situation is itself ambiguous: they come for peace armed as for war.
- 180 torques with three dimensions of meaning: "brandish" like a spear; "whirl in a circle" so that now one side is uppermost, now the other; "put on the rack" "torture."
- 209 The imagery here falls into one of Empson's categories as the human image with hair and arms overlies that of the tree.

- 232 fatalesque manus. Heyne and Wagner gave this up. Both words are ambiguous: manus between "companies" and "hands"; fatales with three levels, "prophetic" in that the Etruscans were famed diviners, "superstitious" in that they controlled their actions by reference to oracles (cf. 8,499 ff), but with ironic overtones unintended by Juturna "deadly" in that Turnus's death is coming, though not from the Etruscans. Servius oddly and impossibly makes the phrase refer to the Trojans.
- 251 arrexere animos physically they pay keen attention, psychologically they are encouraged.
- 259 The quotation from Horace (Sat. 2,6,1) provides an ironical level of meaning, since Horace's prayers were modest.
- 309 ferreus cf. 10,745. Rich in reference. It is Homer's χάλκεον ἔκνον, Il. 11, 241; the change of metal is to be noted. There is a double oxymoron dura quies and ferreus somnus. The sleep of death is cruel and inflexible; it comes from an iron weapon; it is dark like Pluto's robes in Claudian (R. Pros. 2,275)
- 335 It is only a slight ambiguity, but it is not clear whether Iraeque Insidiaeque are additional to or in opposition to atrae Formidinis ora.
- 338 miserabile on the face of it with caesis but in a deeper sense also with insultans. Turnus is pitiable as well as the other victims.
- 344 paribus. A famous ambiguity. In 6,826 paribus ... armis means "identical armour." So Servius ut aequaliter dimicarent, aequaliter currerent. Alternatively "equally suitable for close-fighting or cavalry gallops" (cf. E. 7,5) As so often, we need not and indeed must not choose.
- 348 animo manibusque parentem. What is today called "a snide comment," apparently innocent and laudatory, but in fact Dolon was a boastful and ambitious fool who came to a sticky end; so does Eumedes. Cerda sees the irony.
- 352 aspirat with strong double meaning since he was no longer breathing.
- 398 acerba fremens groaning with his wound and raging at his inactivity.
- 400 lacrimis immobilis. Probably Aeneas rather than Iulus, though there might be something in the thought that Iulus, like his father, has come to the state mens immota manet, lacrimae volvuntur inanes (4,449). But even with Aeneas, is it their tears or his own which fail to move him? In 4, 449, as the image of the oak too faithfully shows, it is primarily his own.
- 403 trepidat hurried but also fearful.
- 426 animos accendit in hostem. Whose? His own? Aeneas's? The company's in general? All; but the singular hostem, common enough with a plural meaning, also points Aeneas towards Turnus.
- 433 fusis ... armis ablative absolute "when his armour is put on" or instrumental with complectitur with a double derivation from arma and armus, as in 4,11.

- 444 caeco as usual complex, "blinding" but also "unseeing" "indiscriminate".
- 481 tortos legit obvis orbis "directs his whirling wheels" and chooses tortuous paths".
- 484 fugam he is testing alike Turnus's powers of flight and his own powers of pursuit.
- 507 crudum (a) "bloody" cf. cruor here proleptic (b) "cruel" cf. crudelis (c) "immature" brilliantly linked with fata celerissima in relation to Sucro (d) "immature" also because the blow should be reserved for Turnus.
- 527-8 Aeneas and Turnus are angry, their hearts are bursting with eagerness to conquer; but also any body which does not give way before them is smashed. They inflict wounds with all their power; they drive on with all their power regardless of wounds; but also, because it is impersonal and indefinite, Turnus drives on with all his power towards his eventual defeat.
- 538 Cretheu with heu in the name.
- 543 mortis ... metae. All metaphors by their nature introduce two levels of discourse; this is more complex. It represents the Homeric θανάτοιο τέλος, and the meaning "end" or "finishing-post" is perfectly good; the metaphor is singularly appropriate as the chariots tear over the plain. But meta is also the turning point; Aeolus here turns from life to death. Further, Vergil uses metae in the plural. One end of the course, from which he started, is Lyrnesus; the other is Laurentum; here he should turn to head back home, but this becomes for him the finishing-post. Finally there is an implicit contrast between his domus alta (the phrase is repeated), high on Ida, and his domus aeterna, which is also alta, deep below the soil.
- 591 caeco again; the sound (and its source) cannot be seen, but it is also unseeing, since the bees cannot see what is disturbing them. The writing is exceptionally bold; the smell is described as black, the noise as unseen. It is wholly justified in the result.
- 598 pugnae with certamine (cf. 11,780). But also closely with infelix; she is "cursed in the field of war." And by its position affecting iuvenem "the warlike young man."
- 617 caecis again.
- 626 prima Servius id est primum. But also "where Victory goes first" or "stands nearest"; and again "Victory who holds the primacy" or "who is our prime concern."
- 630 numero literally "numbers", metaphorically "prestige". pugnae probably genitive with inferior of the field of the inferiority: possibly depending on numero or honore or both; just possibly a dative of disadvantage with recedes, though this is not paralleled; certainly ambiguous. recedes there may be an ironical allusion to death.
- 632 prima noun. fem. sing. or acc. neut. plur.

- 788 refecti a slight zeugma.
- 790 Three possible interpretations (apart from the variant reading certamine)
(a) Martis gen. with certamina cf. ἔριδα Ἄρηος,
Il. 5,861, anheli agreeing with Martis (b) Martis with certamina, anheli
n. pl. (c) anheli n. pl. Martis gen. of cause with anheli cf. Sil. 15,721
longique laboris anhelos.
- 792 fulva. Pindar has ξανθὰ νεφέλα Ol. 7,49. It is the colour of gold (7,279),
and appropriate to a throne. We have had it in this book of the golden
eagle (12, 247), which links it with Jupiter-Juno, but also with fierceness.
It is the colour of the lion, which suggests battle. As a cloud-colour it
is slightly odd, and not I think found elsewhere, but at 7, 76 it is used
of a smoky light; there can be slightly sinister associations. Further
there may be a punning reference to Lucretius 6,461 furva nubes. The cloud
is golden, like Olympus (cf. Val Fl. 7,158) but it recalls darkness.
- 795 "that he is owed to the sky and is being raised by destiny to the stars."
But it is tempting to take caelo fatisque together, and treat as a double
passive "is due to be raised by heaven and destiny to the stars."
- 797 mortalin both "deadly" and "inflicted by a mortal." The ambiguities are
particularly strong in these ten lines.
- 812 inimica nom. fem. "as an enemy" acc. pl. neut., both "hateful battles" and
"battles with their enemies."
- 815 contenderet a slight zeugma.
- 818 exosa She loathes the battle cf. 12,151; she also loathes leaving it.
- 825 viros at first sight just "men" or "soldiers" but with extra emphasis with
vertere vestem; Trojan dress was regarded as effeminate.
- 846 Macrobius explains (1,3,15) quae non habet idoneum tempus rebus gerendis.
Nox intempesta in Cicero means "dead of night." Here it gives an additional
implication of monstrous, premature birth. Further at 3,587 nox intempesta
clearly means "stormy," and at 10,184 Graviscae is described as intempestae
i.e. "unhealthy." All these layers of meaning come together here.
- 852 bello looking both to meritas and territas.
- 873 durae "for all my toughness" but also "in my cruel abandonment of you."
luceam morer "stop the passage of time" like Joshua but for the opposite
reason; "hold on to life for you"; perhaps also "continue to offer help",
a Ciceronian usage (e.g. Pro Leg. Man. 12,33)
- 881 umbras alike the darkness and the dead.
- 885 glauco appropriate to the water-nymph, but with a cross-reference to γλαυξ,
the shape taken by the Fury.
- 930 humilis with supplex in Cic. Inv. 1,16,22 "humble," but also literal, since
he is on the ground, and in both contrasting with sublimes (788).

Shape, sound and sense

Of all poets Vergil is the most careful to shape his writing to the sense, and it may be useful to analyse briefly some of his effects. There is a great deal of alliteration and many rhythmic effects which I have not commented on.

- 18 Spondees for the calming influence, and the archaic olli as the old man speaks.
- 20-1 The ms and ns express his hesitation.
omnis metuentem expendere casus: he is in the middle, fearing, weighing carefully, while misfortunes surround him.
- 26 Three word-accent and a long syllable elided in the last two feet: the effect is hesitant and gasping.
- 31 The hiatus well expresses the old man's gasping repentance.
- 34 A skilful line with the three successive offbeat spondees with their accent, so to say, striving against the rhythm of the line.
- 53 vanis sese occulat umbris: he is in the middle, the shadows surround him.
- 61 qui te cumque ... casus: again the misfortunes surround the situation, but the tmesis intensifies the effect: whatever they are they hold Turnus in their grip.
- 67-9 lilia multa/alba rosa: the mixture of the flowers exquisitely expressed by the word-order. The whole effect is rich and complex. The contrasting colours pick up the similar contrast in 36 (with calefacta 66 picking up recalcent 35); violaverit puns on violentia (see Ambiguities); the unnaturally lengthened ebur expresses the unnaturality of the whole situation.
- 107 maternis saevus in armis: his mother's armour surrounds him. The phrase is more effective with the oxymoron maternis saevus, since Venus is goddess of love (cf. Lucr. 1).
- 123 variis exercitus armis: the same effect.
- 136 prospiciens tumulo campum aspectat: the chiasmus is neat, as is the movement from prospiciens to aspectat: the effect is - gaze ranging ... hill ... plain ... eyes suddenly focus: this is the art of the cinema.
- 138-40 A rhyming effect: sororem ... sonoris ... honorem cf. 146 dolorem. The sense is of a kind of incantation of inevitability.
- 149 It is not the young man per se that is surrounded by ineluctable destinies but his encounter.
- 172 illi sets up the sentence. Chiasmus follows, with a double contrast: vertical movement in a circle (of the sun), horizontal movement in a circle (of the people); the eyes described as "lights" (and gleaming as

the sun strikes them), the true light.

190 paribus se legibus: so the terms bind them.

219-220 Three double ss and a double p express the slow and halting character of Turnus's approach; suppliciter anticipates the moment when he will become truly supplex (930).

227 in medias dat sese acies: the effect is almost second nature.

236-8 Three successive lines with their final unaccented syllables rhyming. The effect is similar, though less strong, to 138-40: here it extends from speech to action. The spondees of 237 express his feeling of their indolence.

240 A menacing line, spondaic, with ipsi L at start and finish and the word of change athwart the very centre.

247 The bird is in the sky and the collocation of colours adds to the effect.

251-2 The cs express the cackling of the birds.

266-7 The ss express the hissing of the spear through the air.

268-9 The armies cackle like the birds.

284 A rhythmically curious line with clash between ictus and accent in tempestat, but not thereafter. The storm explodes, but then the hail of iron falls with a kind of structured regularity.

292 He is indeed tangled with the altar.

294-5 A remarkable effect: a spondaic line followed by a dactylic. The effect is of a "still" in the cinema as the spear towers over the suppliant, followed by flashing action.

302 Again the effect is cinematographic: hair-left hand-panic-grip tightens-it's an enemy!

304 rigido latus ense: the sword is projecting on both sides of the body.

306-7 securi ... reducta: the long delay as the axe is drawn back, back.

308 sparso ... cruore: as the blood is scattered so are the words.

316-7 Aeneas's intensity is well conveyed by the alliteration on f as well as the archaic form.

337 It is tempting to suggest that the word-order implies that whereas to the outward eye Turnus is in the middle of the battle, the real battle is within Turnus.

363 This is one of the only two instances in Vergil where que stands in a long

open syllable (cf. 3,91 liminaque laurusque). It is simply an imitation of Homer, for heroic purposes which are helped by the exotic, resonant names.

372-3 The bit is in the foaming mouth.

373 A leonine line. Again (cf. 172) ora sets the line up, and is followed by chiasmus. The effect is intensified by the rhyme and the alliterative ds; it expresses vividly the way he is bumped along.

381 A very ingenious line. At first appearance there is no gap between the helmet and the breastplate, but the postponed et creates the gap at the very edge despite the overlap.

406 The postponing of horror almost gives the hearer the picture of their hair slowly rising with fear!

419 odoriferam panaceam: offbeat rhythm just before the ure is complete and he settles into normalcy.

433 A difficult line: see also under Ambiguity. Aeneas is in the middle of his armour seeking to embrace the boy, but armour is clumsy, and Ascanius remains outside.

445 An exciting line with its expressive alliteration; the two short syllables of tremit add to the pace.

446 The mound is of course where Aeneas's field-hospital was set; Turnus is in the field; ab with venientis not vidit. It is a masterly line: Turnus's gaze takes in the whole field; included in it is the mound opposite; and within the picture of that mound he sees the Trojans detaching themselves.

462-3 The words are as entangled as the rout is disorderly.

482-3 per agmina magna/voce vocat. There is a curious effect here. The phrase is tied together by magna voce. There is assonance between agmina and magna and voce and vocat, but the length of vowel in magna draws out what has gone before, whereas vocat clips voce short. The effect is of a great sustained shout supervening upon light noise and followed by a light echo.

499 The metaphor is particularly powerful in context.

506 haud multa morantem: the words cause a slight delay.

507-8 crudum ... ensem: again the sword pierces right through (cf. 304)

517 The ms and ns express his hesitations.

537 The spear is in the middle of his head.

539-40 Beautifully conceived. Cupencus is enfolded by his gods, but so too is Aeneas, and the two are in proximity.

- 833 The effective monosyllables have often been noted.
- 837 An interesting line with the repeated sound adiciam faciamque omnis reinforcing the promise, the slight oxymoron of omnis uno, and the elision of a long vowel at the end of the fourth foot before the same vowel cementing the bond.
- 851 A harsh ending, but plague is harsh.
- 886-8 The structure is devious and contorted like the methods of the Parthians. This sentence is almost worthy of Henry James.
- 859 celeris, at first hearing odd with umbras, prepares us for the descent of the Fury. Motion is relative, and as she swoops down the clouds do appear to be darting past. There is an interesting movement. Celer is applied first to the Fury (853), then to her swirling movement (855), then, as we identify with her, to the things she passes. The proximity of celeris and incognita is deliberate: the very speed defies recognition.
- 863 culminibus desertis an effective change of rhythm, the fifth-foot spondee slowing the pace from the headlong rush of the Fury to the unmoving owl, the offbeat rhythm producing sinister unnatural overtones.
- 868 comae et a harsh elision for a harsh moment.
- 879 A kind of oxymoron. "To what end has he given me life without end?"
- 901-2 ille ... heros. The holding up of heros to the end is powerful. The phrase is from Il. 5,308 but Vergil has used it in his own way.
- 903-4 A strong rhyming effect as he moves to his climax, leonine in the first line, chiasmic in the second:
- currentem euntem
tollentem moventem
- Again the sense is of a gloomy inevitability.
- 912-5 The alliteration is noteworthy. In 912 the basic pattern is s-v-v-v-s, but there are subtle subsidiary effects with r and c. After this the predominant effects are quick couplings quacumque; viam virtute; dea dira; sensus; vertuntur varii. The effect of the double consonants in successum should also not be missed. The result is that each particular effect is reinforced.
- 916 ms and ns of hesitation coupled with tremulous ts.
- 928 Seven us in the line and two immediately before represent the groans, and recall the sound of the owl (863-4)
- 936-8 Maguinness has well remarked how the pause in these lines moves from the second foot to the third to the fourth with "increasing earnestness and pathos."

Glory

Of course there is glory. There is no need, after Viktor Pöschl, Michael Putnam and others, to go again over the imagery. But we may pick out four moments. The identification of Turnus with Dido at the beginning of the book (5 cf. 4,1) is a dramatic masterstroke. Reminiscences of book 4 recur throughout: 37:4, 595; 54:4,1 etc.; 55:4,415; 56:4,314; 99:4,215; 400:4,449; 604 ff: 4,665 ff; 703:4,445; 868:4,280; 871:4,673 and point the effect. Aeneas's anguish at the broken truce is another moment quo ruitis? quaeve ista repens discordia surgit? (313). The echo of Horace Epod. 7,1 quo quo scelesti ruitis only makes it more poignant. Again, the prayers of Juno and promises of Jupiter are magnificently memorable:

sit Latium, sint Albani per saecula reges,
sit Romana potens Itala virtute propago:
occidit, occideritque sinas cum nomine Troia. (826-8)

And the ending is superb: Turnus's defiance non me tua fervida terrent/dicta, ferox; di me terrent et Iuppiter hostis (894-5); the brilliant dream-sequence; the skilful way in which the poet draws together the dramatic necessity for Turnus's death and the concept of a hero who pities by attributing the final killing to the spirit of Pallas. And who else would end an epic of national glory on the piteous passing of an enemy?

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BOOK REVIEWS

LATIN READINGS: VOLUME 1, PROSE, VERSE and DRAMA (DCL 1201), 38/- (or 30/- to J.A.C.T. members), and VOX ROMANA - six passages from Virgil (DCL 503), 15/-. One copy of the text is supplied with each disc by the producers, Discourses Ltd., 10a High Street, Tunbridge Wells, Kent.

LATIN POETRY in VERSE TRANSLATION from the BEGINNINGS to the RENAISSANCE, ed. by L.R. Lind. Oxford University Press (Paperbacks series), 1967. 16/-.

VERGIL: EPIC and ANTHROPOLOGY, by W.F. Jackson Knight (John D. Christie - editor). George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1967. 55/-.

THE STORY OF AENEAS, by Kenneth McLeish. HERITAGE of LITERATURE series. Messrs. Longmans, Green & Co. Ltd., 1968.

To the ancients the sound of what they wrote mattered greatly, a fact which we tend too often to overlook; our pupils usually make contact with Latin and Greek as written languages only. This situation the J.A.C.T. along with their publishers, Discourses Ltd., have set out to correct, and their recorded series of readings (by an excellent team of readers) is consequently to be welcomed very much. The attempt