



*The*  
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COVER ILLUSTRATION: a roundel commemorating the foundation of the Society commissioned by Jonathan Foster from Gillian Cooper. It represents the tradition preserved by his biographer Aelius Donatus, that Virgil described himself as bringing forth his poetry as a she-bear does her young, licking it eventually into shape. An epitaph attributed to the poet concludes with the words: '*Cecini pascua, rura, duces*', 'I sang of pastures, farms and leaders' (in allusion to the *Eclogues*, *Georgics* and *Aeneid* respectively).

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in Classics, University of Liverpool.

The lectures printed in the present volume do not represent a  
complete record of what the Society has heard in the past  
three years: some of the lectures have been, or will be,  
otherwise or elsewhere published.

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# Song Contests in Calpurnius Siculus

*A paper given to the Virgil Society on 19 May 2001*

In this paper I will be dealing with the theme of song contests in pastoral poetry, and I will be considering this theme principally by looking at Calpurnius Siculus's response to earlier pastoral song contests in his fourth and sixth poems. This paper does not seek to deal with the controversy of the dating of Calpurnius's poetry; while that is an important issue, it does not impinge on the conclusions offered in this paper.<sup>1</sup>

All forms of pastoral are difficult. One of the most difficult areas perhaps is the poems which contain song contests. A poem like Theocritus, *Idyll* 3 or Virgil, *Eclogue* 2 is obviously about love. But with the song contests we are often unsure how to deal with them, even in Theocritus or Virgil.<sup>2</sup> It is also worth considering as well that song contests are not always straightforwardly confined to formal duels in song.<sup>3</sup> There are also less formal and more friendly exchanges, such as the exchange of cup and song between Thyrsis and the goatherd in Theocritus, *Idyll* 1, and the exchange of songs between Simichidas and Lycidas in *Idyll* 7.

A brief resumé of Calpurnius's contribution to this area may be helpful at this point. In all there are three poems which fall into the category: the second, the fourth and sixth. The second poem begins with the narrator describing how the girl Crocale was loved both by Astacus and Idas. When these two met by chance, they agreed to compete in song with fleeces and, intriguingly, garden produce as the forfeits. Thyrsis is appointed the judge of the contest, and curiously gives the instruction that the stakes are not to count (lines 22-6),<sup>4</sup> so that the honour and dishonour of victory and defeat are to be the only rewards. The two competitors then sing alternately, until Thyrsis declines to declare either of them victorious and encourages them to be friendly to one another. Of all the three poems, this perhaps the one which is closest in manner to its forebears: the contest which ends in a draw, for instance, can be paralleled in Virgil, *Eclogue* 3.<sup>5</sup> In the Calpurnian collection it perhaps establishes a kind of default model of song contest, against which poems four and especially six can be compared.

I will however spend more time on the fourth poem of Calpurnius, a poem which has been seen as central to the collection.<sup>6</sup> But before going into details, a summary of the poem is in order. The poem

has as its first section a conversation between Corydon and Meliboeus, where we hear that Iollas has given Corydon a pipe once owned by Tityrus. Meliboeus urges Corydon to give him a higher kind of poetry than mere praises of Alexis (a glance at Virgil's second *Eclogue*) and by chance they are then joined by Amyntas, the brother of Corydon. Both then exchange snatches of political pastoral, expressing their desire for the good favour of the emperor. The poem then ends at midday.

In the fourth poem, I would argue, one of the central themes is the issue of poetic succession. At the beginning, Meliboeus asks Corydon why he is silent and sitting apart:<sup>7</sup>

*Quid tacitus, Corydon, uultuque subinde minaci  
quidue sub hac platano, quam garrulus adstrepat umor,  
insueta statione sedes?* Calp. 4.1-3

Why are you silent, Corydon, and with a gaze is that is continually brooding, and why do you sit beneath this plane-tree, an unusual place for you, by which the babbling water sounds?

In his reply, Corydon straightaway indicates an anxiety about the quality of his verses:

*carmina iam dudum, non quae nemorale resultent,  
uoluimus, o Meliboe; sed haec, quibus aurea possint  
saecula cantari, quibus et deus ipse canatur,  
qui populos urbesque regit pacemque togatam.* Calp. 4.5-8

For a long time now, Meliboeus, I have been planning songs, not those which have a woodland sound, but these, in which the golden age could be hymned, in which I might sing of the god himself who rules over peoples and cities, and peace that wears the toga.

Corydon's reference here to the golden age seems a glance back at Virgil's fourth *Eclogue*, and this is confirmed by Corydon's implied hierarchy of poetry: he regards his projected verse as on a higher level than mere woodland song, and for this we can of course compare Virgil's own reference to *paulo maiora*, 'things a little greater', at the start of the fourth *Eclogue*.<sup>8</sup> However, Virgil's fourth *Eclogue* is not the only point of comparison here. The reference to the *aurea ... saecula* also evokes another poem of Calpurnius, the first poem, where there is also a version of the golden age. This occurs in the inscribed poem found on a tree by Corydon and Ornytus (Calp. 1.33-88), whose authorship the characters ascribe to the god Faunus himself at the poem's ending (Calp. 1.89-94).<sup>9</sup>

Calpurnius's fourth poem thus opens with Corydon's wish to write a higher kind of verse. Given that we are in the fourth poem of Calpurnius's collection, this seems an obvious glance back to Virgil's *Eclogue* 4. What is striking here is that this gesture of deference towards the literary tradition is at the same time made more complex because we have already seen a rewriting of the fourth *Eclogue*'s confident predictions in Calpurnius's first poem, a poem which foretells a similarly glorious future of happiness. In a sense, Corydon's ambition to match himself to the higher level of Virgil's fourth *Eclogue* has already been undertaken by Calpurnius in the very first poem of the collection. Moreover, the repetition of Virgil's prophecy of a golden age by Calpurnius points even more strongly to the manner in which Virgil's praise in *Eclogue* 4 itself depends on repetition: the heroic age will have to come round again, and there will also have to be a few last vestiges of the bad old ways in order to allow for the possibility of heroic achievement (Virgil, *Ecl.* 4.31-6). Calpurnius, incidentally, avoids this possible trap in his first poem. Faunus's inscribed poem does not allow the possibility of a future involving heroism: it is, as it were, the end of history.

The next pair of speeches in the fourth poem of Calpurnius then contain Meliboeus's encouragement to Corydon, with the warning that Rome should not be sung about in the same way as one would sing

about a sheepfold (Calp. 4.9-11). Corydon replies with a modest affirmation of his talent, though at the same time he concedes that his poetry might be only appreciated in the countryside (Calp. 4.12-18), including a reference to his own *rusticitas* in line 14, a nice glance back at Virgil's *rusticus es*, *Corydon* (Virgil, *Eclogue* 2.56).<sup>10</sup> This on the surface seems to present us with a Corydon who knows his place in the hierarchy of literature, and does not wish to presume too much. However, there then follows a curious speech from Meliboeus which suggests a more complex picture of Corydon's poetic deference. In lines 19-28 Meliboeus tells how he has often heard Corydon attempting to prevent his brother Amyntas from playing the pipes. Corydon, we are told, used to warn his brother that there were was no point in following a career in poetry, since poetry is ignored and unheeded; he even told Amyntas that he should gather acorns and berries and tend his flocks instead. At first glance it seems that Corydon is being pessimistic and has no confidence in the efficacy of poetry, which is of course a Virgilian topic, rehearsed, for example, in *Eclogues* 1 and 9. However, given that Amyntas is about to compete with Corydon in song, we might also notice that Corydon had attempted to divert Amyntas from poetry altogether. This might suggest an attempt by Corydon to control his own place and his brother's place in a poetic hierarchy.

In lines 23-63 there is a lengthy speech from Corydon in reply which begins with his acknowledgement that he had indeed acted in this way towards his brother. He explains, however, that there have been changes since that time (lines 29-63), and attributes the improvement in their circumstances to Meliboeus, who in Calpurnius occupies the rôle of a patron figure.<sup>11</sup> Meliboeus's interventions have saved Corydon from a life of exile outside Italy. In lines 50-2 we hear how he can help Corydon with his poetry:

*sed nisi forte tuas melior sonus aduocat aures  
et nostris aliena magis tibi carmina rident,  
uis, hodierna tua subigatur pagina lima?* Calp. 4.50-2

But unless perhaps a better song attract your ears and the poems of others please you more than mine, would you let today's page be worked on by your file?

Here we see Corydon in a deferential mode, not wishing to affirm his own talents too much, recalling the modesty of lines 12-18. However it would be a mistake to see this modesty as all there is to Corydon. This is because Corydon, after praising Meliboeus, expresses his cautious hopes that he can try out a pipe given to him by Iollas:

*quod si tu faueas trepido mihi, forsitan illos  
experiar calamos, here quos mihi doctus Iollas  
donauit dixitque: "truces haec fistula tauros  
conciliat: nostroque sonat dulcissima Fauno.  
Tityrus hanc habuit, cecinit qui primus in istis  
montibus Hyblaea modulabile carmen auena."* Calp. 4.58-63

But if you show me your favour, nervous though I am, perhaps I shall try out these pipes which learned Iollas gave to me yesterday when he said: "This pipe soothes savage bulls, and it sounds most sweetly for our Faunus. Tityrus owned it, he who first in these mountains sang a melodious song on a Hyblaeian reed."

Here we see another side to Corydon, a Corydon who wishes to follow in the footsteps of Tityrus, whom, even at this point in the poem, one might well reasonably identify with Virgil. The gift from Iollas inevitably calls to mind such gifts as the staff received by Hesiod from the Muses (Hes. *Theog.* 30), and Lycidas's gift to Simichidas in the seventh *Idyll* of Theocritus (Theoc. *Id.* 7.128-9).<sup>12</sup> But while Corydon

might wish to become part of the tradition of Tityrus, there is perhaps also a sense in which he might wish to challenge him. This certainly is how Meliboeus appears to think in these remarks:

*M. magna petis, Corydon, si Tityrus esse laboras.  
 ille fuit uates sacer et qui posset auena  
 praesonuisse chelyn, blandae cui saepe canenti  
 allusere ferae, cui substitit aduena quercus.  
 quem modo cantantem rutilo spargebat acantho  
 Nais et implicitos comebat pectine crines.  
 C. est - fateor, Meliboee, - deus, sed nec mihi Phoebus  
 forsitan abnuerit; tu tantum commodus audi:  
 scimus enim, quam te non aspernetur Apollo.*

Calp. 4.64-72

M. You seek after great things, Corydon, if you strive to be Tityrus. He was a sacred bard, one who could outsound the lyre on his reed-pipe. Often wild beasts played around him as he sang, all tame, and the oak would come and stand close to him. And as he sang, a Naiad would bedeck him with red acanthus and comb his tangled hair.

C. He is, I confess it, Meliboeus, a god, but nor perhaps has Phoebus rejected me; just listen favourably: for we know how Apollo does not disdain you.

Meliboeus sees that Corydon's use of the pipe given him by Iollas is a gesture of assertion, an indication of Corydon's desire to stake out a claim for his own worth as a poet. Meliboeus anxiously compares Tityrus to Orpheus, a comparison with an archetypal poet, and the allusion to Orpheus's mythical powers perhaps emphasises the difference that exists between Tityrus and Orpheus on the one hand, and the humble Corydon on the other.<sup>13</sup> But Corydon's reply in lines 69-72 shows that he is willing to try, and moreover that the attempt is possible, providing that Corydon receive divine favour, or at least the favour of Meliboeus.<sup>14</sup> Meliboeus then urges Corydon on in lines 73-81, not without reiterating the need for caution, but at the same time suggesting that Corydon should be aiming higher and urging him to use the pipe of Tityrus:

*incipi, nam faueo; sed prospice, ne tibi forte  
 tinnula tam fragili respiret fistula buxo,  
 quam resonare solet, si quando laudat Alexin.  
 hos potius, magis hos calamos sectare: canales  
 exprime qui dignas cecinerunt consule siluas.*<sup>15</sup>

Calp. 4.73-7

Begin, for I favour you; but look out, lest perhaps the shrill pipe intone from boxwood as frail as it usually is when it praises Alexis. Rather these are the pipes, pursue these ones more; press on the pipes which sang of woods that were worthy of a consul.

Here we can see a continuing note of caution from Meliboeus; he is anxious that Corydon's performance might not be up to the standard of the Tityran - or rather Virgilian - pipes which he is playing. However, Meliboeus simultaneously suggests that Corydon has already begun the process of imitating and perhaps also competing with Virgil. True enough, Corydon has to raise the level of his poetry. However, what kind of poetry has Corydon been working on previously? It turns out that he has been writing poems in praise of Alexis, *si quando laudat Alexin*. This of course can only recall the second *Eclogue* of Virgil, with its incipit *formosum pastor Corydon ardebat Alexin*. So Calpurnius's Corydon has also been singing in praise of an Alexis, just as Virgil's did, though in the case of Virgil we might note a further level of irony in that we discover at the end of *Eclogue* 5 that the second *Eclogue* is in fact the work of Menalcas, when Menalcas gives Mopsus his pipe:

*Me. hac te nos fragili donabimus ante cicuta;  
haec nos 'formosum Corydon ardebat Alexin',  
haec eadem docuit 'cuium pecus? an Meliboei?'* Virgil, *Ecl.* 5.85-7

Me. I will give you this fragile pipe first; this one taught me *formosum Corydon ardebat Alexin*, this very one taught me *cuium pecus? an Meliboei?*

Notice the use of *fragilis* in both Calpurnius and Virgil to describe the pipes which are handed on. We can see that the passage from the end of the fifth *Eclogue* lies behind the pipe which Iollas has handed on to Corydon. However in the case of Calpurnius, the gift of the pipe leaves open a greater possibility for competition with Virgil. Corydon is also striving to be like Virgil in the very act of raising his poetry, when told by Meliboeus to press the pipes which sang of woods worthy of a consul, *canales / exprime qui dignas cecinerunt consule siluas*, with its irresistible glance back at the opening of Virgil's fourth *Eclogue*, *si canimus siluas, siluae sint consule dignae* (*Ecl.* 4.3).<sup>16</sup>

The competition then begins with the arrival of Amyntas, the brother that Corydon had previously attempted to dissuade from poetry. Meliboeus then requests that the two sing in turn in the usual manner. In lines 82-146 the two then exchange passages of five lines.<sup>17</sup> The subject matter is political, with both Corydon and his brother praising the improvements that Caesar has brought to their world.

Curiously, Corydon's very first snatch of five lines opens with *Ab Ioue principium*, the opening of that very different contest in Virgil's third *Eclogue*, where Damoetas and Menalcas compete in a rather less friendly manner (*Ecl.* 3.60).<sup>18</sup> Corydon's first speech in the competition is worth looking at, and I also give you Damoetas's first utterance in his contest in *Eclogue* 3 as well:

*ab Ioue principium, si quis canit aethera, sumat,  
si quis Atlantiaci pondus molitur Olympi:  
at mihi, qui nostras praesenti numine terras  
perpetuamque regit iuuenili robore pacem,  
laetus et Augusto felix arrideat ore.* Calp. 4.82-6

The beginning should taken from Jove, if anyone sings of the sky, if anyone endeavours to sing of Atlas's Olympic burden. But on me may there be a happy and lucky smile from the august countenance of the god who rules our earth with his present godhead, and who rules over perpetual peace with his youthful strength.

*Ab Ioue principium Musae: Iouis omnia plena;  
ille colit terras, illi mea carmina curae.* Virg. *Ecl.* 3.60-1

From Jove is the beginning of my Muse: all things are full of Jove; he cultivates the lands; to him my songs are a care.

As is well known, this line of Virgil itself refers back to the opening words both of Aratus's *Phaenomena* and of Theocritus's seventeenth *Idyll*, *ek Dios archomestha* (which Cicero, *Aratea* fr. 1 had rendered as *ab Ioue Musarum primordia*).<sup>19</sup> Quintilian also makes use of the figure in *Inst.* 10.1.46:

*igitur, ut Aratus ab Ioue principium putat, ita nos rite coepturi ab Homero uidemur.*

Therefore, just as Aratus thinks that the beginning is from Jove, so do we rightly seem about to begin from Homer.

Here *ab Ioue principium* becomes a kind of metaphor for the literary tradition.

In Calpurnius, however, there is a difference. Corydon does not in fact choose to take the beginning of his poem from Jove. Instead, he uses a kind of priamel: others can start from Jove, but what Corydon

hopes for is the favour of the emperor. Corydon's beginning recalls the classic opening of Virgil's song contest (*Ecl.* 3.60), which itself looks back to Greek literature. On the one hand this could be deference towards what has gone before: the words are of course a quotation. On the other hand Corydon rejects the idea of starting from Jove and instead suggests that the emperor is all that is needed. This can be directly paralleled in the opening of Germanicus, *Phaenomena* 1-2:<sup>20</sup>

*ab Ioue principium magno deduxit Aratus.  
carminis at nobis, genitor, tu maximus auctor.*

Aratus brought down the beginning of his poem from great Jove. But, you, father, are the greatest source of my song.

Thus both Germanicus and Calpurnius turn the quotation of *ab Ioue principium* upside down.<sup>21</sup> We shall see later how Calpurnius makes a similar move with another well-known motif from pastoral in the sixth poem, the topic of not trying to vie with other contemporary poets.

The brothers Amyntas and Corydon then continue their alternation of song until line 146.<sup>22</sup> When they are finished (and we might note in passing that it is Corydon who has the last word, so that he in fact has an extra turn),<sup>23</sup> Meliboeus then affirms his own view that the poetry is not uncultivated and rustic as he had once believed it was (lines 147-51).<sup>24</sup> Thus Meliboeus has modified his caution in relation to Corydon's (and also, by implication, Amyntas's) poetry. Whereas he had previously warned Corydon of the difficulties of trying to be like Tityrus, here he concedes that they have succeeded in raising their poetry to the level of panegyric.

There remain ambiguities, however, since Corydon's response to this praise is to declare that he is held back from poetic success by poverty. In 155-6 he describes how he is often prevented from the practice of poetry by the need to attend to his sheep:

*uellit nam saepius aurem  
inuida paupertas et dicit: "ouilia cura".*

For too often does envious poverty pluck my ear and say: "Let the sheepfolds be your concern."

This passage is of course a reworking of *Eclogue* 6.3-5 where Tityrus describes how Apollo advises him to keep his sheep well-fed and to compose a *deductum carmen*. In Calpurnius, however, the admonition to attend to the sheep is entirely literal. Whereas in Virgil the choice is between two types of poetry, for Calpurnius's Corydon there is no choice. If there were a choice, and if Meliboeus could take Corydon's poetry to the emperor (158), Corydon would in fact wish to aim far higher:

*tum mihi talis eris, qualis qui dulce sonantem  
Tityron e siluis dominam deduxit in urbem  
ostenditque deos et "spreto" dixit "ouili,  
Tityre, rura prius, sed post cantabimus arma."*

Calp. 4.160-63

Then to me you will be like the man who brought sweetly sounding Tityrus from the woods into the sovereign city and showed him the gods and said, "When you have spurned the sheepfold, Tityrus, we will sing first of the countryside, but afterwards we will sing of arms."

So here Calpurnius's character expresses his hope that Meliboeus can play the rôle of a Maecenas in ensuring that he is able to follow a path, which like Virgil's, will ascend from pastoral to culminate in epic, referred to, perhaps unsurprisingly, as *arma*. So here, almost at the end of the poem, the character Corydon turns out not only to want to be like Virgil in terms of writing pastoral, but also in terms of the entirety of his poetic career.<sup>25</sup>

This might have been a reasonable place for the poem to end. It does not, however. It is worth paying some attention to the very last lines:

*A. respiciat nostros utinam fortuna labores  
pulchrrior et meritaefaveat deus ipse iuventae!  
nos tamen interea tenerum mactabimus haedum  
et pariter subitae peragemus fercula cenae.  
M. nunc ad flumen oues deducite: iam fremit aestas,  
iam sol contractas pedibus magis admouet umbras.*

Calp. 4.164-9

A. If only a fairer fortune might look on my labours and the god himself favour my deserving youthfulness. But we meanwhile will sacrifice a young kid and we will together produce the food for a swift meal.

M. Now lead the sheep down to the river: now the summer rages, now the sun moves the brief shadows closer to our feet.

This represents a complex end to the poem. Though Corydon had the final word in the exchange of song, the brother who speaks last of all is Amyntas, and even he is then followed by Meliboeus telling the two of them to take the sheep to the river. Amyntas too has ambitions as a poet. Those ambitions were at first discouraged by Corydon (23-8), who had warned him of the dangers of poetry. Yet in this same poem we see Amyntas as an equal to his brother. Looked at overall, the poem thus exhibits a shifting perspective on poetic hierarchy. A large concern of the poem is Corydon's desire to be a poet like Tityrus, and the Virgilian connexion is made explicit in Corydon's last speech when he ascribes to Tityrus the Virgilian progression from pastoral through poetry of the countryside to epic. The poem shows Meliboeus advising of the dangers of trying to be like Virgil, but it also shows Corydon succeeding in raising his poetry to a higher level just as Virgil does in *Eclogue 4*. The pipe of Tityrus, given to Corydon by Iollas, is seen at the poem's close to have been worthily conferred. Thus the poem shows Corydon as a successor to Virgil, at least in the field of pastoral.

Just as the relation between Corydon and Tityrus is a complex one, featuring both deference and assertion, so too we should see this relation in a kind of counterpoint to the relation between Corydon and Amyntas. Amyntas too is a poet when we first hear of him, but he occupies a subordinate position to his brother, who has the authority to tell him not to try to write poetry. However, in the contest Amyntas is perfectly able to stand on an equal footing with Corydon, as both engage in poetic song in alternation. This of course is no contest for mastery, and nor indeed are there any prizes or indeed any result. The end of the poem allows Amyntas too to affirm his prospects. Thus the poem not only shows the continuation of the poetic tradition in Corydon's successful use of the pipe of Tityrus, but it also shows an Amyntas who may well be a successor to Corydon. And it is this sense of continuation which features in the poem's very last lines, spoken by Meliboeus:

*M. nunc ad flumen oues deducite: iam fremit aestas,  
iam sol contractas pedibus magis admouet umbras*

Calp. 4.168-9

M. Now lead the sheep down to the river: now the summer rages, now the sun moves the brief shadows closer to our feet.

This end of the poem, at midday,<sup>26</sup> can be contrasted with the much more ominous note at the end of *Eclogue 10*, when we hear about the danger of *umbra* to singers:

*surgamus: solet esse grauis cantantibus umbra.  
iuniperi grauis umbra; nocent et frugibus umbrae.  
ite domum saturae, uenit Hesperus, ite capellae.*

Virg. *Ecl.* 10.75-7

Let us rise: shade is often harmful for singers. The shade of the juniper is harmful; and shades harm the crops. Go home filled, Hesperus is coming, go home, goats.

We can compare too the end of *Eclogue* 3, a poem which, as already seen, has other connexions with Calpurnius's poem:

*claudite iam riuos, pueri; sat prata biberunt*

Virg. *Ecl.* 3.111

Close off the streams, lads; the meadows have drunk enough.

Calpurnius's poem comes to a close at midday, and with the continuation of work. And in contrast both to Corydon's discouraging advice to Amyntas to concern himself only with his labours, and the discouragement offered to Corydon himself by the figure of *paupertas* (155-6), Meliboeus, though at the poem's end he gives the instruction to work, is a patron who nurtures his poets and even permits them to emulate Virgil.<sup>27</sup> In contrast *Eclogue* 10, as is well known, brings down the curtain on the pastoral genre, with the onset of shade which is not only the end of the day, but also something which is even harmful to singers. Thus Calpurnius's fourth poem enacts a tradition of pastoral song which is continuing, in spite of the legacy of the Tityrus-Virgil figure who had gone before. The alternation of song in quasi-contest is friendly and there is a sense that the poets of the day, not only Corydon, but also Amyntas, have a rôle to play in the ongoing tradition of poetry. This is therefore a poem which offers a positive approach to the tradition which has gone before, and allows for the possibility of poetry continuing. We shall see that Calpurnius's sixth poem presents quite a different view.

\* \* \* \* \*

With the sixth poem of Calpurnius, the situation is rather different from other poems of contest in ancient pastoral. A brief summary of its content may be useful. The poem opens with two characters: Astylus and Lycidas, who quarrel when Astylus tells Lycidas that he has just missed a competition between Nyctilus and Alcon, won by the latter on the verdict of Astylus. Complaining about Astylus's decision, Lycidas offers to compete with him and even suggests the victorious Alcon as a judge. However Mnasyllus arrives and is immediately suborned to judge the contest. But the contest never takes place since the squabbling continues until Mnasyllus resigns from his rôle as judge and suggests that the dispute could be settled by the arrival of Mycon and Iollas. The poem thus concludes without any resolution.

On the surface the overall effect of Calpurnius's sixth poem is to contrast a competition between Alcon and Nyctilus which happened before the poem began, and that between Lycidas and Astylus, which never happens at all. Yet this opposition between an apparently meaningful contest which had previously happened and the futile bickering between the actual characters of the poem may not be so straightforward.

In the first place, it is worth noting that the result of the earlier poetic competition between Alcon and Nyctilus is called into question. Lycidas finds the result incredible (lines 6-8) and makes a comparison between the song of birds:

*Nyctilon ut cantu rudis exsuperauerit Alcon,  
Astyle, credibile est, si uincat acanthida cornix,  
uocalem superet si dirus aedona bubo.*

Calp. 6.6-8

That crude Alcon might have beaten Nyctilus in song, Astylus, is believable only if the crow defeat the goldfinch or the dreadful owl surpass the tuneful nightingale.

Now this passage recalls two famous passages: Theocritus, *Idyll* 7.40-1, where Simichidas says that attempting to compete with Asclepiades and Philitas would be like a frog competing with the sound of a cricket, and Virgil *Ecl.* 9.35-6, where Lycidas declares that if he were to compete with the poets Varius and Cinna it would be like a goose honking among swans. In Theocritus and Virgil the comparison with nature is used in a statement of poetic modesty, out of a desire not to attempt some rash challenge to other poets. But in Calpurnius, Lycidas, not only the name of a character in Calpurnius's third poem, but also a character in Virgil's *Eclogue* 9 and the mysterious figure who appears in Theocritus, *Idyll* 7, uses the comparison not to affirm existing poetic hierarchy, but to challenge it. Lycidas does not accept that Nyctilus was beaten by Alcon, and thus rejects the verdict of Astylus.

After Astylus defends the vocal qualities of Alcon in lines 9-11, Lycidas then argues in lines 12-16 that Alcon only won because he was better-looking than Nyctilus. This only provokes Astylus to remark in lines 17-18 that his ignorance makes him unable to appreciate the qualities of Alcon. Lycidas is then moved for the first time to suggest a challenge against Astylus himself (19-21). His words are worth lingering over:

*uis igitur, quoniam nec nobis, improbe, par es,  
ipse tuos iudex calamos committere nostris?  
uis conferre manum? ueniat licet arbiter Alcon.* Calp. 6.19-21

Since you are not even equal to me, wicked one, will you then set your pipes against mine, though you yourself were the judge? Will you enter the lists? Let Alcon come as umpire, if you wish.

In the first two lines of the speech Lycidas declares that Astylus is not his equal, yet he still wishes to take him on in competition. Notice that Lycidas refers to Astylus as *iudex*; the figure of the judge is again being called into question. This, I would suggest, has bearing retrospectively on other pastoral poems which feature a judge to settle a dispute, whether with a victory, or a decision in favour of a draw.

In Virgil or Theocritus, the decision of a judge can be used as a closural device. Thus in Virgil's *Eclogue* 3 Palaemon's decision that Menalcas and Damoetas are equal in ability ends the poem,<sup>28</sup> while in *Eclogue* 7 Meliboeus, the retrospective narrator, simply tells us the result, taking on the function of judge. Thyrsis loses: the end of *Eclogue* 7.<sup>29</sup> In *Idyll* 5 of Theocritus, Komatas and Lakon are in competition under the arbitration of Morson. Again, the decision in favour of Komatas brings the poem to an almost immediate conclusion, though we may note with some amusement that Morson is quick to ask for a portion of the meat from the offering sacrificed to the nymphs (Theocritus *Id.* 5.138-40) when he makes his decision.

But with Calpurnius, the originality in his sixth poem lies in taking as his starting point the point of *ending* for Theocritus and Virgil. In Virgil and Theocritus the poems and the contests come to an end with the resolution by the judge. Readers have sometimes wondered why it is that a particular result might occur. Thus Clausen, in the introduction to his commentary on *Eclogue* 7 notes the views of scholars such as La Cerda and Cartault on the various exchanges between Corydon and Thyrsis in *Eclogue* 7, and offers the following opinion:

If Thyrsis is to be judged fairly, he must be judged as a singer subordinate to Corydon, but not necessarily inferior; indeed he is superior to Corydon in at least one exchange, failing only, so that there may be a slight pretext for his defeat, at the very end.<sup>30</sup>

I would however argue that such searches for justification of the victory are pointless. The victory is arbitrary: we may presume from the opening of *Eclogue* 7 that Daphnis is the judge, yet even his judgement is occluded at the end with Meliboeus's brief record of Corydon's victory. Calpurnius's sixth

poem puts under the spotlight the issue of judgement and arbitration in poems of song contest. In Virgil and Theocritus poems of contest come to an end with no obvious reason for the decision. Calpurnius emphasises that such decisions can be arbitrary and may indeed settle nothing.

After more wrangling, it then turns out that the ensuing competition will be judged by Mnasyllus, whom Lycidas praises as a judge who will not be swayed by arrogance (29). In a happy coincidence characteristic of the genre (compare for instance the fortuitous appearance of Palaemon at Virgil *Ecl.* 3.49-54), he arrives and is then persuaded to act as judge. The next section of the poem continues with the characters offering stakes. Astylus makes an extravagant offer of a rather ornately adorned stag (lines 30-47), whose accoutrements include such charms as roses on his horns and a boar's tusk depending from his neck. This animal is a rather elaborate version of the stag owned by Silvia in *Aeneid* 7, but whereas Silvia's stag will tolerate human company and wears garlands (Virg. *A.* 7.488), this stag is even able to wear reins (Calp. 6.35) and bear the yoke. Astylus's confidence is indicated by his willingness to stake the stag even though his beloved Petale is fond of the animal. In reply Lycidas then stakes one of his own horses, a rather more practical wager.<sup>31</sup>

Mnasyllus then at 59-61 makes a short speech inviting the competitors to compete, which recalls the speech of Palaemon at Virgil *Ecl.* 3.55-9 at a similar point in Virgil's poem:

*dicite, quandoquidem in molli consedimus herba.  
et nunc omnis ager, nunc omnis parturit arbor,  
nunc frondent silvae, nunc formosissimus annus.  
incipite, Damoeta; tu deinde sequere, Menalca.  
alternis dicetis; amant alterna Musae.*

Virgil, *Ecl.* 3.55-9

Speak, since we have sat down together on the soft grass. And now every field and every tree bears fruit, now the woods are in leaf, now the year is most beautiful. Begin, Damoetas, and you then follow, Menalcas. You will speak in alternate words; the Muses love alternate words.

This speech has its counterpart in Calpurnius 6.59-61, where Mnasyllus suggests that they compete under the ilex-tree. Instead of the expected contest, however, we then have more delay, for Astylus declares his wish to move the location of the contest; he does not wish to be disturbed by the sound of water.<sup>32</sup> This is an odd request for two reasons: firstly in Virgil's seventh *Eclogue*, the competition took place by the banks of the river Mincius (Virgil. *Ecl.* 7.12-13), but secondly, and even more bizarrely, Astylus himself had umpired the preceding song contest under trees. We have had no indication of the characters' location shifting, so it seems that Astylus now refuses to compete in the place where he had previously acted as umpire for Alcon and Nyctilus:

*serus ades, Lycida: modo Nyctilus et puer Alcon  
certauere sub his alterno carmine ramis  
iudice me, sed non sine pignore.*

Calp. 6.1-3

You are here too late, Lycidas: just now Nyctilus and the boy Alcon strove beneath these branches in alternate song, with me as the judge, but not without laying stakes.

If Astylus could have been distracted by the sound of water, could not the same be true for the defeated Nyctilus?

Lycidas's response to Astylus's comment is even more extraordinary: he suggests a move to rocky caves and cliffs in lines 66-9. The journey is instantly effected, as Mnasyllus in line 70 begins his speech with the word *uenimus*, 'we have got here'. Mnasyllus then urges the competitors to begin and delight

him with alternate song on their love affairs. But Lycidas cannot resist the chance to address further remarks to Mnasyllus, recalling an occasion when Mnasyllus had been the judge in a competition between Astylus and Acanthis, with the implication that Astylus had lost.<sup>33</sup>

There then follow a pair of speeches between Astylus and Lycidas. Astylus expostulates at Lycidas's desire to quarrel and warns that his crimes will be made public, which then induces an ironic taunt from Lycidas mocking Astylus for his dalliance with Mopsus. Astylus then expresses his desire to come to blows with Lycidas, before Mnasyllus abdicates as judge, and suggests that Micon and Iollas, who have both fortuitously appeared, will be able to settle the dispute.

So how are we to interpret this poem? I have already suggested that the poem offers us intriguing insights into how to read Virgil and Theocritus, and tempts us to question the stable and unchallenged contests which take place in those poems. Assuredly, Theocritus and Virgil do themselves have tensions in the area of song contest: thus Morson in Theocritus, *Idyll 5* is perhaps too enthusiastic when he asks Komatas to give him a piece of the meat from his victory sacrifice to the Nymphs - a judge who is so keen to be rewarded by one of the competitors might not encourage confidence. In Virgil, Palaemon's decision in *Eclogue 3* not to award victory to either Damoetas or Menalcas does not necessarily depend on poetic learning: it is more the case that he is unable to make a judgement between the two. And in *Eclogue 7*, the verdict is simply handed down by Meliboeus, who is reminiscing about the occasion, perhaps even from the distance of exile if he is the same character who goes into exile in Virgil's first *Eclogue*. If we think back to Calpurnius's second poem, there is again something rather arbitrary about the way Thyrsis decides that he cannot offer a verdict - and we should also remember that Thyrsis said that the stakes did not really count. This might well imply that such contests are even fairly meaningless. Here though, in his sixth poem, Calpurnius undermines the issue of judgement in song contests and begins his poem at the point where his predecessors end it; conversely, the ending of Calpurnius's sixth poem is not a point of closure for Virgil and Theocritus.

But is there anything more to Calpurnius than this ironic glance at those rather odd poems of song contest that we find in Theocritus and Virgil? Here I want to return to the fourth poem of Calpurnius. In this poem the exchange of poetry is between Corydon and Amyntas, his brother. There is also, however, as we have seen, another level of competition, commented on by Meliboeus just after Corydon has mentioned that he is now the owner of the pipe of Tityrus:

*M. magna petis, Corydon, si Tityrus esse laboras.  
 ille fuit uates sacer et qui posset auena  
 praesonuisse chelyn, blandae cui saepe canenti  
 allusere ferae, cui substitit aduena quercus.  
 quem modo cantantem rutilo spargebat acantho  
 Nais et implicitos comebat pectine crines.  
 C. est - fateor, Meliboee, - deus: sed nec mihi Phoebus  
 forsitan abnuerit; tu tantum commodus audi:  
 scimus enim, quam te non aspernetur Apollo.*

Calp. 4.64-72

M. You seek after great things, Corydon, if you strive to be Tityrus. He was a sacred bard, one who could outsound the lyre on his reed-pipe. Often wild beasts played around him as he sang, all tame, and the oak would come and stand close to him. And as he sang, a Naiad would bedeck him with red acanthus and comb his tangled hair.

C. He is, I confess it, Meliboeus, a god, but nor perhaps has Phoebus rejected me; just listen favourably: for we know how Apollo does not disdain you.

Corydon states his desire to try to emulate Tityrus, whom we may consider to be Virgil, here presented as a kind of Orpheus figure who affected even animals. So the idea of contest and matching is explicitly present in the fourth poem of Calpurnius. Of course there is also an implicit contest with Virgil going on elsewhere in the collection: in the fifth poem, where Micon gives advice on how to look after animals in a manner which recalls the *Georgics*, and in the seventh, where we hear of Corydon's journey to Rome which echoes Tityrus's journey in Virgil's first *Eclogue*. Corydon is of course famously disappointed by the experience and doesn't even get a close look at the emperor.<sup>34</sup>

On the larger scale we thus find two conflicting strands of deference and competition in Calpurnius's engagement with the literary tradition. It is in this context that we should look at his sixth poem. On the deferential side, we could argue that the failure to produce a real song contest shows the impossibility on the larger scale of meaningful competition with poetic predecessors as well. The characters do not produce a contest; it is as if they get no further than the opening exchanges of banter, more or less unpleasant, which occur in Virgil's third *Eclogue*. Nothing is accomplished in the poem in the way of poetic contest, and perhaps we should expect no more. The first words, *Serus ades, Lycida*, rehearse the old problem of 'silver' Latin which happens after everything has happened. Here Lycidas, a key figure in Theocritus's seventh *Idyll* and an importunate and insensitive young man in Virgil's ninth *Eclogue*, is simply too late, the problem for anyone writing after Virgil.<sup>35</sup> To this extent the poem's emphasis on the failure of meaningful competition could be seen as a meditation on its own failure, and the wider lateness of post-Virgilian Latin.

But there is however a more assertive side to this poem as well. Calpurnius is aggressively innovative in his treatment of the theme of song contest. This stems from his decision to destabilise the whole issue of literary verdicts by having Lycidas refuse to accept the decision of Astylus which happened before the start of the poem:

*Nyctilon ut cantu rudis exsuperauerit Alcon,  
Astyle, credibile est, si uincat acanthida cornix,  
uocalem superet si dirus aedona bubo.* Calp. 6.6-8

That crude Alcon might have beaten Nyctilus in song, Astylus, is believable only if the crow defeat the goldfinch or the dreadful owl surpass the tuneful nightingale.

What is remarkable about this passage is that on the surface it seems a deferential reworking of Theocritus on frogs and crickets, and Virgil on geese and swans. One creature sounds better than another; so on the face of it Calpurnius is being deferential. However this is of course the moment where Lycidas, instead of accepting his place in it, rejects poetic hierarchy and claims the right to question the decisive, almost canonical judgement of Astylus on Alcon and Nyctilus. At one of the most allusive moments in poem, Calpurnius's character rejects the established verdicts of the kind that the Virgil and Theocritus passages actually affirmed.

Now if Lycidas can reopen Astylus's verdict on the competition of Alcon and Nyctilus, this in turn might make us ask whether established literary judgements are not themselves open to question. From the point of view of the characters in the poem, it is the judge or umpire who is their audience. Can this serve as a kind of allegory for the reception of real poems by an audience and the nebulous and maybe even untrustworthy nature of aesthetic judgements on poetry? Astylus tells us that Alcon was better than Nyctilus, Lycidas says the opposite. Thus Calpurnius reminds us in this poem of the fickleness of literary judgements by opening up the closed endings of Virgil and Theocritus, where a character pronounces a final verdict. The decision to start the poem where his predecessors had ended raises

questions not only about his other poetic contest, in poem 2, but also about the whole issue of poetic competitions and even the nature of hierarchies between poets as well.

To sum up. What we see in Calpurnius's fourth poem is a sense of the difficulties of continuing in the pastoral tradition, and of following on after Virgil. But though Meliboeus the patron is cautious about Corydon's attempts to use the pipe of Tityrus, the same pipe *is* used by Corydon to produce, in company with his brother, a political pastoral which recalls but also perhaps challenges the fourth *Eclogue* of Virgil. The picture is a complex one; deference is combined with assertion. When we reach the sixth poem, however, the issue of competition is seen in a different light, since the song contest itself never takes place: Lycidas is simply too late. At the same time, though, the poem does have a dimension which also undermines the literary hierarchy: since Lycidas's unwillingness to accept the verdict of the earlier song contest suggests that the construction of literary hierarchies and of aesthetic judgements is in fact open to criticism. Though the sixth poem might be felt to preclude the possibility of effective poetic competition with what has gone before, it also hints at the arbitrariness of literary histories and their narratives.

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## NOTES

- <sup>1</sup> The debate between proponents of a Neronian dating for Calpurnius Siculus and those favouring a date in the third century AD has now generated an extensive bibliography. T.K. Hubbard, 'Calpurnius Siculus and the Unbearable Weight of Tradition', *Helios* 23 (1996), [67-89] 68 n. 6 gives a useful list of such items, to which add B. Baldwin, 'Better Late than Early: Reflections on the Date of Calpurnius Siculus', *ICS* 20 (1995), 157-67 and N. Horsfall, 'Criteria for the Dating of Calpurnius Siculus', *RFIC* 125 (1997), 166-96. A Neronian dating is favoured in the recent commentary of B. Fey-Wickert, *Calpurnius Siculus. Kommentar zur 2. und 3. Ekloge* (Trier 2002), 11-12.
- <sup>2</sup> O. Skutsch, 'The singing matches in Virgil and in Theocritus and the design of Virgil's book of *Eclogues*', *BICS* 18 (1971), 26-9 is a useful attempt to relate the Virgilian song contests to their predecessors in terms of the structure of the whole collection of *Eclogues*.
- <sup>3</sup> A definition of amoebaeon song is offered by Serv. Ecl. 3.28: *VICISSIM EXPERIAMVR id est amoebaeo carmine. amoebaeum autem est, quotiens qui canunt, et aequali numero uersuum utuntur, et ita se habet ipsa responsio, ut aut maius aut contrarium aliquid dicant, sicut sequentia indicabunt.*
- <sup>4</sup> Hubbard, *Helios* 23 (1996), 68 remarks on how Thyrsis, the arbiter of Calpurnius's contest, was the loser in the amoebaeon contest in Virgil's *Ecl.* 7.
- <sup>5</sup> Cf. e.g. E.W. Leach, 'Neronian Pastoral and the World of Power', in A.J. Boyle (ed.), *Ancient Pastoral. Ramus Essays on Greek and Roman Pastoral Poetry* [122-48] 124: 'Indeed, only the second which consists of a pair of courtship songs cast into the framework of an amoebaeon singing match comes close to its models.' For a fuller discussion of the poem, see Leach 127-30, P.J. Davis, 'Structure and Meaning in the *Eclogues* of Calpurnius Siculus', *Ramus* 16 (1987), [32-54], 33-4.
- <sup>6</sup> See e.g. E.W. Leach, 'Corydon Revisited: an Interpretation of the Political *Eclogues* of Calpurnius Siculus', *Ramus* 2 (1973), [53-97], 53; Davis, *Ramus* 16 (1987), 50; C.E. Newlands, 'Urban Pastoral: the Seventh *Eclogue* of Calpurnius Siculus', *Classical Antiquity* 6 (1987), [218-31] 225; Hubbard, *Helios* 23 (1996), 69-70.
- <sup>7</sup> It has been suggested that the opening *Quid tacitus, Corydon?* recalls the opening of the second *Einsiedeln Eclogue*, *Quid tacitus, Mystes?*, though, as noted by Hubbard, *Helios* 23 (1996), 78 n. 31, this opens up yet more problems of literary chronology.
- <sup>8</sup> Virg. *Ecl.* 4.1 'Sicelides Musae, paulo maiora canamus.'
- <sup>9</sup> Hubbard, *Helios* 23 (1996), 69 has a good discussion of the significance of writing in Calpurnius. On Calpurnius's *Ecl.* 1, see also Davis, *Ramus* 16 (1987), 38-43, Newlands, *Classical Antiquity* 6 (1987), 224-7, N.W. Slater, 'Calpurnius and the Anxiety of Vergilian Influence', *Syllecta Classica* 5 (1994), 71-8.
- <sup>10</sup> Davis, *Ramus* 16 (1987), 44. For Virgil's Corydon and Calpurnius's character, see e.g. Leach, *Ramus* 2 (1973), 53-4. For Calpurnius's Corydon as the poet himself, see B. Schröder, *Carmina non quae nemorale resultant. Ein Kommentar zur 4. Ekloge des Calpurnius Siculus* (Frankfurt am Main 1991), 21-9.
- <sup>11</sup> Hubbard, *Helios* 23 (1996), 80-1 has shown how Corydon's leisure in this poem recalls that granted to Tityrus in Virgil, *Ecl.* 1.
- <sup>12</sup> Hubbard, *Helios* 23 (1996), 81 sees an echo of the pipe which Virgil's Corydon received from Damoetas (Virg. *Ecl.* 2.36-9).
- <sup>13</sup> Davis, *Ramus* 16 (1987), 46 sees a link with Virgil's sixth *Eclogue* here.
- <sup>14</sup> Hubbard, *Helios* 23 (1996), 81 points out the similarity between the description of Tityrus as *deus* and the use of *deus* to denote deified emperors; one is also reminded of the *Virgilian* Tityrus's use of the word *deus* at Virg. *Ecl.* 1.6, which has usually been thought to refer to Octavian.

- <sup>15</sup> I am accepting Leo's *exprime* in this passage. For further discussion of the textual problems, see Schröder's commentary on Calp. 4.77.
- <sup>16</sup> See also Hubbard, *Helios* 23 (1996), 81.
- <sup>17</sup> Hubbard, *Helios* 23 (1996), 81 sees these exchanges of five lines as an attempt to eclipse the groups of two and four lines exchanged in amoebaeon contests in Theocritus and Virgil.
- <sup>18</sup> See e.g. L. Castagna, 'La IV Ecloga di Calpurnio Siculo', in J.-M. Croisille and P.-M. Fauchère (edd.), *Neronia 1977. Actes du 2e colloque de la Société Internationale d'Études Néroniennes (Clermont-Ferrand, 27-28 mai 1977)* (Clermont-Ferrand 1982) [159-71] 161.
- <sup>19</sup> For further discussion, see Kidd on Arat. *Phaen.* 1.
- <sup>20</sup> More indirectly, one might compare Lucan's assertion in Luc. 1.63-6 that he has no need of Bacchus or Apollo for poetic inspiration, since Nero is sufficient. Contrast the different approach of Statius in *Silv.* 1 *pr.* 16-17 *primus libellus sacrosanctum habet testem, sumendum enim erat 'a loue principium'*, in introducing *Silv.* 1.1, a poem on an equestrian statue of Domitian; see further C.E. Newlands, *Statius' Silvae and the Poetics of Empire* (Cambridge 2002), 53-4.
- <sup>21</sup> Cf. Hubbard, *Helios* 23 (1996), 82: 'Calpurnius has thus reversed and contradicted the Vergilian prologue by asserting that there is a divinity of more present importance to him even than Jupiter; the Vergilian centrality of Jove becomes a rhetorical foil for Calpurnius.'
- <sup>22</sup> On the content of their exchanges, see Hubbard, *Helios* 23 (1996), 83-4.
- <sup>23</sup> Hubbard, *Helios* 23 (1996), 84 n. 40 argues convincingly against the suggestion that there might have been a lost stanza.
- <sup>24</sup> Hubbard, *Helios* 23 (1996), 84 sees the reference to Paelignian bees in these lines as a suggestion on the part of Meliboeus that Corydon and his brother Amyntas do at least surpass the work of Ovid.
- <sup>25</sup> Schröder on Calp. 4.162-3 notes the parallels between this passage of Calpurnius and the second line of the sepulchral epigram for Virgil, *Mantua me genuit, Calabri rapuere, tenet nunc / Parthenope; cecini pascua rura duces (Vita Donati 36)*, and also the rejected opening lines of the Aeneid; the perspective in Calpurnius is however one of future ambition, not funerary retrospect. Davis, *Ramus* 16 (1987), 47 notes the rejection of the countryside implied by Corydon's *spreto ... ouili*; cf. C. Newlands, *Classical Antiquity* 6 (1987), 220-4 for Corydon's preference for the man-made landscape of the amphitheatre in Calpurnius 7.
- <sup>26</sup> On the use of midday as a motif in Calpurnius, see further Leach, 'Neronian Pastoral and the World of Power' (n. 5 above), 126-7.
- <sup>27</sup> The emphasis of Hubbard, *Helios* 23 (1996) 85 is different here: 'For all of Corydon's ambitions to be another Tityrus, Meliboeus' seemingly unsympathetic reply shows him inevitably falling short, constrained to toil in the heat rather than reclining, like Tityrus, *sub tegmine fagi*.' Cf. 87: 'But Corydon fails at the end of Calp. 4, when he attempts to use his relation with Meliboeus to obtain real access to the emperor.'
- <sup>28</sup> On the close of Virgil, *Ecl.* 3, see now C.E. Schultz, 'Latet anguis in herba: a reading of Vergil's Third Eclogue', *AJP* 124 (2003), [198-224], 219-21.
- <sup>29</sup> For discussion of why Corydon wins in Virgil, *Ecl.* 7, see W. Clausen, *A Commentary on Virgil Eclogues* (Oxford 1994), 210-12. R.B. Egan, 'Corydon's Winning Words in Eclogue 7', *Phoenix* 50 (1996), 233-9 is a recent contribution to the debate.
- <sup>30</sup> Clausen, *A Commentary on Virgil Eclogues*, 211-12. Cf. J. Henderson, 'Virgil's Third Eclogue: How do you keep an idiot in suspense?', *CQ* 48 (1998), [213-29] 215. Discussing Palaemon's verdict at the end of *Eclogue* 3, Henderson draws attention to the problems that have beset scholars in attempting to solve why particular results occur in such contests: 'In fact, quite apart from the question of the stake, his pronouncement has itself generated widely different notions of what he (must have) meant. In any case, it is not, ultimately, at all obvious that the judge does speak either representatively, on behalf of some implied rustic community; or authoritatively, in terms of preferring some rustic values to others; let alone authorially, as the surrogate of the poet's viewpoint. The delivery of his verdict actually puts *his* judgement into question. We judge the judge from the dock.'
- <sup>31</sup> On these stakes, see also Leach, 'Neronian Pastoral and the World of Power' (n. 5 above), 139, who regards the deer as 'another witness to the perversity of Astylus's refinement of pastoral', and the horse as 'a swift charger of unusual mettle that seems to belong to the heroic world'.
- <sup>32</sup> For the avoidance of the sounds of nature in Calpurnius, see P. Damon, *Modes of Analogy in Ancient and Medieval Verse*, University of California Publications in Classical Philology 15.6 (Berkeley and Los Angeles 1961), 293-4. See also Leach, 'Neronian Pastoral and the World of Power' (n. 5 above), 139.
- <sup>33</sup> H. White, 'A Singing Contest in Calpurnius Siculus', *QUCC* 62 (1999), 149-51 seems to imply that Mnasyllus had witnessed Astylus and Acanthis making love, but this seems to ignore the force of *iudex* in Calp. 6.77-8 *auribus accipias, quibus hunc et Acanthida nuper / diceris in silua iudex audisse Thalea*, where judgement of a contest seems implied.
- <sup>34</sup> On the seventh poem of Calpurnius, see Newlands, *Classical Antiquity* 6 (1987), 218-31, and also Hubbard, *Helios* 23 (1996), 85-7.
- <sup>35</sup> The belatedness of the autumnal setting of Calp. 1 is noted by Hubbard, *Helios* 23 (1996), 71. For literary 'secondariness', see especially S. Hinds, *Allusion and Intertext* (Cambridge 1998), 83-98.

# Virgil: Modern Classic

*A paper given to the Virgil Society on 27 October 2001*

‘Our classic, the classic of all Europe, is Virgil.’

T.S. Eliot, Presidential Address to the Virgil Society 1944<sup>1</sup>

I’m not sure whether I had anything very precise in mind when I gave this paper the title ‘Virgil: modern classic’. Perhaps that it would be pleasing to have Virgil’s *Aeneid* made accessible to the general reader, in the way Orwell and Kafka are or like the films, TV and short stories I study in my academic work.

I came to Virgil through Literature not Language. Having read the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, I thought I’d look up the ‘third one’ and, after reading it once (in Robert Fitzgerald’s translation<sup>2</sup>), exclaimed on shutting the book: “This is the masterpiece of the world.”

My very first response to the *Aeneid* came, of course, before I’d read it, that is, by way of ill-informed reputation and prejudice. The *Aeneid* was ‘classical’, that is, ancient, stuffy, frigid as white polished stone. If it was Roman, it was probably stiff with militarism and dark with superstition (‘pagan’ was the term, wasn’t it?) and unlike modern Art, neither shocking and sensational nor critical and intelligent.

However, on reading it, I soon decided that what I didn’t want to do was reduce this text to our times. Find its relevance, or significance, certainly, but not by making Virgil One of Us - denying his Roman context, bypassing scholarship or making him a Christian or anti-colonialist. That said, one never reads without looking for one’s own significance in the work or reading it as a metaphor from which one can draw lessons for one’s time. Reading is a dialogue in which the work’s effects are not received without meanings and associations of one’s own being present. As Susanna Braund puts it, readers of Virgil (especially of Virgil) can’t help reading inside their epoch, but at least let us be ‘candid about the baggage that we bring to bear when we read the poem’.<sup>3</sup>

## A ROMAN SHOSTAKOVICH?

After reading the *Aeneid* and reading about it, I found that the most pervasive interpretation of the text was that it was the Greatest Propaganda Poem ever written: advocacy for Roman Empire building, for invasion and conquest, using the legend of an adventurous ancestor. Behind the Trojan Aeneas and his journey to found a new people in Italy the Poet had portrayed a divinely sanctioned mission, Rome the result of Fate and Jupiter's wish, while giving the opponents of that mission (hostile Latins, Carthaginians, etc.) an effective voice. By showing a measure of pity for opponents, the poem didn't invalidate the colonising mission, but only made the final victory of Rome's ancestors inevitable though tinged with an unavoidable sadness. Then I discovered that the epic was said to bear another reading. Some scholar-critics argued that Virgil was something like a secret republican, opposed to Emperors and Empires, as the work had a saving ambiguity. It contained 'two voices', an Imperial one and another voice that subtly undermines it.<sup>4</sup> Virgil was in fact a Shostakovich to the Roman Stalin.<sup>5</sup>

## READING NOW

In this paper, I'm not going as far as either of these. Both these interpretations are themselves readings of the text as metaphor, as a story the significance of which is not at first obvious but must be explicated. Scholarship too is there to remind the reader or interpretative critic that a text has roots, that its meanings once belonged to other contexts. It is necessary - and fun - to seek out and be shown what meanings the text may have had for its original (and later) public. As I have read and re-read the poem, and continued to study works of scholarship, I became more and more interested in whether I could leave Virgil an Epic poet and a Roman (not make him One of Us) and still acknowledge the way the text - narrative, language, ideas - had affected me. Could the work connect with and even assist us in our modern condition? As Terry Eagleton<sup>6</sup> has argued, new readers can produce new readings of a text's significance. I would only add that this need not mean rejecting what is known *about* the text, that is, scholarship.

This paper therefore starts from the idea that we can discuss a text both acknowledging it as a product of a particular ideological/social moment and interpreting its significance for our own purposes. Virgil's *Aeneid* is a 'universal' text not because it is free of history, but because it can be read as more than a document of Ancient Rome. It tells a tale of any great human endeavour fully seen as not without pain, difficulty or risk. Furthermore, the wisdom of the *Aeneid* goes beyond notions of original sin or automatic progress; in other words, it has a message for us today who have been failed by both pessimism and optimism, dogma and technology.

## MISTAKES WILL HAPPEN

The traditional summary of what the *Aeneid* promotes is *pietas* - obligatory conduct to ancestors, parents, benefactors, the *patria* and to a Father in heaven. However, if asked what I'd found Virgil to be *against*, I'd say Thoughtlessness, meaning absence of mind, not only as in *furor* (frenzy and madness), but also in lack of attention to the necessary. It's what Orpheus exhibits in *Georgics* 4.485-505. Orpheus is leading his love Eurydice out of the World of the Dead but only if he doesn't give in to the temptation to look back at her. Alas, he can't resist and turns round. 'What possessed you?' Eurydice cries out as she disappears back to the Underworld.

Different kinds of failure to think occur all through the *Aeneid*, as passion and impulse and as *inattention*, in the form of mistakenness for example (especially the making of assumptions). Thoughtlessness too can cover an attachment to stupefying subjectivity, not as impulse but as a continuous lack of seeing things, including oneself, from the outside. This practice, though humanly understandable, is better replaced with knowledge of the conditions (whether of forces inside or outside us).

The antipathy to thoughtless action, which can be found throughout his works, is part of Virgil's promotion of *pietas*, anti-individualism in thought. The last two centuries of the Roman Republic had seen a growth of individualism, a decline in traditionalism. Religious ideas (stoicism), social crises, expansion of Empire and trade, and the reliance on Great Individuals, such as military leaders like Pompey, had weakened traditional allegiance to the State. From 107 BCE, the reduction in property qualifications for membership of the Army alone had weakened soldiers' loyalty to the polity rather than to their own commanders. One such commander, Julius Caesar, had shown just how much an individual, if skilled and contemptuous of boundaries, loyal to his troops and their enrichment, could antagonise and frighten the traditional order and its embodiment the Senate. The next Caesar, the *Princeps* Octavian, did in fact come to an accommodation with the traditional order (whose high members, the Senate, had to renounce their supremacy) while achieving as much if not more real personal control as his uncle Julius ever practised as dictator. Whether Virgil's epic played any part in encouraging this solution, we cannot know, but there is much in the work to demonstrate that he seeks to show that thoughtless self-assertion (either against or in defence of the state) is not enough.

If deliberation is to be valued, this doesn't make the *Aeneid* cool or callous. Virtually every commentator has noticed the feeling for suffering individuals the text exhibits. Indeed, I have never read a work where the characters make so many *mistakes*, which doesn't lay them open to disparagement. This is because their mistakes are not ones of prejudice but of misreading, often of events caused by the Gods. As a polytheist, Virgil is telling a story not of God's Judgement but of Gods acting out of their own impulsiveness. Juno, Venus and Apollo all play capricious parts in Aeneas's and the Trojans' hardship.

For example in Book II, when the Trojans find the wooden horse outside the city, what convinces them to take it in is their mistaken interpretation of the 'sign' that follows. Laocoon, a priest of Troy, warns them against trusting this gift from their enemies, but Apollo sends two large sea snakes to murder him and his sons. This horrible sight is then interpreted by the Trojans as a sign that a God is offended at any disrespect shown to the effigy. A Greek spy Sinon further convinces them that the Horse is only a statue. They are inclined to believe him because of his claims that he too is a victim of Greek persecution.

So, unlike Shakespeare's Macbeth seduced by the Witches' prophesy because of his personal vanity, his 'sin', the Trojans believe the Horse is harmless out of respect for cosmic forces and their generosity towards the victim. One might even conceive of oneself falling for the same fraud. Though we may not want to lose the concept of a flaw in personality (say, in a Freudian sense), we can still distinguish between Flaws and Errors, Accidents and Entrapments. This is objectivity, distinguishing what outside forces as well as what ideas lead us to misfortune. Virgil shares this with many artists of the 20th century. As John Berger comments while discussing Picasso, the

typical genius of the twentieth century is ‘almost anonymous: they are quiet, consistent, controlled and very conscious of the power of the forces outside themselves’.<sup>7</sup> Berger cites Brecht and Bartok. One might add Kafka, Pinter, Duchamp, but, unlike some of these, the *Aeneid* combines objectivity with empathy.

### FIGURES OF SPEECH

Empathy is more than feeling sympathy for a character: it is being let in on their emotions. Here is an example from the *Aeneid*. The Greeks have now returned and have invaded the city. In the mêlée, a Greek, Androgeos, comes across a party of defending Trojans in a street. In the fog of war, he mistakes them for fellow-Greeks. He then realises his error and the text describes him as stepping back ‘*as one who has crushed a serpent unseen...and in sudden terror shrinks back...*’ (Aen. 2.370-82).<sup>8</sup> Now I would argue that this simile, in alluding to a comparable experience of surprise and shock, assists us in feeling what someone in Androgeos’s position might feel. Each line and further description of the situation carries the reader along into the danger and pathos of this wrong step. Virgilian similes go deeper and last longer than the work of comparable writers. They seem designed to counteract the *inattention* of the reader or hearer.

As scholars have pointed out however, Virgil is not known for being original (originating) in his figures of speech. It’s a commonplace to say that the *Aeneid* contains what we now call intertextuality, the use of sources, allusions and archetypes that one author takes from another or from the cultural tradition (when these can be traced). Lyne<sup>9</sup> has drawn attention to a significant example of this: the metaphor at Aen. 2.756-9 is obviously related to Homer *Iliad* 23.182. In Homer, Achilles refuses to cremate respectfully his dead foe Hector and addresses his dead companion Patroclus alongside twelve fallen Trojans: ‘them the fire eats at the same time; but Hector I shall not give to the fire to devour, but to the dogs’. The metaphor here is of fire’s digestive power. This is a familiar idea, but in the *Aeneid* passage, the word ‘fire’ *ignis* is conjoined with the word *edax* ‘greedy’. This ‘greedy fire’ occurs when Aeneas is searching for his wife Creusa from whom he has been separated as Troy is sacked. He returns to their house to look for her. Suddenly the building goes up in flame, set on fire in fact by the Greeks. Lyne adds the comment that, prior to the poem, the word *edax* appears only in stage comedies (like Plautus) and in prose not poetry. Virgil ‘exploits a word from the living tongue to jerk some life into the old metaphor’. Also worth considering is that the whole of Book II, where this passage occurs, is being narrated by Aeneas himself. He is addressing the court of Dido about the fall of his city.

How apt then is the line about the greed of the fire. Aeneas remembers how it consumed, devoured his house with gusto to the very roof. The metaphor is true both to Aeneas’s shock and to the impressiveness and speed of wind-driven flames.

This is not merely stealing or borrowing, this is a development. Virgil takes up Homer’s phrase of the fire that eats and puts it to a use where it is doubly apt - apt to this destructive moment in Troy’s end and to Aeneas’s shock and memory of that shock. This rejuvenation of a used metaphor is characteristic of the poem. One might indeed turn Virgil into a verb, that is, *to Virgilise*, to take something, whether it be a figure of speech, mythical tale or ideological task, and ‘make it over’, make it more profound, refine and create it afresh, find its aptest use and a new function together.

The idea of making new, or freshening perception, seeing something more clearly from a new angle, ‘making strange’ as Brecht would say,<sup>10</sup> is one of our most modern and modernist projects. But in this freshening of old material, the *Aeneid* is not ‘original’ either. The poet may well have taken it from Catullus, the Roman poet whose *Peleus and Thetis* poem (No 64) blends elegy and epic, injecting conventionally descriptive and mythical Hellenistic poetry with drama and a meditation on lost love. Indeed one recent critic suggests that the characters Ariadne and Theseus ‘stand in’ for the historical persons of Catullus and his lover *Lesbia*.<sup>11</sup> Before Virgil, Catullus shows a way in which literary myth and ordinary human concerns can coexist, as well as writing fine poetic narrative such as when oarsmen see the faces of sea-nymphs looking up at them from the waves.

Virgil then doesn’t worry about originality, a message for us who both disclaim originality (through pastiche) and worry about lacking it (nothing new for us to say now). Of all writers, he is the Poet of those who come after. The *Aeneid* is Post-Homer but that doesn’t make it pastiche. Many writers since at least the 1960s may feel they Come After too. We come after the Great Moderns, and the Great Modernisation of our world, hence Post-Modern. Virgil shows a way of being a Post-Poet.

Apart from its rejuvenations, the *Aeneid* is based on a particular relation between Past and Future. The legend tells of Aeneas founding the people who will result in Rome. In the poem this destiny is known only to Jupiter (who approves and assists it) but we the audience ‘know it’ as well, that is, know of Rome and the Empire (and after). We may experience the struggle to get there with Aeneas but we read it (or hear it as the first Roman audience did) from, as it were, its future. We are ‘knowing’ in relation to this text, not only as to the allusions and by virtue of our superior position of understanding (we recognise a character’s mistakes, for example) but as people looking back from the result. Most stories are narrated (and read) in the past tense, ‘this happened some time in the past.’ With the *Aeneid*, the past in the story is the past of all of us who have been affected by Rome.

Is Virgil then teleological? Is the result of the story inevitable? Could the struggle of Aeneas, his supporters and opponents, have turned out differently? The opponents (including the anti-Trojan Juno) act as if they think so and Virgil allows us, by the way the epic is written, to conceive of how the process might still be open. Aeneas doesn’t know quite where he will end up. He knows he has a destiny but not his destination.

## THE EMPIRE LINE

Surely though, Virgil doesn’t belong to ‘all of us’ in the post-Roman world but to the Roman Empire. The *Aeneid* is *the* poem of the imperial mission, justifying future leaders (like the Emperor Augustus) and putting a high moral and providential gloss on the conquest of other peoples. It may however, if we read it ‘subversively’, only do this superficially, planting plenty of pathos and respect for those beaten down in Aeneas’s progress. This story either champions or undermines.

While reading the *Aeneid* I am less interested in speculating about Virgil’s everyday attitudes, whether republican, grateful or pragmatic, than how the *Aeneid* works as literature, how it can be read as applicable to any endeavour, how malleable its metaphor is to any difficult uncertain

struggle, of whatever politics, that people might pursue in the world. However, given both scholarship and the significance of the work to Augustan use and Roman education, I can't avoid the question of Virgilian politics altogether.

One of the most famous passages in the *Aeneid* is often taken as not only a statement of the poem's political vision but of a more general 'Roman Empire' ideology. It is quoted as such in de Ste Croix.<sup>12</sup> I refer to the advice uttered by Aeneas's father Anchises when his son visits him in the Underworld *Aen.* 6.851-3. It is given here in a free translation by the author.

Yours to rule the peoples with authority, Roman, remember how,  
these shall be your arts, and base custom upon peace,  
show mercy to the subject and put to flight the proud.

In another place, one might discuss other translations of these lines, not forgetting Dryden's incredible anti-slavery gloss.<sup>13</sup> But beyond nuances of interpretation, I would rather concentrate on the contrast made in the last line of the passage. Might Virgil be merely echoing a Roman commonplace (this is how we maintain dominance) or was he rather reminding the colonisers who had already started under the Republic to go about their business mindfully, to distinguish the defeated from the recalcitrant? Again, I'm not going to claim Virgil as an anti-imperialist or pacifist. In fact, it may be just his method once more: *to Virgilise*, to improve the familiar, make the cliché profound. Anchises is addressing future colonisers. He asks them to remember how their forefathers did it: 'base custom upon peace'. Govern for consensus, concord, and distinguish among the Others. Apply lessons from the Past, don't live in it. Here, the *Aeneid* is speaking to Rome about Rome. It may indeed also be advice to one Roman in particular, Octavian, but the poem is not an Octaviad, not an account of Augustus's earlier victories. Such an account of battles and a still living hero (even if the author had personal reasons to be grateful to him) might be too recent, too parochial to suit a great epic. One writer to attempt an Octavian poem was Cornelius Severus who 'versified' Octavian's defeat of Sextus Pompeius at Sicily in 36 BCE, 'versifier' being the term Quintilian uses (10.1.89) to indicate that Severus's piece was simply not poetry. Hainsworth comments on the challenge of Virgil's task:

Precedent and patronage insisted on a public voice. It would praise Augustus, of course, but a great epic would have to sound a deeper note than the strident tones of propaganda. It would express the Romans' vision of themselves as they looked back on the road to empire and forward to the new age. This was the voice of Ennius, but it would speak in a mature poetical idiom. Nothing less would carry poet and reader through ten thousand verses. Virgil's epic would therefore be a national epic.<sup>14</sup>

For an epic poem to rival Homer and justify a national project (one nevertheless in line with the requirements of the hour), it had to do more than praise an individual or a regime.

## TRAGIC EPIC

But why did it prove so amenable to Augustus and his court, becoming not just a respected work but the national classic, and then later appeal to so many different individuals, from royalists like Dryden to socialists like William Morris?

One view of how art is made, found in the critics Lucien Goldmann<sup>15</sup> and Raymond Williams,<sup>16</sup> is that the worldview a work exhibits isn't merely personal to an author, but belongs to one among a range of general approaches to the world. These can include tragic, romantic or dialectical, and apply to philosophy and even scientific theories. A particular work achieves its version of its 'world vision' through an author's treatment of various

ideas, the modification of the artistic forms available and the answer to specific problems of the author's life. But because it has a worldview, the text has a universal application. It is as if cultural products of the most resonant kind are both unique artefacts and examples of *a school*, as it were, across time. Even non-historically minded critics have noticed this, such as E.M. Forster in his *Aspects of the Novel*.<sup>17</sup> There is another way in which world visions are not peculiar to an author. They are always inflected by the formal and philosophical needs of a particular social group. Goldmann in his classic study of the playwright calls Racine's world vision (which changes subtly with each play) 'tragic bourgeois' and roots it in the situation of a specific fraction of 17th century French society called the *noblesse de robe*.<sup>18</sup>

Virgil can be viewed as being at a particular crux of thought and social action, an era where the age of philosophical private solutions (Stoicism, Epicureanism, etc.) gave way to a 'classical' sense of intervention in the world. In just such a turn, Shakespeare's tragedies mark the end of feudal Christendom and Descartes ministers to the rise of Individualism and Reason. Of course, the *Aeneid* is not merely tragic *or* epic. It incorporates the above philosophies and finds in the legendary history of Aeneas and his people both hard luck (mistakes) and ultimate meaning (the future, our present). It is pained and hopeful. It is retrospective, being a tale with a momentous result, but fully embedded with the effort, pain and uncertainty of action in a present. It neither rejects the world nor makes it too reasonable. As a creation it belongs to a particular moment, the emergence of a Roman ideological amalgam - one that could appeal not only to the supporters of benevolent Caesarism (which might count as mainly the bourgeoisie) but all those in the 'free' aristocracy who would give up liberty for safety under the new first-citizen saviour and the now acknowledged drive to Empire. It has Greek elements (like Pollio's interest in learning) but it finally stands on a Roman 'realism' - pragmatic, objective, prudent (see Dumézil<sup>19</sup>).

When Maecenas his patron encouraged Virgil to recite, this new (or rejuvenated) civil ideology was just taking shape. It required something larger than the praise of a hero. Here it is useful to quote Eder:

(Octavian/Augustus's) greatest political achievement consists in having promoted the development of a patriotism that combined the legacy of the republic and his own accomplishment in preserving that legacy... Augustus has summoned once more to the consciousness of the Romans the responsibility that was traditional to them...<sup>20</sup>

The deadly enemy was the immediate past, the struggles of the Civil War, of stick-in-the-muds and egotists, which had nearly broken Rome into chaos. Hainsworth draws the contrast:

*Furor* is the driving force of this anarchic society, under whose impulsion Julius Caesar had thought a civil war a reasonable alternative to a diminution of his 'dignity'. Nothing could be

more different from the public morality of a restored Augustan Rome.<sup>21</sup>

And Virgil was to have a share in developing it, perhaps even in partly inventing it, not by taking themes from a proclamation or Party pamphlet but by taking the old idea of obligation to the Fathers - ancestors, leaders and Gods - and 'licking' it into a shape relevant to the times, as in the famous analogy that Aelius Donatus attributes to the poet, of licking his poetry into shape as a she-bear does her cubs.

The hopefulness of the tragic epic has over the centuries appealed most, as Burrow says, to individuals who acknowledge the fact or prospect of defeat but continue to think the struggle worthwhile. He writes: 'When translated into English, he more usually gives a voice to those who feel that they are on the outside of a dominant culture.'<sup>22</sup> These are readers who are marginalized, defeated or see their beliefs in crisis and under threat: Augustine in Africa, Dryden under the Orange, Seamus Heaney in these Isles and, of course, the founders of the Virgil Society themselves in the 1940s up against Fascism. Aeneas's travail is theirs.

As many have pointed out though, compared to Hector or Achilles, Antigone or Phaedra, Aeneas is a poor excuse for a hero. He isn't a 'big' character, more Clark Kent than Superman. The 'casualties' of the *Aeneid*, Dido and Turnus, are easily more vivid, more assertive. But that is the point. Aeneas alone doesn't bring meaning into the world. Instead, he wagers (like Pascal assuming it was a better gamble to presume a God) that his acts and those of his party will have desirable results. Nevertheless, he journeys without certainty of arrival, marking out a path, considering each juncture, and not without trouble or sorrow. When Christianity came over the Roman World, it promised a future (the afterlife, the Day of Judgement) but it withdrew too much from the world even as it was changing it. The individualism of Protestantism and the ambition of the European bourgeoisie was needed for a more 'epic' turn, producing its own Empires and revolutionary reactions until we come to the present, whether you call it Post-Modern or not, when so many have abandoned almost all hope in a Future or in human action as good and useful. The world is tragic again.

## TROJANS AND LATINS

The second half of the *Aeneid* concerns the settling of Italy, the emergence of a combined people that will result in Rome. Isn't this then a demonstration of successful colonising and conquest?

One could begin by mentioning that it is part of the Aeneas legend that the people of Troy were descended from Italy. Italy is their original home. This however is not the way things are presented in the poem. R.D. Williams compares Aeneas with another epic traveller:

Odysseus is trying to get home to resume his old life in Ithaca exactly as he left it, but Aeneas has to find a new home and to build a new way of life.<sup>23</sup>

The Latin court initially welcomes the Trojan remnant. Aeneas sends a party on ahead to reassure the King and the King, following a prophecy, is ready to offer his daughter's hand in marriage. Some though, like Turnus, take exception to the new arrivals. Later, a Trojan group kills a favoured stag, but as they didn't know it was a prized possession, the subsequent war is not their responsibility alone. It is in this and other moments that Aeneas recalls not Odysseus returning home to take back what is his, but that favourite theme of the recent century, the passage of the refugee, the immigrant and displaced person, exile or asylum-seeker, who must manoeuvre

between accommodation and self-respect and make a home.

When Enoch Powell quoted the *Aeneid* in 1968, he echoed the Sibyl (6.87) in foreseeing rivers running with blood as a consequence of a multicultural Britain.<sup>24</sup> Had he or someone else referred readers to the second half of the epic, they might have had the chance to appreciate how much closer the Trojan arrivals are to the migrants he feared than to those who take against them.

Furthermore, Northrop Frye, commentator on archetypes in legend and literature, has written, comparing our poem and the *Odyssey*:

The *Aeneid* develops the theme of return into one of rebirth, the end in New Troy being the starting point *renewed and transformed* by the hero's quest. (My italics.)<sup>25</sup>

The transformative nature of the encounter in the *Aeneid* narrative can be contrasted with the more familiar liberation/renewal model, which has informed many movements, secular and religious, not least in the last century. This, of course, is the Biblical one of Exodus where Captivity is followed by Deliverance or Return and a previous wholeness are resumed in national or group rebirth. This narrative of a people's homecoming or liberation, especially in the light of recent history, has been found wanting for its exclusivity and chauvinism. Many of us ostracize it now as nationalism. In the second half of the *Aeneid*, there is a pervasive alternative. Aeneas and the Trojan remnant leave their home never to return. They travel and land in a country which may have been inhabited by their forefathers but which to them is new. They make friends and enemies there, and finally there is reconciliation, decided by the divine opponents Juno and Jupiter. The visitors give up their identification 'Trojan' and become Latin, or rather, a new mixed people, the Italians. The Roman Empire was indeed a multicultural Empire. In fact, polytheists as they were, the initial Roman invaders were sympathetic to amalgamating local cultures of worship through syncretism - equating one God with another. The English town of Bath, for example, is the holy site of Sulis Minerva, the Celtic name preceding the Latin for the deity of the springs.<sup>26</sup>

The *Aeneid* is a story of trouble and transformation, taking and giving, strife and progress that ends in a new community. It's true that an analogy can be drawn between the Trojan search for a viable community in another land and the 'civilising mission' of a Great Power. Aeneas as colonial administrator is an available figure if a reader has the need to block out those details of the text that don't fit. However, if one reads the second half again, it's not so reassuring to the empire builder. The Trojans don't make Italy a new Troy. They don't appoint a new Priam or bring values and politics which they regard as final and, in the name of these, conquer another people. They come in peace, they struggle and form a new nation. The Gods, Jupiter and Juno, initially embodying inflexible differences, finally compromise. This tale can be used as an alibi for invasion; it can also be used as a model for peace.

## THE REVOLUTION THAT WAS ROME

The climax of this section, and therefore of the whole epic, occurs at *Aen.* 12. 554-60. In Aristotelian terms, it is the *peripeteia*, that moment in a drama when the protagonist discovers or realises something that reverses their sense of themselves or the world,<sup>27</sup> as when Oedipus recognises that it is his actions - now discovered to be incest and father-murder - that have brought the plague on his beloved city. In the *Aeneid*, the realisation/discovery is not tragic but, one could

say, 'therapeutic'. Aeneas is inspired (by Venus, his mother god), as he struggles against the recalcitrant among the Latins, to recognise that the only way he will end the slaughter is if he changes tactics and turns from the plain to attack the enemy's city (at least in suggestion), that is, treat it like Troy. He must become more than a Homeric Trojan (more than a defender) and, as in modern therapies, confront the unthinkable.

There are other comparisons to be made at this point between warriors in Homer and in Virgil. Like Virgil, Homer is full of pathos. Frye comments that in the *Iliad* 'the fall of the enemy no less than of a friend or leader is tragic and not comic.'<sup>28</sup> Homer however is circular. Battle involves violence and pity but the struggle is continuous, constant. Achilles kills Hector while Achilles himself in the scheme of things will die because of this. Yet, what is gained? What is the result of the *Iliad*? The battle continues until Troy is destroyed but that climax is outside the poem and is not celebrated by it. In the *Aeneid*, Troy is levelled, Aeneas journeys until there is a struggle between the natives and the migrants in lands of the Latin. Italy and Rome are the promise, and after Rome, we can add, Europeans and European colonies, new Empires and the modern world. Each of these turnings is a development. When the Trojans arrive and end up mixing with the Latins, this is not a return to an origin, a native and purified land, but a revolution. The old ways of Latins and Trojans have merged, advanced in a new (Hegelian) synthesis, though this too is not without its own tensions and problems. The Romans knew they were hybrids, mongrels and students of other cultures as well as observers of their own. In this concluding book of the story, the *Aeneid* bears witness to the broad historical reality of cross-culture, of the effect of one social group on another, whether in a violent or gradual way. Was this part of Virgil's message, to remind his first audience in that proud aristocratic city that they were Italians too (like his own provincial self)? It's a metaphor we can still take to heart. We did not do it On Our Own. There are no totally separate Others, even if divided by custom or force. We are all in this together.

### THE LESSON OF THE *AENEID*

So, to sum up, the vision of the *Aeneid* is one whole. To those who would cut it up into a private and a public 'voice', or perhaps an imperialist and a pacifist voice, one can reply, why only two? What about a Stoic, an Epicurean, a Platonic voice? No doubt, they can all be found there (and have been), in tension with each other, like a Shavian play or Bakhtin's 'dialogical' novel.<sup>29</sup>

The *Aeneid* recites a legend of Aeneas's endeavour, the Trojans' sojourn, to find a new home, a new place, a people that will one day issue in Rome, not with two voices but many sides. It is an endeavour not without mistakes, backsliding, sorrow, loss and the constant pressure of outside forces. It is a reply to the *Iliad*: Homer's heroes suffer and struggle but are leaves that fall from the tree, over and over, cyclic in death. In the *Aeneid*, they suffer and struggle but they reach somewhere, not their old home, like Odysseus, but what will become a new society. When the Trojans end their quest and create a people made of two nationalities, something is created that was not there before, and this can be called a revolution. Indeed the Roman Empire itself could be said to be a revolution. For Rome was different from previous Empires, those of Egypt and Sumer for example. Rome wasn't defined as a race or tribe amongst others, nor the 'children' of a Royal family, but a culture, emphasising skills, discipline, technique, things that could be universally learnt. As something that could be spread, not merely imposed, it was an example not only to future Empires (who promoted their 'universality', their applicability to everyone, even as their

racism denied it) but to worldwide movements generally, from Christianity and Islam to the various international social utopias of our own day, even if discredited.

There is much to debate about how baleful the influence and heritage of the Emperors and the Senators, the Gladiators and Governors have proved. For example, the recent question as to whether these Romans could be described, in our terms, as racist. The *Aeneid* itself is engaging and convincing not just because it allows the Other a voice (which may merely mark the generosity of those who control how the Other is defined and controlled). It has engaged so many different individuals because it admits strikingly that triumph involves loss and doubt. At the very close of the final book, in Aeneas's 'furious' lack of mercy to Turnus, we might even ask if the hero hasn't finally lost his heroism. Whether we read this scene as retribution or a bad example, it's an outrageous finish. The epic thus ends not in certainty and the triumph of the Good and the Heroic, but in tense doubt for the reader (why else do we keep on discussing it?), a troubling close that not even that great advocate of a critical relation to the text Bertolt Brecht ever quite achieved. Whether intended as a condemnation or an exculpation, the ending of Turnus can give us an exercise in not surrendering ourselves to an endeavour, a hero or a text unthinkingly. We are left to ask whether Aeneas is to be respected at all. There is no certain answer. We may well be unsure but we are stimulated to mull it over, to debate. Can it really be true that someone wrote this work over two thousand years ago?

## OUR CLASSIC

Aeneas does not set out to lose comrades or kill the hostile. Mishap and mistake come the Trojans' way. As a Pre-Christian, Virgil doesn't have a 'problem of evil'. Shit happens, but the *Aeneid* is neither bleak nor euphemistic, defeatist nor anodyne. Many of those to whom the *Aeneid* became attractive enough to warrant translation, were those who required such a species of intelligent hope, of renewal and transformation. The text offers itself for examination and evaluation, our thoughtfulness.

At the end of the 20th century, many of us were wiser, more careful and more sceptical of 'revolutionary' promises (whether of technological fixes, social transformation or Saving the World for Free Market Democracy). Some would see this as the anti-heroic end of history's endeavour, as laziness and masochism. This paper is only a proposal to read the *Aeneid* as a poem, a metaphor, not as a guidebook or book of rules. Nevertheless, its wisdom as a story may indeed have its uses for those who might search for a new *imperium*, the great endeavour of a new international community. We can still think we have a future, a destiny, even if we don't know our destination.

Virgil is the readers' writer. Each reader is engaged in a thoughtful struggle (especially if translating it into another language), an endeavour to comprehend and appreciate the work. We go with it, bearing it (*superanda omnis fortuna ferendo est* - all fortune is to be overcome by bearing it' *Aen.* 5.710), comprehending/ interpreting/co-creating, as we progress.

These thoughts are presented as something to be added to the discussion and reading of a certain text, a way of seeing and reading to be considered among evidence, forensic (scholarly) or witness ('readings'), at a trial where the jury is always all readers. It is a devoted offering to the process of reaching a verdict about the value we give these works, our defining of a classic.

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NOTES

This is a more developed version of the paper given in 2001. The author would like to extend warm thanks to Jonathan Foster for his editorial guidance and Peter Agrell for his acute historical sense. Without their comments, this paper would not have developed as I would have wished.

- <sup>1</sup> T.S. Eliot, 'What is a Classic?' Presidential Address to the Virgil Society (1944), *On Poetry and Poets* (London, 1957).
- <sup>2</sup> R. Fitzgerald, *The Aeneid* (London, 1983).
- <sup>3</sup> S. M. Braund, *Latin Literature* (London 2002), 18.
- <sup>4</sup> For the concept of the subversive voice in the *Aeneid*, see R.F. Thomas, *Virgil and the Augustan Reception*, (Cambridge. 2001) and R.D. Williams 'The Purpose of the Aeneid' in *Oxford Readings in Virgil's Aeneid*, ed S.J. Harrison (Oxford, 1990).
- <sup>5</sup> For more on the cat and mouse game that a Leader can play with an Artist, see S.Volkov, *Shostakovich and Stalin*, tr. Antonina W.Bouis (London, 2004).
- <sup>6</sup> T. Eagleton, *Literary Theory: An Introduction* (Oxford, 1983), 209-213. In the same chapter, 'Conclusion: Political Criticism', Eagleton calls for the reinvention of 'Rhetoric, which was the received form of critical analysis all the way from ancient society to the eighteenth century...', 205.
- <sup>7</sup> J. Berger, *The Success and Failure of Picasso* (Harmondsworth, 1965), 131.
- <sup>8</sup> English translation from H.R. Fairclough, *Virgil* (Harvard, 1934).
- <sup>9</sup> R.O.A.M. Lyne, *Words and the Poet* (Oxford, 1989), 54-6.
- <sup>10</sup> B. Brecht, 'Short Description of a New Technique of Acting', 136-47, and 'Theatre for Pleasure or Theatre for Instruction', 69-77, in *Brecht on Theatre*, tr. John Willett (London, 1978).
- <sup>11</sup> M.C. J. Putnam, 'The Art of Catullus', *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology* 65, 1961, 165-205.
- <sup>12</sup> The lines are quoted in Ch. VI. 'Rome the Suzerain' in G.E.M. de Ste Croix, *The Class Struggle in the Ancient Greek World* (London), 1997), 327
- <sup>13</sup> Aen. 6.553 becomes in Dryden: 'To tame the Proud, the fetter'd Slave to free' (6.1176: 1697).
- <sup>14</sup> J.B. Hainsworth, *The Idea of Epic* (California, 1991), 95.
- <sup>15</sup> For the best presentation of Goldmann's formal-historical approach and his concept of the 'world vision', see L. Goldmann, *The Hidden God*, tr. Philip Thody (London 1964).
- <sup>16</sup> See especially R. Williams 'Literature and Sociology, In Memory of Lucien Goldmann' in *Problems in Materialism and Culture* (London, 1980) and 'Form and Meaning: *Hippolytus* and *Phèdre*' in *Writing in Society* (London, 1984).
- <sup>17</sup> See E.M. Forster's discussion of writers as echoing each other's approach across history - for example, similarities between Dickens and H.G. Wells - in 'Introductory' to *Aspects of the Novel* (London, 1949), Pocket Edition, 12 - 23.
- <sup>18</sup> Goldmann, cit., Ch. VI 'Jansenism and the *noblesse de robe*', 103-41.
- <sup>19</sup> For Dumézil on the value of prudence for the Romans in religion, law and culture, see G. Dumézil, *Archaic Roman Religion*, vol.1, tr. Philip Krapp (Baltimore and London, 1996), 40-41.
- <sup>20</sup> W. Eder, 'Augustus and the Power of Tradition: The Augustan Principate as Binding Link between Republic and Empire' in Raaflaub K.A. and Toher M., *Between Republic and Empire Interpretations of Augustus and His Principate* (California, 1990), 87.
- <sup>21</sup> Hainsworth, 105.
- <sup>22</sup> C. Burrow, 'Virgil in English Translation' in *The Cambridge Companion to Virgil*, ed. Charles Martindale (Cambridge 1997), 36.
- <sup>23</sup> R.D. Williams (note 4 above), 28.
- <sup>24</sup> An addendum to the 1968 'rivers of blood' speech: in 1987 Powell was interviewed for a TV profile and regretted his misquotation of Virgil, that is, referring to 'the Roman' rather than the Sibyl. He'd taken out Virgil's phrase 'and put in a translation'. Powell added, 'I probably ought to have stuck to the Latin. That's a good motto in life: "stick to the Latin".' From R.Shepherd, *Enoch Powell A Biography* (London, 1996), 359-60. The speech itself is in E. Powell, *Freedom and Reality*, ed, John Wood (London, 1969).
- <sup>25</sup> N. Frye, *Anatomy of Criticism* (London, 1990), 319.
- <sup>26</sup> L. Adkins and R.A. Adkins, *Dictionary of Roman Religion* (Oxford, 1996), 212.
- <sup>27</sup> Aristotle, 'On the Art of Poetry' in *Classical Literary Criticism* (London, 1965), 46.
- <sup>28</sup> Frye, 19.
- <sup>29</sup> M. Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World* (Massachusetts, 1968).

# Confronting the Beast - From Virgil's Cacus to the dragons of Cornelis van Haarlem\*

*A revised version of a paper given to the Virgil Society on 24 November 2001*

*For Carlotta Dionisotti*

## I. INTRODUCTION

This paper has its origins in a visit to the National Gallery, that London marvel of state-sponsored munificence. Its mission is to trace the history of European painting from the beginning of the Renaissance to the end of the nineteenth century, and the collection therefore abounds in suggestive vistas of complement and contrast. In virtually every room, the Gallery illustrates the co-presence and interlocking of Judeo-Christian and classicizing elements in western culture. My argument here will take shape against this backdrop of interactive traditions.

Let me begin with a look at an altarpiece by Raphael on display at Trafalgar Square: *The Crucified Christ with the Virgin Mary, Saints and Angels* (c. 1503). Here is how John Drury, Dean of Christ Church, Oxford, and head of its cathedral, imagines a first, deliberately naive, reaction to the painting:

Enjoyment and difficulty meet us straight away and in strength. Here is a loveliness of colour, line, forms, landscape and human bodies to give immediate delight. But - and the 'but' is very big - the mention of bodies... points up the difficulty. Having and being bodies, we can only be distressed, even appalled, by the central body in this picture being hung on a cross: an atrocious form of public death by ignominious torture which any body can see only with feelings of horror. Being caught like this in a collision of pleasure and pain is a ferocious challenge to contemplation. Are we meant to enjoy this? If so, how? ... Time is short, so would it not be better to go and look at something by Monet, who has got himself clear of such rank ambiguity?!

Before reaching Monet, however, one might be stopped dead in one's tracks, as I was, by another painting first, which is, arguably, even more unnerving than Raphael's image of Christ nailed to the cross: Cornelis van Haarlem, *Two Followers of Cadmus devoured by a Dragon* (1588) [figure 1]. *Two Followers* shares Raphael's concern with the human body in pain and its atrocious mutilation, but has little of its elegance of brushwork and loveliness of colour; rather, at first sight, the painting features a relentless spectacle of death within an overall atmosphere of putrefaction. If the Raphael poses 'a ferocious challenge to *contemplation*', the Cornelis, in its stomach-churning glory, seems destined to trigger a more visceral response—quite apart from the fact that the imagery is one of disaster and perdition rather than of prelapsarian forbearance and promised salvation.

Indeed, in the case of the Christian painting it is fairly easy to make at least some sense of the depicted violence. For two millennia, much exegetical ingenuity has been invested in the endeavour to rationalize the extraordinary fact of a crucified saviour. Anyone familiar with the basic catechism of Christianity is able to situate Raphael's vision within the context of an eschatology that holds out a final deliverance from evil. As Nigel Spivey puts it: 'In believers' eyes, Christ died for the world: so Christians translate by faith the extremity of passive suffering into sublime victory.'<sup>2</sup> In fact, as far as Christian representations of pain and suffering go, the Raphael is fairly tame. The aesthetics of edifying shock, *via* the concept of *gloria passionis*, both of Christ and those who followed in his footsteps, was part and parcel of the Christian artistic tradition, from late antiquity onwards.<sup>3</sup> For the Cornelis, in contrast, such an 'ideological recuperation' is rather more difficult to perform. The imagery appals through its irrationality: there seems to be no larger plot behind the painting that could make sense of the depicted violence. It is of course possible to take refuge in the academic. Art historians, for instance, tend to point out the lively interest in the nude and its representation in art, which were well-known hallmarks of the Renaissance.<sup>4</sup> But having a dragon feast on two hapless victims is arguably not the most obvious way to explore the intricacies of human anatomy. While a concern with the body is clearly visible in the painting - from the exaggerated brawn of the musculature to the gaping windpipe of the dislocated head -, Cornelis does not invite us to partake in an anatomy lesson à la Rembrandt.

The authors of the National Gallery volume on *Sixteenth-Century Painting* try to solve the unsavory predicament of having to deal with an apparent *l'art-pour-l'art* atrocity by suggesting that Cornelis wished to illustrate Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. The painting thus becomes 'an example of another new development in art, the creation of exciting imagery to illustrate ancient poetry, especially that of Ovid - here the excitement is violent, more often it was erotic.'<sup>5</sup> The slippage from 'exciting imagery' (which I take to mean imagery that may excite the spectator) to 'the excitement' (presumably the one depicted in the painting?) intrigues. For a fleeting moment, the authors put the focus on reception, rather than representation, implicitly acknowledging that the gruesome, in particular in art, is not necessarily a turn-off (as Drury presupposes a *priori*). What he called 'rank ambiguity', the coincidence, that is to say, of violence and artistic beauty, might actually thrill.

This holds very likely true for Cornelis' original audience in sixteenth-century Haarlem, and is most certainly the case in twenty-first-century Britain. After a day of fieldwork in the National Gallery, during which I observed reactions of visitors to the Cornelis-canvas, I can report that even British school-children (aged 6-10) almost invariably respond to the painting with a jolly mixture of



*Figure 1:*

Cornelis van Haarlem, *Two Followers of Cadmus devoured by a Dragon*. National Gallery, London.

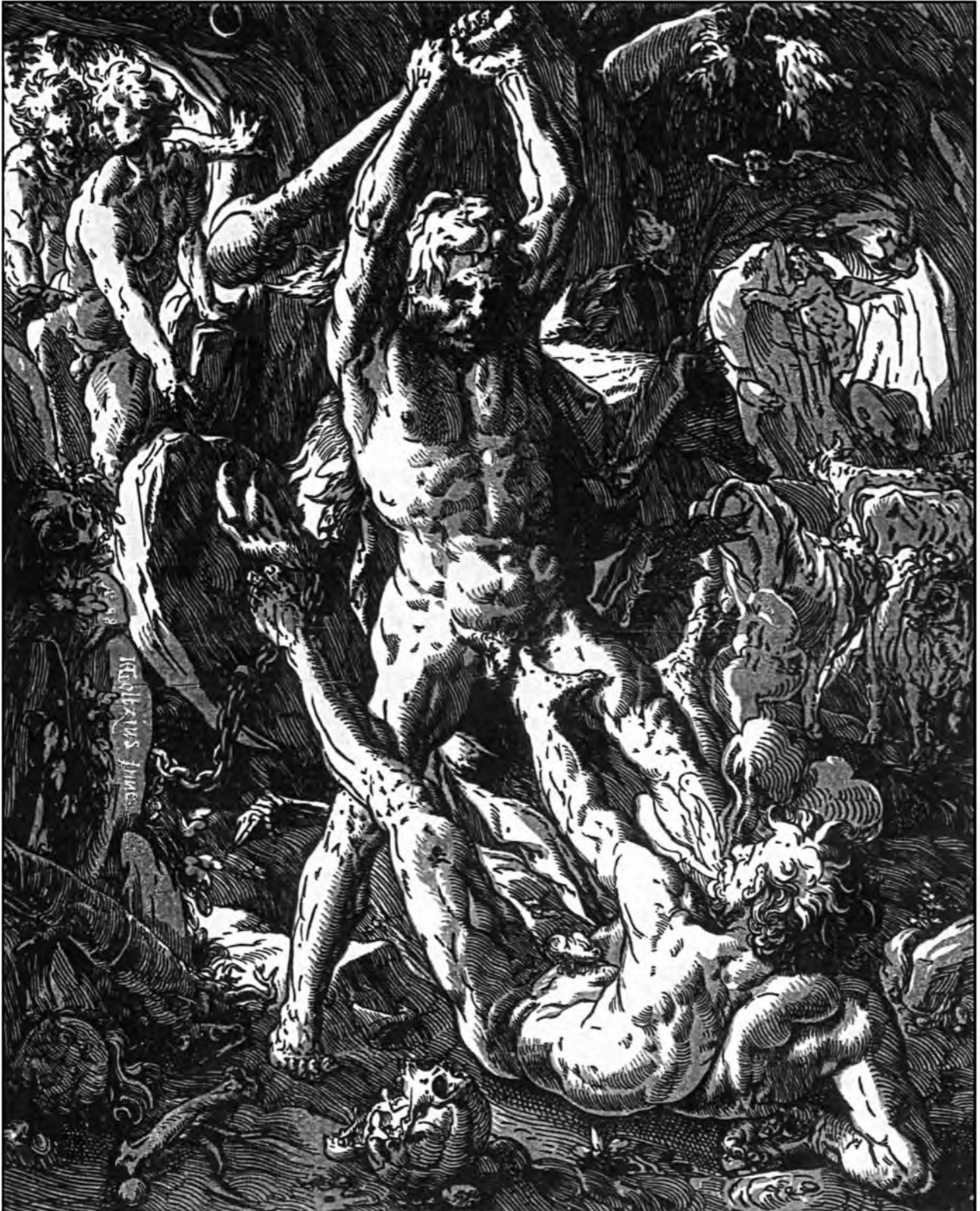
horror and delight, a scopophiliac desire to stop and stare, while anxious chaperones, ruffled and alarmed, quickly try to shuffle them out of the room.

Observations such as these point up the problematics involved in situating ourselves vis-à-vis cultural artifacts and underscore the complex social and psychological processes by which we come to endow visual data with meaning. As is now well known, ‘spectator’-, or, for that matter, ‘reader’-ship, constitutes itself at the interface of the units of information that we take in through our eyes and the sedimented layers of cultural knowledge that shape our outlook on the world. While difficult to parse, this interplay between sense-perception and epistemic matrices conditions our responses on various levels, from the elementary physiological (horror and disgust) to the highly cognitive and intellectual, as when we insert certain images into the metanarrative scripts that circulate within our culture (such as Christian eschatology).<sup>6</sup> What I wish to do in this paper is to work out such a script in the Cornelis-canvas, which has, as far as I can tell, gone unnoticed by art historians. My point of departure is the fact that the posture of Cornelis’s lapsed Phoenician finds conspicuous replication in a woodcut of Hendrik Goltzius, entitled *Hercules and Cacus* [figure 2]. This replication is hardly fortuitous: both artists belonged to the circle of Carel van Mander, a scholar and poet active in late sixteenth- and early-seventeenth-century Haarlem.<sup>7</sup> *Two Followers* and *Hercules and Cacus* can with some certainty be dated to the same year as well: 1588.<sup>8</sup> We may thus confidently posit an instance of iconographic allusion.

For the classicist, the allusive dialogue between these two artworks is of special interest since it re-enacts, rather intriguingly, an intertextual dimension of the two texts which the paintings recall, namely Virgil’s *Aeneid* 8 and Ovid’s *Metamorphoses* 3.<sup>9</sup> As Philip Hardie has shown in a seminal article, Ovid’s account of the founding of Thebes, in particular Cadmus’s encounter with the primordial resident of the site, the dragon of Ares, is replete with allusions to the *Aeneid*, especially to *Aeneid* 8 and the fight between Hercules and Cacus.<sup>10</sup> Ovid’s Cadmus, clothed as he is in the lion-skin of Hercules, emerges as an intertextual transvestite who acts out the role of ‘the great civilizer’ that Virgil pre-scripted for Hercules in the *Aeneid*. The ‘interfigurality’ that links Goltzius’s woodcut to Cornelis’s painting seems to indicate that the Dutch artists, too, perceived some sort of meaningful relation between these two myths. One might even ponder the possibility that they were aware of the Virgilian reminiscences in Ovid’s *Metamorphoses*. I should stress, though, that the reflections that are to follow do not depend on this being actually the case: in the wake of Julia Kristeva, it has become possible to pursue intertextual dynamics without a (strict) notion of intention.

Whatever Cornelis and Goltzius thought they were doing—their choice of *sujets* (two myths with obvious parallels of plot) and the formal design of their paintings (enacting an allusive interplay of some sort or another) extend a strong invitation to set up, at least provisionally, a series of analogies that involves four artists, two media, four fictional characters and two cultures separated by more than fifteen centuries. The figures of Hercules and Cacus parallel those of Cadmus and the dragon of Ares, and the allusive dialogue between Goltzius’s woodcut and Cornelis’s painting matches that between Virgil’s *Aeneid* and Ovid’s *Metamorphoses*, even though in the case of Goltzius and Cornelis it is impossible to determine who influenced whom.

Cultural history, of course, is never as straightforward, simple and pithy as these formulae suggest. Already a moment’s reflection on the ‘inversion of victimhood’ in the two visual artists points up a serious difficulty. In the Cornelis, we find an unfortunate Phoenician in the same contorted posture



*Figure 2:*

Hendrick Goltzius, *Herkules und Cacus*. Hamburg, Hamburger Kunsthalle. Foto: Christoph Irrgang. Reproduced with the kind permission of bildarchiv preussischer kulturbesitz.

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of subjugation that Cacus is forced to assume in the Goltzius, and this ‘triumph of the beast’ over one of the harbingers of civilization cannot help but complicate our response. For the time being, however, let us note that we are dealing with a prime instance of ‘hypoleptic conversation’, the phenomenon which Jan Assmann has identified as the hallmark of cultural traditions: a special type of coherence and continuity in which texts and artists communicate with each other across profound divides of culture, space and time, as well as media.<sup>11</sup> In the following, I want to tinker a bit (nothing more) with the texture of the traditions that underwrite the quartet of Virgil and Ovid, Goltzius and Cornelis. My guiding interests are: how is spectatorship constituted for us, both in the texts and the paintings? What are the aesthetic experiences the artists have to offer their audiences (ranging from the off-putting to the sublime)? And how do their respective aesthetics interact with issues of ideology, such as larger historical or metaphysical ‘plots’?

## II. VIRGIL: HERCULES AND CACUS<sup>12</sup>

### 1. Sights and observers in the tale of Hercules and Cacus

The story of Cacus and Hercules as related in *Aeneid* 8 by Virgil’s internal narrator Euander contains a complex network of references to eyes, seeing, and sights. Far from being a secondary feature, this multi-layered poetics of visuality helps to establish the peculiar ontological design of Euander’s discourse, as well as its epistemological profile and aesthetic impact.

Euander’s deployment of visual pointers begins with his inaugural gesture to the badly damaged topography of the Aventine Hill. As he begins his tale, he encourages his Trojan guest to take a good look: *hanc aspice rupem*, he says (8. 190), and then follows up his invitation to autopsy, which grounds his narrative in empirical reality (or at least the human reality of Virgil’s narrative), by transporting his audience back in time via a gut-wrenching *mise-en-scène*:

*hic spelunca fuit uasto summota recessu,  
semihominis Caci facies quam dira tenebat  
solis inaccessam radiis; semperque recenti  
caede tepebat humus, foribusque adfixa superbis  
ora uirum tristi pendebant pallida tabo.*

(*Aen.* 8. 193-97)

[‘T was once a robber’s den, inclos’d around  
With living stone, and deep beneath the ground.  
The monster Cacus, more than half a beast,  
This hold, impervious to the sun, possess’d.  
The pavement ever foul with human gore;  
Heads, and their mangled members, hung the door.]<sup>13</sup>

Euander’s horrifying ephrasis of Cacus’s gruesome domicile is bound to trigger revulsion and disgust—much like the bits and pieces of human anatomy that litter the foreground of *Two Followers*. But the depiction also titillates the reader with the evocation of an atmosphere perhaps best captured with Freud’s concept of ‘das Unheimliche’. For Freud, the uncanny is opposed to the homelike and the everyday and fascinates with the perverse allure inherent in the mysterious and the alien. The underworldly trappings (*plutoneia*) that make up Euander’s description—a vast cave, inaccessible to sunlight, damp with slaughter; putrefying human heads—are ghastly stuff, bound to produce the odd frisson of pleasure and horror we experience when we mentally partake from a position of safety in frightful settings and events.

The passage also brings to the fore the primeval connection of ‘the gaze’ and power. We have a stark and disturbing antithesis between disfigured human heads which rot away as the putrefying trophies of a headhunting monster and the countenance of Cacus himself, a semi-human ogre whose visage is terrifying to behold: *semihominis Caci facies .. dira*, 8. 194. I daresay that not many members of Euander’s Arcadian community would have mustered the courage to confront Cacus face to face.<sup>14</sup> While he was in residence, we may reckon with a few downcast eyes at the future site of Rome, a condition of victimhood that Euander picks up and reverses in the monster’s clash with Hercules. Both the moment of peripeteia and the very end of their encounter are marked by references to Cacus’s eyes.

As soon as Hercules has twigged the prank that the monster has played on him and storms up the mountain in a fit of rage, Cacus’s eyes cloud over with fear. Intriguingly, this instance is focalized for us through the eyes of Euander’s fellow-Arcadians, whom he here (and only here) mentions as onlookers to the fight:

*tum primum nostri Cacum uidere timentem  
turbatumque oculis.* (8. 222-3)

The enormous monster who, initially, is said to be moving about with massive bulk (*magna se mole ferebat*, 199) proves to be surprisingly fleet of foot. His flight, however, is in vain. In the end, Hercules gains access to the cave in which the frightened ogre cowers and throttles him until his eyes pop out:

*et angit inhaerens  
elisos oculos et siccum sanguine guttur.* (8. 260-1)

Line 261 brings Hercules’s agency to an end. At this point, there is an abrupt cut in the narrative as Euander switches to impersonal and anonymous passives. The construction is peculiar since it makes Hercules all but disappear from the narrative:

*panditur extemplo foribus domus atra reuulsis  
abstractaeque boues abiurataeque rapinae  
caelo ostenduntur pedibusque informe cadauer  
protrahitur.* (8. 262-5)

[The doors, unbarr’d, receive the rushing day,  
And thoro’ lights disclose the ravish’d prey.  
The bulls, redeem’d, breathe open air again.  
N ext, by the feet, they drag him from his den.]

Then the Arcadians are back. Precluded from observing the events that took place within the cave, they are now able to observe the dead monster at length, especially his eyes:

*nequeunt expleri corda tuendo  
terribilis oculos, uultum uillosaque saetis  
pectora semiferi atque extinctos faucibus ignis.* (8. 264-7)

[The wond’ring neighborhood, with glad surprise,  
Behold his shagged breast, his giant size,  
His mouth that flames no more, and his extinguish’d eyes.]

Euander again places heavy emphasis on the horrible eyes and face of Cacus, as his fellow Arcadians engage in scopophilic gloating over a fear dispelled. They ‘have their visual fill’ of the monster as if to make up for the time when they would not have dared to stare him in the eyes.

In the course of the Hercules and Cacus episode, then, the eyes of the monster gradually lose their demonic powers. It is Cacus who has ‘air supremacy’ at the outset and who is *superbus* (cf. 8. 196), the very word that Virgil uses of the Romans themselves when he first mentions his people in the *Aeneid*: *populum late regem belloque superbum* (1. 21).<sup>15</sup> It takes a god to break the spell of Cacus’s evil eyes, to instill fear in them, and finally to dislocate them from their sockets, clearing the site for Rome’s ascent to global power. With the defeat of Cacus, Hercules removed a primeval obstacle of Rome’s rise to a city co-extensive with the universe.<sup>16</sup>

## 2. The aesthetics of the sublime

Given his persistent emphasis on ‘the eyes’ of Cacus and the Arcadians as spectators, it is remarkable and curious that Euander carefully avoids presenting *himself* as an eye-witness to the events. At 8. 222, he talks of *nostri*, ‘our people’, and at the very end he again scrupulously excludes himself from those who gazed upon the monster’s corpse: *nequeunt expleri corda tuendo ...*, 8. 265. This (surely deliberate) way of situating himself vis-à-vis his narrative material amounts to an implicit disclaimer: without stressing the fact, Euander still insists on making it clear that he is not reporting on events which he saw with his own eyes. *Prima facie*, this is a baffling ploy as it appears to undermine his credibility as well as diminish his *auctoritas* as narrator—or does it?

To make headway with this problem it is important to realize that Euander’s tale features a peculiar ontology. On inspection, his discourse imbricates two different realities—the human reality of the Arcadians; and the ‘divine’ reality in which the clash between Hercules and Cacus takes place.<sup>17</sup> The latter is almost entirely a space of the poetic imagination. We enter it at 8. 193, with the ecphrasis of Cacus’s cave (*hic spelunca fuit...*) and exit it when the doors of the cave suddenly swing open after Hercules vanquished Cacus (8. 262: *panditur extemplo foribus domus atra revulsis...*). As George puts it:

The cave-description is a fit beginning for a story that is to culminate in a katabasis-like exploit. When this tale of the supernatural closes (262ff.), the cave-mouth is again the setting; and it is used as the point of re-entry from the world of the fearfully supernatural to that of Arcadian Pallanteum.<sup>18</sup>

The pocket of ‘gigantomachic art’<sup>19</sup> embedded in Euander’s tale differs in important ways from the narrative surroundings, an ontological split that raises questions of epistemology and aesthetics, which are compounded by the fact that Euander does not keep the two worlds fully apart. There is one telling moment, that carefully contrived instance of peripeteia, in which the Arcadian settlers are configured as onlookers to the metaphysical drama on the Aventine Hill. This moment of ‘imbrication’ roots Euander’s fanciful account in the life of a human community; but by removing himself from the realm of the empirically observable, he clears narrative space for another type of vision: the vision of the *uates*, the seer-prophet, who is able to look beyond appearances. In Euander’s case, his epistemological omnipotence finds articulation in his special powers of *phantasia* (‘visualization’).

*Phantasia* is the faculty that enables a poet to transcend the confines of empirical reality, a precondition for creating a world endowed with sublime magnificence. And Euander's tale, as Richard Heinze realized long ago, offers 'sublime' poetry *par excellence*. Arguably the best commentary on its poetics can be found in Ps.-Longinus' treatise on the subject. Several passages from *On the Sublime* do much to illuminate Virgil's artistic agenda, especially the striking shift in literary registers that his narrator Euander deploys:

Contrast the line about Darkness in Hesiod—if the Shield is by Hesiod:

Mucus dripped from her nostrils.

This gives a repulsive picture, not one to excite awe. But how does Homer magnify the divine power?

As far as a man can peer through the mist,

Sitting on watch, looking over the wine-dark sea,

So long is the stride of the gods' thundering horses.

He uses a cosmic distance to measure their speed. This enormously impressive image would make anybody say, and with reason that, if the horses of the gods took two strides like that, they would find there was not enough room in the world. (6) The imaginative pictures in the Battle of the Gods are also very remarkable:

And the great heavens and Olympus trumpeted around them.

Aidoneus, lord of the dead, was frightened in his depths;

And in fright he jumped from his throne, and shouted,

For the earth-shaker Poseidon might break through the ground,

And gods and men might see

The foul and terrible halls, which even the gods detest.

Do you see how the earth is torn from its foundations, Tartarus laid bare, and the whole universe overthrown and broken up, so that all things—Heaven and Hell, things mortal and immortal—war together and are at risk together in that ancient battle? But, terrifying as all this is, it is blasphemous and indecent unless it is interpreted allegorically... .

(Ps.-Longinus, 9.5-6; trans. Russell)

The passage reads like a commentary on Euander's discourse. The description of Cacus's cave definitely qualifies as 'repulsive'. It is off-putting in the extreme.<sup>20</sup> (Not that it is not also great poetry, of dense allusive texture, recalling similarly repulsive passages in earlier writers, from Homer to Ennius.) But Virgil quickly leaves the 'repulsive' behind and moves into the 'awe-inspiring'. In the encounter of Cacus with Hercules, we get awesome poetry of cosmic grandeur. Nothing captures the operative principle in Virgil's text better than Longinus's phrase *hyperbole tou megethous*, which Russell translates as 'enormously impressive image'. Virgil's imagery is out of the ordinary, larger than life, cosmic in scale, in every respect beyond the boundaries of human experience.

The amplification of reality begins subtly: first, there is the lowing of cows that resounds from the hills as they depart (8. 215-16: *discessu mugire boues atque omne querelis/ impleri nemus et colles clamore relinqui*), which not only triggers the responsive answer from the cattle hidden in the cave that sets up Cacus's downfall, but also, like the rumbling of thunder in the far distance, introduces a majestic soundtrack that will soon build up to a truly sublime crescendo. Then there is the magnificence of Hercules's emotional outburst and the speed with which he scales the Aventine Hill in no time at all, Cacus, in turn, fleeing faster than the wind. We finally reach the climax when Euander describes the effects of Hercules's toppling the cliff on the Aventine Hill to gain access to Cacus's cave:

*impulsu quo maximus intonat aether,  
dissultant ripae refluitque exterritus amnis.  
at specus et Caci detecta apparuit ingens  
regia, et umbrosae penitus patuere cauernae,  
non secus ac si qua penitus ui terra dehiscens  
infernus reseret sedes et regna recludat  
pallida, dis inuisa, superque immane barathrum  
cernatur, trepident immisso lumine Manes.*

(8. 239-46)

[Thus heav'd, the fix'd foundations of the rock  
Gave way; heav'n echo'd at the rattling shock.  
Tumbling, it chok'd the flood: on either side  
The banks leap backward, and the streams divide;  
The sky shrunk upward with unusual dread,  
And trembling Tiber div'd beneath his bed.  
The court of Cacus stands reveal'd to sight;  
The cavern glares with new-admitted light.  
So the pent vapors, with a rumbling sound,  
Heave from below, and rend the hollow ground;  
A sounding flaw succeeds; and, from on high,  
The gods with hate beheld the nether sky:  
The ghosts repine at violated night,  
And curse th' invading sun, and sicken at the sight.]

At this point, the hyperbolic commotion is complete, the soundtrack earsplitting, the entire cosmos in turmoil, the images produced by Euander beyond the capacity of our imagination. Tiber himself cannot help but feel the emotion that, according to Ps-Longinus, great poetry is bound to elicit: *ekplexis* (cf. *exterritus amnis*, 8. 240). Note that Euander resorts to a simile that enacts the worst fears of Homer's Hades:<sup>21</sup> Terra splits open, revealing the realm of the dead. In all, the imagery of the tale does indeed 'measure out the full dimension of the Cosmos' (to paraphrase Ps.-Longinus), as well as delight with an aesthetics of shock and suddenness.<sup>22</sup>

Both the theomachic imagery and the following *katabasis* of Hercules into Cacus's fuming haunts are prime instances of poetic *phantasia*. The author of *On the Sublime* discusses the image-producing powers of 'visualization' and contrasts its use and function in rhetoric and poetry as follows:

15.1 Another thing which is very productive of grandeur, magnificence and urgency, my young friend, is visualization (*phantasia*). I use this word for what some people call image-production. The term *phantasia* is used generally for anything which in any way suggests a thought productive of speech; but the word has also come into fashion for the situation in which enthusiasm and emotion make the speaker see what he is saying and bring it *visually* before his audience. It will not escape you that rhetorical visualization has a different intention from that of the poets: in poetry the aim is astonishment, in oratory it is clarity. Both, however, seek emotion and excitement.<sup>23</sup>  
(trans. Russell)

Ps.-Longinus's distinction between the rhetorical and the poetic use of language and their different functions is ideally suited to identify and assess the shift in registers that occurs in Euander's discourse. As we have seen, he initiates his tale with a rhetorical use of language. Nothing could be clearer than his gesture to the Aventine Hill (*hanc aspice rupem*, 8.190) by which he links his

narration to ‘empirical’ features of the landscape. But his account then veers off into the mythopoetic, where different rules of the imagination apply, as he regales his audience with an astounding tale of supernatural forces, designed, and bound to produce, the desired frisson of sublime poetry, *ekplexis*. The story ends with a marked return to rhetorical clarity. After he has set Hercules’s katabasis before the mind of the audience, an event that played itself out without any eye-witnesses present, Euander abruptly discontinues tracing the adventure of Hercules with his powers of *phantasia*. The doors of the cave swinging open coincides with a change in perspective, as Euander returns his discourse to the reality of his Arcadians.

In the course of his tale, then, to put it in the idiom of the author of *On the Sublime*, Euander moves from *to pragmatikon* to *to muthodes*, from *enargeia* to *ekplexis*, from *mimesis* to *phantasia*, and back again. Euander, a *uates*-figure blessed with privileged knowledge that spans the empirical and the divine, expertly plays on the two registers, successfully integrating the natural and the supernatural aspects of his tale. By offering an aitiological account of the local topography as well as the ritual at the Ara Maxima that Aeneas’ arrival interrupted, he teaches; by entertaining the guests with a grandiose account of legendary events, he knows how to delight.

For Virgil’s readers, Euander’s narration further establishes a teleological link between Rome’s mythic past and her historical evolution. His tale of triumph and its aesthetics of the sublime are similar to a plot of cosmic conquest elaborated by Lucretius in *De rerum natura*. In describing the effects of Epicurus and his philosophy, Lucretius also opted for a ‘drama of vision’ that plays itself out through various stages of ‘ocular posturing’:<sup>24</sup>

*Humana ante oculos foede cum vita iaceret  
in terris oppressa gravi sub religione  
quae caput a caeli regionibus ostendebat  
horribili super aspectu mortalibus instans,  
primum Graius homo mortalis tollere contra  
est oculos ausus primusque obsistere contra,  
quem neque fama deum nec fulmina nec minitanti  
murmure compressit caelum, sed eo magis acrem  
irritat animi virtutem, effringere ut arta  
naturae primus portarum claustra cupiret.*

...

*quare religio pedibus subiecta vicissim  
obteritur, nos exaequat victoria caelo.*

(*De rerum natura* 1. 62-79)

[When human life lay foul for all to see  
Upon the earth, crushed by the burden of religion,  
Religion which from heaven’s firmament  
Displayed its face, its ghastly countenance,  
Lowering above mankind, the first who dared  
Raise mortal eyes against it, first to take  
His stand against it, was a man of Greece.  
He was not cowed by fables of the gods  
Or thunderbolts or heaven’s threatening roar,  
But they the more spurred on his ardent soul

Yearning to be the first to break apart  
The bolts of nature's gates and throw them open.

...

Wherefore religion in its turn is cast  
Beneath the feet of men and trampled down,  
And us his victory has made peers of heaven.]  
(trans. Melville)

The passage offers remarkable and illuminating parallels to the narrative setting of *Aeneid* 8: foul living conditions, downcast eyes, a powerless community, supernatural horrors, a Greek saviour who measures out the universe and breaks the spell of fear, a triumphant end with human heads uplifted. In Lucretius, of course, we are dealing with the private drama of philosophical enlightenment. In Virgil, the liberation of the Arcadian community takes place in a religious context and is of world-historical significance. Virgil's equivalent to Lucretius's intellect that lifts itself victoriously into heaven (*nos exaequat victoria caelo*) is the city of Rome that will conquer the world: *tecta uident, quae nunc Romana potentia caelo/aequauit, tum res inopes Euandrus habebat* (8. 99-100).

To sum up: in Virgil, we have aesthetic effects very similar to those of the Cornelis painting, a combination of the noisome and the sublime, of off-putting rot and genuine grandeur. But there is a clear sense of progress and improvement in the tale: the relief at the end is palpable. Moreover, the story has a historical dimension: a promising future beckons for Rome once the evil which haunted the site has been removed. Indeed, Virgil intimates that Rome herself is now poised to unleash gigantomachic energies, as she is ready to launch her march towards world-conquest. Beneath all the undeniable complexities, Virgil's plot is one of salvation and triumph under the aegis of supportive divinities.

### III. OVID: CADMUS AND THE DRAGON OF ARES<sup>25</sup>

Ovid's tale of Cadmus and the dragon of Ares at the opening of *Metamorphoses* 3 features a drama of sight that is as rich in visual registers and as sophisticated in its literary enactment of a psychology of perception as Virgil's tale of Hercules and Cacus. But his poetics of vision in this episode also adumbrates a view of the world that is diametrically opposed to the teleology of the *Aeneid*.

#### 1. In and out of focus

Just before the followers of Cadmus stumble into its lair, Ovid offers his readers a highly vivid account of the beast but omits any reference to its size:

*ubi conditus antro*  
*Martius anguis erat cristis praesignis et auro:*  
*igne micant oculi, corpus tumet omne ueneno,*  
*tresque micant linguae, triplici stant ordine dentes.* (Met. 3.31-4)

[Hidden in the cave  
There dwelt a snake, a snake of Mars. Its crest  
Shone gleaming gold; its eyes flashed fire; its whole  
Body was big with venom, and between  
Its triple rows of teeth its three-forked tongue  
Flickered.]<sup>26</sup>

Size, however, matters when the creature leaves its cave to attack the horror-stricken intruders. The dragon suddenly appears to be of gigantic proportions:

*ille uolubilibus squamosos nexibus orbis  
torquet et inmensos saltu sinuatur in arcus  
ac media plus parte leues erectus in auras  
despicit omne nemus tantoque est corpore, quanto,  
si totum spectes, geminas qui separat Arctos.* (Met. 3.41-5)

[Coil by scaly coil  
The serpent wound its way, and, rearing up,  
Curved in a giant arching bow, erect  
For more than half its length, high in the air.  
It glared down on the whole wide wood, as huge,  
If all its size were seen, as in the sky  
The Snake that separates the two bright Bears.]

Here Ovid wants us to believe that the dragon towers above the entire grove, is, in fact, equal in size to the astral version of the species that dwells between the Bears. Against such a creature any resistance is patently futile, and the Phoenicians quickly succumb to the beast's ferocious onslaught (Met. 3.46-9).

But how could Cadmus vanquish such a foe, even though he comes equipped with the accoutrements of Heracles, mythology's valiant slayer of gigantic ogres? Ovid makes the necessary adjustments. In the course of Cadmus's battle with the dragon, a significant downsizing of the animal takes place. After some initial difficulties, Cadmus pins the beast, who had easily outsized the entire grove only forty lines earlier, against a single oak (3.90-2). To be sure, the sturdy tree bends under the dragon's weight; but the plant would hardly have been able to sustain the burden of the stellar-sized animal that massacred Cadmus's companions.<sup>27</sup> In other words, as the narrative progresses the intimations of gigantomachy quickly fizzle out. The adventure turns into an ordinary dragon-hunt. And we, the audience, come to understand that the first impression we were given of the monster's size must have been mistaken.

What are we to make of such inconsistency? Sportive play with epic penchant for hyperbole is, of course, a hallmark of Ovidian poetics - an ingenious stratagem, repeatedly employed throughout the poem, to undercut the representation of traditional heroism. But one should not regard the - surely present - send-up of conventional epic forms as exhausting the text's meaning. Another interpretation, one more closely aligned to what actually happens in the text, suggests itself. What the hyperbole seems to capture is the distorted perception of the followers of Cadmus when they suddenly come face to face with the lethal monster. Anxiety generates delusions.<sup>28</sup> And the companions of Cadmus are absolutely paralyzed with fear when the dragon appears on the scene.<sup>29</sup> Being surprised by a monstrous foe may well distort one's point of view. From the perspective of the characters in the narrative, the hyperbolic depiction of the animal is therefore psychologically apposite.<sup>30</sup>

So in a sense, Ovid, by his use of hyperbole, assimilates his narrative to the delusory perspective of the dragon's victims. Our first impression of the animal's size is mediated through clouded eyes;

the judgment of the Cadmeans is impaired by terror and panic, as they - wrongly, as it turns out -, attribute gigantic proportions to their attacker. It is Cadmus who affords us a more realistic perspective. When he enters the scene and surveys the gruesome slaughter, he commits himself with unemotional determination to either exact his revenge or die trying. We get no intimation that Cadmus is at all impressed by the serpent's magnitude.<sup>31</sup>

## 2. Tragic visions<sup>32</sup>

Immediately after Cadmus's heroic struggle, as he gazes on the conquered foe, an anonymous voice tragically ruptures the atmosphere of epic achievement:

*dum spatium victor victi considerat hostis,  
vox subito audita est (neque erat cognoscere promptum,  
unde, sed audita est): 'quid, Agenore nate, peremptum  
serpentem spectas? et tu spectabere serpens.'* (Met. 3. 95-8)

[Then as the victor contemplates his foe,  
His vanquished foe so vast, a sudden voice  
Is heard, its source not readily discerned,  
But heard for very sure: 'Why, Cadmus, why  
Stare at the snake you've slain? You too shall be  
A snake and stared at.']

Ovid here recasts the divine epiphany that occurs at the end of Euripides's *Bacchae*, where Dionysus makes a similar announcement to Cadmus and his wife Harmonia. But he perversely inserts the closing statement of the Euripidean Dionysus, which is addressed to a Cadmus who is already well past his prime, at the very beginning of Cadmus's Theban career in the *Metamorphoses*.<sup>33</sup> The magnificent chiasmus *serpentem spectas - spectabere serpens* captures on the stylistic level the truly remarkable transformation that Cadmus will undergo from an active epic protagonist into the tragically passive object of a spectator's gaze.

Any sense of future promise and historical development is thus strikingly foreclosed for him and the city he is about to found. His fate epitomizes the principle that haunts Thebes in the imagination of Attic drama. As Froma Zeitlin has shown, tragic Thebes is forever incapable of differentiating itself from its origins.<sup>34</sup> The city is unable to shake off her heritage, her ultimate roots in the dragon of Ares. Disaster of one sort or another strikes again and again. Judging from the authoritative scripts of Athenian playwrights, daily life in ancient Thebes featured incessant civil strife, repeated autochthonic disaster, flagrant sexual perversion and the occasional human *sparagmos* - the entire spectrum of violent and gruesome catastrophes that confound the normal order of things.

The theme of civilisation rising out of bloodshed and becoming undone is crucial to tragedy; it also frames and permeates Ovid's Theban history.<sup>35</sup> As the fates of Actaeon, Semele, Narcissus, Pentheus, and Ino and Athamas show, his Theban territory has lost none of its sinister and deadly connotations. It finds its proper conclusion in Cadmus and Harmonia assuming the shape of the monster, as they bring Theban 'history' full cycle, back to its origins in the primordial beast. In other words, the view of history in Ovid's Theban narrative is diametrically opposed to the vision of progress that Virgil presents in *Aeneid* 8.

#### IV CORNELIS VAN HAARLEM: TWO FOLLOWERS OF CADMUS DEVoured BY A DRAGON

##### 1. The painting

The first impression is one of graphic, unadulterated violence. We see a dragon in the process of devouring two naked human beings. The brutality of the scene is palpable. The beast, an overwhelming juggernaut, rules the canvas. The man on whom it has settled with its murderous paws seems already dead. Crimson droplets of blood trickle down from his pale body where the atrocious claws of the animal tear deep into the skin. The second victim is still alive; thrown backwards onto the ground and half buried under the torso of his fallen comrade, he awkwardly props himself up on his right elbow and valiantly tries to ward off the animal with his bare left hand. Yet despite his well-developed physique, the effort is futile. We witness the very moment when the monster is sinking its teeth with languid yet irresistible force straight into his face.

The foreground of the painting reinforces the chilling outrage that the dragon is working on its victims. This is apparently not the first time that the beast has had its fill. Human and animal remains litter the scene, including a complete human head that is turned towards us. Its eyes are closed, but the mouth is wide open, still contorted in a scream of pain.<sup>36</sup> Grotesquely, in the badly mauled throat the gaping windpipe is fully visible - a gruesome detail that adds to the atmosphere of gratuitous carnage and lurid gloom that prevails in the painting. The visual impact of the creature as it feasts on two helpless human beings is virtually all-consuming. The ghastly cloud of colours that hovers around the beast fills out almost the entire background. There is a demonic glow to the appearance of the dragon that contrasts with the ghastly paleness of the human bodies. The menacing darkness that ensues almost seems to envelop the spectator as well: the painting seems barely able to contain the animal.

Eventually, however, the window of dim blue sky in the upper left corner redirects our attention. This vista is the only exit from the slaughter, a vanishing point that grants a temporary reprieve from the overpowering images in front. In fact, just below the horizon, barely visible in the gloomy landscape and easily overlooked, the painter has added a scene that hints at a resolution to the pictorial hymn to violence celebrated in the foreground. In the far distance, we can make out a well-dressed figure that engages the dragon in single combat. Both antagonists are much diminished in scale, but the dragon seems to have shrunk disproportionately. The hero deftly employs a long spear to keep the miniature version of the animal at bay. With his weapon poised at the serpent's throat, he is at the point of delivering the *coup de grace*; the monster, so it seems, here suffers the reckoning for the unchecked outrage it is working in the foreground.

##### 2. Ovid into art

This gruesome painting by Cornelis van Haarlem (1562-1638) illustrates the crucial sequence of events at the opening of Book 3 of the *Metamorphoses*. It recasts the unfortunate encounter between the dragon of Ares and the companions of Cadmus at their arrival in pristine Boeotia. It also hints at the sequel: Cadmus's killing of the monster in revenge for its slaughter of his followers.

A host of lovingly elaborated details reminds the viewer of Ovid's text. The scene in the foreground looks very similar to the sight that must have presented itself to Cadmus when he went

in search of his comrades. He encountered the dragon, perched above his human prey, licking the horrible wounds he had inflicted with his blood-drenched tongue.<sup>37</sup> The dragon's deadly bite is just as authentic an Ovidian touch as Cadmus's fatal blow to the animal's throat.<sup>38</sup> Moreover, the careful depiction of the dragon's vicious teeth recalls Ovid's own emphasis on the chewing equipment of his tooth-fairy: *triplici stant ordine dentes*, he says at 3.34, its teeth stood three rows deep. Both artists might have had in mind the crucial role these instruments of destruction would play later on in the narrative: they furnish the seeds of the Spartoi with whose help Cadmus founds his city.

But beyond such points of detail, a more general kinship exists between the narrative and the painting. Ovid and Cornelis employ the differing artistic devices at their disposal to create similar thematic effects. Most obviously, in his striking visual representation of the events that led up to the founding of Thebes, the artist captures the essence of what the city stands for, both in the tragic imagination and Ovid's *Thebaid*: disruptive and transgressive violence against human beings. Cornelis could have given prominence to Cadmus's *aristeia*, littering the background of his painting with the limbs of his companions. He chose not to. And his choice is true to the mythological fact that Thebes is synonymous with ferocious catastrophes. As we have seen, the untimely demise of the companions of Cadmus initiates a sequence of tragic tales, recounted in the course of *Metamorphoses* 3 and 4 that will ultimately end with the transformation of Cadmus himself and his wife Harmonia into serpents.<sup>39</sup> Quite clearly, the *anguis* as *uictor*, rather than the laudable feat of the hero, belongs in the limelight of the painting.

A similar homology between text and painting concerns their peculiar merging of linear and circular time. The two scenes in the fore- and the background of Cornelis' canvas suggest development and progress, the chronological evolution of plot in Ovid's narrative. But the odd disproportion and the overpowering images up front arrest any sense of temporal progression. The painting all but compels the viewers to revisit the image that dominates the foreground, suspending, as it were, any sense of future through an overwhelming presence. Thus understood, it becomes emblematic of a universal truth about the city: its origins in violence that can never be fully exorcised. The conquest of the dragon takes place in the background and is, at any rate, only an insignificant and momentary respite from future outrage.<sup>40</sup>

Much like Ovid's narrative, Cornelis' painting illustrates the inability of the city to differentiate itself from its origins. The making of Thebes begins with the undoing of Cadmus's companions by the dragon; its death furnishes the seeds for the city's foundation. But, as we have seen, tragic Thebes can never shake off her heritage, her initial roots in the dragon of Ares. At Thebes, the future cannot begin. The spectre of the primordial monster continues to hold sway, remorselessly returning civilization to its origins in the beast.

### 3. Illustrating Revelation

Viewing the Cornelis as an illustration of Ovid's Theban history yields a rich and coherent interpretation. But something else is going on in the painting. It so happens that *Two Followers* comes with a companion-piece that depicts the 'Fall of Lucifer' as recounted in *Revelations* 12.7-10:

12. 7 And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels;  
 8 And prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven.  
 9 And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.  
 10 And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ...<sup>41</sup>

The two paintings were done in the same year and ended up with the same patron (Jacob Rauwert, a friend of Cornelis and Goltzius). They also elicited joint commentary from a contemporary connoisseur, Karel van Mander:<sup>42</sup>

When he [sc. Cornelis] was at the height of his studies he made a *Brazen Serpent* ('Serpent-bijtinghe'), lengthways on a large canvas and another large upright canvas with a *Fall of Lucifer*. Jacob Ravart in Amsterdam had these two pieces of his. .. In relation to these two I cannot sufficiently express what excellent observation is achieved in all the various poses of the nudes, and it is a pity that such works are not to be seen in a public place for during that period he paid very close attention to the art of drawing, good arrangement, proportions and other elements.

Pieter van Thiel, the author of the most recent monograph and catalogue raisonné on Cornelis offers the following comment on van Mander's use of 'Serpent-bijtinghe':<sup>43</sup>

Miedema translates 'Serpent-bijtinghe' as 'Brazen Serpent', as Van Mander usually used that title to refer to the biblical subject, as appears (to name just one example) from his title of the right wing of the triptych by Cornelis Engebrechtsz in Leiden. In this case, however, he must have been referring to the *Cadmus* painting.

The *Fall of Lucifer* was long believed to have been lost; but recently, Pieter van Thiel has made a convincing case, based on iconographic material and formal evidence, that it should be identified with a canvas in Copenhagen, which he had previously thought to depict a titanomachy [figure 3 - *overleaf*]. For a non-expert, the reasons he adduces sound persuasive.<sup>44</sup> Whether or not this canvas is the one that Cornelis intended as complement to *Two Followers* is, at any rate, not essential to my argument. The fact remains that Cornelis carried out two paintings for the same patron in the same year, one depicting an overpowering and victorious dragon from the *Metamorphoses*, the other illustrating the passage from the Bible in which Satan, referred to as a dragon, and his host are being thrown out of Heaven. It is difficult to believe that he did so accidentally, quite apart from the neat philological detail that Van Mander seems to have used the Dutch word for Satan, the Judeo-Christian Serpent, with reference to the *Cadmus*-painting.<sup>45</sup>

Juxtaposed, the two paintings thus neatly epitomize the four main 'forces' that make up the western cultural tradition. Let me be quick and to the point: if one were to impose a genealogical stemma upon the shifting kaleidoscope of discourses and practices that is human history, the western cultural tradition would run back to four primary sources of origin. On the one hand, there is the heritage of Judaism and Christianity; on the other the legacy of ancient Greece and Rome. The former finds its most influential articulation in the Old and New Testament of the Bible. The latter lacks any such central text. Yet if a single work from pagan antiquity had to be placed next to the Holy Scriptures of the Jews and the Christians, it would have to be Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. Homer might be the Bible of the Greeks, but the *Metamorphoses* is the Bible of paganism for the art and literature of the western tradition.<sup>46</sup> Much like Christianity, which fashioned something new out of



*Figure 3:*

Cornelis van Haarlem, *The Fall of the Titans*.

Statens Museum for Kunst, Copenhagen.

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the religious vision of Judaism, the *Metamorphoses* modified and changed, but also codified and preserved the initial Greek way of making sense of the world: myth.

However, or, rather, moreover, the outlook of the Bible and the outlook of the *Metamorphoses* complement each other like ying and yang, tweedle-dum and tweedle-dee: the one offers an ‘official’ narrative, which promises (the re-establishment of) order, justice, and salvation; the other delights in fluid subversion, lapses into chaos, the triumph of the beast. The figure of the dragon is ideally suited to explore these oppositions. Symbol of evil in the Bible and the creature of natural creation in Greek myth, the dragon combines the metaphysical with the metamorphic. Encounters with dragons evoke both primeval creation and later gigantomachies (original creation on a somewhat reduced scale). To engage the dragon in art and literature tends to involve a struggle over the definition of the universe, of good *versus* evil and creation *versus* destruction. As Watkins puts it: ‘The dragon symbolizes finally everywhere the chaos of destruction, the threat to life and property, the ravager of man and beast, which we find formulaically expressed ... in a variety of traditions throughout the Indo-European world.’<sup>47</sup>

The two signature voices that conclude the conquest of the beast in the Bible and the *Metamorphoses* define for us two opposite ways in which these tensions may play themselves out in time, either as a triumphant teleology or a cyclical return to the origins:

And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom  
of our God, and the power of his Christ...  
(*Revelations* 12.10)

Then as the victor contemplates his foe,  
His vanquished foe so vast, a sudden voice  
Is heard, its source not readily discerned,  
But heard for very sure: ‘Why, Cadmus, why  
Stare at the snake you’ve slain? You too shall be  
A snake and stared at.’  
(*Met.* 3. 95-8)

With this announcement, Ovid implodes the neat table of opposites on which an affirmative view of cosmic order and human civilization is based: if we cannot distinguish between Cadmus and the Dragon, between Christ and Satan—or if such distinctions can only be upheld temporarily, through tremendous efforts of prescribed futility—, then the world we live in is a rather inhospitable place. Even worse, we humans turn into rather problematic beings since the violence that primordial acts of creation both presuppose and try to exorcise resides within ourselves, is part of us, constantly poised to raise its ugly head again in apocalyptic destruction and new forms of atrocity. In Ovid’s tale of Cadmus and the dragon we find articulated a view of things that Sigmund Freud encapsulated in the formula of ‘civilization and its discontent’, just as the Fall of Lucifer in *Revelations* enacts the promise of an ultimate salvation that would move us beyond such ‘rank ambiguity’. By illustrating both the *Metamorphoses* and *Revelations*, Cornelis pointedly juxtaposes, and to some degree conflates, the two masterplots of Western civilization.

## V. GOLTZIUS

I want to conclude with a look at Goltzius’s *Hercules and Cacus*, which, in intriguing ways, complements the Cornelis-painting. Goltzius must have engaged with *Two Followers* in detail, given that he produced a mirror-reversed woodcut of it. He must also have been aware of the fact that his

co-artist did not simply set out to illustrate Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. He himself later represented the opening of *Metamorphoses* 3 in art, as part of a new illustrated edition of the poem. The three woodcuts he devoted to the Cadmus-story differ drastically from Cornelis's interpretation of the event. All three woodcuts stick very closely to Ovid's narrative; there is not even a whiff of the transgressive elements that dominate the Cornelis painting, with its adumbration of the metaphysical, and its enactment of the gruesome and the sublime.<sup>48</sup>

Significantly, apart from illustrating a 'classical' source, Goltzius's woodcut contains an intriguing interfigurality with a Christian painting as well: his Cacus not only 'cites' Cornelis's follower of Cadmus, but also 'bears a striking resemblance to the figure in the foreground of a drawing by Dirck Barendsz., "Fall of the Rebel Angels," in Windsor Castle.'<sup>49</sup> The paintings of all three artists, then, feature a figure in the same posture of defeat: a companion of Cadmus in the case of Cornelis; a member of the host of the rebel angels in Barendsz; and Cacus in Goltzius. Yet the identity of the victims strikingly differs: Barendsz and Goltzius illustrate the conquest of evil; Cornelis the triumph of the beast.

If we are indeed dealing with a deliberate allusion by Goltzius to Barendsz's painting, the artist, in his rendition of the pagan myth, seems to have been intent on endowing it with a Christian meaning. As in the two Cornelis paintings, the Judeo-Christian and the Greco-Roman cultural horizons intermingle. But whereas the two canvases of Cornelis offered alternative visions of the world, the interfiguralities of Goltzius operate in unison: the triumph of *Hercules over Cacus* is, from the point of view of plot, exactly analogous to the victory of the archangel Michael over Satan. The 'Christian allusion' in the woodcut reinforces the stark contrast between his Hercules and Cacus and Cornelis's *Two Followers*. Goltzius, in other words, perceptively strengthens the antinomy between the narrative outlook of Virgil's *Aeneid* and Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, by aligning the former with the grand plot of Christian salvation.

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## NOTES

- \* I am very grateful to the Classics Department of King's College London for a small research grant that facilitated publication of this lecture.
- <sup>1</sup> J. Drury, *Painting the Word. Christian Pictures and their Meaning* (New Haven and London, 1999) ix-x.
- <sup>2</sup> N. Spivey, *Enduring Creation. Art, Pain and Fortitude* (London, 2001) 28.
- <sup>3</sup> See e.g. G. Finaldi et al. *The Image of Christ. The catalogue of the exhibition SEEING SALVATION* (London, 2000). Some of the more extreme documents that merge sadistic violence with the promise of salvation, such as the *Vie de Sainte Marguerite of Wace*, mid 12th-century, which recounts the torture and execution of St. Marguerite, are discussed by H. R. Jauss, 'Die klassische und die christliche Rechtfertigung des Hässlichen in mittelalterlicher Literatur', in: *Die nicht mehr schönen Künste* (Munich, 1968), 143-68. For our purposes, we may note that such texts tend to put a lot of emphasis on sight insofar as they try to visualize the transcendent glory that attaches to the ultimate commitment of Christian martyrdom. Thus, at the most gruesome moment in the *Life of St. Marguerite*, even Olimbrius and the other pagan torturers need to avert their eyes (not realizing that the human body counts for nothing), whereas Christian onlookers, privy to this insight, remain unaffected by even the greatest forms of atrocity. In all, we are dealing with an 'ontological split': whereas pagans partake only in empirical reality, Christians have access to a transcendent world, in which ostensibly pernicious events acquire a sublime quality. Prudentius' *Hymn to St. Lawrence*, the saint famous for having been roasted to death on a gridiron, enacts this ontological split through the sense of smell: whereas the pagans are assaulted by the stench of human flesh being burnt, Christians savour the scent of ambrosia in vicarious anticipation of St Lawrence's ascent to an eternal life in Heaven.
- <sup>4</sup> Cornelis was fond of mythical and biblical *sujets* that enabled him to depict bodies in 'extreme' situations. See e.g. his series of figures caught in a moment of free fall (Phaethon, Icarus), his *Slaughter of the Innocent*, or his *Fall of the Rebel Angels* (for which see below).

- <sup>5</sup> J. Dunkerton, S. Foister, and N. Penny, *Dürer to Veronese. Sixteenth-Century Painting in The National Gallery* (New Haven and London, 1999) 2.
- <sup>6</sup> The two (and other) levels are not distinct: Drury, for instance, brilliantly illustrates how, by familiarizing oneself with the Christian presuppositions of the Raphael, a 'naive' response of bafflement and revulsion may in time give way to a more nuanced (but, perhaps, also less immediate) understanding and appreciation of the artwork.
- <sup>7</sup> See J. L. McGee, *Cornelis Corneliszoon van Haarlem (1562 - 1638). Patrons, Friends and Dutch Mannerism* (Nieuwkoop, 1991) (= *Bibliotheca Humanistica & Reformatorica*, vol. XLVIII): 53 and 77 (on the 'close working relationship among Cornelis van Haarlem, Goltzius and van Mander' as well as 'the frequent exchange of ideas and styles').
- <sup>8</sup> See P. J. J. van Thiel, *Cornelis Cornelisz van Haarlem, 1562-1638: a monograph and catalogue raisonné*, translated from the Dutch by Diane L. Webb (Ghent, 1999) 340-41; W. L. Strauss (ed.) *Hendrik Goltzius. Complete Engravings, Etchings, Woodcuts* (New York, 1977) 696. In the same year, Goltzius also executed an engraving of Cornelis' painting.
- <sup>9</sup> It is, of course, possible that Goltzius also knew, and alluded to, Ovid's version of the Hercules and Cacus myth in *Fasti* 1.543-86. In fact, in many ways (but not all), Ovid's account of the fight corresponds closer to the painting. In Virgil, Hercules strangles the monster to death. In Ovid, the fight ends with Hercules smashing his triple-knotted club several times into the ogre's face (see *Fasti* 1. 569-78). Obviously, though, there are also artistic considerations to be taken into account: the use of the club allows Goltzius to depict Hercules at just the *kairos* when every muscle in his body would be tensed for maximum effect.
- <sup>10</sup> P. R. Hardie, 'Ovid's Theban History: The First Anti-*Aeneid*?', *CQ* 40 (1990) 224-35.
- <sup>11</sup> J. Assmann, *Das kulturelle Gedächtnis. Schrift, Erinnerung und politische Identität in frühen Hochkulturen* (Munich, <sup>2</sup>1997) 102 and 280-92.
- <sup>12</sup> The immense body of critical literature on this episode, especially its political implications, is deftly sorted, critiqued, and transcended by L. Morgan, 'Assimilation and civil war: Hercules and Cacus', in: H.-P. Stahl (ed.) *Virgil's Aeneid. Augustan epic and political context* (London, 1998) 175-97.
- <sup>13</sup> Throughout, I give Dryden's translation of the *Aeneid*.
- <sup>14</sup> Looking the enemy straight into the eyes is the most elemental articulation of courage. In *Iliad* 17.166-68, for instance, Glaucus specifically reproaches Hektor for not daring to face up to Ajax.
- <sup>15</sup> Hercules, too, is described with this adjective: *spoliisque superbus/ Alcides aderat* (8. 202-3).
- <sup>16</sup> See *Aen.* 8. 99-100: *.. tecta uident, quae nunc Romana potentia caelo/ aequauit, tum res inopes Euandrus habebat* and the description of the shield of Aeneas that concludes the book (8. 626-731).
- <sup>17</sup> The most striking instance of such 'imbrication' I know of occurs in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* 2, in the wake of Apollo's rather rash execution of his pregnant, yet unfaithful beloved Coronis. After the dying girl has informed the god of his pending fatherhood, the divine patron of healing engages in a vigorous, yet futile attempt to revive her. It is only when Coronis is about to be burned on a pyre that he snatches away her unborn child, the future god Aesculapius. Divine and human actions in this episode run parallel, but are at the same time utterly out of sink. As a result, the corpse of Coronis seems to exist in two different worlds. On the one hand, Apollo closely attends to it, trying to bring it back to life; on the other, it undergoes funeral rites carried out by some anonymous mortals. The divine and the human handling of the body are clearly incompatible, but are nevertheless conflated. The god is forced to react to whatever happens in the human sphere, whereas his own exertions are clearly invisible to whoever puts Coronis on the pyre. To be sure, the passage is an extreme instance of 'ontological imbrication', designed, primarily, to show up the foolishness and ineffectuality of Apollo. But it may help to bring the artistic design of the Virgil-passage into sharper focus.
- <sup>18</sup> E. V. George, *Aeneid VIII and the Aitia of Callimachus* (Leiden, 1974) 51.
- <sup>19</sup> For the gigantomachic associations of the fight between Hercules and Cacus, see P. R. Hardie, *Virgil's Aeneid. Cosmos and Imperium* (Oxford, 1986) 110-118.
- <sup>20</sup> While Longinus does not approve of it, (representation of) the gruesome and disgusting can trigger powerful physiological responses in the audience, and hence form effective registers of literary communication. Applied in measure, they may spice a text with that element of the sensationally revolting which plays on the paradoxical curiosity that attracts us to sights we would ordinarily find sickening in the extreme. In epic, of course, generic conventions restricted poetic license in this respect rather drastically, though Virgil here gives us a taste of what was to come: his successors expanded the epic code in this area with evident relish. See M. Fuhrmann, 'Die Funktion grausiger und ekelhafter Motive in der lateinischen Dichtung', in H. R. Jauss (ed.), *Die nicht mehr schönen Künste*, (note 3, above) 23-66.
- <sup>21</sup> Hom. *Iliad* 20.61-65, for which see the Ps.-Longinus passage quoted above.
- <sup>22</sup> The text contains sudden leaps in time, striking omissions, abrupt shifts in focus: cf. *On the Sublime*, chap. 35.
- <sup>23</sup> Cf. Quint. 6. 2. 29: *quas phantasias Graeci vocant, nos sane visiones appellemus, per quas imagines rerum absentium ita repraesentantur animo ut eas cernere oculis ac praesentes habere videamur*.
- <sup>24</sup> See G. B. Conte, 'Instructions for a Sublime Reader: Form of the Text and Form of the Addressee in Lucretius's *De rerum natura*', in: *Genre and Readers. Lucretius, Love Elegy, Pliny's Encyclopedia* (Baltimore and London, 1994) 1-34.

- <sup>25</sup> The material in this section is part of work-in-progress on Ovid's *Metamorphoses* in which I collaborate with Andrew Zissos.
- <sup>26</sup> Translations of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* are taken from A. D. Melville, *Ovid, Metamorphoses* (Oxford 1986)
- <sup>27</sup> Cf. *Met.* 3.93-4: *pondere serpentis curuata est arbor et imae/ parte flagellari gemuit sua robora caudae.*
- <sup>28</sup> Cf. Lysias 2.39 on the mindset of the Greeks before the battle of Salamis: 'Certainly the fear that was upon them must have made them believe that they saw many things which they saw not, and heard many that they did not hear.'
- <sup>29</sup> Cf. *Met.* 3.39-40: *effluxere urnae manibus, sanguisque relinquit/ corpus et attonitos subitus tremor occupat artus.*
- <sup>30</sup> Interestingly, Ovid implicates his audience in the mental state of the animal's victims. His apostrophe in line 45 (*si totum spectes*) exhorts you and me with pointed immediacy to survey his leviathan. This produces the calculated effect of drawing us into the narrative. And like the companions of Cadmus, we would have difficulties fitting the dragon into our frame of vision. The author here plays with our capacity for visualising the phantastic, a sly ploy to see whether our imaginative abilities are up to his penchant for extravagant exaggerations.
- <sup>31</sup> It bears mention that Ovid explicitly singles out Cadmus's courage as the most useful weapon in his encounter with the dragon (3.54: *teloque animus praestantior omni*); a fearless hero, unlike his companions, is not susceptible to disadvantaging himself by mistakenly exaggerating the size of his antagonist.
- <sup>32</sup> This section draws on I. Gildenhard and A. Zissos, 'Somatic Economies - Tragic Bodies and Poetic Design in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*', in: P. Hardie, A. Barchiesi and S. Hinds (eds.), *Ovidian Transformations. Essays on Ovid's Metamorphoses and its Reception*, (Cambridge, 1999) 162-81.
- <sup>33</sup> It is uncertain who speaks the Ovidian lines. There might be a whiff of Aius Locutius in the air, that peculiar Roman deity that consists of a voice. If that is the case, the lines contain an additional cross-cultural point. Aius Locutius, in Rome, utters prophetic warnings, never iron-clad predictions: there is always a margin of contingency in place that allows the community to make amends, restitute the *pax deorum*, and avoid disaster. This is clearly not an option for Cadmus.
- <sup>34</sup> F. I. Zeitlin, 'Theater of Self and Society in Athenian Drama', in: J. J. Winkler and F. I. Zeitlin (eds.), *Nothing to do with Dionysos?* (Princeton, 1990) 130-67.
- <sup>35</sup> See P. R. Hardie, *CQ* 40 (1990) 224-35.
- <sup>36</sup> Potentially, this head belongs to the first of the dragon's two victims; it is difficult, however, to come up with a coherent sequence of events that could account for its location.
- <sup>37</sup> Cf. *Met.* 3.55-7: *ut nemus intrauit letataque corpora uidit/ uictoremque supra spatiosi corporis hostem/ tristia sanguinea lambentem uulnera lingua.*
- <sup>38</sup> Cf. 3.48-9: *hos morsu ... necat*; and 3.90-1: *donec Agenorides coniectum in gutture ferrum/ usque sequens pressit... .*
- <sup>39</sup> *Met.* 4.563-603.
- <sup>40</sup> There is another potential allusion to a future event: the head in the foreground is reminiscent of the 'torn-off head' of Pentheus (see *Met.* 3.727: *auulsumque caput*) that his mother Agave is brandishing in noxious triumph at the end of book 3. In Thebes, the future is always a re-enactment of the past, a return to the founding myth, a renewed grounding of Thebes in its violent origins.
- <sup>41</sup> See also 11.7: And when they shall have finished their testimony, the beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit shall make war against them, and shall overcome them, and kill them.
- <sup>42</sup> Van Mander, *Schilder-boeck*, fol. 293r, in the English translation by Hessel Miedema (1994-1999), vol. I, 430.
- <sup>43</sup> Pieter J. J. van Thiel, *Cornelis Cornelisz van Haarlem 1562 - 1638. A Monograph and Catalogue Raisonné*, translated from the Dutch by Diane L. Webb (Ghent, 1999) 341.
- <sup>44</sup> See van Thiel 326.
- <sup>45</sup> van Thiel 341, n. 3 gives the following linguistic explanation for his choice of words: 'The first meaning of "serpent" was snake. In his elucidation of the Cadmus legend (Wtlegg., fol. 22r), Van Mander consequently talks not of a "serpent" but a "draeck" (dragon). In combination with "bijtinghe" (biting), dragon would have produced "draeck-bijtinghe", which nonexistent word would have sounded strange to Van Mander. "Serpent-bijtinghe", on the other hand, had a familiar ring to it and characterized the depiction perfectly.' This argument seems to rest on the strange premise that Van Mander somehow had to use a combination of words that included 'bijtinghe'. But surely he could have described the painting in several other ways without recourse to the charged phrase 'serpent-bijtinghe'.
- <sup>46</sup> A case forcefully argued by L. Barkan, *The Gods made flesh. Metamorphosis & the pursuit of paganism* (New Haven and London, 1986).
- <sup>47</sup> C. Watkins, *How to kill a dragon. Aspects of Indo-European poetics* (Oxford, 1995) 300.
- <sup>48</sup> Years later, in 1613, Goltzius returned to the tale of Hercules and Cacus. The painting, commissioned by a Haarlem lawyer and now on display in the Frans Hals Museum, Haarlem, depicts the immediate aftermath of the fight and is perfectly innocuous.
- <sup>49</sup> W. L. Strauss (ed.) *Hendrik Goltzius. Complete Engravings, Etchings Woodcuts* (New York, 1977) 696.

# Vergili opera? Dido and cultural crisis in 1689.<sup>1</sup>

*A paper given to the Virgil Society on 19 January 2002*

This article is concerned with the opera (or mini-opera) *Dido and Aeneas*, composed by Henry Purcell and Nahum Tate and first performed (to the very best of our knowledge) in 1689-by no means a neglected corner of the Virgilian tradition. But what I hope to achieve in this discussion is a better understanding of the opera's relation to the momentous historical circumstances which surrounded its première, in simple terms the Glorious Revolution of 1688, which replaced the Catholic James II of Great Britain and Ireland with the Protestant joint monarchy of William and Mary.

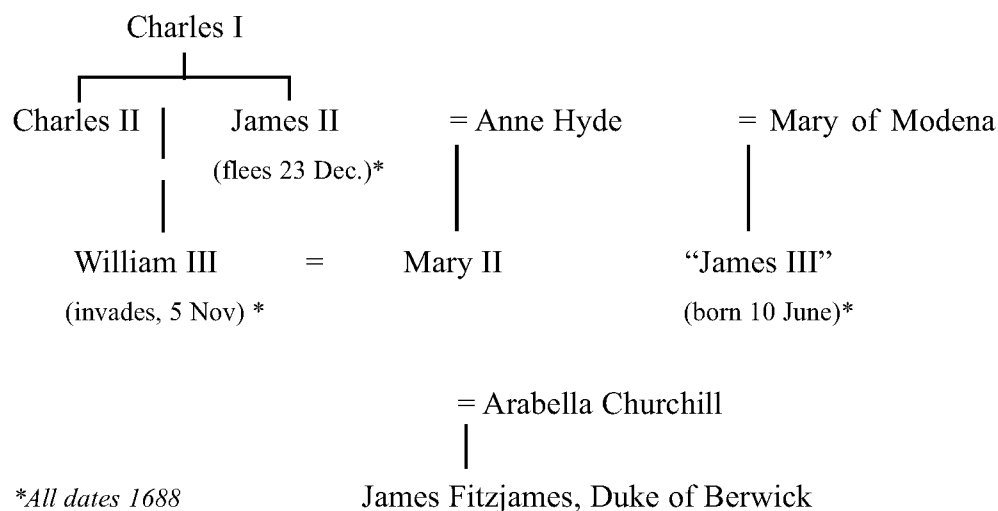
In tackling this topic I confront immediately a large weight of scholarly writing on *Dido and Aeneas*, particularly dense around the tercentenary of Purcell's death in 1995, which has focused on two main issues: the dating of the opera and its political significance. The one has implications for the other, and I shall begin by describing my own position on dating, but the emphasis of this paper will be on the political dimension of the work. My ultimate conclusion will actually be that the politics of *Dido and Aeneas* are much more elusive than most contributors to the debate have appreciated. What unites the various political readings of *Dido and Aeneas* is a conviction that the work is *designed*, at an authorial level, to communicate a political message. What I now appreciate is that *Dido and Aeneas*, whilst bursting with political significance, had only limited control over its meaning. Rather than setting out to say something, the truth is rather that this presentation of the Dido myth was being made to say things, often fundamentally contradictory things, by the events beyond its control which surrounded it. *Dido and Aeneas* communicates despite itself, and any authorial contribution to the political dimension of the piece is typically restricted to rather cack-handed attempts to neutralize its political charge; and I want to suggest that this tells us interesting things about the status of high-cultural artefacts like *Dido and Aeneas* at this particular

historical juncture.

Dating the original performance is a complex task, but in simple terms it amounts to this. We know that *Dido and Aeneas* was performed at a girls' school in Chelsea run by Frances Priest and her husband Josias (or Josiah), a noted dancer and choreographer whose interests were amply represented in the performance. We can also date this production to the spring or summer of 1689. That much nobody disputes. What has been suggested, however, is that this was not the first performance, and that *Dido and Aeneas* had been performed at an earlier date at Court. Now there is no evidence of such a performance at Court, and I think it can be established quite satisfactorily that no such performance ever took place. But what is also clear is that *Dido and Aeneas* is in its fundamental conception a 'courtly' kind of work, very much the kind of thing which would have entertained the Stuart kings, just as another mini-opera, John Blow's *Venus and Adonis*, the model for *Dido and Aeneas*, was performed at Court before it was also performed at the Priests' school in 1684, as the libretto of the school performance (recently rediscovered) proudly testifies.<sup>2</sup> It will at any rate be assumed in what follows that the 1689 performance at the Priests' school was the première. But that does not alter the *strangeness* of the fact. *Dido and Aeneas* is fundamentally-in its staging, casting and vocal requirements, not to mention its authorship (Tate and Purcell would not normally be commissioned by a school)-a work designed for professional performance at Court, and we may suspect that at some early stage of its genesis this was indeed its intended destination. If there was no such Court performance, as I firmly believe, a ready explanation is to be found in the overthrow of the Stuart court which had just occurred. To this crucial contextual information we now turn; but that initial hint of a mismatch between text (a courtly opera) and performance context (a girls' school) will with luck emerge as far from the only awkward element of the first performance of *Dido and Aeneas*.

But before that I shall provide some background information, divided into three parts: first an outline, necessarily simplistic, of the Glorious Revolution; then some more information about the Priests' school at Chelsea; and finally some general thoughts on the composition and form of this version of the Dido myth.

Stated very simply, the Revolution of 1688 was the product of English concerns regarding the intentions of the reigning king James II. A Catholic, James had by various means managed to alienate a country which at his accession in 1685 had seemed reasonably, perhaps surprisingly, comfortable with the idea of an openly Catholic monarch. But it took very little to activate deep-seated English fears of Catholicism, absolutism and France, conveniently embodied as they all were in the dominant and daunting figure of Louis XIV just across the channel. Suspicion and paranoia-not entirely without foundation given James' friendly relations with Louis and recent events in France like the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes-were the hallmarks of this revolution. Events were brought to a head, at any rate, by the birth of a son to James in June 1688. Hitherto the heir apparent had been Mary, James' *Protestant* daughter, but the birth of James, the 'Old Pretender' as he would come to be known, raised the strong possibility of the persistence of Catholic rule: a Catholic dynasty. Amid rumours that the child was no child of the Queen at all but a changeling, Mary's husband William of Orange landed at Torbay in November 1688 and rapidly and relatively peacefully secured control of the country. James escaped to France, but whilst the revolution in England had been effectively bloodless, in Ireland things were to turn out very differently. There the Catholic majority rose in support of James, to be defeated by William's forces at the battles of the Boyne in 1690 and Aughrim in 1691, names which still, sadly, resonate. The Irish dimension to these events will concern us later, but I provide a royal family tree to clarify the situation:



To illustrate the motives that drove the coup against James, here also is a specimen of the kind of rhetoric the Revolution generated, this from John Locke, philosopher, Whig and fierce opponent of the deposed king:

Every one, and that with reason, begins our delivery from popery and slavery from the arrival of the prince of Orange and the compleating of it is, by all that wish well to him and it, dated from King William's settlement in the throne. This is the fence set up against popery and France, for King James's name, however made use of, can be but a stale [i.e. a rung of a ladder] to these two. If ever he returne, under what pretences soever, Jesuits must governe and France be our master. He is too much wedded to the one and relyes too much on the other ever to part with either. He that has ventured and lost three crowns for his blinde obedience to those guides of his conscience and for his following the counsels and pattern of the French King cannot be hoped, after the provocations he has had to heighten his naturall aversion, should ever returne with calme thoughts and good intentions to Englishmen, their libertys, and religion. (Bodleian MS Locke e. 18, fo. 1)<sup>3</sup>

The document from which this passage is taken is a sketch for a possible pamphlet which John Locke sent, probably in April 1690, to his friend the Whig MP Edward Clarke, whom we shall meet again in another context. Note in particular the implied synonymity of 'popery' and 'slavery' (i.e. absolutism) and 'popery' and 'France', James' perceived proximity to Louis XIV, and the paranoia evident even in the writing of a reasonable man like John Locke.

We shall see an attempt being made in the course of the performance of *Dido and Aeneas* to put distance between these tumultuous contemporary events and the school at which it was staged. What made that possible above all was the school's location. It stood above the Thames in Chelsea,<sup>4</sup> and consequently at a remove from the bright lights and dubious morality of London, or this at any rate was how it could be presented. *Dido and Aeneas* stands at the beginning of a long collaboration between the owner of the school, Josias Priest (though his wife Frances seems to have been the guiding force in its management) and Purcell.<sup>5</sup> The institution itself, like other schools of its kind, was essentially designed to prepare its charges for marriage. Upper-class girls ('Young Gentlewomen' according to the libretto of *Dido and Aeneas*) were sent there to gain that finish which would ultimately catch them a good husband. Here, for example, is Sir Edmund Verney writing to his daughter Molly, a pupil at the school:

I find you have a desire to learn to Jappan, as you call it, and I approve of it; and so I shall of any thing that is Good and Virtuous, therefore learn in God's name all Good Things, & I will willingly be at the Charge so farr as I am able-tho' They come from Japan & from never so farr and Looke of an Indian Hue and Odour, for I admire all accomplishments that will render you considerable & Lovely in the sight of God and man...<sup>6</sup>

Decorative, non-practical accomplishments like dancing and singing-and japanning (lacquering) - made up the curriculum. Performances along similar lines to *Dido and Aeneas* (though perhaps not generally so ambitious) would seem to have been fairly regular.<sup>7</sup>

The opera itself brought together some of the foremost dramatic artists of the day, Purcell most obviously. But Priest himself, as we have mentioned, was a leading choreographer. The author of the libretto, Nahum Tate, is now notorious for his version of *King Lear* with a happy ending and his *magnum opus* entitled *Panacea-a poem on Tea*, but he was generally respected in his day (though not by Pope) and became Poet Laureate in 1692, if that post had any status after Dryden's dismissal from it at the Revolution. The plot is based, as its title suggests, on Books 1 and 4 of the *Aeneid*: thus Dido and Aeneas confess their mutual love in Act 1, they hunt and Aeneas is ordered to depart from Carthage in Act 2, and in Act 3 there are unfriendly exchanges between Dido and Aeneas, Aeneas leaves and Dido dies. The major difference between Virgil's and Tate's accounts lies in the causation of Aeneas's departure and Dido's death, and in the moral status of the protagonists. In the *Aeneid* the hero's departure is of course motivated by Mercury, sent by Jupiter to remind him of his obligations. In *Dido and Aeneas* the job is done by a malicious sorceress who dispatches her 'trusty Elf/ In Form of Mercury himself/ As sent from Jove' to 'chide his stay,/ And Charge him Sail to Night with all his Fleet away.'

The effect of this change on the meaning of the story is rather dramatic, since it renders the critical moment of moral enlightenment in *Aeneid* 4 a sham, and a sham perpetrated by malign forces. The implications of the difference can be brought out by comparison with an earlier stab by Nahum Tate at the Dido myth, the play *Brutus of Alba* of 1678, which Tate himself admits in his preface was closely based on Virgil's Dido.<sup>8</sup> In both Tate versions a central part is played by wicked sorceresses. In *Brutus* the sorceress Ragusa directs her malign energy towards encouraging the love-affair between Brutus and the Dido-figure, the Queen of Syracuse. Brutus eventually extricates himself from this affair and sails off to found Britain, as destined. In other words this is essentially the same scheme as in the *Aeneid*: the hero is distracted from his destiny by a supernatural conspiracy promoting a love affair, but ultimately comes to his senses and continues on his allotted way. In *Dido and Aeneas*, on the other hand, the sorceress doesn't use her magic to *cause* the love-affair but rather to send her elf to *end* the love-affair and hasten Aeneas on his way to Italy. In short, whereas in *Brutus* malign forces delay the mission, in *Dido* they expedite it. The effect in *Dido* is inevitably to undermine the value of Aeneas' mission and our sense of the force and value of the imperative to leave Carthage which he obeys.

Our respect for that mission is further undercut in the final scenes of the opera. If in the *Aeneid* the self-discipline and moral backbone is all Aeneas', and a lack of self-control is what characterizes Dido (in ways all too easy to analyse in terms of gender stereotypes), in *Dido and Aeneas* the roles are again reversed. Once she has learnt of Aeneas' decision to leave Dido is heroically resolved that he must go, but Aeneas starts to vacillate:

*Aen.* What shall lost *Aeneas* do?  
 How, Royal fair, shall I impart  
 The Gods' decree and tell you, we must part?

*Dido* Thus on the fatal Banks of *Nile*  
 weeps the deceitful Crocodile.  
 Thus Hypocrites that Murder Act  
 Make Heaven and Gods the Authors of the Fact.

*Aen.* By all that's good -

*Dido* By all that's good no more:  
 All that's good you have Forsworn.  
 To your promised Empire fly,  
 And let forsaken *Dido* dye.

*Aen.* In spite of *Jove's* Command I stay,  
 Offend the Gods and Love obey.

*Dido* No, faithless Man, thy course pursue:  
 I'm now resolved as well as you.  
 No Repentance shall reclaim  
 The Injured *Dido's* slighted Flame.  
 For 'tis enough, what e're you now decree,  
 That you had once a thought of leaving me.

*Aen.* Let *Jove* say what he will, I'll stay.

*Dido* Away [Exit *Aen.*

Dido then dies, delivering the famous, noble lament to her confidante Belinda, 'When I am laid in Earth/ May my wrongs Create/ No troubles in thy Breast./ Remember me, but ah! forget my Fate.' *Dido and Aeneas* thus embodies a radical inversion of the Virgilian scheme.

There are other, more minor divergences, which I shall attempt to make something of later. But to round off this brief account of the shape of the opera, I need to mention two elements of the original piece which are rarely, if ever, included in contemporary productions. These are the prologue and epilogue. The prologue, originally sung (but the music has been lost), is a dramatic allegory of the arrival of spring. Phoebus the sun rises and pays court to Spring with the assistance of Venus. There have been attempts to find in this prologue a further, allegorical dimension, to read it as a celebration of the accession of William and Mary,<sup>9</sup> or allusions to peculiar climatic conditions obtaining in the spring of 1684,<sup>10</sup> but they have not been convincing: it is no more nor less than an allegory of spring. However if the prologue has little to say about contemporary events, the epilogue is a rather different matter:

All that we know the Angels do above,  
 I've read, is that they sing and that they love,  
 The vocal part we have tonight perform'd  
 And if by Love our hearts not yet are warm'd  
 Great Providence has still more bounteous been  
 To save us from those grand deceivers, men.  
 Here blest with innocence, and peace of mind,  
 Not only bred to virtue, but inclin'd,  
 We flourish and defy all human kind.  
 Art's curious garden thus we learn to know,  
 And here secure from nipping blasts we grow.

Let the vain fop range o'er yon vile lewd town,  
 Learn play-house wit, and vow 'tis all his own;  
 Let him cock, huff, strut, ogle, lie, and swear,  
 How he's admired by such and such a player;  
 All's one to us, his charms have here no power,  
 Our hearts have just the temper as before;  
 Besides, to shew we live with strictest rules,  
 Our nunnery-door is charm'd to shut out fools;  
 No love-toy here can pass to private view,  
 Nor China orange cramm'd with billet doux,  
 Rome may allow strange tricks to please her sons,  
 But we are Protestants and English nuns;  
 Like nimble fawns, and birds that bless the spring  
 Unscarr'd by turning times we dance and sing;  
 We hope to please, but if some critic here  
 Fond of his wit, designs to be severe,  
 Let not his patience be worn out too soon;  
 In a few years we shall all be in tune.

This was composed not by Nahum Tate but by another contemporary literary figure, Tom D'Urfey, a popular playwright and songwriter who achieved the difficult task of remaining, as the *Oxford History of English Literature* puts it, 'during four successive reigns one of the most successful entertainers of his age', as well as being another regular collaborator with Purcell around this time.<sup>11</sup> In 1689 he was apparently experiencing a lean patch in his career, and hence presumably his temporary employment in the summer of that year at the school in Chelsea. The probable reasons for his fall from favour, and the means by which he revived his fortunes, will concern us later. The last thing we need to know by way of background, however, is that the epilogue was published in D'Urfey's *New Poems* of 1690, entitled, 'An Epilogue to the Opera of *Dido and Aeneas*; performed at Mr. Priest's Boarding-school at Chelsey: spoken by the Lady Dorothy Burk.' The speaker of the epilogue will occupy the very centre of our attention later in this article.

But for now we have a context for this performance, historical, geographical and to some extent also sociocultural (though this can be filled out further), and with luck we also have the germ of a sense of its idiosyncrasy within the Virgilian tradition, the quite radical departures it marks from the Virgilian model. What I shall try to do in the remainder of this paper is to draw out the resonances with contemporary events - the Glorious Revolution, essentially - which the opera possesses. I shall ultimately be suggesting that the things which *Dido and Aeneas* has to say about the Glorious Revolution are diverse to the point of incoherence, but in their very incoherence offer a fascinating portrait of the profound ambivalence with which this revolution was met, amongst the British public at large, but particularly in the social circles associated with institutions like the Priests' school at Chelsea.

The clearest allusion, in fact probably the only clear allusion, to contemporary circumstances in the body of the opera comes early in the first act. Dido confesses to Belinda, her confidante, that she is in love with Aeneas, but is unwilling to give way to her passion. Belinda, like Anna in the *Aeneid*, encourages her to succumb, and Belinda is supported in this by the Chorus, who contribute the declamatory couplet, 'When Monarchs unite how happy their State,/ They triumph at once on their Foes and their Fate.' The fact that this couplet is delivered by the Chorus, its declamatory

style, and the abrupt lack of connection of the sentiment with what precedes it, all make it a very marked passage, and it seems a fairly blatant allusion to the very unorthodox arrangements made in the aftermath of the Glorious Revolution. Mary was the source of legitimacy for the regime, such as it was, by virtue of being James II's daughter, but William was *de facto* in control after his military invasion, and was not inclined to take a subordinate constitutional role. A joint monarchy was the solution, but it was a very unusual solution. Certainly in the context of the remainder of the opera this optimistic observation by the Chorus sits very awkwardly indeed. It is in fact blatantly untrue. Dido does succumb to Belinda's and the Chorus' persuasion; she and Aeneas do 'unite'; but they certainly do not 'triumph ... on their Foes and their Fate.' Aeneas abandons Dido and Carthage, following his *fate* towards Italy, and Dido as a consequence dies. As she dies Dido sings 'Remember me, but ah! forget my *fate*.' Now it is easy to understand the impulse to construct a parallel of this kind between the plot of the opera and such a remarkable constitutional settlement, and particularly if (as seems likely) it was a spring performance. John Blow's *Venus and Adonis* was performed at the Priests' school on April 17, 1684; if *Dido and Aeneas* was performed at a similar time in 1689, it would have happened in the immediate aftermath of the coronation of William and Mary on April 11, a unique event to reflect the unique circumstances of this reign.<sup>12</sup> It was surely impossible not to make the connection in the circumstances. But the fate of the mythical couple makes a terribly unfortunate analogy, if pursued, for William and Mary, and the fundamental awkwardness of the gesture in the context of the opera as a whole is actually very typical of this work's maladroit self-positioning in respect of contemporary events, as if it is drawn to make such connections but unable to do so comfortably or satisfactorily.

If we turn to the epilogue, this text too seems to betray contradictory impulses, simultaneously a desire to acknowledge the political situation (and express loyalty to the new regime) and a determination to deny the relevance to the performance of these contemporary events. The Epilogue, as D'Urfey informs us in *New Poems*, was delivered by a pupil of the school named Lady Dorothy Burke. The significance of this choice of speaker cannot be overestimated. There is a rather remarkable bundle of documents in the Public Record Office (now renamed The National Archives) centred around a petition submitted by Lady Dorothy Burke to the King (ruling alone after Mary's death in 1695) dated June 1696. In the process of requesting money to which Lady Dorothy claims a right, the petition reveals some fascinating details about her past life:

To the King's most Excellent Majestie

The Humble Petition of the Lady Dorothy Burke Sheweth

That your Petitioner's father the Earl of Clanricard going over into Ireland during the last Rebellion there and declaring himself a Roman Catholick commanded your Petitioner to leave this Kingdom in order to be bred up in the same Religion, and in case of her refusal threatened to expose her to want.

That the late Queen of ever Blessed memory was pleased to rescue your Petitioner in that great difficulty and out of her Majestie's great Piety and Goodness to promise your Petitioner an honorable provision, and made her an allowance of one hundred pounds *per annum* for her present support, which your Majestie has been graciously pleas'd to continue since the Queen's deplorable Death.

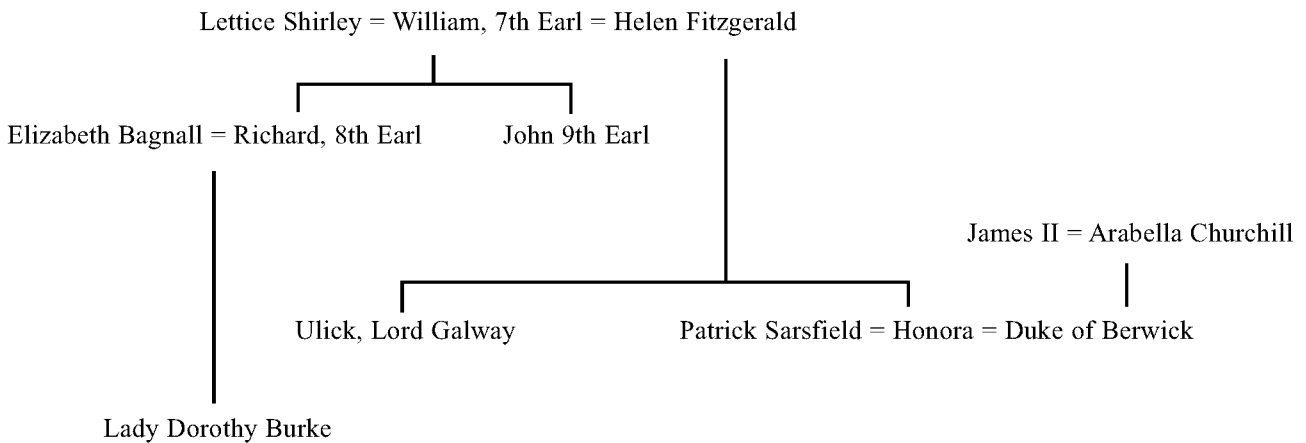
That your Petitioner is the only Child of her Father, and the only Protestant of her Family, and

your Petitioner's Uncles the Lords Gallway and Boffin on whom her Father's Estate is entailed in Remainder, and the Duke and Duchess of Barwick who have a debt on the Said Estate are outlawed for High Treason against your Majestie, and as your Petitioner believes, their own Estates as well as their Remainders of your Petitioner's Father's Estate forfeited to your Majestie, tho' as yet no Inquisition has been taken for your Majestie:

Your Petitioner doth therefore most humbly beseech your Majestie to grant to your Petitioner the several Forfeitures made by her Uncles and Aunt and all your Majestie's Right to Their Estates, either in possession or Remainder

And your Petitioner shall ever pray the...<sup>13</sup>

This document tells us a great deal, but the crucial material will be explicated by another family tree, this time of the Burke or de Burgh family, at the head of which stood the Earls of Clanricarde. It may be noted that this and the earlier tree intersect by virtue of the Duke of Berwick, product of the affair between James II (then Duke of York) and Arabella Churchill, sister of the Duke of Marlborough:



As can be seen, Lady Dorothy Burke is the daughter of the 8th Earl of Clanricarde. After the Revolution of 1688 her father declared for James and joined his forces in Ireland, taking command of the city of Galway, near the family seat at Portumna. The tree also indicates quite what a glorious pedigree Dorothy could claim. As an example, her aunt, Honora de Burgh/Burke married Patrick Sarsfield, the most prominent soldier in James' forces and a hero of Irish folklore—the archetypal 'Wild Goose'—and she was really marrying beneath her.<sup>14</sup> After he died she married James Fitzjames, Duke of Berwick, favourite illegitimate son of James II, and subsequently one of the greatest generals of the age, fighting for the French against his uncle the Duke of Marlborough: he and she are the 'Duke and Duchess of Barwick' of the petition. So this family are at the very summit of the Irish aristocracy and at the centre also of Irish resistance to the Revolution. What makes them so loyal to James, above all, is their Catholicism. As the petition tells us, Dorothy's father commanded her 'to leave this Kingdom in order to be bred up' in the Catholic faith, 'and in case of her refusal threatened to expose her to want.' But Dorothy clearly did refuse, and had to be rescued from penury by a grant of £100 *per annum* from Queen Mary, which evidently allowed her to remain a student at the Priests' school. Certain parallels will have been noted between Dorothy's pious disobedience to her Catholic father and the not dissimilar state of affairs which obtained between Queen Mary and *her* Catholic father.

Reading the epilogue again in the light of this understanding of the speaker's identity and significance certain things stand out. For example, particular force attaches to 'Rome may allow strange tricks to please her sons,/ But we are Protestants and English nuns' when spoken by this heroine of the Protestant cause, willing to surrender family ties before her faith. But here a strange diffidence intrudes itself: for while the choice of speaker seems to trumpet the political character of this event, the *text* of the epilogue is essentially an exercise in asserting the irrelevance of the political situation to the girls of the school, their virtuous sequestration far away from such disturbances. There is plenty here to corroborate my earlier suggestion that the Priests' was a bride factory, but also great emphasis on the protection offered by the school, the security it offered from men, London, Catholics-and revolutions: 'Like nimble fawns, and birds that bless the spring,/ Unscarr'd by turning times we dance and sing.' The epilogue puts as much energy into *denying* the pertinence of

events to the cast of this opera as it does into inviting, by virtue of the girl who delivered it, an awareness of it.

We can perhaps see this tendency to discount contemporary events in other elements of the opera. One odd, specific departure from the Virgilian model is the change of name experienced by Dido's confidante, from Anna to Belinda. I have seen no convincing explanation for it.<sup>15</sup> But an explanation did occur to me which would again show a diffidence in the opera's engagement with the circumstances of the Revolution. Queen Mary also had a sister named Anne, the future Queen. The removal of an Anna from the plot of *Dido and Aeneas* looks rather like an attempt to discourage the parallels which might otherwise suggest themselves between this noble female made to suffer by a feckless male (remember Lady Dorothy, too)-and Queen Mary.

I shall soon offer some explanation of the strange contradictory dynamics of this work, the apparent need to respond to the Revolution balanced by an even stronger impulse to shut it out. Before that, though, I want to discuss this element of 'depoliticization' as it impacts on the form of the story at a broader level. It has been well argued by Steven Zwicker that the Revolution of 1688 and the regime of William and Mary which emerged from it were at something of a loss when it came to representing themselves in literary or artistic mode. As Zwicker puts it, 'the muses were reluctant to speak in 1688. They were, I think, uncertain of what to say and what form to say it in.'<sup>16</sup> If this was the case, Zwicker suggests, it was partly due to the peculiar character of the Revolution (above all the resistance its apologists put up to considering it a revolution at all), which militated against the conventional heroic treatment, but it was also (and these alternatives are not clearly distinguishable) a consequence of the inalienable association of High Culture, in all its forms, with the regime which had been displaced (175):

Perhaps it was merely an accident of literary history that the former laureate [i.e. Dryden] should have been trapped in his Roman Catholicism and Jacobitism in 1689; that the greatest exponent and exemplar of high culture in the 1690s should have been an adherent of Stuart monarchy and Stuart policy; and that the closest student of his art, Alexander Pope, should also have been a Catholic and Jacobite, and in his first major work, *Windsor-Forest*, should have identified himself as an acolyte of Stuart monarchy. Was it, however, solely chance that high culture should have been so firmly attached to Stuart monarchy, and that the revolution should have been attacked in cultural terms as boorish, illiterate and dull; that William's first laureate was Thomas Shadwell, dunce of *Mac Flecknoe*; and that the Williamite epic should have been Blackmore's *Prince*

*Arthur rather than Dryden's Virgil?*

Charles II and James II had put enormous energy and resources into promoting the artistic life of the Court, and became as a result powerful sources of patronage and constant objects of literary treatment. Consequently, the conventional idioms of literary panegyric could not help but be associated with, and when deployed call to mind, James II rather than William III. To take a more specific example, Aeneas was a figure who featured with such regularity in Caroline and Jacobean panegyric that he was bound to evoke the deposed king rather than his replacement at every appearance. For illustration I can cite two examples of late Stuart court poetry deploying Virgilian imagery to the end of eulogizing James II: from John Dryden's *Britannia Rediviva*, which celebrated the birth of the Old Pretender in June 1688, and from a poem *On the Earl of Castlemaine's Embassy to Rome in King James II's Reign, 1687* composed by a certain Nahum Tate. The latter incidentally plays on the potential of 'Rome' to designate the ancient city *and* the papacy in the same way as D'Urfey's Epilogue seems to do: at the end of an opera about the founder of Rome, who is presented as an untrustworthy male, the couplet *Rome may allow strange tricks to please her sons,/ But we are Protestants and English nuns* may well obliquely evoke Aeneas too.

Here may'st thou see thy wond'rous fortunes trac'd,  
 With suff'rings first, and then with empire grac'd;  
 Long toss'd with storms on Faction's swelling tide,  
 Thy conduct and thy constancy was tri'd,  
 As Heaven design'd, thy virtue to proclaim,  
 And show the crown deserv'd before it came.  
 Troy's hero thus, when Troy could stand no more,  
 Urg'd by the Fates to leave his native shore,  
 With restless toil on land and sea was toss'd,  
 Ere he arriv'd the fair Lavinian coast;  
 Thus Maro did his mighty hero feign.  
 Augustus claim'd the character in vain,  
 Which Britain's Caesar only can sustain ...

Nahum Tate, *Castlemaine's Embassy* 5-17

Fain would the fiends have made a dubious birth,  
 Loath to confess the godhead cloth'd in earth;  
 But sicken'd, after all their baffled lies,  
 To find an heir apparent of the skies,  
 Abandon'd to despair, still may they grudge,  
 And, owning not the Savior, prove the judge.  
 Not great Aeneas stood in plainer day,  
 When, the dark mantling mist dissolv'd away,  
 He to the Tyrians show'd his sudden face,  
 Shining with all his goddess mother's grace;  
 For she herself had made his countenance bright,  
 Breath'd honor on his eyes, and her own purple light.

John Dryden, *Britannia Rediviva* 122-33

If we turn to *Dido and Aeneas*, the denigration of the hero is obvious, but the more striking in the context of this persistent deployment of the figure in Stuart panegyric. I repeat that my sense is that we are not to see the representation of Aeneas in *Dido and Aeneas* as a deliberate subversion of Stuart imagery so much as another attempt to drain the myth of any political applicability: Aeneas does not cut the figure that he did in Stuart propaganda, and that should preclude any interpretation of him in line with panegyric tradition. But since a strong vein in the justification of the Glorious Revolution consisted precisely in suspicion of the elaborate self-promotion of the previous regime, the subversion of the glory of Aeneas' mission in *Dido and Aeneas* inevitably resonates with the ideology (or anti-ideology) of the Revolution. In this respect *Dido and Aeneas* is an exercise in defusing political allegory which only succeeds in turning the allegory to another application: in denigrating Aeneas, this opera rejects the very category of heroism, so central to Stuart self-presentation, or at any rate attributes heroism to a most unconventional figure, Dido. The analogy between the feckless James and Aeneas, and the noble Mary and Dido, is hard to resist; and if so, that is because it is in this allegorical way that we (the audience of *Dido and*

*Aeneas*) have been taught to understand Virgilian myth.

In its profound incoherence, its inability to decide whether it is positively loyal to the Revolution or innocently detached from it, *Dido and Aeneas* is thus an eloquent document of its times, a work which exemplifies the problems encountered by high art after 1688. But I want to move away from abstract processes towards the individual experience of these 'turning times' which our relatively full knowledge of the circumstances of this production allows us to see. When Zwicker summarizes the situation at the Revolution as, 'the highest forms of literature are then either in difficulty or in the hands of an opposition' (181), it is clear that the problem for high art in 1689 is partly a simple matter of personnel. Artistic forms are closely associated with the Stuart monarchy primarily because, as a centre of patronage, it attracted artists into its ambit. That patronage had now vanished, it not being William III's style at all, and the artists were in many cases left disoriented without much of their artistic *raison d'être*. As it happens, a number of them were apparently washed up at the Priests' school in Chelsea. We have seen an example of Tate's production in 1687, and it places him very close to James indeed: in the wake of the Exclusion Crisis of 1679-81, more damningly still, he was collaborating with Dryden on the second part of *Absalom and Achitophel*, a satirical assault on the enemies of James, then Duke of York. As for D'Urfey, he was on familiar terms with both Charles II and James II, and was the author of a recent poem entitled *A Poem Congratulatory on the Birth of the Young Prince; most humbly dedicated to their August Majesties, King James and Queen Mary*, which must have been awkward, to say the least, given the insistence of apologists for the Revolution that the baby in question was supposititious, smuggled into the Queen's chamber in a warming-pan, by Jesuits. (Paranoid, as I say.) It is in fact the temporary embarrassment of his loss of patronage with James' departure which best explains D'Urfey's presence at the school in 1689. Purcell, meanwhile, had regularly composed for the festivals of James' court, and cooperated on projects with Tate, Dryden and D'Urfey; the scope to produce music at Court was also now much restricted. Every single one of the artists involved in the production of *Dido and Aeneas* thus had reason to feel discomfited by the Glorious Revolution. It wasn't a life sentence for any of them. Unlike Dryden they all recover their status, and more. But at this juncture they are all likely to be experiencing, in greater or lesser degree, feelings of insecurity.

To contemporaries, at any rate, the Priests' school could look like a nest of Jacobites. In 1690, after his departure from the school, the resourceful D'Urfey betrayed his erstwhile hosts with a farce entitled *Love for Money: or The Boarding School*, which satirized a lightly fictionalized boarding-school in 'Chelsey, by the River.' The *dramatis personae* include the heroine Mirtilla ('the fair forlorn'), apparently penniless but in reality, as it eventually turns out, worth £50,000 pounds (£3,000 a year), who attends the school out of an act of generosity, and who self-evidently owes a lot to Lady Dorothy Burke; and 'a singing, dancing, talking, fluttering nothing' named Le Prate, a French dancing master whose name I assume is meant to suggest Priest's (*Le Prêt*): Priest was not, as far as we know, French, but his profession, dancing, was considered an intrinsically French activity, and deeply suspect as a result. Le Prate, along with most of the other people associated with the school (Mirtilla of course excepted), is a dyed-in-the-wool opponent of the new regime. The headmistress of the school, Crowstich, thus comments on a master who has eloped with a Catholic pupil: 'Nay, and what's worst of all, the

Villain Made her sit on's knee and sing an Impudent Ballad twice over in praise of King *William*.' (It is fascinating that the audience is being encouraged to approve of heiresses who marry against the wishes of Catholic Jacobite parents: this was a revolution which needed to validate filial disobedience, Mary's and Anne's above all, but Lady Dorothy's too, and England's fundamentally.) The satire was transparent enough for the play's performance at the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane (probably in December 1690) to be interrupted by 'my hissing Antagonists of the *Nimble Craft*', the dancing master Josias Priest and friends, in other words. As D'Urfey complains, ironically, in the Prologue,

Or if we show the humours of a School  
Offending none, Still some will play the Fool;  
Some dancing Critick, in despite of Witt,  
Shall swear, we do it to offend his Kitt.<sup>17</sup>

D'Urfey's protestations of innocence should of course convince nobody: the Priests' school is being presented as a Tory establishment uneasy, to say the least, with the new dispensation. And there is more evidence that the Priests' school could be perceived as politically unsound. In an excellent recent article Mark Goldie has published and elucidated a letter which refers to the school from a certain Mrs Buck to her friend Mary Clarke, wife of the leading Whig MP Edward Clarke, himself (we may recall) an intimate friend of John Locke and recipient of Locke's sketch for a political pamphlet which we met earlier. Mrs Buck is reconnoitring schools for the Clarkes' children, whose education was a concern to Locke, too (inspiring *Some Thoughts concerning Education*, 1693):<sup>18</sup>

I went myself to three schoolls. Preists att Little Chelsey was one which was much commended; but he hath lately had an Opera, which I'me sure hath done him a great injury; and the Parents of the Children not satisfied with so Publick a show. I was att Hackney at one of their Balls: I cannot commend itt. Kingsinton was commended for a delicate air, but I cannot finde out what the Children are improved in. Att present all schoolls are redicul'd: they have latly made a Play cal'd The Boarding School.

The letter dates to May 1691, and it seems pretty clear that the stir at 'Preists att Little Chelsey' was caused by *Dido and Aeneas*. But what Goldie draws out of this letter is the Whiggish standpoint shared by author and recipient. Both the school and the opera which the school staged were in the eyes of people like Mrs Buck (or the Clarkes, or Locke)—all too ready to see pernicious, or worse, French influence in flamboyant exhibitions like opera or dancing—deeply suspect, tainted by an association with Toryism and (inevitably) Jacobitism. As Goldie puts it, '[i]n 1689 Josias Priest was reviving a cultural artefact of this high Tory court, a regime which stood for everything Locke, the Clarkes and Mrs Buck abhorred.'

The picture painted by D'Urfey's farce and Mrs Buck's letter is clear enough. In 1689 the Priests' school at Chelsea embodied a representative section of Stuart high culture left stranded, exposed and anxious in the harsh light of the Revolution of 1688. No wonder *Dido and Aeneas* exemplifies so well the profound insecurities experienced by artists at this time.

So I hope I have established that the standard record-sleeve assessment of *Dido and Aeneas* as the first major achievement of English opera, or whatever, is only part of the story. That

performance in the spring or summer of 1689, a paranoid time, was an event fraught with anxiety, a suspect art form written, composed and rounded off by suspect artists in a suspect educational establishment, and quite possibly attended by suspect parents. No surprise, given the displacement of cultural resources which Zwicker describes, that this rare instance of Williamite high culture took place far from William's court, or that it was so tentative, inept even, in its treatment of the heroic material it tackled. As a cultural event Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas* perfectly exemplifies the peculiar diffidence which Zwicker identifies as characteristic of the literary culture, such as it was, of the Glorious Revolution (177-8). Comment on the Revolution, he writes, 'seems hampered, confused in its handling of themes, caught out for an idiom'. The violence done to the Virgilian model, its ethics, its consistency, its very status as a text with any ideological significance at all, makes this hamstrung composition a paradoxically eloquent document of what Zwicker calls (180) 'a troubled circumstance for a literature of heroism and high principles.'

I would like to end by reasserting, in a rather oblique way, my opening remark to the effect that *Dido and Aeneas* is not a work deliberately and confidently communicating a political position, but rather a passive victim of events beyond its control. I want to do this by stressing the fundamental importance to the work of its performance context in a girls' school in Chelsea. In particular the description offered in D'Urfey's epilogue of the Priests' school as a haven of security away from dangerous influences has applicability far beyond the schoolgirl performers. As Ellen Harris suggests,<sup>19</sup> the basic gist of the epilogue is to characterize the opera, in retrospect, as nothing more controversial or politicized than a 'morality', a lesson in the dangers of men proper to the finishing school in which it takes place. But D'Urfey has his own reasons for wanting us to believe this. It suits these grown-up Tory artists, no less than the girls, to avail themselves of the protection offered by the school environment, the ideological protection which allows them to present *Dido and Aeneas* as in *absolutely no sense* a contribution to contemporary political debate. The whole opera, in fact, betrays a desire to keep a low profile, avoid topicality, *not mention the revolution*, which offers a close analogy on the intellectual plane to the geographical situation of the girls' school, at a safe distance from the perils of London Town. But any such attempt to control and restrict the meanings of the myth presented at this performance was always as sure to fail as the attempt to protect the schoolgirls from outside influences. D'Urfey's play about the school gives the lie to the ideal of virginal purity peddled by his own epilogue, to the extent of presenting on stage an assignation arranged between a pupil and a male admirer by means of a *billet doux* concealed in an orange, a practice explicitly disavowed in the epilogue. But we also know quite independently of D'Urfey that for Lady Dorothy Burke to describe herself, or be described, as 'unscarr'd by turning times' was hopelessly wishful thinking. D'Urfey and his colleagues in this endeavour might piously hope to evade notice and avoid controversy in a morality entitled *Dido and Aeneas* in a girls' school *outside* London, but the *Aeneid* was too essential a component of high culture, and the Revolution of 1688 too conflicted in its attitude to that high culture, for *Dido and Aeneas* to escape attention, for Virgilian myth to be disarmed, for Dido to lose significance. For all the attempts to keep a lid on things, *Dido and Aeneas* could not help but be, as Mrs Buck appreciated, 'so Publick a show.'

NOTES

- <sup>1</sup> I first spoke about Henry Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas* at the Cambridge University Classical Literature Seminar in 1994, and then at a meeting of the International Society for the Classical Tradition at Boston University in 1995: I am still waiting for the *International Journal of the Classical Tradition* to honour their undertaking to publish the text that I supplied in the summer of 1995. I returned to the opera, with a rather different slant, at the Dublin Classics Seminar at University College Dublin in 1997, and a fuller version of that argument was delivered to a meeting of the Virgil Society in 2002 and a seminar at the University of St Andrews shortly afterwards. I owe a special debt to two people: Andrew Erskine for reigniting my interest in this peculiar contribution to the Virgilian tradition, and for providing my title in the process; and Jonathan Foster for his firm commitment to bring to an end its decade-long quest for a publisher.
- <sup>2</sup> R. Lockett, 'A New Source for *Venus and Adonis*', *Musical Times* 139 (1989), 76-9.
- <sup>3</sup> The document is published in J. Farr and C. Roberts, 'John Locke on the Glorious Revolution: A Rediscovered Document', *Historical Journal* 28 (1985), 385-98.
- <sup>4</sup> There is a near-contemporary map in R. Thompson, *The Glory of the Temple and the Stage: Henry Purcell, 1659-1695* (London, 1995), 44.
- <sup>5</sup> R. Semmens, 'Dancing and Dance Music in Purcell's Operas', in M. Burden (ed.), *Performing the Music of Henry Purcell* (Oxford, 1996), 180-96, at 190-96.
- <sup>6</sup> F. P. and M. Verney, *Memoirs of the Verney Family* (London, 1907), Vol. 2, 312-3, quoted in J. Keates, *Purcell: a biography* (London, 1995), 175.
- <sup>7</sup> Keates, op. cit. (n. 6), 175-6.
- <sup>8</sup> E. T. Harris, *Henry Purcell's Dido and Aeneas* (Oxford, 1987), 20.
- <sup>9</sup> J. Buttrey, 'Dating Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas*', *Proceedings of the Royal Music Association* 94 (1967-8), 51-62; C. Price, *Henry Purcell and the London Stage* (Cambridge, 1984), 229-234; answered by B. Wood and A. Pinnock, "'Unscarr'd by Turning Times'?: The Dating of Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas*", *Early Music* 20 (1992), 372-390, at 375-6.
- <sup>10</sup> Wood and Pinnock, art. cit. (n. 9), 388-9; answered by A. R. Walking, "'The Dating of Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas*'?", *Early Music* 22 (1994), 469-81, at 470-1.
- <sup>11</sup> *Dictionary of Literary Biography 80 (Restoration and Eighteenth Century Dramatists)*, 86. In April 1688 we hear of Purcell collaborating on D'Urfey's comedy *A Fool's Preferment*: C. Price (ed.), *Purcell, Dido and Aeneas: An Opera, Norton Critical Scores* (New York & London, 1986), 76. In March 1690 we find him setting to music D'Urfey's ode, *Of Old, When Heroes Thought it Base* for 'the Assembly of the Nobility and Gentry of the City and County of York' in London, and in April 1690, similarly, D'Urfey's *Arise my Muse* in celebration of Queen Mary's birthday: R. King, *'A Greater Musical Genius England Never Had': Henry Purcell* (London, 1994), 177, 179.
- <sup>12</sup> H. and B. van der Zee, *William and Mary* (London, 1973), 277-9.
- <sup>13</sup> The National Archives T1 41, no. 20.
- <sup>14</sup> P. Wauchope, *Patrick Sarsfield and the Williamite War* (Dublin, 1992); for Honora de Burgh, see 89-90, 296, 299-300.
- <sup>15</sup> That offered by Keates, op. cit. (n. 6), 180 ('Anna, whose name, doubtless because it seemed hard on the ear, was changed to Belinda') does not seem adequate.
- <sup>16</sup> S. N. Zwicker, *Lines of Authority: Politics and English Literary Culture, 1649-1689* (Ithaca, 1993), 198.
- <sup>17</sup> 'Kitt' here seems to mean both 'setup' or 'establishment' and a type of fiddle typically used by dancing instructors.
- <sup>18</sup> M. Goldie, 'The Earliest Notice of Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas*', *Early Music* 20 (1992), 392-400.
- <sup>19</sup> Harris, op. cit. (n. 8), 33.

# The Name of the Game: The *Troia*, and History and Spectacle in *Aeneid* 5

*A paper given to the Virgil Society on 23 February 2002*

When Heinze dismisses the games in *Aeneid* 5 as a weakly motivated imitation of the games in *Iliad* 23, he does so mainly because Aeneas' games are commemorative, an anniversary celebration, rather than the immediate representation of grief offered by the Homeric funeral games. For Heinze, Virgil's decision to place the games after the Carthaginian episode meant the 'not very welcome consequence [...], that it needed to be a memorial celebration, and not as in the *Iliad* a real funeral before the freshly dug grave'. The lack of a fresh grave means that the Virgilian event 'is not something unique, but something which can be repeated at will'.<sup>1</sup>

And that, I suspect, is precisely the point for the Roman poet, who is deliberately drawing attention to the poem's 'belatedness'. In a culture that is obsessed with anniversaries and annual rites, with the measurement and organisation of time itself, and with the organisation and presentation of spectacular ritual, a freshly dug grave is not in itself particularly important or necessary.<sup>2</sup> So, the Virgilian games should be understood to *improve* on the Homeric precedent by inserting the death of Anchises into a kind of prototype ritual calendar, invented by Aeneas on his return to Sicily on the anniversary of his father's death.<sup>3</sup> The 'improvement' is not only a matter of poetic rivalry, but more importantly perhaps serves to remind the reader of the fact that archaic Greece, unlike Augustan Rome, did not conceive of time as a continuous, linked sequence of years. The passing of the year itself is referred to, and it is made explicit that the games should be thought of, not as a singular occasion, but as the first in a series:

*annuus exactis completur mensibus orbis,  
ex quo reliquias diuinique ossa parentis  
condidimus terra maestisque sacrauimus aras.  
iamque dies, nisi fallor, adest, quem semper acerbum,  
semper honoratum (sic di uolulistis) habebo.*

With the passing of the months the circling year is drawing to an end since we laid in the earth the remains of my divine father, and sanctified the altars of grief. And now the day is at hand, if I am not mistaken, which I shall always keep as a day of grief, (such was your will, gods,) always as a day of honour. (5. 46-50)

By emphasizing the memorial nature of the games, and by alluding, as Andrew Feldherr has shown, in a sustained and deliberate way to the Augustan circus games, Virgil gives *Aeneid* 5 an important role in the poem's Augustan agenda.<sup>4</sup> The purpose of this paper is to examine the ways in which the equine 'dance' called the *lusus Troiae* fits this Augustan agenda. In particular, I want to question its antique and ritualistic connotation, both within and without the poem. What is at issue here, too, is the association of the Trojan ride with spectacle. And to bring spectacle and memory and history together, the question I am addressing is: what is the role of the *lusus Troiae* in the organisation of memory, and what can it tell us about the interaction between spectacle and memory not only in the poem, but in Augustan Rome?

## 1. MEMORY, REPETITION, AND MASTERY

Anchises' death itself formed the brief and painful conclusion of book 3 - the part of the story that Aeneas does not tell Dido in the Odyssean account of his travels. Instead, he refers to the death of his father at the very end of book 3, as both his final labour and the turning point of his voyage:

*hic labor extremus, longarum haec meta uiarum:  
hinc me digressum uestris deus appulit oris.* (3.714-5)

The poem had begun, of course, just out of sight of Sicily. Now the return here with the foundation of the annual remembrance rites first and the foundation of the city which follows it (albeit prompted by the terrifying event of the burning of the ships) re-orders the chaotic and Odyssean first half of the *Aeneid* as a manifestation of the ordered, and politicised, cosmos represented by the *Circus Maximus*.<sup>5</sup>

Given this context of the un-narrated, and revisited, death of the father it is possible also to interpret the function of the funeral games as part of the 'private' voice which conveys a personal narrative of loss and trauma and its recovery.<sup>6</sup> Alternatively the games can be understood as an aetiology of Rome's uses of commemorative ritual. In any case, the games are very much outside the rest of the poem - 'a world apart', as Michael Putnam puts it in his essay on Book 5. Putnam's case is, briefly, that the events of the book, and in particular the games, are outside the tragic sphere of the poem, which they allude to with often bitter irony. The games, according to Putnam, are 'enclosed within the world of ritual'. (And I want to return to this to establish exactly what kind of a ritual we are dealing with here.) Putnam's reading of the book is so valuable still because it succeeds in showing us how the 'game' of Book 5 is a formalised,

or mastered, version of the more chaotic or traumatic events of Books 2 and 3 - and 1 and 4. This mastery or order has clear political ramifications, as both David Quint<sup>7</sup> and Feldherr have shown: the world of the poem, and the world of the circus easily fit an Augustan reading of order imposed on chaos.

In book 5, the role played by Aeneas as organiser of the games puts him, for once, in a position of authority and of relative social integration. More than anywhere else in the poem, it is during the games that Aeneas really begins to look like Augustus himself, and to take on the role of a quasi-divine ruler. He is referred to as *pater* in the first half of book 5 six times (twice as many as Books 8 and 12).<sup>8</sup> This alone would suffice to draw some important parallels between Aeneas and Augustus. But there is more. The prominence given to the boxing contest, which we are told was one of Augustus' favourite events, and indeed the keen and personal interest that Aeneas is seen to take in the games, point to a deliberate parallel between Aeneas and Augustus in this book. Consider Suetonius' description of Augustus watching circus games, either with friends - or in the royal box.<sup>9</sup> When he is present at the games, Augustus watches with keen interest, possibly to avoid the criticisms levelled against Julius Caesar, who appears to have spent the duration of the games going through his correspondence (*Aug.* 45). Much is made of the gifts selected and awarded by Aeneas himself to the contestants after each of the events. Also in *Aug.* 45, Suetonius talks about the personal interest Augustus takes in handing out prizes - and the interest he takes in athletics and boxing. The prize-giving and gentle conflict resolution performed in this book by Aeneas differ from the awkwardness, or remoteness, that usually characterises his interactions with others.<sup>10</sup> Aeneas' easy soothing of tempers, his reassurance of anxious and angry contestants, and indeed his ability to impose closure and resolution on irrational anger, make him look more confident in his own authority than he appears elsewhere in the poem. In the controlled and ordered version of the cosmos, just like that created by Augustus himself during the games in the *Circus Maximus*, Aeneas, like Augustus, I suspect, can act as Jupiter, omnipotent and serenely in control of this 'world apart'. Just as Suetonius likes to draw our attention to Augustus' divinity by having him watch the games *ex pulvinari*, so there are a number of occasions when I think Virgil intends to make us sense a parallel between Aeneas and Jupiter himself. For instance, we can hear Jupiter's smiling reassurance to Venus that her descendants' fate is secure (*manent immota tuorum | fata tibi* 1. 257-8) resonating in his reassurance to Nisus and Euryalus that their prizes are secure, that nothing will change:

*tum pater Aeneas 'uestra' inquit 'munera uobis  
certa manent, pueri, et palmam mouet ordine nemo.* (5.348-9)

A little later, Aeneas smiles or laughs and hands over the prizes: *risit pater optimus olli* (5. 358). Smiling or laughter are rare in the *Aeneid*, and I would suggest that the kind of indulgence shown by Aeneas here is not unlike that shown by a smiling Jupiter in the face of Juno's irrational savagery (after Juno has demanded the extinction of Trojan traces in Rome: *olli subridens hominum rerumque repertor*, 12. 829). Similarly, Jupiter smiles at Venus' whining (after Venus' rant demanding an end to the sufferings of the Trojans: *Olli subridens hominum sator atque deorum*, 1. 254). Venus, too, smiles a wicked smile when she catches Juno out (*adnuit atque dolis risit Cytherea repertis*, 4. 128).

But human mirth is rare. Apart from Aeneas' indulgent smile at the prize-giving, Book 5 also has the only occasion of communal laughter, at Menoetes' misfortune (*illum et labentem Teucris et risere natantem | et salsos rident reuomentem pectore fluctus*, 5. 181-2). The two remaining laughs in the poem are more contemptuous or bitter, delivered by Mezentius and Turnus - both in dire straits (9. 740 and 10. 743). So I would argue that Aeneas' only smile in the poem is important, and goes together with other indications of calm and confidence, and with his role as sponsor and 'controller' of the games to give him a divine or at least a very authoritative character here. That this quasi-divine authority is associated with circus games - and with the idea of an annual memorial - gives this book a very 'Augustan' feel. It is no coincidence then, that Aeneas, like Jupiter elsewhere, is in a position to impose an end on anger and rage:<sup>11</sup>

*tum pater Aeneas procedere longius iras  
et saeuire animis Entellum haud passus acerbis,  
sed finem imposuit.* (5. 461- 63)

## 2. SPECTACLE AND HISTORY

In all, it seems clear enough that the book is dominated by the interaction between spectacle and history, and by the idea of commemorative spectacle as an important link between past and present - and as an important way of anticipating a future organised by annual ritual returns and repetitions. Michael Putnam was the first to show the poignancy of the relationship between game and reality throughout the book.<sup>12</sup> Andrew Feldherr's more recent work on the ship race, and his book on spectacle in Livy, brings to the fore the Augustan context of the circus games, and their ideological significance. Feldherr's work demonstrated persuasively the way in which the world of the circus can be interpreted as an ordered and controlled, perhaps an ideal, version of the 'real', Augustan universe.

On the face of it, the *lusus Troiae* is the culmination of the meeting of past, present, and future, through the medium of spectacle. In gazing at their children, and seeing in their faces the features of their fathers, the Trojan spectators experience the coincidence of tradition and future. For Virgil's Roman audience the spectacle evokes their own *iuventus*, still celebrating the same rites, still bearing - in their imagination at least - the same features, and the same names. Thus, a spectacle of this kind can be seen to offer immediate access to the past - a form of continuity and living tradition that Augustus in particular, and Roman culture in general, aspires to.

But I don't believe that spectacle and performance always sit that comfortably in the Roman mind with the display and the experience of tradition. In what follows, I will examine how the status of the *lusus* as a part of the circus games may problematise, even call into question, its function as a historically meaningful spectacle.<sup>13</sup> For many critics, the *lusus* is more a ritual than a 'game' or mere display. I think Virgil does his best to make it look and feel 'ritual', by embedding it in a story of its antiquity and continuity on the one hand, and embedding it in the poem's own imagery (I am thinking especially of the labyrinth here), which adds its own sense of 'antiquity', or ritual. I suggest that the poet's insistence on the continuity and tradition of the *lusus*, and his careful use of the labyrinth image are intended to separate the *lusus* out from the rest of the circus games - to make it more than a mere performance. At the same time, we know

that the *lusus* in fact was in Augustan times a firm circus favourite. Before looking at the *Aeneid's lusus* itself we should cast a glance over some of the historians' descriptions. Suetonius for instance implies that Augustus is keen on the *lusus* because he believes it to be an ancient and respectable way to display elite youth to the public (*prisci decorique moris existimans clarae stirpis indolem sic notescere, Aug. 43*). But the context makes it clear that there are serious issues over the nobility performing at all, since Suetonius mentions, also in *Aug. 43*, the fact that Roman *equites* used to perform on stage and as gladiators, but that the senate eventually decided to forbid this. It is clear from what Suetonius says that the *Troia* is one of a number of displays which take place in the circus, and also that the participation of patrician or equestrian boys and men in such spectacles is not without its problems. For instance, the orator Pollio's grandson was injured, and there was quite a row about this in senate, which ends in the *Troia* being stopped. Quite apart from broken bones, we know enough about Roman attitudes to the stage to realise that putting one's grandson of patrician status in the Circus would need some pretty good justification - a connection with ancient Trojan custom might just serve that purpose - but clearly this only worked intermittently. Other sources tell us of the range of occasions for the *lusus*, which included: Caesar's triumph in 46 BC (Dio, 43.23.6 and Suet. *Jul. 39*); the dedication of Caesar's temple in the Forum 18 Aug 29 BC (Dio, 51. 22.4); the *Ludi Apollinares* in 40 BC (Dio 48.20.2); the dedication of the theatre of Marcellus in 13 or 11 BC (Pliny 8.65 and Dio 54.26.1); the funeral of Drusilla in AD 38 (Dio 59.11.2); and the *Ludi Saeculares* in AD 47 (Tac. *Ann. 11.11*).

With a few exceptions, the *lusus* is always produced as part of the Circus games, and in the historians' accounts it is usually represented in the context of other spectacles. Take Dio's account of Caesar's triumph in 46: as a part of the triumph there are games to dedicate the new forum and temple of Venus. In Dio's account of the lavish games given by Caesar following his triumph, performing aristocrats are disapproved of - again, the *Troia* is the exception. ('...some of the knights, and, not to mention others, the son of one who had been praetor fought in single combat. Indeed a senator named Fulvius Sepinus desired to contend in full armour, but was prevented; for Caesar deprecated that spectacle at any time, though he did permit the knights to contend. The patrician boys went through the equestrian exercise called "Troy" according to ancient custom, and the young men of the same rank contended in chariots', Dio 43.23). Suetonius has Julius Caesar produce entertainments of all sorts, which include senators fighting in the arena, the *lusus Troiae*, and a mass stampede resulting in fatalities. The *Troia* is here given only the briefest of mentions, stuck between young noblemen racing chariots and wild beast hunts in *Jul. 39*. And again, there is the issue of performing senators, fighting for instance in the forum as gladiators. And the *eques* Decimus Laberius, also in *Jul. 39*, performs his own mime and then receives five hundred thousand sesterces and a gold ring to restore him to equestrian status so that he can return from the stage to the seats allocated to those of his rank in the orchestra.

Tacitus' account of the performance of the *Troia* at the secular games in 47 (featuring the young Nero and Britannicus) in *Annals 11.11* emphasises the popular appeal of Nero on this occasion (*favor plebis acrior in Domitium loco praesagii acceptus est*), and so draws attention to the anti-theatrical prejudice with which Nero is tainted anyway. I think this serves to demean the *lusus* by associating it with the enthusiasm of the masses for an effective performer - and one who appreciates the popular mythologies which go with his 'star' persona. (Tacitus concludes by

recording the popular tale of the snakes found by Nero's cradle - and the pleasure Nero clearly takes in this kind of thing: *vulgabaturque adfuisse infantiae eius dracones in modum custodum, fabulosa et externis miraculis adsimilata: nam ipse, haudquaquam sui detractor, unam omnino anguem in cubiculo visam narrare solitus est.*) Thus, it seems to me the *lusus* is contaminated with Nero's weakness for spectacle and his love of made-up mythology.

On the other hand, there is a very evocative mention of the *lusus* in Seneca's *Troades*, where the religious and ritual aspects of the event are far more emphasised (and where a connection appears to be being made between the *lusus* and the dance of the *Salii*).<sup>14</sup> The context is Astyanax's imminent death, and his mother's regret for the lost world of old Troy, and for the lost youth of her son. The *lusus* is one of the things that, in a sense, will die with him:

*nec stato lustris die  
sollemne referens Troici lusus sacrum  
puer citatas nobilis turmas ages.*

On the appointed day you'll not renew the Trojan Game's holy rites, noble boy at the head of  
swift squadrons. (Seneca, *Troades*, 777-9)

Seneca presents a scenario in which there should be a special day for performing the *lusus*, and implies that the *lusus* itself has sacred and ritual qualities. In this scenario, the *lusus* is part of what Propertius calls *sacra diesque* (4.1.69) - rites associated with particular days (and places). But the *lusus* of both Seneca's and Virgil's world is performed at a variety of times, in a variety of places. In the *Troades*, it is clearly part of an old world, the death of which is the subject of the play. So Seneca's non-performed *lusus* could well be a revision of Virgil's more optimistic presentation of a renewed and sacred *lusus*. Where Virgil's *lusus* shows promising and energetic youth commemorating the past and looking forward to the Roman future, Seneca shows a culture that is deeply tainted by death and decay. Seneca's moribund and crepuscular Troy mirrors a bleak view of contemporary Rome, in which the ritual connection with the past is not possible. Perhaps both authors are commenting on the *lusus* as an event which has the potential to offer historically meaningful spectacle: Seneca's view of the possibility of this is typically pessimistic, while Virgil's may be viewing Augustus' appropriation of the *lusus* with some optimism. But we have already seen that the young Nero took part in the *lusus* - and in fact in a very 'sacred' and ritualistic context, that of the secular games. In Tacitus' account, as we saw, the sacredness of the occasion is somewhat disrupted by Nero's base popular appeal. I wonder if the Senecan Andromache's regret is also targeting the fact that the modern *lusus* is a mere performance - ideal for the actor-emperor, but nothing to do with the 'real thing'.

### 3. VIRGIL'S LUSUS

Virgil deals straightaway with the problem of the *lusus* as performance, by focussing first on the interaction between the boys and their audience. The emphasis on the Trojans' recognition of their ancestors in the features of their children makes it clear that what the children are performing is history, and tradition, not any old spectacle. Then, as if to emphasise the inappropriateness of viewing the children as performers, he draws attention to their shyness in the face of applause - and links the applause with the recognition of ancestral features. This

recognition distinguishes the spectacle of the *lusus* from, say, a gladiatorial fight, or a chariot race: the relationship between viewer and performer is one of kinship, thus eroding the usual barriers which help normally to objectify the performer in the eyes of the viewer. Here, the performers return the gaze - the Trojans look into the faces of their children and see, almost literally, themselves looking back.<sup>15</sup>

*excipiunt plausu pauidos gaudentque tuentes  
Dardanidae, ueterumque adgnosunt ora parentum.* (5. 575-6)

In this way the performance of the *lusus* emphasises community instead of the fragmentation that we might associate with the modern experience of spectacle. I would argue that Virgil's emphasis here on familiar ties consciously undermines the potential for objectification that is inherent in any performance, and especially in the Roman arena. We have seen how closely the historians seem to associate the performance of the *lusus* with other spectacular events, and we have seen how misgivings about performing aristocrats appear to touch on discussions of the *lusus*. It is not surprising then that Virgil wishes to distance this event from other circus events. At least a part of the difference lies in the ties that bind spectators and performers.

The description of the performance itself steps the *lusus* in antiquity in two important ways. First, through the use of the labyrinth simile the poet creates links with other parts of the poem, especially Book 6, and with the Greek world, *via* Catullus perhaps:

*ut quondam Creta fertur Labyrinthus in alta  
parietibus textum caecis iter ancipitemque  
mille uiis habuisse dolum, qua signa sequendi  
frangeret indeprensus et inremeabilis error.* (5. 588-91)

Second, the elaborate story of the tradition passed on *via* Ascanius and Alba Longa all the way to contemporary Rome, works with Augustus' desire to make the *Troia* a revived ancient custom, a historically legitimate way of getting the elite to perform in the circus:

*hunc morem cursus atque haec certamina primus  
Ascanius, Longam muris cum cingeret Albam,  
rettulit et priscos docuit celebrare Latinos,  
quo puer ipse modo, secum quo Troia pubes;  
Albani docuere suos; hinc maxima porro  
accepit Roma et patrium seruauit honorem;  
Troiaque nunc pueri, Troianum dicitur agmen.* (5. 597-603)

And there are the dolphins, too, which evoke the dolphins set up as lap-counters on the *spina* in the *Circus Maximus* by Agrippa:<sup>16</sup>

*haud alio Teucrum nati uestigia cursu  
impediunt texuntque fugas et proelia ludo,  
delphinum similes qui per maria umida nando  
Carpathium Libycumque secant.* (5. 592-5)

The dolphins' paths, cutting and weaving through the sea, are an alternative image to that of the labyrinth - but they also appear on the shield of Aeneas, encircling the central image of the battle of Actium. This means that the dolphins on the shield, which in one way come from the *Shield of Heracles* and help to give the Virgilian shield its 'cosmic' feel, are also a way of binding the cosmos of the shield to the cosmos of the circus.<sup>17</sup>

So, the young Trojan boys are framed by their reflections in the Trojan past (at the start of the passage: *ueterumque adgnosunt ora parentum*), and into the Roman future (at the end: *Troiaque nunc pueri, Troianum dicitur agmen.*). They become associated with the *Circus Maximus*, and with Roman domination of the seas, through the dolphins, thus partaking of the imagery of cosmic order which surfaces frequently in the *Aeneid* and of course elsewhere in Augustan culture. But their performance is also, it seems, deeply resonant of Greek myth. I think that what is happening here is something like this: the *lusus* has come to prominence in Virgil's own time as a popular circus act, which, through its name alone appears to be linked with Trojan heritage. Because of this name, and because it is odd and inaccessible in the rules it appears to follow, it has an air of antiquity. There are legitimate questions to be asked about Virgil's perhaps emphatic use of *nunc* when referring in the last line of his description to the name of the game (5.603). Does this mean something along the lines of 'now that Augustus has re-discovered this game, we call it *Troia*'? Or does it mean 'and we still call it *Troia* now'? I suspect, as do others, that it is the former.<sup>18</sup> But, of course, as Mary Beard and others have shown, it is the exegesis and the myth-making accompanying Roman ritual which make up its meaning.<sup>19</sup> So the name of the game matters very much: it allows Virgilian mythography to connect the remote and somewhat strange, but clearly popular, ritual with the story of Rome's Trojan origins that both he and Augustus wish to tell.<sup>20</sup> And if the interaction between rituals and the texts which surround them is as close as we suspect then the *Aeneid's* linking of the *Troia* game with its Iliadic and Greek background may have helped to make this particular circus act respectable enough for patrician boys to perform.

But what about the labyrinth? If the dolphin image links the Troy-boys with the world of the shield, the labyrinth image links them with another important work of art in the poem - the temple gates at Cumae, which depict the Cretan labyrinth. As is well known, both labyrinths allude clearly to Catullus 64.<sup>21</sup> It has also been said before that the description is, to some extent, reminiscent of the description of Ariadne's dance-floor on the shield of Achilles. This in turn, the scholia inform us, may be influenced by the idea that Theseus and the boys and girls who escaped from the Minotaur learn to perform a dance under Daedalus' guidance. (This dance is the rather odd 'crane dance' in Plutarch's *Theseus*.) So, there is a Hellenising, and intellectual, 'history' of the *Troia*, which runs alongside the dolphin symbolism and with the story of a continuous tradition going back to Alba Longa. In addition to all this there is an Etruscan pot, the Tragliatella Oenochoe, which depicts, it seems, a circular labyrinth, some riders on horseback, and the word TRUIA (and some copulation - which is not directly relevant to the present discussion). For some, this means that the labyrinth, and the *lusus* itself are a part of deep and ancient mythology, which permeate Mediterranean culture across times and places. The connection between the Trojan ride, the city of Troy, and the mythic or symbolic use of the image of the labyrinth is appealing to critics of all colours, from Jackson Knight in the 1930s to contemporary Lacanian or psychoanalytic discussions.<sup>22</sup> Much can also be made of the labyrinth

itself as a motif throughout the *Aeneid*. The final confrontation between Turnus and Aeneas is preceded by a chase, which can be said to resonate with labyrinthine language. So Aeneas is described thus, looking for Turnus on the battlefield: *Aeneas tortos legit obuius orbis| uestigatque uirum* (12.481-2); Turnus is running around in demented circles, not unlike the more organised circles traced by the boys: *et nunc huc, inde huc incertos implicat orbis* (12.743). Or, a little further on, *mille fugit refugitque uias* (12.753) revisits the thousand paths of the labyrinth (*mille uis*, 5.590). In addition, there are some clear indications that Troy itself functions as a kind of labyrinth in Book 2 - and that this is revisited in book 9, when Nisus and Euryalus are lost in the woods.<sup>23</sup>

So the *Troia* is embedded in the very fabric of the poem, and it is this embeddedness, this creative and imaginative re-casting of a well-known spectacle, that turns it into such a deeply resonant and mythic event. I think that Karl Weeber's assessment of the situation regarding the antiquity of the *Troia* is probably right. In Weeber's view the introduction of the *lusus* coincides with a new or renewed interest at Rome in Trojan ancestry, and a new fashion amongst prominent Roman families for tracing their origins to Trojan heroes. Both Suetonius' careful expression in *Aug.* 43 (*existimans*), and Virgil's own emphatic *nunc* appear to confirm the thesis that there is indeed some doubt about the antiquity of the game.<sup>24</sup>

But what really matters is the fact that in Virgil's *Troia* we have an excellent example of the importance of the complicated relationship between ancient rituals and the texts which bring them to life for us. Virgil's game, with its three contexts - the Roman circus, Greek mythology, and the poetry of the *Aeneid* - is suspended between myth and history, and between ritual and spectacle in a very Roman, and I think also a very *modern* way.<sup>25</sup>

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## NOTES

- <sup>1</sup> R. Heinze *Virgils epische Technik* (Leipzig 1915) 147 (my translation).
- <sup>2</sup> See D. Feeney 'Horace and the Lyric Poets', in N.Rudd, ed., *Horace 2000: A Celebration*. (London 1993) 58-60.
- <sup>3</sup> See Williams' commentary *ad loc.* He finds that Anchises' funeral games are evocative of the *Parentalia*.
- <sup>4</sup> See A. Feldherr 'Ships of State: *Aeneid* V and Augustan Circus Spectacle' in *CA* (1995) 245-65. Feldherr's work, both here and in A. Feldherr, *Spectacle and Society in Livy's History* (Berkeley and London 1998) on spectacle and history is crucial to much of what I am saying here.
- <sup>5</sup> See Feldherr (1995) 246 on the turning posts in the ship-race.
- <sup>6</sup> For this kind of reading see Peter Brooks, *Reading for the Plot: Design and Intention in Narrative* (New York and London 1984). Here, Freud's concept of the compulsion to repeat functions as a kind of 'masterplot', a model for all narrative. The point of this, very crudely, is that repetition or 'return' (to origins, or the repressed) runs counter to the simple movement forward. In the case of *Aeneid* 5, clearly the return to Sicily and the 'repetition' of Anchises' death interrupts the simple movement forward to Italy and to the successful end of the poem. The return to Sicily can be read in Freudian terms as a return to the repressed - the unworked-through, silence-inducing death of the father, and as a return to origins: Sicily is the starting-point in many ways of the transition from Troy to Rome. 'Remembering, Repeating, and Working Through' is essentially the work done by Books 2,3, and 5 of the poem. In terms of their *narrative* function, repetitions are painful, according to Brooks because 'they create a delay, a postponement in the discharge of energy, a turning back from immediate pleasure, to ensure that the ultimate discharge will be more complete. The most effective or, at the least, the most challenging texts may be those that are most delayed, most highly bound, most painful.' And of course, it is part of the narrative 'effectiveness' of the *Aeneid* that it so painfully delays its ultimate outcome.

- <sup>7</sup> D. Quint 'Painful Memories: *Aeneid* 3 and the Problem of the Past' in *CJ* 78 (1982) 30-38; 'Repetition and Ideology in the *Aeneid*' in *MD* 23 (1989): 9-55; *Epic and Empire: Politics and Generic Form from Virgil to Milton* (Princeton 1993).
- <sup>8</sup> Compared with three times in each of Books 8 and 12, and only once or twice in other Books - never in Books 4 or 6. I don't think this is a meaningless statistic: both 8 and 12 have reason to stress Aeneas' role as a founding father, but 5 must be seen as the showcase-book: this is where, because of the games theme, Aeneas is closest to Augustus - and to Jupiter.
- <sup>9</sup> *Ipse circenses ex amicorum fere libertorumque cenaculis spectabat, interdum ex pulvinari et quidem cum coniuge ac liberis sedens.*
- <sup>10</sup> See D. Feeney 'The Taciturnity of Aeneas' in *CQ* NS 33 (1984) 204-219 (reprinted in S.J. Harrison, *Oxford Readings in Virgil's Aeneid* (Oxford 1990) 167-90) on Aeneas' problems with successful dialogue.
- <sup>11</sup> See D. Feeney, *The Gods In Epic* (Oxford 1991) 137-42 on the association of Jupiter with *finis*.
- <sup>12</sup> See M.J. Putnam, *The Poetry of the Aeneid: Four Studies in Imaginative Unity and Design* (Ithaca 1965) 64-104.
- <sup>13</sup> See Feldherr (1998) 10-19 on history and spectacle.
- <sup>14</sup> At least one scholar took this seriously enough to come up with a date (19th March) for the performance of the *lusus*. A. v. Premerstein 'Das Troiaspiel und die tribuni celerum' in *Festschrift für Otto Benndorf* (Vienna 1898) 261-66 argued that the Troia was ritually meaningful only on specific religious occasions - and that it had a kind of parallel life as a 'mere spectacle': 'Selbstredend war die sacrale Bedeutung der Troia auf ganz bestimmte gottesdienstliche Anlässe beschränkt; daneben wurde sie (...) sehr häufig als blosses Schaustück bei den Circusspielen aufgeführt.'
- <sup>15</sup> See Feldherr (1995) 264.
- <sup>16</sup> See P. Zanker *The Power of Images in the Age of Augustus* (Ann Arbor 1988) 67-8.
- <sup>17</sup> And of course the circus is made to resemble the cosmos when Julius Caesar surrounds it with an 'ocean'.
- <sup>18</sup> K.W. Weeber 'Troiae Lusus: Alter und Entstehung eines Reiterspieles' in *Ancient Society* 5 (1974) 171-196. On *nunc* see 195, and J. Scheid and J. Svenbro *The craft of Zeus. Myths of weaving and fabric.* (Harvard 1996) 44.
- <sup>19</sup> See, for instance: M. Beard 'A complex of times: no more sheep on Romulus' birthday' in *PCPHS* 33 (1987) 1-15; M. Beard 'Looking (harder) for Roman myth: Dumézil, declamation and the problems of definition' in F.Graf (ed.) *Mythos in mythenloser Gesellschaft* (Stuttgart and Leipzig 1993) 44-64; D. Feeney *Literature and Religion at Rome* (Cambridge 1998), especially 115-9.
- <sup>20</sup> On the lateness of Roman aetiological myth, and of Roman mythology itself see e.g. J. Bremmer 'Three Roman aetiological myths' in F.Graf (ed.) *Mythos in mythenloser Gesellschaft* (Stuttgart and Leipzig 1993), especially 173-4.
- <sup>21</sup> The most recent treatment of this is, I think, Allen Miller 'The Minotaur within: Fire, the labyrinth, and the strategies of containment in *Aeneid* 5 and 6' in *CPh* 90 (3) (1995) 225-40, which contains all the relevant bibliography, most notably P. Reed Doob *The Idea of the Labyrinth from Classical Antiquity to the Middle Ages* (Ithaca and London 1990).
- <sup>22</sup> e.g. Miller (1995).
- <sup>23</sup> See P. Hardie's commentary on *Aeneid* 9 on this.
- <sup>24</sup> Weeber (1974) 195 and n.26 ('Suetons vorsichtige Ausdrucksweise, und Vergils sonst kaum verständliches *nunc* könnten andeuten, dass beide Autoren sehr wohl wussten, dass die Troia kein uraltes Spiel war.')
- <sup>25</sup> See A. Benjamin 'Tradition and experience: Walter Benjamin's "Some motifs in Baudelaire"' in A. Benjamin (ed.) *The problems of modernity* (London and New York 1989) 122-40.

# Between Pantheons: Roman Landscape and Topography in Butor's *La Modification*

*A Paper given to the Virgil Society on 18 May 2002*

**L***a Modification* is a book that is centred around journeys, journeys which for the most part find their centre in Rome. As so often travel functions as a metaphor for a process of self-discovery, a voyage into the subconscious.<sup>1</sup> The protagonist, a middle-aged business man named Léon Delmont, is on a train to Rome; he is going to tell his mistress Cécile that he has found a job for her in Paris, that he is going to leave his wife and children for her and that they will set up home together. As the journey progresses he falls in and out of sleep, in and out of dreams and memories. Eventually the memories of six other journeys blend into his

train journey, and, together with the dreams unleashed by his subconscious, they reveal to him so urgently the extent and the implications of his wilful short-sightedness that by the end of his journey and the end of the book he has determined to leave Cécile and to try and salvage his relationship with his wife, Henriette. His 'change of heart'<sup>2</sup> is based heavily upon Aeneas' descent into the Underworld in *Aeneid* 6, and the parallels between Delmont and Aeneas in the Underworld have been the subject of a great deal of lucid commentary.<sup>3</sup> However, critics have tended to stress the initiatory aspect of the parallels alone, and yet the links between the two figures stretch far beyond the fact that they are both seeking to create a solid image of Rome and that both went down into the Underworld in order to learn how to direct their futures. This paper will indicate the importance of Aeneas' pilgrimage around the future Rome (*Aeneid* 8) to *La Modification* and to Delmont's experience of Rome, and will look at the significance of the Roman monuments that Delmont visits or passes.

Memory shapes the direction of *La Modification*. Delmont is driven by his memories of previous train journeys to Rome, but he also moulds his future through the stories that he has read about Rome, and stories which he tells to himself about his fellow-passengers - and their relationship with Rome. Eventually these stories fuse into a force strong enough to destroy the fiction upon which he has built

his future and become fabrications which destroy his myth of Rome. At the same time he is being driven in a physical sense towards the uncovering of all these fictions as he is transported by the train; throughout the work there is a sense that things would have turned out differently if he had embarked on a different train.

Just as Delmont is suspended between two cities, Paris and Rome, thus echoing Aeneas, who spends most of the *Aeneid* suspended between Troy and Rome, he is also suspended in an unreal time, which is composed of both past and future, something which is characteristic of the *Aeneid* as a whole. By the end of the journey he is able to look at Cécile and to recognize not only that 'if she comes to Paris I will lose her'<sup>4</sup> but also to see that she is an obstacle to his true vision of Rome, 'the place of authenticity' (146), just as once Dido stood in the way of Aeneas' Rome.

As the book progresses it becomes increasingly apparent that for Delmont Henriette represents Paris, while Cécile represents Rome. The cities with which these women are identified are contained in their names: Henriette recalls Henri IV's conversion to Catholicism and his attendant observation that, 'Paris vaut une messe', while Cécile represents the Roman martyr, Caecilia, who remained a virgin, and whose mind during her wedding ceremony was filled with heavenly music rather than thoughts of a husband. These resonances contained in her name may point to a life that she is perfectly capable of conducting without Léon, resonances which should have indicated to him that she was far more elusive than he had imagined. Hippolyte Delehay describes Cécile's namesake as 'The most tangled question in all Roman hagiography'<sup>5</sup> and indeed the name does repay further probing. The origins of the legend of St Cecilia are unknown. Suddenly and for the first time at the end of the fifth century a saint appeared who seems to have been unknown to previous generations, and yet who receives all the homage due to one of the most revered of Roman virgin-martyrs. Her story is an obvious fiction and there is practically no evidence that she was venerated much earlier than this date - no evidence that she ever existed, apart from the deeply ingrained popular cult which celebrates her at her tomb in Trastevere with great enthusiasm. Butor associates Delmont's Cécile strongly with the legend of St Cecilia by pointing out that 'the first Roman secret which she uncovered for you was Pietro Cavallini's *Last Judgement* at Saint Cecilia at Trastevere.'<sup>6</sup> The image of the Last Judgement is highly charged as later in the book, on his descent into hell, Delmont undergoes a Last Judgement experience where he is condemned and enlightened by the prophets, sibyls and cardinals of Rome. But it is still more significant that when Delmont speaks of 'rejoining his liberty which is called Cécile' - her very name should tell him that he is labouring under an illusion, that this liberty is rooted in a confected legend.

Furthermore, as the legend of Caecilia developed, she became associated very strongly with the Bona Dea, to whom Romans appealed for help in combating eye disease.<sup>7</sup> The name Cécile is telling in this context as it is closely related to 'cécité' meaning 'blindness'. It is true that Cécile does blind Delmont to certain aspects of Rome and to all that Rome signifies, but it is equally true that it is through her that he begins to acquire an understanding, albeit a partial one, of all that Rome can mean. It is as if by shedding a bright light on certain angles she dims certain other angles even further. Since she is the catalyst for Delmont's 'change of heart' it is also significant that in the later Middle Ages she 'became a symbol and exemplar of deep spiritual change'.<sup>8</sup> Butor makes sure that we realize that she can see far more clearly than Delmont. She is able to appreciate Henriette on Henriette's own terms and comes to esteem her as someone who is considerably more intelligent and liberal than Delmont had suggested. In fact Cécile goes so far as to point out that Henriette is much more open-minded than Léon himself, and one of the crucial moments in the novel is when Delmont remembers how the two women instinctively formed an alliance against him. He does his best to suppress this memory just as, at the time, he did his

best to curb this developing friendship by limiting how much the women saw each other.

In Delmont’s mind Cécile becomes synonymous with Rome and all that Rome means to him. He points out that ‘before meeting Cécile well might you have visited the principal monuments, and appreciated the climate there, but you did not have this love for Rome’(60). His lamentable failure to read the city in the pre-Cécile period is indicated by his silence when his wife asks him on a visit to the temples of Venus and of Rome ‘Why Venus and Rome? What is the relationship between those two things?’ (270). He should, of course, have pointed out that Venus was Aeneas’ mother who guided and protected his mission to found Rome, but that she is also the goddess of love, which in Latin is Amor, the reverse of Roma. And the temples themselves provide a visible explanation of the pun, as they stand back to back. But if Rome is the city of love it is love that is needed to uncover her significance. And as Delmont has fallen in love with an illusion, and an illusion that keeps announcing itself as such, his vision of Rome is necessarily flawed and fragile.

Butor makes it clear that it is not solely a fulfilled stability in his relationships that Delmont seeks but also a fixed centre to his world, and not just his personal world but the centre of Western civilization, which has failed to hold. At the end of the book he announces:

And so one of the great waves of history is drawing to a close in your consciences, the one where the world had a centre, which was not simply the earth in the middle of Ptolemy’s spheres, but Rome in the centre of the earth, a centre which had been moved, which attempted to become established after the collapse of Rome at Byzantium and then much later in imperial Paris, where the black star of the railways over France was like the shadow of the star of the Roman roads. (279)

The multivalency of Rome is indicated through the myriad Romes that belong to the various characters in the book. Delmont displays his awareness of the city’s potential for multiple significations by imagining the Romes of his fellow passengers:

If it is unlikely that he is going to Rome this time, he has perhaps already been there or perhaps dreams of going there to see his pope, to mingle with the cassocked crowd swarming through all the streets like clouds of chattering flies, fat or bony, children or clapped-out ancients; he must have known or else will come to know a Rome that is very different from that which Cécile has shown you over these last years. (89)

Cécile refuses absolutely to set foot inside the Christian site of the Vatican, abhorring ‘this cancer city clinging to the sides of Roman splendour and freedom’ (168). At the same time Delmont depicts an Henriette who, while she is in Rome, as consolation for her husband’s indifference, turns fervently towards the Catholicism which Rome represents.

Butor doesn’t confine himself to setting up pointers and clues in her name alone. It is worth mentioning that Delmont’s name is stereotypically Italian, Del Monte, the name of an important aristocratic family in Papal Rome (precisely the Rome which Cécile asks him to reject) and the name of Cardinal Del Monte who was Caravaggio’s early patron. It is also evocative of the hills of Rome.<sup>9</sup> The name Léon harks back to Leo I, the legendary saviour of Rome against Attila the Hun and his armies, as well as to Leo IV, builder of the Leonine city which is one of the names under which the Vatican is known (*civitas Leoniana*, *Città Leoniana*). When Cécile tells him that he is ‘rotten to the core with Christianity, with the stupidest kind of devotion, despite all your protestations; the humblest Roman cook has a broader outlook than you do’(168), she perhaps speaks more truly than she realises. And it is easy to categorise her as someone who refuses absolutely to set foot in any of the Christian sites in Rome, but this is not the case. What she does refuse to do is to set foot within the Vatican, that is the Leonine city, and she points out that this is his home, that this is where he belongs by observing: ‘I am too afraid of that insidious poison which has robbed me of so much and which is now robbing

me of you to be mad enough to enter these accursed walls, especially with you, where everything would foster your cowardice' (168). By her refusal to enter the Vatican Cécile sets herself up as the antithesis of Dante's Beatrice, who went through Peter's gate in the *Purgatorio*,<sup>10</sup> and thereby she sows seeds of failure within their relationship. She does however agree to go and look at Michelangelo's 'Moses' and points out that there is a church near her house, Sant Andrea della Valle,<sup>11</sup> where copies of his main statues are held. Again, it is telling that they go and look at the Moses, as the Moses statue is held in the church of S. Pietro in Vincoli (St Peter in Chains); this sets up the prison imagery by which Butor defines Delmont's relationship with Cécile, even though Delmont perceives her as embodying his freedom.<sup>12</sup> Moreover the Moses is a famous failure as it was originally intended for the S. Pietro in Vaticano. It also evokes the failure of Moses himself, who, like the Aeneas of the *Aeneid*, also wandered without reaching his final goal. Delmont has prints in his apartment, one of which was given to him by Cécile after they had discovered Piranesi's book on the Roman ruins together. She gives him *I Carceri* and so he hangs this image of prisons in his apartment. When we remember that she is constantly berating him for the lack of freedom in the outlooks he holds we might recognise that the gift may well have been more barbed than Delmont realizes.

There is a curious introduction into the account of one of their pilgrimages: 'in the little bar on the piazza Farnesi, before going off to lunch on the Largo Argentina [because on a weekday like that you couldn't go off too far] you were saying that it was strange that you had never set out, an Isis and a Horus piecing together once again their Osiris, to search for the fragments of Michelangelo, and so to gather together the signs of his activity in this city.' (167) As the Largo Argentina is very near the site of the temple of Isis the references to Osiris, Isis and Horus are less surprising than they might initially seem. And the fact of the temple of Isis was recalled by two obelisks, discovered in the area of the Temple, both erected nearby. Butor describes one of their tours around Rome: 'One time your peregrinations, your pilgrimages, your quests had taken you from obelisk to obelisk...' (167) One of these obelisks was erected in front of the seventeenth-century Pantheon and one in front of the eighteenth-century church of Santa Maria Sopra Minerva on top of an elephant. The reference to the obelisks, strengthened later by a direct reference to Santa Maria sopra Minerva, may well include another joke on Butor's part with regard to the fortitude of the scholar, the student of Rome, as there is an epigraph at the base of Bernini's elephant which observes: 'It is the sign of a strong mind to maintain a solid knowledge.' Furthermore, Butor reminds the reader that Santa Maria sopra Minerva is the only example of a gothic church in Rome, but since it was built above the ruins of a temple dedicated to Minerva Chalcidica, goddess of wisdom, it again overlays the Christian with the pagan. This pagan element is strengthened if we remember that the church stands in the shadow of Rome's most perfect classical structure, the Pantheon. These fleeting references to the Egyptian gods uncover yet another Rome, and again it is a Rome where Christian and pagan meet, since the figure of Isis (mother of all) and Horus (divine child) prefigure the Pietà, and Delmont and Cécile are also eager to see the two Pietàs in Michelangelo's Rome.

While Butor connects Léon strongly with the Catholic side of Rome, and has highlighted the connections between Cécile and St Cecilia, he ensures that the links between Cécile and Rome's pagan history are no less striking. She first invites Léon to her flat when they visit the tomb of Caecilia Metella on the Appian Way, and she lives at a house run by the family Da Ponte, which is the name of Mozart's librettist.

Delmont is aware of his biased approach to Rome which is coloured by his relationship with Cécile, and occasionally he regrets the limitations, but they are more than compensated by the Rome which Cécile represents, 'this splendid Roman air which will be like a rediscovery of spring after the Parisian autumn' (perhaps also a reference to Cécile's youthfulness compared to Henriette). This is a Rome

depicted by Virgil’s *Georgics*, which Butor incorporates into the novel by quoting ‘*hic ver assiduum*’ (here is eternal spring) (55). But when Virgil refers to spring in the *Georgics* he links it to the childhood of the world (2.339-42). The insertion of this particular allusion into *La Modification* heightens the feeling of limitless possibility and optimism that Delmont finds in Rome, and intensifies the literary tradition of finding a renewal of life, a transformation of life within Rome. *La Modification* is almost a parody of this tradition, perhaps best exemplified by Goethe in *Italian Journey*. Whereas Delmont watches helplessly as what he had held to be a fixed and meaningful centre kaleidoscopes into contradictory and challenging shards and pieces, Goethe’s experience is of the various fragments of Rome coalescing into a stable and coherent whole:

‘Now I have arrived I have calmed down and feel as if I had found a peace that will last for my whole life. Because, if I may say so, as soon as one sees with one’s own eyes the whole which one had hitherto only known in fragments and chaotically, a new life begins.

All the dreams of my youth have come to life; the first engraving I remember - my father hung views of Rome in the hall - I now see in reality, and everything I have known for so long through paintings, drawings, etchings, woodcuts, plaster casts and cork models is now assembled before me. Wherever I walk, I come upon familiar objects in an unfamiliar world; everything is just as I imagined it, yet everything is new.<sup>13</sup>

Goethe speaks of his awe when his visions are transformed into reality, as he is forced to look upon the familiar with new eyes. It is precisely this defamiliarisation, this capacity to see things anew, that Virgil demands of his readers in the eighth book of the *Aeneid*, when Aeneas is shown around the site of future Rome by Evander, king of the Latins. For contemporary readers of Virgil there would have been a sense of awe as they heard of Aeneas treading over sites destined to be revered in later Roman history. Although the episode presents to Virgil’s readers a Rome founded upon historical reality, to Aeneas the episode is nothing more than a presentiment of the future, the shadowy outline of his hopes. It is worth noting that within the *Aeneid* this is only one in a sequence of false Romes: for Virgil, as well as for Butor, Rome is haunted by a whole series of ghost cities, the cities that she has been, or could have been. Book 1 shows us the foundation of Carthage prefiguring the foundation of Rome, Book 3 describes the new Troy built in Buthrotum and Book 8 depicts the site of the future Rome. As Virgil maps onto Evander’s rustic settlement the shapes of the stately buildings of his own day, he contrasts the pastoral simplicity of Pallanteum with the contemporary grandeur of Rome. Virgil takes his readers on a journey from Evander’s tiny settlement on the Palatine up to the golden Capitol of the Augustan age, which was perceived as the centre of both the Roman empire and the universe itself. And so Virgil’s passage (*Aeneid* 8. 337-369) is pervaded by an ambiguity which filters through into Butor’s text. This ambiguity is neatly indicated by the *nunc/olim* figure (*even then* the Capitol was instinct with divinity) (*then* a wooded spot, *now* the golden Capitol, 347-8), but *olim* can refer both to past or to the future: either ‘golden now, once densely wooded’ or ‘golden now, one day to be densely wooded.’ Gibbon ends up looking back on the history of Rome and giving fullest expression to this point:

The place and the object (the Capitoline Hill) gave ample scope for moralising on the vicissitudes of fortune, which spares neither man nor the proudest of his works, which buries empires and cities in a common grave; and it was agreed that in proportion to her former greatness the fall of Rome was the more awful and deplorable. “Her primaevial state, such as she might appear in a remote age, when Evander entertained the stranger of Troy, has been delineated by the fancy of Virgil. This Tarpeian rock was then a savage and solitary thicket: in the time of the poet, it was crowned with the golden roofs of a temple: the temple is overthrown, the gold has been pillaged, the wheel of fortune has accomplished her revolution, and the sacred ground is again disfigured with thorns and brambles. The hill of the Capitol, on which we sit, was formerly the head of the Roman empire, the citadel of the earth, the terror of kings; illustrated by the footsteps of so many triumphs, enriched with the spoils and tributes of so

many nations. This spectacle of the world, how it is fallen! how changed! how defaced!"<sup>14</sup>

Charles Martindale points out that it is not only a matter of whether we prefer woods or gold; the trajectory of history is itself unclear, and the lines allow us to see beyond the grandeur of Augustus' Rome to a return to the wild, as though the Gibbonian narrative were already there in shadowy form in Virgil. *Nunc* introduces another ambivalence, since it could mean 'now in Virgil's day' or 'now in Aeneas' day', and 'golden' could be literal or metaphorical, 'belonging to a golden time' or 'made of gold/gilded.' And Martindale shows how this more complex narrativisation gives us cycles of growth and decay; ancient cities powerful long ago are ruined already in the time of Aeneas, perhaps thereby portending the eventual fall of Rome itself.<sup>15</sup>

Moreover, the *Aeneid* also acknowledges the dangers, the limitations of historical narratives. If we read carefully we can see that Virgil indicates that early Italy has more than one history, more than one truth. James Zetzel has pointed out how Evander's ethnography combines two standard accounts of the history of civilisation: the hard, primitive anthropological account which sits uneasily alongside the softer, more primitive mythological account which he also provides.<sup>16</sup> But it is also possible to read the passage as if all the elements in Virgil's narrative are held together in a simultaneous timeless moment. Rome the eternal city is always both the *caput rerum*, the metropolis which Augustus found brick and left marble, and sweet rural scene, both the *res publica* restored by political and military power and place of a renewed age of gold, *aurea saecula*. Virgil shows us how such a Rome, the new Troy, can be both standing proud and in ruins. Martindale recalls Bruno Snell's famous argument that Virgil discovered a spiritual landscape which he called Arcadia; read archaeologically, Aeneas' visit to Pallanteum uncovers a spiritual city which men have always called Rome.<sup>17</sup>

It is possible therefore to see Delmont's journey around Rome under the aegis of Cécile as already being inscribed in shadow form onto this episode in Book 8. The ambiguity pervading the Virgilian episode heightens the incomplete feel to Delmont's projected tour of Cécile's Rome by evoking memories of Aeneas' tour:

and at the close of dusk you will witness the darkening of night inside the Coliseum, then you will pass near to the arch of Constantine, you will go down the via San Gregorio and the via dei Cerchi passing by the ancient Circus Maximus; in the night you will see the temple of Vesta on your left and on the other side the arch of Janus Quadriforis; then you will rejoin the Tiber which you will walk along as far as the via Giulia to arrive back at the Farnesi Palace where you will doubtless have only a few minutes to wait before Cécile comes out of it. (86-7)

In another tour which he evokes Butor also fuses glory and ruin in the same passage and asks us to travel through time :

during which you were attempting to reconstitute from immense, scattered ruins the monuments as they might have been in their early days, the image of the city as she must have been in full glory; and so, when you were walking in the Forum, it was not only amongst the few, paltry stones, the broken capitals, and the impressive brick walls or dados, but in the midst of an enormous dream that you shared, which became more and more solid, precise and justified at each passageway [ . . . ] to continue this systematic exploration of Roman themes you would also have had to go one day from the churches of Saint Paul to churches of Saint Paul, from San Giovanni to San Giovanni, from Saint-Agnès to Saint-Agnès, from Lorenzo to Lorenzo, to try and deepen or delimit, to seize and to use the images linked to these names, the gateways onto some very strange discoveries (of that you can be sure) on the Christian world itself which is known so fallaciously, gateways onto this world which is still in the process of collapsing, of becoming corrupt, of crashing down on you, and from the ruins, the ashes of which you were seeking to flee into its capital itself.' (167)

In fact one of the more chilling moments in the novel is when Butor takes us back to Virgil's Rome

by fading out all the more modern buildings. 'It's decided that in the afternoon you will walk around all this quarter of the city where there is nothing to be seen, as it were, except for these ruins, as the modern-day city and the baroque city somehow retreat to live them in their mighty solitude.' (86). Butor is also taking us back to Mussolini's Rome, as is indicated if we look at Mussolini's speech when he is received in the Capitol by Cremonesi, whom he has promoted from Commissioner to Governor of Rome, with greater powers:

Governatore!

You have before you a period of at least five years to complete what has been begun, and to begin the greater enterprise of the second stage of development.

My ideas are clear, my orders are precise. I am absolutely certain that they will become concrete reality. Within five years, Rome must appear marvellous to all the peoples of the world: vast, well-ordered, powerful, as it was at the time of the first empire of Augustus.

You shall continue to free the trunk of the great oak from everything which at present strangles it. Make open space around the tomb of Augustus, at the Theatre of Marcellus, at the Capitol, at the Pantheon. Everything which sprouted near those monuments in the centuries of decadence must disappear. Within five years, in a vast perspective from Piazza Colonna you must be able to see the bulk of the Pantheon. You must also liberate the majestic temples of Christian Rome from the parasitical and profane constructions which have crept up around them. The monuments of the thousands of years of our history must demonstrate their vastness in the solitude that is necessary.

It is worth remembering that the standard school edition of Virgil in twentieth-century France, the Plessis-Lejay, presented the *Aeneid* as a work which eulogized Rome's divine mission to dominate and civilize the world, claiming that this was Virgil's 'great inner idea which is his own and which became for him the centre towards which everything gravitates.'<sup>18</sup> But the promotion of an empirocentric world in the twentieth century is dangerously redolent of fascist desires and it must not be forgotten that Mussolini used Virgil's text to promote his regime. Towards the end of Butor's novel it becomes apparent that in his vision of Rome Delmont has wilfully suppressed memories of Fascist Italy:

At that time Italy was drunk on the dream of empire and overrun by police, uniformed figures were to be seen in all the stations . . . you said to Henriette, who admitted to you her unease, you said to her 'They don't exist', and she tried vainly to believe this. (231)

Eventually he recognizes the importance of taking responsibility not only within his personal life, but within the wider historical context and declares: 'a cavern which has been within me for a long time [ . . . ] is the communication with an enormous historical cleft.' (276). His only hope of redemption is the articulation of a full recognition of his past. Throughout the train journey and the journey of his self towards discovery, acceptance and reconciliation, Delmont has been clutching an unread book as a talisman. He now plans to write his own story in book form and to present it to Cécile, and acknowledges that the account he gives can only be partial and subjective, will be something which he has fabricated rather than an objective truth which he represents, since even before he has decided to describe his experience, when he looks at the covers of the unread book he imagines the story within:

where there would need to be, for example, the question of a man who is lost in a forest which closes up behind him without his managing even to decide to which side he should now go, to find once again which is the path which brought him there, because his steps leave no trace at all on the heap of dead leaves into which he is now sinking. (201)

It is, of course his own story, but a story which is based upon others: he is in his own version of the Dantean wood, awaiting help from Virgil. Butor speaks of the 'dead leaves' and in a book which is so heavily imbued with Sibylline imagery it is impossible to dissociate leaves from the cryptic papers of the Sibyl which have come to represent literature in general. Delmont is lost in a wood of words, of

fictive representations, unable to find his way to any central, concrete ideas. Once again Butor is parodying the literary tradition of establishing one's identity within Rome: Cicero was one of the earliest contributors to this tradition, and observes in the *Academica*:

Tum ego, 'sunt', inquam, 'ista, Varro; nam nos in nostra urbe pergrinantis errantisque tamquam hospites tui libri quasi domum reduxerunt, ut possemus aliquando qui et ubi essemus agnoscere (1.9)

(Then I said 'You are right, Varro. For we were like foreigners drifting and wandering through our city but your books brought us home, so that we were able to recognise who and where we were)

The book that is designed to act ultimately as his guide remains unexamined on his journey until eventually he realises that he must write it himself, must find his own answers to the urgent questioning of the 'grand veneur', the mythical hunter who haunts his dreams: 'Are you listening to me?' (114), 'What are you waiting for?' (135), 'Where are you?' (151), 'Are you mad?' (183) 'Who are you?' (220)

The wood evokes once again the memories of Aeneas' tour around the future Rome, and reminds us that the centre of Rome, the Capitol, was once just such a wood. While Aeneas arrives at the beginning of the history of Rome and sees in Book 8 a vision of Augustan Rome, Léon comes at the end, and sees a confusing mass of pantheons amongst which he wanders. Aeneas wanders much on his way to found Rome; Léon wanders much within Rome. While Aeneas encounters a number of false images of Rome before he is able to found the city, Delmont's narcissism and short-sightedness lead him to believe that what he has found is real, until he is forced to acknowledge the fact that his prejudices and solipsism have led him to a gross distortion of Rome's identity. His determination to create a Rome in Paris is based upon his inability to appreciate either city properly, and parodies Aeneas' experience.<sup>20</sup> Furthermore, while Aeneas is driven to Rome by 'pietas', responsibilities to his race, his father, his gods, Léon has a bizarrely cold and distant relationship with his children, something like a vague affection combined with a great willingness to live without them. Butor has cast as a twentieth century Aeneas a man who is comically devoid of any of the qualities which lend his prototype any kind of greatness. Right up to the end of the book Butor seems to be looking upon his protagonist with a wry smile: the Aeneas of our times, he who would seek redemption through literature is a seller of typewriters to other people, and his firm is based in a city where one of the major buildings is the Vittoriano, known slangily as 'the typewriter' or 'the wedding cake'. Given Delmont's problems with relationships the emblem of the wedding cake must also be a joke. It is also somewhat ironic that the politically myopic Léon, incapable of understanding the threat of Fascism even as it stands right in front of him, has chosen to live next to the Pantheon at the heart of the Latin quarter, the seat of revolutionary feeling in Paris.

Virgil has come to open Delmont's eyes to the very ambiguity of literature, for his dream undermines the power and glory of a regime which the *Aeneid* had been used to perpetrate. Within *La Modification* the intertexts from *Aeneid* book 8, which stress the ambivalence of history, serve as a corrective to those elements of book 6 which promote a more positive vision of the Roman empire. Delmont has been forced to scrutinize his vision of Rome, to analyse its implications on his personal life, and the references to the immensity of Rome's significance, to the process of turning his conceptions around before his eyes recall Aeneas at the end of book 8 gazing at a magical shield which has the future history of Rome chased upon it. Delmont has the privilege of recognizing that his vision of Rome can only portray a fragment of the whole and that the book which he has sought amidst 'so much danger and wandering' (erreurs) will, in the end, be no more than the reflection of the liberty which he now realises he lacks.

... it is the foundation and the real volume of this myth that Rome is for you, they are the ins and outs, the neighbouring elements of that face under which that immense object was presented to you, trying

to turn it around under your gaze within the historical space in order to advance your knowledge of the links that it has with the conduct and decisions of yourself and those around you. (239)

So to prepare, to allow, for example by means of a book, that future liberty which is out of our reach, to allow it, however minimally, to set itself up, to establish itself

it’s the only possibility I have to delight in its reflection at least which is so admirable, so poignant without there being any question of finding an answer to that enigma which the name of Rome points to within our consciousness or unconsciousness, of taking account even crudely of this centre of marvels and obscurities ... (276)

By the end of the book Delmont is beginning to recognize the immense multivalency of Rome as a cultural icon; the wealth of ideologies embedded in her art makes of her an unrivalled image of the cultural confusions and problems of the late twentieth century, a postmodern image before its time. This realization distinguishes him from the Aeneas at the end of the eighth book, who rejoices with short-sighted joy at all that he beheld:

He marvels at such visions on the shield of Vulcan, his mother’s gift, and knowing not the deeds he rejoices in their image as he raises onto his shoulders the fame and destiny of his descendants. (729-31)

At the beginning of the shield episode Virgil has warned that he could only bear witness to a minuscule part of events - not only is the shield’s texture but also its text beyond all telling ‘clipei non enarrabile textum’ (625). The shield episode seems to represent a felicitous portrayal of history, a moment of respite when Aeneas and the reader can behold the future fulfilment of his mission. Zetzel points out that Virgil has enclosed the chronicle of Roman history within a closed and perfect circle, which mirrors the universe in its order and balance, and in the static pattern of time it portrays it is similar to the sixth book where Aeneas meets his past in the form of his father and beholds the future of the Roman race.<sup>21</sup> It is a circle which seems to be bound in perfect harmony, but for Virgil’s contemporaries the circle of the shield would have been suggestive of the circle of empire: ‘the *orbis* of the shield becomes an emblem of the *orbis* terrarum’. Aeneas is able to rejoice in his shield because he is unable to see this far, to hear, as Auden could, behind the Virgilian lines ‘the weeping of a Muse betrayed.’<sup>22</sup> In the shield he carries the history of his descendants such as Delmont, but Butor reiterates Virgil’s warning through the figure and story of Delmont.

*La Modification* is a novel which itself offers a new journey on each reading, a journey where a new clue or joke of Butor’s corrects our earlier perceptions and readings: it is all too easy to classify, to categorise the figures of Delmont and Cécile, to identify their Romes, and yet Butor has laid a multiplicity of clues to modify these categories, to show that so many of the areas or buildings of Rome by which they become identified are themselves so full of various, shifting histories that any kind of stable identities are impossible. Of course Delmont’s story will itself become inscribed on our pilgrimages to Rome once we have read the book, and as we reach an understanding of how Delmont’s vision of Rome is flawed, partial, wilful, Butor is doing his best to show us how easy it is to fall into the same trap, almost how impossible it is not to. The rich network of allusions and histories running through *La Modification* ensures that we can only take in so much on any one reading, that the journey through the novel can only be partial and various. Perhaps Butor’s best joke is the one he saves until after the end: that even while we believe that we understand Delmont and his history, it is only when we revisit the book that we recognize that we had only seen a fragment of him and of his Rome, that our reading of the book was just as consistently slanted as his reading of Rome. And it is in this way that Butor makes Delmonts of us all.

FIONA COX, who delivered the paper

NOTES

- <sup>1</sup> See Butor, 'L'Espace du roman', *Répertoire II*, p.44: 'Toute fiction s'inscrit [. . .] en notre espace comme voyage, et l'on peut dire à cet égard que c'est là le thème fondamental de toute littérature Romanesque: tout roman qui nous raconte un voyage est donc plus clair, plus explicite que celui qui n'est pas capable d'exprimer métaphoriquement cette distance entre le lieu de la lecture et celui où nous emmène le récit.'
- <sup>2</sup> This is the title of the English translation. Michel Butor, (trans. Jean Stewart), *A Change of Heart* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1958).
- <sup>3</sup> See Eleanor Dand, *Mythological Structures in the works of Michel Butor*, Unpublished PhD thesis, University of Bristol, 1978.  
Jean Duffy, *Butor: La Modification* (London: Grant and Cutler, 1990).  
Mary Lydon, *Perpetuum mobile*, (Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 1980).  
Françoise van Rossum-Guyon, *Critique du roman* (Paris: Gallimard, 1970).
- <sup>4</sup> All translations are our own unless otherwise indicated. All references to *La Modification* are to Michel Butor, *La Modification* (Paris: Minuit, 1957).
- <sup>5</sup> As cited by Thomas Connolly, *Mourning - into - Joy* (Yale University Press: New Haven and London, 1994), 1.
- <sup>6</sup> For an illuminating discussion of this see Jean Duffy, *Signs and Designs: Art and Architecture in the Work of Michel Butor* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2003), 109-110.
- <sup>7</sup> 'I shall further suggest that the name Cecilia was applied to the Christian cult that grew up here not from any association with the Roman *gens* of that name but because the cult concern of the goddess for *caecitas*, blindness, interacted in some way with the same Christian cult.' (ibid, 41)  
  
'Right through the developing cult of Cecilia, to the end of the Middle Ages and beyond, the saint would be associated with *claritas*. The concept permeates Chaucer's treatment of her, for instance in *The Second Nun's Tale*. But this contrasting of confusion and clarity is precisely what must have fuelled the aspirations of the pilgrims who sought relief from their diseased eyes from the Good Goddess in Trastevere.' (ibid, 53).
- <sup>8</sup> *Ibid*, 2. See also 'But within this whole area of change, of mutability, one kind of change - change in the heart - seems to have been Cecilia's particular domain.' (4).
- <sup>9</sup> We owe this point to Diana Spenser.
- <sup>10</sup> We owe this point to Dick Collins.
- <sup>11</sup> It is worth noting that the name of this church 'della Valle' is in direct opposition to Léon's own name, 'Delmont.' We owe this point to Dick Collins.
- <sup>12</sup> See Jean Duffy, *Signs and Designs: Art and Architecture in the Work of Michel Butor* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2003), 113: 'If Cécile represents freedom, it is curious that he should relish the prospect of a freedom that can only be enjoyed because of her absence.'
- <sup>13</sup> J. W. Goethe, *Italian Journey* tr. W.H. Auden and Elizabeth Mayer (London: Penguin, 1962), 129.
- <sup>14</sup> Edward Gibbon, *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* (London: J.B. Bury, 1909-1914), VII, 13.
- <sup>15</sup> See Charles Martindale 'Introduction: The Classic of all Europe', 1-18 in Martindale (ed.) *Cambridge Companion to Virgil* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 5.
- <sup>16</sup> James Zetzel, 'Rome and its traditions' in *Cambridge Companion to Virgil*, 188-203, 191.
- <sup>17</sup> Martindale, op.cit., 5.
- <sup>18</sup> F. Plessis and P. Lejay (eds), *Œuvres de Virgile* (Paris: Hachette, 1919), liii.
- <sup>19</sup> For an interesting discussion of this passage see Edwards, *Writing Rome* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 17.
- <sup>20</sup> Jean Duffy makes many interesting observations in her discussion of Delmont's Roman Paris. op. cit., 138-9.
- <sup>21</sup> Zetzel, op.cit., 201.
- <sup>22</sup> W. H. Auden, 'Secondary Epic' in *Collected Poems*, ed. Edward Mendelson (London: Faber, 1976), 456.  
  
For a discussion of these issues see Cox 'The Presence of the Past: Fama and Fata in the Shield of Aeneas' in *Aeneas Takes the Metro: The Presence of Virgil in Twentieth Century French Literature* (Oxford: Legenda, 2000), 1-15.

# City of God(s): Virgil and Augustine<sup>1</sup>

*A paper given to the Virgil Society on 26 October 2002*

**W**hy talk to the Virgil Society about Augustine, Doctor of the Church, bishop and theologian? The membership card declares that the purpose of the Society is ‘to unite all those who cherish the central educational tradition of Western Europe. Of that tradition Virgil is the symbol.’ For Augustine, Virgil certainly symbolised the central educational tradition of the Roman empire in which he lived, and Virgil also shaped his understanding of his own experience. Sabine MacCormack, in her long-awaited book on Virgil and Augustine, calls him ‘undoubtedly Vergil’s most intelligent and searching ancient reader’.<sup>2</sup> There are questions to be raised about that judgement; and we cannot know about all the intelligent and searching ancient readers whose responses to Virgil do not survive. But of all Virgil’s ancient readers known to us, it is Augustine who tells us most about the experience of reading Virgil, and therefore makes modern readers think about theirs.<sup>3</sup>

If there had been a Virgil Society in Carthage in the late fourth century CE, Augustine would have been a member. He had invested much time, and his parents’ money, in Virgil. Education did not come free: parents in the later Roman empire paid for their sons, and sometimes their daughters, to acquire the 3 Rs and some evidence of literary culture.<sup>4</sup> Quintilian said that the teacher’s task was the correct use of language and exposition of the poets.<sup>5</sup> Three centuries after Quintilian, ‘correct’ language was still Greek as Demosthenes used it or Latin as Cicero used it, and ‘the poets’ meant above all Homer in the Greek-speaking east and Virgil in the Latin-speaking west. Virgil became a school classic almost at once, like Seamus Heaney in the late twentieth century. At school, Augustine learned how to read a text that was much less helpful than a modern book, with line-breaks but without word-divisions or punctuation: there are fine examples of Virgil texts dating from Augustine’s own lifetime or soon after.<sup>6</sup> He learned to hear Virgil’s metre that was so different from the accentual rhythms, the *cursus*, of everyday Latin. This was especially difficult for Romans from North Africa, he observed, because their speech did not differentiate long and short vowels.<sup>7</sup> He learned to interpret vocabulary and cultural allusions from a time that was as far from his everyday world as Shakespeare’s is from present-day students, who also find it hard to hear verse.

What did the *grammatici*, the secondary teachers of the late antique world, do in their Virgil classes? The commentary of Servius, who was probably Augustine's contemporary, seems very familiar to present-day readers who have had a traditional classical education.<sup>8</sup> Servius asks whether we are reading the correct text, or whether it should be emended. He discusses why Virgil uses a particular word, and what he means by it, on the assumption that the best way to find out is to consider Virgil's usage in other works, or to compare the usage of other classical authors. He explains references to people and rituals and other allusions. Some teachers, according to Augustine (*De ordine* 2.12.37), took this to extremes, asking 'what was the name of Euryalus's mother?' But they were expected to know all the answers: 'we are annoyed with a master who cannot answer some question of detail, rather than thinking it is Virgil's fault that he has nothing to say' (*de utilitate credendi* 13). Commentary, then as now, allowed for displays of learning. Augustine's contemporary Jerome, who (as he often remarked) was taught by Donatus, challenged the scholarship of an opponent by listing commentaries. No doubt Rufinus has read Asper on Virgil and Sallust, Vulcatius on Cicero's speeches, Victorinus on Cicero's dialogues and on Terence, Donatus on Virgil, and the commentators on Plautus, Lucretius, Horace, Persius and Lucan?<sup>9</sup>

Augustine complained (*Conf.* 1.18.29) that in his own education, a mistake in grammar or a false quantity brought greater disgrace than a moral lapse did, and Servius lends support to this claim by frequently using Virgil as the occasion for a discussion of grammar. Robert Kaster observes, in his illuminating book on late-antique *grammatici*, that Virgil is almost incidental to Servius' purpose, which all too often is to tell his pupils 'Virgil does this, but you mustn't.'<sup>10</sup> (There is some resemblance to the legendary schoolmaster: 'Boys, this term you are to have the privilege of reading the *Oedipus at Colonus* of Sophocles, a veritable treasure-house of grammatical peculiarities.') But Servius did not always ignore the hard questions about religion and morality. He asked, for instance, what we are to think when Virgil, at the outset of his poem, calls Juno *saeva*, 'savage'. How can she be *saeva* when her name comes from *iuvare*, 'to help'? Is this an archaic use of *saeva* to mean 'mighty', as in Ennius, or does Virgil mean that in this context the Trojans experience her as *saeva*?<sup>11</sup>

Robert Kaster's work shows the impact of the *grammatici* on the Roman educated elite. It was not just a matter of flaunting Virgil like an old school tie,<sup>12</sup> or of displaying shared cultural capital, as in the British parliamentary debates of the earlier nineteenth century, when everyone was expected to recognise a Virgilian tag. (Chris Stray reports sceptical comments that the great majority of these nineteenth-century quotations came from *Aeneid* 1. This may help to explain why the uneducated diviner Albicerius, known to Augustine, could usually identify the line of Virgil that someone had in mind: there may not have been many lines that were widely familiar.<sup>13</sup>) In their study of Virgil, students taught by *grammatici* developed an acute awareness of words, their associations, and their impact, and this awareness could have the same practical importance as a present-day politician's choice of a phrase or a slogan. Present-day students taking classical degree subjects are assured that their communication skills equip them for almost any job. They are not told that if they cannot effectively deploy their culture and their persuasive arguments, a human life may be lost, a family reduced to poverty, a city devastated by rioting or punitive taxation: but when Augustine was at school, that could have been true. The readers of Virgil, as members of the educated elite, might have to convince or mollify the local representative of imperial government as he sat in judgement, and it helped if he could be made aware that the person trying to persuade him belonged to the same cultural club.<sup>14</sup>

Augustine's family belonged, precariously, to that local elite. His father was prosperous enough to be a city councillor, one of those who had to take unwelcome responsibility for the local budget and the imperial tax bill, but not so prosperous that it was easy for him to fund Augustine's education. This was a major investment for a family with other children, and the expectation was that Augustine would make a career in the imperial civil service, as a legal advisor. Instead, he became a teacher of rhetoric, first in Carthage where he was himself a student, then in Rome, then in the imperial capital Milan, where he had a publicly funded chair. His *Confessions* discuss this phase of his life, but none of his extant writings come from it. Everything comes from the time after he abandoned his career and his intended marriage for a life of prayer and study, which in turn became a life of pastoral work as priest and bishop.<sup>15</sup> From his immense range of philosophical and theological writing, there follow a few examples of how Augustine read Virgil at different times in his life.

The first passage comes from one of his earliest extant works, dated to 386 when he was 32. It is from a philosophical dialogue *Against the Academics*, which challenges the philosophical scepticism that says we cannot know anything for certain.<sup>16</sup> Augustine is heavily indebted to Cicero for information and for the style of a philosophical dialogue. *Against the Academics* takes place in the *otium*, the civilised leisure, of a country estate. As Peter Brown comments, the setting and the company is less distinguished than Cicero's: the group includes 'a pious old woman, two uneducated cousins, and two private pupils, aged about 16'.<sup>17</sup> The country estate, a little villa at Cassiciacum, is borrowed from a friend, a *grammaticus* also from North Africa, and several modern scholars have been reminded of a reading party. Augustine had recently resigned his chair, waiting until the long vacation so as not to inconvenience his students; it was a relief, because his health had suffered from his heavy teaching load (*Conf.* 9.2.2). Cicero's (now lost) *Hortensius* had long since taught him that, after abandoning a public career, one should lead the philosophic life, living simply and quietly, pursuing wisdom and discussing it with congenial friends.<sup>18</sup> In the dialogue, Augustine's pupils discuss philosophy, debating difficult questions about wisdom and knowledge. They also read Virgil with Augustine, working through (*recensio*) books 2 to 4 of the *Aeneid*, with a lecture (*tractatio*) from Augustine when it was needed (*c.Acad.* 2.4.10); *tractatio*, as he explained elsewhere (*De Doctrina Christiana* 1.1) is a matter of finding out what we need to understand and giving expression to our understanding. Although he intended to seek baptism when he returned to Milan, he evidently did not think that Christian commitment required him to abandon Virgil. In these early writings, though never afterwards, Virgil is still *poeta noster*.

In his final retrospect on his writings, the *Retractationes*, Augustine said that in the works written before his baptism, he had abandoned worldly hopes but was still too much 'puffed up', *inflatus*, by his familiarity with secular learning.<sup>19</sup> This does not mean simply 'too much Virgil': Cicero is always the more pervasive influence in Augustine's work. But, unlike those nineteenth-century members of parliament, he knew all of Virgil, and in the range of his writings there are quotations from every book of the *Aeneid* and from the *Georgics* and *Eclogues*.<sup>20</sup> In the pre-baptism works, he does not constantly quote from or allude to Virgil. But Virgil comes to his mind with illustrations of a philosophical point, or with allusions and phrases that reinforce the sense of a culture that he shares both with his group of friends and with the expected audience for his book. (One of the challenges of present-day teaching is the absence of a shared culture: it is no longer possible to quote Shakespeare or the Bible and expect recognition.) *De ordine* supplies a striking example of Virgil as common ground:

*Hic ego multo uberius cernens abundare laetitia meas, quam vel optare aliquando ausus sum, versum istum gestiens effudi: 'si pater ille deus faciat!' Perducet enim ipse, si sequimur, quo nos ire iubet atque ubi ponere sedem, qui dat modo augurium nostrisque inlabitur animis. Nec enim altus Apollo est, qui in speluncis, in montibus, in nemoribus nidore turis pecudumque calamitate concitatus implet insanos, sed alius profecto est, alius ille altus veridicus atque ipsa - quid enim verbis ambiam? - veritas, cuius vates sunt, quicumque possunt esse sapientes. Ergo adgrediamur, Licenti, freti pietate cultores, et vestigiis nostris ignem perniciosum fumosarum cupiditatum opprimamus.* (De ordine 1.4.10)

Realising that my happiness was more lavishly abundant than I had even ventured to wish, I burst out with the line 'If God the Father grant it!' He who gives us the augury, who slips into our souls, will lead us, if we follow, where he tells us to go and to settle. It is not Apollo who is lofty, Apollo who in caves and mountains and groves is stimulated by rich incense and slaughtered cattle to take over madmen: no, another is the lofty truth-teller and (why use evasive words?) truth itself, whose prophets are those capable of wisdom. Let us go on, Licentius, worshippers relying on faithfulness, and tread under our feet the pernicious fires of smouldering desires.

Augustine here speaks in a moment of religious emotion, and Virgil provides the words for his invocation of help from the Christian god: *sic pater ille deus faciat* (from Aeneas's response to Mezentius's challenge, *Aeneid* 10.875). Augustine's student Licentius, and others in his envisaged audience, can be expected to recognise the quotation and complete it: *sic altus Apollo*. This prayer to Apollo calls to mind another, Aeneas' prayer at Delos (*Aeneid* 3.88-9), which Augustine paraphrases in such a way that it remains immediately recognisable:

*quem sequimur? quove ire iubes? ubi ponere sedes?  
da, pater, augurium atque animis inlabere nostris.*

Then he rejects the affirmation, *sic altus Apollo*, that he did not need to quote. For this purpose he adapts words and phrases from a third Virgilian prayer, again not quoted:

*Summe deum, sancti custos Soractis Apollo,  
quem primi colimus, cui pineus ardor acervo  
pascitur, et medium freti pietate per ignem  
cultores multa premimus vestigia pruna...*

This prayer of Arruns (*Aeneid* 11.785-8) that his spear will hit Camilla is appropriated to proclaim the superiority of Christian over pagan faith.<sup>21</sup>

Many Christian writers of the late fourth century use the same tactic of appropriating Virgil for their purposes. It might be called 'supersessionist', by analogy with Christian appropriation of Jewish scripture. Virgil is the shared cultural capital, and they draw on him to affirm their own culture and to lend authority to their literary and doctrinal claims.<sup>22</sup> Prudentius and Claudian are well known examples; one of Augustine's pupils at Cassiciacum is less well known. Licentius, son of Romanianus who had helped to finance Augustine's education, is described in *contra Academicos* as over-excited by reading *Aeneid* 2-4:

*quo tamen opere Licentius in poeticae studium sic inflammatus est, ut aliquantum mihi etiam reprimendus videbatur.* (C.Acad. 2.4.10)

This work so inflamed Licentius' passion for poetry that I thought he needed a little calming down.

Licentius continued to be passionate about poetry. Almost a decade later he wrote Augustine a poem, in a style like that of Claudian, including several allusions to Virgil; but by then Augustine was concerned not with the merits of Licentius' language, but with his lack of commitment to the religious life.<sup>23</sup> His own experience must have helped him to understand why Licentius responded so intensely to Virgil, but his account of this experience comes from the *Confessions*, written a decade later and in quite different circumstances. When Augustine wrote the *Confessions*, he was a bishop; he was under personal attack from religious opponents; he wanted to acknowledge (Latin *confessus sum*) what God had done in one human life. Some readers of *Confessions* emphasise his attempts to counter the opposition, others emphasise his attempt to understand and to give thanks for what God has done.<sup>24</sup> His account of Virgil may be read from either perspective.

In book 1 of *Confessions*, Augustine challenged the priorities of his education. The basic books, those that taught him to read and write and count, were generally thought to be far inferior to Virgil, whose works are *honestiores et uberiores*: 'more respected, and there is more to them' (*Conf* 1.13.21). Augustine disagreed. Why commit to memory the wanderings, *errores*, of some man called Aeneas? The young Augustine feels *miseria*, wretchedness, for the adulterous Dido who dies of love when separated from Aeneas. But this is empty compassion: he shares the feelings of someone who does not exist. He himself is objectively *miser*, wretched, because he is separated from the love for God and is dying a spiritual death: but he fails to recognise the true object of love. In book 3 of *Confessions* Augustine returns to the question why people enjoy the sadness prompted by tragic drama, as he saw it performed in Carthage. Virgil perhaps shaped his awareness of Carthage as a city with a theatre,<sup>25</sup> since the theatre is so prominent when Aeneas sees Carthage being built with all ancient conveniences:

*hic alta theatris  
fundamenta locant alii, immanisque columnas  
rupibus excidunt, scaenis decora apta futuris* (*Aen.* 1.427-9)

Virgil was also dramatised at Carthage, and the evidence for this comes from Augustine: 'a few of you know from books, and many more of you from the theatre, how Aeneas went down to the underworld'.<sup>26</sup> This remark comes from a sermon. Augustine did not often use Virgil in preaching, and when he did, he was careful to explain what 'their' poet had said, distancing himself and his Christian audience from any expectation that they were classically educated. But his sermons use techniques of Scriptural exegesis that he had learned from the *grammatici* and as a *grammaticus* expounding Virgil. In his *tractationes* on the gospel of John, his *enarrationes* of the Psalms, and his regular preaching, he focused on words and phrases, and interpreted them with the help of other passages as if Scripture, like the works of Virgil, had a single author.<sup>27</sup>

Scripture, for Augustine, teaches truth, whereas Virgil offers fiction that instils false values and false beliefs. In *Confessions*, he also shows Virgil used for training in rhetoric, that is, for the effective marketing of falsehood and false emotion. Where Servius confronted the theological problem of *saeva Juno*, Augustine's teacher set a competition: who could best convey, in prose, the movement of her anger and resentment? This sounds like a promising topic, but Augustine, in retrospect, asked why society should reward a schoolboy for imitating such emotions (*Conf* 1.17.27). The language in which he discusses this episode confronts Virgil with Scripture by moving between the classical Latin of a late-antique education and the Biblical Latin that came from Hebrew by way of translated Greek. The

'essay title' for the rhetoric competition is almost a hexameter, [*dolentis quod*] *non posset Italia Teucrorum auertere regem*, a minimally adapted quotation from *Aeneid* 1.38, *nec posse Italia Teucrorum auertere regem*. The conditions for the prize are set out in a ponderous Ciceronian sentence,<sup>28</sup> such as the boys were expected to produce:

*ille dicebat laudabilius, in quo pro dignitate adumbratae personae irae ac doloris similior affectus eminebat verbis sententias congruenter vestientibus.*

The speaker who earned most praise was he who most closely expressed those feelings of anger and resentment, taking into account the status of the imagined character, and clothing the thoughts in appropriate language.

Then Augustine challenges Cicero with Biblical Latin: *ut quid mihi illud, o vera vita, deus meus?* For anyone who did not know the Latin Bible, *ut quid* would sound very strange: it is Hebrew idiom, followed by phrases that evoke the gospel of John.<sup>29</sup> Augustine continues in Biblical mode, but, as his translators have noted, Virgil reappears in his image of the young vine bearing worthless fruit for the birds to peck at:

*Laudes tuae, domine, laudes tuae per scripturas tuas suspenderent palmitem cordis mei, et non raperetur per inania nugatorum turpis praeda volatilibus.*

Your praises, Lord, your praises expressed through your scriptures could have propped up the vine-shoot of my heart, and it would not have been snatched away by empty trifles, 'a shameful prey for the birds'.

*Turpis praeda volatilibus* evokes Virgil's line *et turpis auibus praedam fert uva racemos* (*G.* 2.60). Virgil, who ensured that young Augustine did not bear fruit, supplies the language for promise spoiled. Perhaps also, as Philip Burton suggests, Augustine evokes Jesus' parable of the sower (*Mt.* 13.4), in which some of the seed fell beside the road, and birds came and ate it up.<sup>30</sup>

So Virgil, in *Confessions*, still provides words that express Augustine's experience. He also provides narrative structures. The undramatic travels of Augustine, from Thagaste to Milan, are analogous to the Mediterranean wanderings of Aeneas, also in half-understood obedience to the commands of a father-God. In the *Confessions*, at the harbour of Carthage, our hero tells lies to a woman who loves him (*Conf.* 5.8.14). Secretly, on a journey prompted by God, he sails away to Rome, leaving her frantic with grief on the shore; and her grief displaces the future glories of Rome from the narrative.<sup>31</sup> But the woman frantic with grief is not Dido, who tried to obstruct the purpose of Jupiter: it is Augustine's mother Monica, who furthered God's purpose with her prayers even when she did not understand what that purpose was. Dido prayed at the shrines of pagan gods, and died; her prayers went unanswered. Monica prays at the shrine of St Cyprian, the martyred bishop of Carthage, and returns to her normal life; her prayers are heard. Augustine, unlike Aeneas, does not establish himself in Rome. Monica follows him and brings him back to his true home; her tears, and her piety, maintain the link even when he seems most distant.

In *Confessions* Augustine shows how far he has moved from his early passion for Virgil, and ensures that Scripture triumphs over Virgil. He does not express anguish that he is still imbued with Virgil, that he taught his own students Virgil, and that Virgil is still the basis of education. Jerome described a nightmare of being dragged before the judge (*Jer. Ep.* 22.30). Asked for his name and status, he declares, in the best tradition of the Christian martyrs, 'I am a Christian!' But the judge

replies ‘You are lying: you are a Ciceronian.’ Augustine does not record a nightmare vision ‘you are a member of the Virgil Society’. He had found a solution in a book he began shortly before he wrote *Confessions*. The first two books of *Christian Teaching* (*de doctrina Christiana*) are concerned with the task of interpreting and explaining Scripture, that is, with the task Augustine had undertaken when he became a priest.<sup>32</sup>

What does a Christian *grammaticus* need to know? *Christian Teaching* draws a distinction (2.74) between human culture that requires a pact with other members of a human society, and superstition that requires a pact with demons. Language is an agreed system of communication among humans, and can be used for good or for bad purposes. If the words of magical spells are used performatively, to cast a spell, the speakers have made a pact with demons: but poets usually refer to magic rather than teach it. Augustine does not specifically mention Virgil, but it would be easy to conclude that neither Virgil, nor a student reading *Aeneid* 4, is actually communicating with demons. Reading or quoting the *Aeneid*, then, would be harmless evocation of shared human culture. There are no doubt more useful kinds of education than the classical education, but all human customs are imperfect. Moreover, there is Scriptural and Christian precedent for ‘spoiling the Egyptians’, that is, taking treasure from an idolatrous culture and reworking it for the service of the true God.<sup>33</sup> Augustine did not have to renounce all the expertise he had learned; Virgil could be used to reinforce a Christian message.<sup>34</sup>

In *Confessions*, Augustine reworked Virgil for his own journey from Carthage to Rome, but that city of Virgil and of classical tradition is strangely absent from *Confessions*. Evander gave Aeneas a tour of the city (*Aen.* 8.307-69), but there is no such tourism in Augustine: his two visits to Rome, both lasting several months, leave almost no trace in *Confessions* or in his other writings.<sup>35</sup> The title of this paper points to Augustine’s most sustained engagement with Rome and with Virgil, in *City of God*.<sup>36</sup> It is often said that *City of God* is Augustine’s response to the sack of Rome, in the year 410, by an army of Goths. This is not exact. His response to the Gothic sack comes in a small number of sermons preached in 410 and 411, when his major concern was not Rome, but the North African peace process. He was planning for the Carthage conference of 411 that might at last end terrorism and rioting between rival Christian groups in North Africa. In the sermons that address the sack of Rome, he says (as Francois Paschoud observed) what he always said in time of tribulation.<sup>37</sup> He starts from the readings for the day, and when he eventually reaches the recent disaster, he exhorts his congregation to get it into perspective. Terrible things have happened, innocent people suffered torture and rape and murder, but human history has known far worse: the Goths pulled out after three days and the city is still standing. Those who died are safe with God; those who survive should think about their sins. This latest horror is one more example of the great olive-press at work, leaving exhausted olive-lees but producing pure gold oil. What Augustine does not do, in sermons or in letters, is to reach for Virgil and cry out in anguish *urbs antiqua ruit, multos dominata per annos*. Jerome reaches for Virgil, juxtaposing Virgil on the fall of Troy with Isaiah on the fall of Babylon: but Jerome was writing to highly educated Christians who had personally suffered in the Gothic assault, and Rome was the city of his youth and his education.<sup>38</sup> Augustine was preaching, to anyone who came to church, and his interpretation was shaped by Scripture. He reached for Virgil in response to a request that he should speak to a different audience.

*City of God* is Augustine’s response, not to the sack of Rome, but to the complaints of refugees from the sack of Rome. Several members of the Roman senatorial elite had fled south through Italy and Sicily. It was a short sea-crossing to Carthage, and they had land or friends in North Africa. So

Romans escaping from a devastated city found refuge in Carthage as Aeneas had done; and in this now Roman city that had once been Rome's greatest enemy, they argued that Rome had fallen at last because its gods were angry at Christian neglect. This was a centuries-old explanation for the inexplicable: 'no rain, blame the Christians' was proverbial (CD 2.3). Marcellinus, the imperial commissioner in charge of the peace process, asked Augustine for a rhetorically impressive response to the all too familiar arguments against Christian belief (Aug. *Ep.*138). Augustine took the opportunity to engage with Rome: not the late-antique city that, on the evidence of his writings, made so little impact on his life, but Rome to whom the gods had given empire without end, Rome the eternal city of history and culture. In *City of God*, this means Rome as it was constructed by a late-antique education. *City of God* is Augustine's most consistently Ciceronian book, whether his subject matter is ancient Rome or ancient Israel, Platonist philosophy or the evidence for miracles. He deploys Terence and Sallust, also key texts of the classical curriculum; he uses Varro for Roman religion, Livy for examples of Roman virtue and Roman disasters, Apuleius for philosophy.<sup>39</sup> But Rome, above all, means Virgil.

Augustine's preface to *City of God* begins with a magnificent Ciceronian sentence stating the purpose and scope of his book: to defend God's city against those who prefer their own gods to its founder.

*Gloriosissimam civitatem Dei*<sup>40</sup> *sive in hoc temporum cursu, cum inter impios peregrinatur ex fide vivens (Hab.2.4), sive in illa stabilitate sedis aeternae, quam nunc expectat per patientiam (Rom.8.25), quoadusque iustitia convertatur in iudicium (Ps. 93.15), deinceps adeptura per excellentiam victoria ultima et pace perfecta, hoc opere instituto et mea ad te promissione debito defendere adversus eos qui conditori eius deos suos praeferunt, fili carissime Marcelline, suscepi, magnum opus et arduum, sed Deus adiutor noster est (Ps. 61.9). Nam scio quibus viribus opus sit, ut persuadeatur superbis quanta sit virtus humilitatis, qua fit ut omnia terrena cacumina temporali mobilitate nutantia non humano usurpata fastu, sed divina gratia donata celsitudo transcendat. Rex enim et conditor civitatis huius, de qua loqui instituimus, in scriptura populi sui sententiam divinae legis aperuit, qua dictum est: Deus superbis resistit, humilibus autem dat gratiam (Prov. 3.34). Hoc vero, quod Dei est, superbae quoque animae spiritus inflatus adfectat amatque sibi in laudibus dici: parcere subiectis et debellare superbos (Aen. 6.853). Unde etiam de terrena civitate, quae cum dominari adpetit, etsi populi serviant, ipsa ei dominandi libido dominatur, non est praetereundum silentio quidquid dicere suscepti huius operis ratio postulat et facultas datur (De Civitate Dei, praefatio)*

The most glorious city of God, in this sequence of time, lives by faith among the impious, a foreigner among them. It now awaits in steadfastness, until justice returns in judgement, the security of its everlasting place, which it will achieve hereafter by its final victory and perfect peace. This city, my dear son Marcellinus, I have undertaken to defend, in this work promised to you, against those who prefer their own gods to its founder. The task is great and arduous, but God is our helper. I know what strength will be needed to convince the proud of the power of humility. This power exalts it above all the summits of this world: they sway in the instability of time, and it surpasses them not by human arrogance, but by God's gift of grace. For the king and founder of this city which is our theme has published the statement of the divine law in his people's Scripture: 'God withstands the proud but gives grace to the humble.' This prerogative of God is claimed for itself by the swollen pride of an arrogant soul, which loves to hear itself praised in the line 'to spare the conquered and beat down the proud'. So I must also speak of the earthly city, which seeks to dominate, but is itself dominated by the lust to dominate even while nations serve it. I cannot pass over in silence what this work requires, as the occasion offers.

This preface is as full of Scriptural allusions as the prayer in *De ordine* was of Virgilian allusions. Augustine directly confronts Scripture with Virgil as authoritative statements on the city of God and the city of this world. God's law is stated in Scripture: he withstands the proud but gives grace to the humble, *superbis resistit, humilibus autem dat gratiam*. But human pride claims this role for itself, and delights in hearing itself praised in the verse 'to spare the subject and fight down the proud', *parcere subiectis et debellare superbos*. Writing for educated readers, Augustine need not name Virgil as author of this famous line, or Rome as the eager audience.

Augustine must, then, also discuss the city of this world, which is dominated by its own desire to dominate. It would be easy to conclude (and through the centuries many readers have done so) that pagan Rome is the city of this world, and the Christian church is the city of God. That conclusion would be reinforced by the opening chapter of *City of God*, which points out that many Romans have survived to attack the city of God only because they took refuge in its holy places, that is, in the churches of Rome that the Goths regarded as places of sanctuary. By the end of book 1 Augustine has made it clear that it is not so simple. Citizens of God's city, those who love God, live and work in the city of this world; there are citizens of the earthly city, those who love its rewards, who are members of the Christian church (*CD* 1.35). But in the opening chapters he moves straight from the sack of Rome to Virgil as representative of the earthly city's culture. Virgil is one of the authors so highly regarded that people will pay money to learn about them; indeed, they will give the teachers a salary from public funds and a respected status. Virgil in particular is thought to be the best of poets, and that is why children read him at an age when they will not forget him (*CD* 1.3).

*City of God* prompts the question whether Augustine really was, as Sabine MacCormack thinks, the most searching and intelligent ancient reader of Virgil. Augustine produces brilliant rhetorical challenges to Virgil on the gods of Rome, as he does to Livy on Lucretia and to Cicero on Regulus as models of Roman virtue. But he does not offer a reading of Virgil: he uses Virgil for another kind of rhetorical exercise, namely deconstructing the opponent's case. The same quotations recur like a damning admission made by an opponent: 'the Trojans carrying their conquered gods' (*Aen.* 1.67-8), 'all the gods left, abandoning shrines and altars' (*Aen.* 2.351-2). Is Augustine giving himself an easy target? He could reply that, for all those Roman citizens whose minds are still impregnated with Virgil read in youth, this is what Rome is. In Augustine's sermons on the sack of Rome, Rome is the Romans, the people who live in the city. In *City of God*, Rome is the construct made by its poets and historians and transmitted to those who read their works: to borrow a phrase from Brian Stock, this literature is the 'societal memory'.<sup>41</sup> Augustine said that he had to engage with the literature, because educated Romans kept quiet about Rome's disastrous history, and allowed the uneducated to think it was true that the gods had always protected them. 'I had to show, from the books their authors had written about past history, that it was far otherwise than they think' (*CD* 4.1). Virgil, as in all Augustine's writings after his early dialogues, is 'their' poet, their famous poet, their most famous poet (*CD* 5.12, 15.9). Virgil is therefore the authoritative spokesman for 'their' culture; that is how Augustine's near-contemporary Macrobius used him, setting in Rome of Augustine's time, perhaps in the very year Augustine first visited Rome, a philosophical dialogue in celebration of Roman tradition.<sup>42</sup>

Virgil is most prominent in the first five books of *City of God*, those that refute the claim that worship of the traditional gods brings worldly success. Augustine uses Virgil to reveal the truth about

Rome's conquered or neglectful gods, usually emphasising that he is quoting the very words of 'their' most famous poet. On one occasion, surprisingly, he does not take the opportunity to quote or mention Virgil: perhaps Virgil was so ingrained in his envisaged audience that he did not need to say anything, but usually he drove his point home. In *City of God* 2.4, Augustine describes the rites of Berecynthia as they were celebrated at Carthage when he was young. Virgil's Berecynthia, mother of all the gods, is used by Anchises as an image of imperial Rome and her offspring. She wears the turreted crown of a city goddess, and embraces all the other gods as she rides in her triumphal chariot through the cities of Phrygia:

*En huius, nate, auspiciis illa incluta Roma  
imperium terris, animos aequabit Olympo,  
septemque una sibi muro circumdabit arces,  
felix prole virum: qualis Berecynthia mater  
invehitur curru Phrygias turrata per urbes  
laeta deum partu, centum complexa nepotes,  
omnis caelicolas, omnis super alta tenentis.* (Aen. 6. 781-7)

Augustine's Berecynthia is worshipped with obscene ceremonial that would disgrace any mortal mother:

*veniebamus etiam nos aliquando adulescentes ad spectacula ludibriaque  
sacrilegiorum, spectabamus arrepticios, audiebamus symphonicos, ludis turpissimis,  
qui diis deabusque exhibebantur, oblectabamur, Caelesti virgini et Berecynthiae matri  
omnium, ante cuius lecticam die solemni lavationis eius talia per publicum  
cantabantur a nequissimis scaenicis, qualia, non dico matrem deorum, sed matrem  
qualiumcumque senatorum vel quorumlibet honestorum virorum, immo vero qualia nec  
matrem ipsorum scaenicorum deceret audire.* (De Civitate Dei 2.4)

When I was a young man I used to go to sacrilegious shows and entertainments. I watched the antics of madmen; I listened to singing boys; I thoroughly enjoyed the most degrading spectacles put on in honour of gods and goddesses - in honour of the virgin Caelestis and of Berecynthia mother of all. On the yearly festival of Berecynthia's purification the lowest kind of actors sang, in front of her litter, songs unfit for the ears of even the mother of one of those mountebanks, to say nothing of the mother of a senator, or of any decent citizen; while as for the Mother of the Gods - !<sup>43</sup>

Yet, Augustine continues (2.5), her demonic power deceived Scipio, chosen by Rome as the best of Romans and worthy to receive her image. Should we conclude that Virgil too was deceived by demons, or that he knew he was telling lies? In one of the sermons he preached after the sack of Rome, Augustine imagined asking Virgil how he had come to claim that Jupiter gave Rome empire without limit, imperium sine fine, when nothing in this life is permanent. Virgil, he speculates, would answer 'Yes, I know, but I was selling words to the Romans and had to say what they wanted to hear. At least I made Jupiter say it rather than me: the god was false and the poet lied. And I did say elsewhere in my own person "not Roman state nor kingdoms doomed to die".'<sup>44</sup>

If Augustine's audience had asked naively 'Is Virgil true?' the answer could be 'Of course not, it's all invention', or 'yes, the *Aeneid* is a true representation of false gods and of misguided Roman belief'. Augustine attacks Virgil's poetry in *Confessions* because it is not true and in *City of God* because it is. In *Confessions*, the *errores* of Aeneas are analogous to the physical and spiritual *errores*

of Augustine, but in *City of God*, the *errores* are Virgil's. But perhaps *City of God* gives Virgil greater status because Augustine takes seriously what he thinks Virgil says. Virgil, who supplied emotion for the self-indulgence of the young, or fine words and phrases that can be reapplied without their contexts or even to refute their contexts, is now the authoritative source for Roman religion and for Roman sense of what it is to be Roman. Augustine contributed to Virgil's exceptional status in western tradition: of all Augustine's works, *City of God* was the most often and the most carefully copied.<sup>45</sup> But in *City of God* the cultural *imperium* of Virgil is like the *imperium* of Rome.<sup>46</sup> It is not god-given *imperium sine fine*: Virgil, like Rome, has no special place in the history of the world or in God's purposes, either as the vehicle of good or as the enemy of good. Virgil, like Rome, is a very impressive example of the flawed human culture that is all we can achieve on this earth since human pride first prompted disobedience to God's will. He is a spokesman for Roman tradition and for Platonist philosophy: and he is usually wrong. He thinks, for example, that passions come from the body, whereas Augustine thinks that the corruption of the body was the punishment, not the cause, of sin; and he is wrong about punishment after death.<sup>47</sup> As Augustine's book progresses beyond refutation of the claims of Roman gods, Virgil, like Rome, becomes less and less prominent. Rome is brought into perspective by other empires, and displaced by the story of ancient Israel; Virgil, like other Roman authors, is displaced by Scripture. The poet who shaped the experience of Augustine, and expressed the culture of Rome, is no longer very important.

Augustine, then, does not offer commentary on Virgil or new readings of Virgil, but he does offer a response to Virgil that is unusual in western tradition.<sup>48</sup> This response requires Augustine's readers to think about their own reading of Virgil in a culture that no longer shares Virgil's expressed beliefs about the gods, or empire, or love, or heroism. Do we read Virgil for the enjoyment of emotion that does not issue in action? Do we take seriously, to believe or to disbelieve, what Virgil says about life and death, human emotions and religion? Or do we read him for the delight and the reassurance of a shared culture, a Virgil society that can take from Virgil what it wants and for its own purposes?

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## NOTES

- <sup>1</sup> My thanks to Jonathan Foster, who invited me to speak to the Virgil Society, and to Charles Martindale, who read a draft of the paper. Translations are mine unless otherwise credited.
- <sup>2</sup> *The Shadows of Poetry: Vergil in the Mind of Augustine* (Berkeley Ca., 1998), xv.
- <sup>3</sup> For readers of Virgil, see further P.Courcelle, *Lecteurs païens et lecteurs chrétiens de l'Énéide* (Paris, 1984).
- <sup>4</sup> C.Dionisotti, 'From Ausonius' Schooldays? A Schoolbook and its Relatives', *JRS* 72 (1982) 83-125.
- <sup>5</sup> *Inst.Or.1.4.2: recte loquendi scientiam et poetarum enarrationem.*
- <sup>6</sup> M.B.Parkes, *Pause and Effect: an introduction to the history of punctuation in the West* (Aldershot, 1992).
- <sup>7</sup> *De doctr. Chr* 4.10.24; for a brief comment on the transition to *cursus*, see G.Clark (ed.) *Augustine: Confessions, Books I-IV* (Cambridge, 1995), 13.
- <sup>8</sup> D.Fowler, 'The Virgil Commentary of Servius', in C.A.Martindale (ed.) *The Cambridge Companion to Virgil* (Cambridge, 1997), 73-8; R.A.Kaster, *Guardians of Language: the grammarian and society in late antiquity* (Berkeley Ca., 1988), especially pp. 169-97 on Servius.
- <sup>9</sup> Jerome, *contra Rufinum* 1.16 (PL 23.410); for his repeated references to 'Donatus, my instructor', see J.N.D.Kelly, *Jerome: his life, writings and controversies* (London, 1975), 11.
- <sup>10</sup> Kaster, l.c.
- <sup>11</sup> Cited by Fowler, 74.
- <sup>12</sup> The phrase is borrowed from Kelly, l.c.
- <sup>13</sup> C.A.Stray, *Classics Transformed* (Oxford, 1998), 66. Albicerius: Augustine *c.Acad.* 1.6.18, with W.Klingshirn, 'The figure of Albicerius the diviner in Augustine's *Contra Academicos*', *Studia Patristica XXXVIII* (Leuven, 2001) 219-23.

- <sup>14</sup> Peter Brown, *Power and Persuasion in Late Antiquity* (Wisconsin, 1992), especially 39.
- <sup>15</sup> S.Lancel, *St Augustine* (English translation London, 2002), is a recent and sympathetic account.
- <sup>16</sup> See further John Rist, *Augustine: ancient thought baptized* (Cambridge, 1994), 41-91. Rist translates the title *Contra Academicos* as *Against the Sceptics*.
- <sup>17</sup> Peter Brown, *Augustine of Hippo: a biography* (rev.ed. London, 2000), 113.
- <sup>18</sup> *Conf* 3.4.7-8; see further M.Testard, *Saint Augustin et Cicéron* (Paris, 1958), I.19-39.
- <sup>19</sup> *Retr.* Prolog. 3. Underlying *inflat* is 1 Cor. 8.1, *scientia inflat, caritas aedificat* (a favourite quotation from Scripture, used e.g. *De Doctr.Christ.* 2.148).
- <sup>20</sup> H.Hagendahl, *The Latin Fathers and the Classics* (Goteburg, 1958).
- <sup>21</sup> Dr J.B.Stanfiel is developing, from his PhD thesis (*St Augustine's Platonic Sources as Intertexts*, University College London, 2001), work on Virgilian intertexts in Augustine.
- <sup>22</sup> R.Rees (ed.) *Romane memento: Vergil in the fourth century* (London, fc) will be helpful here.
- <sup>23</sup> *Aug. Ep.* 26 includes the poem; see further D.Shanzer, 'Arcanum Varronis iter: Licentius's verse epistle to Augustine', *Revue des Etudes Augustiniennes* 37 (1991) 110-43.
- <sup>24</sup> See further G.Clark, *Augustine: Confessions* (Cambridge, 1993; rev.ed. Bristol, 2004)
- <sup>25</sup> See further Robert Markus, *The End of Ancient Christianity* (Cambridge, 1990), 110-23; he comments (123) that a 'very high proportion' of the sermons in which Augustine discusses the theatre were preached at Carthage.
- <sup>26</sup> *ser.* 241.5 (PL 38.1136). Augustine's sermons are brilliantly translated by Edmund Hill O.P. in the continuing series *The Works of St Augustine for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* (Villanova, Pa), ed. John E.Rotelle OSA.
- <sup>27</sup> Compare Frances Young, *Biblical Exegesis and the Formation of Christian Culture* (Cambridge, 1997), especially 76-96, on grammarians and (Greek) Christian exegesis.
- <sup>28</sup> Cf. *Conf* 8.2.3, where the high status of the orator Victorinus is reported in a Ciceronian sentence adorned with quotations from Virgil.
- <sup>29</sup> *Jn* 11.25 'I am the resurrection and the life', 14.6 'I am the way, the truth and the life'.
- <sup>30</sup> P.Burton (tr.), *St Augustine: The Confessions* (London, 2001), ad loc.
- <sup>31</sup> See further C.Bennett, 'The conversion of Vergil: the *Aeneid* in Augustine's *Confessions*', *Revue des Etudes Augustiniennes* 34 (1988) 47-69.
- <sup>32</sup> *De Doctrina Christiana* is edited and translated by Roger Green (Oxford, 1995); see further C.Kannengiesser, 'The interrupted *De Doctrina Christiana*', in *De Doctrina Christiana: a classic of Western culture*, ed. Duane W.H.Arnold and Pamela Bright (Notre Dame, 1995), 3-13.
- <sup>33</sup> *De Doctr.Christ.* 2.144-7; see further G.Clark, 'Spoiling the Egyptians: Roman law and Christian exegesis', in R.Mathisen (ed.) *Law, Society and Authority in Late Antiquity* (Oxford, 2001), 133-47.
- <sup>34</sup> MacCormack, 206-7.
- <sup>35</sup> G.Clark, 'City of Books: Augustine and the world as text', fc in W.Klingshirn and L.Safran (ed.) *The Early Christian Book*. On Augustine's journey to Carthage, I differ from my distinguished contemporary Robin Lane Fox, who hears Scripture not Virgil (pers.comm.).
- <sup>36</sup> See further G.O'Daly, *Augustine's City of God: a Reader's Guide* (Oxford, 1999), especially 246-8.
- <sup>37</sup> F.Paschoud, *Roma Aeterna* (Paris, 1968) 240. The sermon now called *de excidio urbis Romae* is translated in E.M.Atkins and R.Dodaro, *Augustine: Political Writings* (Cambridge, 2001).
- <sup>38</sup> *Jer. Ep.* 127.12-13, quoting Isa.15.1, Ps.78.1-3, *Aen.*2.316-5 and 369.
- <sup>39</sup> O'Daly, 234-59.
- <sup>40</sup> Ps.86.3: *gloriosa dicta sunt de te, civitas Dei*.
- <sup>41</sup> B.Stock, *Augustine the Reader* (Harvard, 1996) 13.
- <sup>42</sup> For December 17-19, 384, as the dramatic date of Macrobius *Saturnalia*, see Alan Cameron, 'The Date of Macrobius' *Saturnalia*', *JRS* 56 (1966) 28-9.
- <sup>43</sup> Translated by Henry Bettenson, *St Augustine: City of God* (Harmondsworth, 1972)
- <sup>44</sup> *Ser.* 105.7, quoting G. 2.498; the complete sermon is translated by Hill, op.cit., *Sermons* III.4.
- <sup>45</sup> See the preface to the *Corpus Christianorum* edition (Turnhout, 1955).
- <sup>46</sup> On the *imperium* of Virgil as a classic, see D.F.Kennedy, 'Modern receptions and their interpretative implications', in Martindale ed. (n.7 above), 45.
- <sup>47</sup> *CD* 14.3, quoting *Aen.* 6.733-4; *CD* 21.13, quoting *Aen.* 6.735-42.
- <sup>48</sup> This claim may need to be modified: at the Oxford Patristics Conference, 2003, Peter Burnell offered a paper on Augustine's reading (*CD* 19.12) of the story of Cacus (*Aeneid* 8. 190-305).

# Wed or Unwed? Ambiguity in *Aeneid* 4

*A revised version of a paper given to the Virgil Society on 23 November 2002*

## INTRODUCTION<sup>1</sup>

The story is famous. In *Aeneid* 4 Virgil tells us how Dido and Aeneas ride out to hunt and are overtaken by a violent storm. They are separated from their entourage and arrive at the same cave for shelter. There something happened which Virgil immediately tells us in his own voice was the beginning of catastrophe for Dido. Virgil describes the event in language appropriate to a marriage, but other features are disquieting, and Aeneas later denies that he has been married. What are we to suppose did happen, and how does it fit into Virgil's representation of the changing relationship between Dido and Aeneas?

Despite studies by successive scholars over the years<sup>2</sup>, there is still no agreement on whether Aeneas and Dido should be regarded as married or not. The aim of this paper is to review Virgil's narrative and show how he has made a definitive answer impossible and then to show how he uses this ambiguity and to suggest his possible reasons for creating it.

## A: OPENING SCENES

Virgil begins by establishing the motivation behind Dido's subsequent expectations and behaviour towards Aeneas. There is no doubt that she is powerfully attracted to him; the question is whether her aim is seduction or lawful marriage. The book opens the day after the feast at which Aeneas told Dido his story<sup>3</sup>. Although Virgil does not mention it here, we should remember that, the previous night, Cupid had "inoculated" Dido with a slow-kindling love for Aeneas, "*paulatim abolere Sychaeum / incipit*" "she begins to wipe Sychaeus gradually out of <Dido's> mind"(1.720f.). Now, Dido's mind is full of Aeneas but, after enthusing over him, she immediately states in the strongest terms, reinforced by a dreadful oath, that she will not marry again but remain true to Sychaeus; she then bursts into tears. Anna, her sister, then persuades away her difficulties about remarriage to such a husband as Aeneas. Dido turns to *divinatio*, in the traditional Roman form, to satisfy herself that the gods are not opposed to this course. *Divinatio*, however, does not help her to find a way forward; she roams distractedly

around the city, she seeks out Aeneas' company, but takes matters no further, she abandons her work as ruler. This scene ends with Dido in a state of frustration.

Clues in the context indicate clearly that the question in Dido's mind is marriage. Before the feast, Venus had deliberately chosen the way for Cupid to slip through Dido's emotional defences; it was by disguising himself as the child Ascanius<sup>4</sup>. Anna's arguments are all drawn from the traditional benefits of marriage, set out, for example in Catullus 61.61-75, the legitimate consummation of love (*Veneris...praemia* (l.33), cf. Catullus 61.61-64<sup>5</sup>, the expectation of legitimate children to continue the family (*dulcis natos* (l.33), cf. Catullus 61. 66-69 and the continued protection of the city (*nec venit in mentem quorum consederis arvis?* (l.39), cf. Catullus 61.71-74.

Dido expresses her own feelings in her first speech (ll.9-29), which brings out with great skill the conflict between her strong attraction to Aeneas and her abiding feeling of commitment to her much-loved dead husband, Sychaeus. The question is whether the *culpa* mentioned in l.19 and its correlative *pudor* in l.27 refer to remarriage or an ordinary *affaire*. The natural interpretation is that Dido means remarriage, as suggested by her final oath (ll. 24-27) to remain faithful to Sychaeus, and by her mention (l.15), which would not otherwise be relevant, of her irrevocable rejection of remarriage<sup>6</sup>. If so, however, why should Dido call remarriage a *culpa*, when remarriage was clearly perfectly normal for Roman widows?

Fidelity in widowhood was a recognised ideal in Rome, even if the importance of the concept of *univiratus* should not be exaggerated<sup>7</sup>. Dido, however, wears the ideal with a difference; she shows little concern with the "status of *univira*" or with the opinion of others<sup>8</sup>; for her it is a matter of *fides*, good faith, of her obligation to the dead Sychaeus. Her final words on the subject will be

*"non servata fides cineri promissa Sychaeo."* (l. 552)

"I have not kept the faith I promised to Sychaeus' ashes."

When she confronts Aeneas (ll.305-30, discussed further below), she will rest her appeal, in the last resort, not on their love or their marriage but on *fides*.

Whatever the importance of *univiratus*, the word *culpa* is a surprising way of referring to an admired member of the opposite sex to whom one is strongly attracted. Virgil has devised a situation, however, where the first acknowledgement of a strong attraction is followed directly by a no less strong, principled, renunciation. The words *pudor* and *culpa*, which Virgil has given to Dido, serve both to highlight her feeling of lapsing from her own principles and to put the action which she is contemplating in a disreputable light.

This section is completed by two more scenes, spread over an unspecified length of time. Once persuaded by her sister that fidelity to Sychaeus need not require her to shut her mind to possible marriage with Aeneas, Dido seeks the *pax deorum* for her intended course of action by *divinatio* in the correct Roman fashion<sup>9</sup>. Virgil does not tell us what the outcome of repeated sacrifices was or, indeed, what she had in mind; instead, by ominous, if opaque, comments on the inefficacy of divination, he sheds a sinister light on the proceedings. The lovesick Dido then is shown abandoning her duties to seek out Aeneas' company. She does not, however, take matters further. So far from attempting seduction or anything like a *furtivus amor*, she does not even attempt to flirt<sup>10</sup>.

As so often in this book, Aeneas' state of mind is not reported. The only hint may be Anna's suggestion that Dido contrive reasons for him not to hurry his departure (ll. 51-53). If Virgil means us to put weight on this, we might infer that Aeneas is still intent on the "*fatalia arva*" of Italy.

## B: JUNO AND VENUS

Dido is now blocked, and the scene shifts. Juno appears. She knows of Venus' stratagem of engaging Dido's affections with Aeneas and has a compromise to propose. She will call up a storm to disrupt the next day's hunt and bring the two together in a cave, where she will herself bind them in wedlock. The Trojans will then settle in Carthage. Venus, who has already been told by Jupiter that this is not the destined outcome, does not commit herself to the plan but sends Juno off to obtain Jupiter's consent to the scheme. Juno departs full of purpose.

There is much irony in this. Juno is overconfident and does not stop to consult Jupiter, who might have warned her that Aeneas' destiny was unchangeable. She also assumes with a show of formal courtesy - "*tua si mihi certa voluntas*" "if I can be sure of your support"(l. 125) - that Venus has said what she wanted to hear and takes Aeneas' heart for granted. There is, however, no hint that these misapprehensions affect her ability to carry through her plan.

## C: DID THE ROMANS RECOGNISE MARRIAGE BY MERE CONSENT?

Before examining Virgil's narrative of the "marriage" itself, we need to consider an aspect of the Roman law of marriage. A sophisticated

explanation of what passed between Dido and Aeneas depends upon the idea of a "consensual" marriage. According to the most precise formulation of this idea, in Rome a marriage where the wife did not pass into the husband's possession (*manus*) and so did not become a member of his family (a "free marriage"; the term is modern) required no formalities, only the consent of both parties, not necessarily even before witnesses<sup>11</sup>. Others add the suggestion that "what started as a liaison might develop into a binding marriage after a transitional period"<sup>12</sup>. On this view, alone in the cave, without witnesses, both parties were carried away. Aeneas said more than he meant or than was discreet; Dido heard what she wanted to hear - words of marriage - and deceived herself as to Aeneas' intentions. The subsequent explanations were bound to be painful and were made more so by Dido's passionate temperament.

Now, it is clear that marriages without *manus* were regarded as legitimate at Rome by the time of the Laws of the Twelve Tables and that, by the late Republic, most marriages seem to have been contracted on these terms<sup>13</sup>. However, legitimate marriage was so important to families and to the state (cf, for example, Catullus 61.66-74) that it would be surprising if there were not checks against individual impulsiveness, fortune-hunting, exploitation and other abuses. Were marriages without *manus* really quite so informal that, leaving aside Juno's intervention, an exchange of promises between Aeneas and Dido without witnesses in the cave could be recognised by Roman readers as a possible legitimate marriage created by mutual consent?

The legal analysis underlying such an interpretation is set out in P.E. Corbett's book *The Roman Law of Marriage*. He argues that the wedding ceremonies were "in great part legally indifferent; the validity of the marriage did not, except to a limited extent in *confarreatio*, depend on their observance" (p.68). His argument continues that "the original Roman marriage always involved *manus* over the wife, while the marriage without *manus*, the so-called "free marriage", was a comparatively late development" (*ibid.*, p. 68). Originally therefore, "the formalities which resulted in *manus*... from the legal point of view, constituted the main, if not the sole, essential formal element of valid marriage" (*ibid.*, p. 91). However, "free marriage" without any *manus* - creating ceremony was clearly recognised as legitimate at least by the time of the Laws of the Twelve Tables (451-50 BC), since they provided for at least one circumstance in which *manus* was created by prescription (*usus*)<sup>14</sup>. In law, therefore, the parties could enter into a "free marriage" without the formalities required for the creation of *manus* or any others; the

only essential was their consent.

This analysis, however, is open to serious objections. There is good evidence that marriage was one thing, *manus* another and that they were brought into being by different procedures, not necessarily at the same time<sup>15</sup>. The jurist Gaius speaks of a bride not subject to *manus* as “continuing married” (“*si nupta perseverabat*” 1.111) in the interval before her husband acquired *manus* by prescription. This clearly implies that the marriage was valid before there was any question of *manus* - whose creation might be, and in Cicero’s time usually was, put off indefinitely. Corbett’s answer (*ibid.*, pp. 87-88), that Gaius’ language cannot be relied on and that “*nupta*” can elsewhere be used of “purported wife” does not convince, especially since he accepts that “a free marriage” would not have been acceptable to the women’s families unless it had been a settled and respectable status from the outset (*ibid.*, pp. 89-90). By Virgil’s time, indeed, legitimate marriage depended so little on *manus* that a wife might enter into the *manus* of a long-standing and loving husband, not to mark any change in their affections or mutual confidence, but as a legal tactic. Gaius even explains how *coemptio* (mock sale) might be used to create a kind of trustee for a wife by transferring her into the *manus* of someone other than her husband<sup>16</sup>. Absence of *manus*-creating ceremonies does not therefore imply anything about the formal acts required to create a valid marriage.

Further, even if *manus* was not in question, there clearly were binding requirements for a valid marriage other than mutual consent. Puberty, *conubium* (satisfying the conditions for the civil law to recognise their marriage, especially on grounds of citizenship<sup>17</sup>), if either party was still subject to *patria potestas* (the legal authority of the head of the family), the consent of the *pater familias* in question, and *affectio maritalis* (living together as husband and wife should) were all required for a valid marriage, as well as the consent of the parties. There was also at least one legal requirement of procedure; unlike a man, a woman could not be married *in absentia*<sup>18</sup>. These requirements make it an oversimplification to speak as if a valid marriage could normally have been a private matter between the parties alone. Marriage was also expected to be a matter of public knowledge. The *deductio*, the formal delivery of the bride to her husband’s house, traditionally in a torch-lit procession followed by more ceremonies on her arrival, served the purpose of making the marriage public. It may not have been a legal requirement but was recognised as the legal starting point for a marriage<sup>19</sup>. We shall see that the special importance of *deductio* may help to understand Aeneas’ last speech to Dido.

Against all this, there is no positive evidence for a purely “consensual marriage”. There is no direct evidence for it and there is no reference in the *Digest* or elsewhere to practical points of law rising from it<sup>20</sup>. Ulpian’s maxim that “Consent not consummation makes the wedding” (“*Nuptias non concubitus sed consensus facit*”: *Dig.*50.17.30) does not say that consent is the only requirement. Nor does it imply it since the principle makes good sense used, as Ulpian and others used it, to decide the exact point when a marriage (celebrated with *deductio* and, presumably, all other formalities) comes into being<sup>21</sup>. There is therefore no reason to think that a marriage entered into by a single unwitnessed act of the two parties was a regular thing in Roman law. In reading Virgil, however, what matters is not legal concepts but what he could expect his readers to recognise as a valid marriage and how he would expect them to interpret both the events in the cave and the contradiction between Aeneas’ and Dido’s accounts of the position. There is no reason to think that the possibility of private, informal, “consensual” marriages was so recognised in Rome that Virgil could rely on his readers using it to interpret a crucial moment in his story.<sup>22</sup>

#### **D: BACK TO THE NARRATIVE; THE “MARRIAGE IN THE CAVE”**

Events now proceed exactly as Juno had described her plans to Venus; the coincidences in language underline that hers is the directing hand. Dido and Aeneas ride out to hunt. The party is scattered by a

sudden storm. They take refuge in the same cave. (The words at 165f. “*speluncam...eandem/deveniunt*” imply that their meeting was not consciously planned.) There, a series of supernatural events occurs corresponding to some of the leading elements of the marriage ritual and the heaven (*aether*) itself is a party. Virgil implies, but does not state, that the two became lovers<sup>23</sup>. All this is described in a rush of graphic historic presents with a minimum of connectives. The narrative does not attain this pace again until the Trojans’ headlong departure at lines 579-82. This syntax is not designed for a complete and structured description of events. Highlights only are required. Non-essential details - and possible questions - can be brushed over in the interests of speed.

The question is whether we are to think of Dido and Aeneas as legitimately married. We have seen that Virgil cannot have intended to suggest that they were married by mere mutual consent or some exchange of vows, since no such “marriage” was recognised as legitimate in Roman law. If, therefore, they were married, it was by the actions of Juno and the other divinities involved with her, and those actions are to be seen as an effective marriage, not as a symbolic reflection of their lovemaking, or some sort of celestial backdrop.

Virgil had a model for this scene in Apollonius Rhodius’ description of the emergency marriage of Jason and Medea on the island of Phaeacia (*Argonautica* 4.1110 - 1222). The similarities are striking: Hera helps to stage-manage the affair; there is no notice of the wedding; families are not represented; no rites or vows are reported; the marriage is consummated in a cave (in this case with the Golden Fleece serving as the bedcover); nymphs sing the wedding song outside. At the end of it all there seems to be no doubt that Jason and Medea have contracted a valid marriage. The differences, however, are just as important. Apart from the chorus of nymphs, all the actors in Apollonius’ scene are human. The intention of the parties to marry has been clearly stated beforehand; indeed, Jason has reinforced his promise to marry Medea with an oath. Hera immediately spreads a true report of Medea’s marriage (Ap. Rhod. 4.1183-84) and publicity is provided by an immediate procession into town with crowds of spectators. For Dido and Aeneas, news is spread by Fama, who mixes truth and untruth, and Virgil does not tell us the circumstances of their return to Carthage or how they were received there. The overall emotional colour is different; in Apollonius, the supernatural elements supply what is needed to make Jason and Medea’s wedding normal and joyous; any cloud on its happiness comes not from ambiguous omens, but from practical human anxiety - whether in the morning Alcinous will order Medea’s extradition to Colchis (Ap. Rhod. 4.1165-9). If, therefore, one of Virgil’s contemporary readers had called to mind the details of Apollonius’ scene, he might have been puzzled to decide what the reminiscence implied about a marriage between Aeneas and Dido.

We must look at Virgil’s description more closely. Some, but not all, of the central features of a traditional Roman wedding can be made out, but transformed by the participation of supernatural rather than human actors. There is a *pronuba*, a female of standing still married to her first husband, to join the parties’ hands and tie the knot, but it is Juno; who after all could be more suitable than the goddess of marriage?<sup>24</sup> Omens are sought, but not by a human *auspex*, but by Earth, the first bride, who will then give the signal for proceedings to begin<sup>25</sup>. There are witnesses, but they are not human kin present on the spot, but Earth and the Heaven, who are omnipresent. There are lights and song, but they come from lightning flashes and the cries of nymphs, who are gathered not outside the chamber but on the surrounding hills<sup>26</sup>. In none of these cases, except Juno, does Virgil use language which highlights the functional equivalence with Roman wedding ceremonial. Equally, he does not mention some central features of a traditional wedding; no traditional dress for the bride, no family presence (though both Aeneas and Dido were heads of their houses), no traditional responses like “*ubi tu Caius, ego Caia*” or

other rituals, no wedding settlements. These omissions could be put down as selection in the interests of rapidity of narrative; that of *deductio*, the public reception of the bride at her husband's home would be more significant, but Virgil switches the narrative away before that point is reached<sup>27</sup>. At the same time, he does not say whether the intervention of Juno, the goddess of marriage, makes good any departures from normal human ritual. Throughout, what we are told falls just short of enabling us to say with confidence that this marriage, however extraordinary, was - or was not - valid<sup>28</sup>.

The omens and emotional colouring do not make matters clearer. Virgil tells us that the Earth gave a sign - *signum* - as *auspex*, but not whether it was some sort of verbal or manual signal for proceedings to begin or an actual portent and, if a portent, auspicious or inauspicious (Servius' assumption that it must have been an earthquake is arbitrary).<sup>29</sup> Lightning and thunder may be auspicious or inauspicious, depending on type and direction, which are not specified. The ambiguity is most marked in Virgil's use of the word "*ulularunt*" to describe the nymphs' song (l. 168). This word can denote a shrill sound, wails of mourning or howls, but also battle cries or shouts of triumph or ritual cries<sup>30</sup>. It would not, therefore have been out of the question for Virgil to have used it to refer to a wedding song. It would have been a bold use, however, and, without a specific reference to the content of the song, I doubt whether a Roman hearer would have put associations with screech owls (*ululae*) and other uncanny or ill-omened sounds out of his mind<sup>31</sup>. As in the description of what might or might not have been wedding ritual, the possibilities are left open; we are left unable to say with confidence that the omens were favourable or not. By way of contrast, in *Heroides* 2.115-20, Ovid's lavish colours in the wedding of Phyllis to Demophon - in a story which he makes more than a little reminiscent of that of Dido and Aeneas - leave no doubt that the occasion was disastrously inauspicious; all are meant literally.

After the studied ambiguity of the narrative Virgil now intervenes in his own voice to emphasise the importance of the events:

*"ille dies primus leti primusque malorum  
causa fuit; neque enim specie famave movetur  
nec iam furtivum Dido meditatur amorem:  
coniugium vocat, hoc praetexit nomine culpam."* (ll.169-72)

"This day was the beginning of her death, the first cause of all her sufferings.  
From now on Dido gave no thought to appearance or her good name and no  
longer kept her love as a secret in her own heart, but called it marriage,  
using the word to cover her guilt." (D.A. West's translation)

These lines have been taken as Virgil's definitive statement, resolving any uncertainty and justifying Aeneas' subsequent denial that he had entered into a marriage with Dido. They have been the basis of inferences that Dido was at fault and knew that she was not married to Aeneas. Before we accept that interpretation, however, we need to understand what the lines say. These lines are anything but straightforward. The problems boil down to three:

- i What was the "*furtivus amor*" and when did it enter into Dido's intentions? When she first discussed Aeneas with Anna, there was no indication that she had anything in mind but marriage. It can hardly refer to the proceedings in the cave, since the separate arrivals of Dido and Aeneas seem to rule out a planned seduction, and thereafter Dido had no doubt that she was married. Gordon Williams has suggested that it is the unexpressed passion, which found its outlet in Dido's obsessive behaviour in the days before the hunt (ll. 74-90)<sup>32</sup>. Maybe so, but it is hard to believe that Virgil's audience would have heard these words without some reminiscence of their normal sense of concealed *affaire*, or that Virgil did not deliberately implant this suggestion, so contrary to his

previous picture of a Dido intent on honourable marriage.

- ii Do the words “*vocat*” and “*nomine*” in line 172 necessarily imply misrepresentation or self-deception on Dido’s part? West’s translation quoted above, like the great majority of commentators, takes the words to mean that Dido calls herself married when she is not “to cover her fault” (“...*hoc praetexit nomine culpam*”). However, “*nomen*” means “word” as well as “name”, and, as R.P.H. Green pointed out in 1986<sup>33</sup>, “*vocat*” means declaring something by its right name (compare *Aen.* 7.264 and 11.105) as well as giving it a name which may be deceptive. The sense might then be something like ‘She speaks of “marriage”’, but, even if the word does not misrepresent the facts, she still uses it to disguise some *culpa*, whether from others or from herself. When the lines are taken in isolation, neither interpretation can be excluded - this ambiguity can hardly be accidental<sup>34</sup>.
- iii Is this *culpa* which Dido “cloaks” the same as the *furtivus amor* in the preceding line, or is it the same as in line 19, remarriage as a breach of loyalty to the dead Sychaeus? Monti has strongly argued that *furtivus amor* is meant, on the ground that it would be illogical for Dido to use talk of marriage to “disguise” a “*culpa*” which essentially consists of the breach of loyalty to Sychaeus involved in remarriage. However, it is simpler and more natural to take “*culpa*” here to have the same reference as in line 19, and, after the events in the cave Dido believes herself to have been married; she says nothing to suggest that she thought that she had been involved in some “*furtivus amor*”.<sup>35</sup> Further, any remarriage is, by its nature, both the joyous start of a new love and the abandonment of an old one. Dido has so far regarded remarriage as blameworthy; now she uses her new marriage to blind herself to her breach of previous commitment to Sychaeus. This is consistent with her behaviour for the rest of her life: so long as Aeneas stays, no more is heard of Sychaeus. ( F. H. Bradley’s aphorism that “a man may find when he is in love that his principles were in reality different feelings” is to the point here.)

Although, therefore, these lines might be taken for Virgil’s authoritative summation of the events which have just passed, they do not resolve any of the reader’s uncertainties or reduce suspense. Instead, their ambiguous language if anything makes it harder to say whether what happened was a valid marriage or not by putting Dido’s own belief in doubt and insinuates doubts about her motives not apparently justified by the main stream of the narrative. We cannot say that Aeneas and Dido are “obviously” married - or not married - or that Virgil has made his meaning clear<sup>36</sup>. On the contrary, ambiguity is part of the fabric of this story, and a Roman reader, remembering the fixed point in Dido’s story, that she killed herself on a pyre, might well have been puzzled and approached the subsequent story with curiosity whetted.

#### **D: BACK IN CARTHAGE**

The scene now shifts abruptly. Fama enters; Dido and Aeneas are back in Carthage, although the reader is not told how long has elapsed or whether the circumstances of their return, even if it was not a formal *deductio*, effectively proclaimed them man and wife as happened to Jason and Medea. Fama then spreads the story that Dido has condescended to match with one Aeneas, who has come from Troy; they are now spending the winter wrapped up in one another, abandoning their responsibilities (ll 191-94). These reports are described as indiscriminately true and false (“*pariter facta atque infecta*”), although examination shows that each of Fama’s statements is tendentious and twisted rather than some true and others false. It comes as no surprise, then, that Fama’s story does not remove doubts about the marriage. Further, even if it is true that “Dido has matched with one Aeneas”, these words fall just short of saying that they are man and wife<sup>37</sup>.

The focus moves on to Aeneas. He is no longer preoccupied with his voyage. He has “gone native” and wears the dress of a very high officer at a Hellenistic court; his purple uniform cloak and his jasper-hilted dress sword are presents from the Queen, and he is shown acting as her active and efficient

deputy<sup>38</sup>. So far as this goes, the report that he and Dido are husband and wife might or might not be true; Virgil does not take us further at this stage, nor does omniscient Jupiter mention marriage when he instructs Mercury to tell Aeneas to resume his voyage to Italy. If, however, Virgil had provided at this stage the information, which he withholds until after the final parting, that Aeneas had moved his kit into Dido's bedroom and that the parting will cost him such anguish, there would have been little room for doubt that this was all proper *affectio maritalis*: Dido and Aeneas were living as man and wife.<sup>39</sup> The reader would also have been very differently prepared for their great confrontation which follows.

### **E: THE CONFRONTATION (IL 296-396)**

Dido now confronts Aeneas when he has made plans to leave Carthage but has not yet found an easy opening to tell her. The ways in which Virgil treats the issue of marriage in the course of the resulting pyrotechnic exchange is of great interest. Dido does not rest her case on the fact - if it was a fact - of marriage as such. Instead, she begins her plea with *fides*-related words, (*perfide* (l.305), *data dextera* (ll.307, 314) and references to the help and hospitality which she gave to Aeneas and his storm-tossed men, generalising her argument with an appeal to *fides* - of which fidelity in marriage is a species. She then appeals to their love and marriage, but immediately abandons them, first for pity and finally for another *fides*-related concept "guest", *hospes* (l. 323)<sup>40</sup>. Similarly, when she last sums up her obligations to Sychaeus, she does not refer to marriage vows but to the faith which she promised to him (l.552). Good Faith is a powerful argument for a Roman audience and Aeneas will make only a lame answer<sup>41</sup>. She then expressly gives up the argument even before Aeneas announces that he does not regard himself as her husband. Why should she throw away what might have been thought her strongest argument? (Ovid's conventionally-minded heroines would dwell on the details of their marriage vows.) Dramatically, one might imagine her reacting to something in Aeneas' body-language<sup>42</sup>, but logically and rhetorically the question remains. Since Virgil for the rest of the book reinforces the point by working in clear reminiscences of Alcestis, the archetypal devoted wife, Dido's silence here is surely not to be taken as a tacit admission that there never was any marriage<sup>43</sup>.

Aeneas' response is also perplexing. He says baldly that he never entered into a marriage, specifically that he never "held up the wedding torch"(ll.338-39). Now, in a Roman wedding, the husband carried a torch on returning to his own home to welcome his bride, while she is brought in the formal *deductio*. Aeneas therefore denies that the proper rituals have been performed and, in consequence, that Dido is his wife<sup>44</sup>. We should not underestimate the dramatic impact of this statement. Whatever Virgil had prepared us to hear, it was not this. Virgil simply leaves it unexplained, just as he does not explain how Aeneas saw his position in the days after the hunt, or, indeed what he thought had happened in the cave. At the same time he leaves Juno's position equally unexplained. She announced her intention to join Aeneas and Dido in a "*stabile coniugium*" (l.126); the word for word match between her words and the description of Dido's and Aeneas' arrivals at the cave creates the strongest impression of her agency but the intended result is not achieved. Since the essential characteristic of the Olympians was power, this is extremely surprising. An Immortal could always be thwarted by a superior force or by fate, or, most dramatically, their action could succeed but prove disastrous for those it was meant to help; for one of their actions just to peter out ineffectually is extraordinary<sup>45</sup>. At the end of this scene, then, it is, if anything, harder than before to understand whether or not Virgil wants to represent Aeneas and Dido as married. The way in which this ambiguity contributes to the architecture of the scene and of Aeneas' speech in particular will be further discussed below.

Two details in these speeches indicate the care with which they have been composed. First, Aeneas' denial that he has taken part in a *deductio* (l.339). Now *deductio* was a vital part of the Roman wedding,

the public declaration that a wedding had taken place; we have also seen that the narrative breaks off after the events in the cave and no *deductio* is described; Aeneas and Dido may, like Jason and Medea have returned to Carthage with equal publicity but less formality. Is Aeneas using the word “*deductio*” as a synecdoche for the whole wedding ceremony to say that there was no wedding and no marriage? Or is he using the lack of one, albeit important, part of normal wedding ritual to deny what he and Dido accepted at the time? The question is unanswerable. Second, in her reply, Dido develops the stock themes of faithlessness and ingratitude (ll.373-75) but unlike her prototypes, Apollonius’ Medea and Catullus’ Ariadne, does not mention the oaths broken by her betrayer<sup>46</sup>. Now we have seen that Medea’s cave marriage was preceded by solemn oaths by Jason that he would make her his wife when they returned to Greece; these oaths helped to establish the genuineness of the marriage. Retaining the reference to oaths, in a context so clearly indebted to Apollonius, would have implied the reality of Dido’s marriage; instead they are suppressed.

## F: THE REST OF THE BOOK

As far as the specific question of marriage or non-marriage goes, the rest of the Book confirms themes already established rather than shedding new light. The focus is all on Dido; Aeneas is shown entirely focused on the voyage to Italy and the prompt departure commanded by Jupiter. Now that the die is cast, Virgil brings out Aeneas’ real feeling for Dido, but his speech has made it clear that his real passion is for the refounding of Troy, his home. As Dido is carried away fainting, Virgil describes Aeneas, for the first time in the book, as “*pius*”, “faithful” (l. 393). This epithet has been claimed as Virgil’s considered judgement on Aeneas’ conduct<sup>47</sup>; it may be so, but he also calls Dido’s death “undeserved” (l.696), and neither expression can be taken as a judgement on the rights and wrongs of the two parties<sup>48</sup>.

Dido is now shown swinging violently between extremes. In despair at Aeneas’ announcement of his departure and his unshaken resolve to sail for Italy (ll. 450-53), her mind turns to suicide and her thoughts focus on Sychaeus (ll.457-63). First she hears his voice from his cenotaph, and it then blends into progressively more dreadful dreams in which, first, Aeneas has become her enemy, then her people have abandoned her, then she is surrounded by spirits of vengeance from the tragic stage. In increasingly wild moods she alternates between planning suicide and thoughts of revenge on Aeneas. Once she has resolved on suicide, the mood changes, and after final imprecations against Aeneas, pathos creeps in, and Virgil introduces reminiscences of Alcestis, the ideal wife - but the sentiment is directed to the bed which she shared with Aeneas. All this confirms the transformation in Dido’s affections since the opening of the Book, but sheds no light on whether we should think of Dido as married to Aeneas or not.

Her last reference to Sychaeus (ll.550-52) clearly reflects her feelings at the opening of the book:

*“non licuit thalami expertem sine crimine vitam  
degere more ferae, talis nec tangere curas.”*

“I was not allowed to live my life without marriage,  
in innocence like a wild creature, and be untouched  
by such anguish as this.” ( D.A.West’s translation)

If the words “*more ferae*” were not there, the wish would be exactly the same wish as in ll.15-19:

*“si mihi non animo fixum immotumque sederet  
ne cui me vinclo vellem sociare iugali,  
postquam primus amor deceptam morte fefellit ;  
si non pertaesum thalami taedaeque fuisset,*

*huic uni forsā potui succumbere culpaē.*"

"If my mind had not been set and immovably fixed  
against joining any man in the bonds of marriage  
ever since death cheated me of my first love, if I  
were not so utterly opposed to the marriage torch  
and bed, this is the one temptation to which  
I could possibly have succumbed." (D.A. West's translation)

Her regret is not to have been able to live a chaste life without remarriage. The new thought "*more ferae*" "as wild beasts do", which has no counterpart in her opening speech, makes the whole train of thought hard to understand, largely because it is hard to see what picture Virgil meant to conjure up. Dido has shown no interest whatever in a life of animal promiscuity, and the sudden appearance of the notion at this stage would make nonsense of the end of the speech. All that said, it can be doubted whether a Roman reader hearing the words "*more ferae*" and "*thalami experts*" would have quite rid his mind of the ideas of animal promiscuity and of open couplings in Lucretius' account of primitive man<sup>49</sup>. If so, we have the same gratuitous suggestion of the sexually disreputable as in the use of the word "*culpa*" as in line 19.

## G: CONCLUSIONS

The text does not say, therefore, or enable us to say with confidence, whether Aeneas and Dido were married or not. There is no incontrovertible statement that a marriage did, or did not, take place and many things that seem to point to a marriage are left incomplete, while the hints telling against a marriage are less than explicit. Virgil has used a whole range of techniques to this end. (a) In the opening scene, the idea of marriage is an essential part of setting the scene; it is touched on in Dido's first words that she is resolved against remarriage; thereafter, it is implicit in references to ideas traditionally associated with marriage. In the closing scenes, references to wifely behaviour, patterned on Alcestis, are woven into the story and add pathos to Dido's actions and to her relations with Aeneas, but they cannot confirm that a marriage took place. (b) In the opening scenes, we also meet the use of innuendo, the introduction of words with a vague flavour of the disreputable, which are not justified by anything said in the context. (c) Scenes are also often cut short before the decisive moment which would reveal their meaning, for example Juno's planning of the marriage and, indeed the scene in the cave itself. (d) Sometimes information is delayed to a point where its connotations change; the information that Aeneas has moved his kit into Dido's bedroom contributes to the pathos of her suicide in ll.495-96, but if it had come before the confrontation with Dido, we might have judged their relationship, and Aeneas' denial of a marriage, differently. Again, an account of Aeneas' return to Carthage with Dido, showing whether or not it amounted to a public acknowledgement of their relationship, and of the Carthaginians' reaction, might well have affected the reader differently from Fama's report after the event. (e) Sometimes the connotations of language are ambiguous (practically every term used in describing the supernatural actions around the cave, the references to "*culpa*" in l. 19 and l. 173), sometimes the statements themselves are equivocal (I have argued above that ll.171-72 and ll.338-39 are ambiguous). (f) Above all, the strongest indications that there was no marriage, ll.172-73 (Virgil's authorial intervention at the end of the events in the cave), and the innuendoes in l. 19. ("*culpa*" - fault) and l.550 "*more ferae*" are at variance with the narrative as a whole. So is Aeneas' disclaimer of marriage.

Can these repeated ambiguities be resolved? The simplest way would be to privilege one side of the evidence, usually that supporting Aeneas' good faith<sup>50</sup>. However, it is not clear why this evidence

deserves special treatment, especially if misunderstandings resulting from an informal “consensual marriage” cannot be invoked. First, Aeneas’ denial that he entered into a marriage (ll.338-39) is unexplained and requires the assumption - itself not without difficulty, as argued above - that Juno’s activities at the cave were ineffectual. Second, Virgil’s statement (ll. 171-72) that Dido “used the word marriage to cloak her lapse”, is itself ambiguous and is blurred by a reference to “furtive love”, ungrounded in the rest of the narrative. Third, key passages describing Dido’s motivation (ll. 18-19, 551-52) are made suspect by language implying, apparently at variance with the rest of the narrative, sexual impropriety. None of these objections is clear-cut; everything is open to alternative explanations. The passages called upon to show Dido’s innocence and her wifely behaviour also fall short of proving the reality of her marriage.

Another favoured way of resolving ambiguities has been to reconstruct the characters’ psychologies and motivations so as to fill the gaps and uncertainties in Virgil’s text. Two lines of approach have been specially favoured: self-deception by Dido and an emotionally inarticulate Aeneas. Self-deception by Dido might have fitted the context of a supposed informal “consensual marriage”, where nothing more than an unwitnessed exchange of declarations was required, but this explanation does not stand up to examination. It is far less plausible, but not out of the question, that Dido might have deceived herself about a supernatural marriage conducted by goddesses, but a stronger indication of what was afoot would be required than anything Virgil provides. However, Dido’s own words give the best reason against thinking that she had deceived herself about the fact of marriage. In the tragic manner, she dies with her eyes opened to the cause of her destruction. In l. 552 her analysis of how she went wrong ends with the cry that she has broken the faith she promised to Sychaeus’ ashes and in ll. 657-8 it is the coming of the Trojan fleet that has destroyed her good fortune; nothing is said about a misunderstanding over Aeneas’ intentions. The great scene in Hades confirms this: what matters to Dido is her relationship with Sychaeus, and Aeneas is still the author of her catastrophe; details about marriage or non-marriage would be a distraction. As suggested above, however, I believe that Dido did indeed deceive herself - into thinking that the word “marriage” would reconcile her love for Aeneas with what she felt she owed to Sychaeus<sup>51</sup>. There is less to say about Aeneas’ supposed emotional inarticulateness or reserve<sup>52</sup>. It may help to understand why his reply to Dido’s accusations at ll. 333-61 does not express his love for Dido and strikes a tone which many have found unsympathetic; it cannot explain what he thought had happened. In short, nothing that Virgil makes Dido or Aeneas say or do helps us to reconcile their different understandings of whatever happened in the cave.

A final possibility is that this uncertainty is unintentional but results from misjudgement, or perhaps Virgil’s famously unsystematic methods of composition, and would have been put right if only he had lived to make his final revision of the *Aeneid*<sup>53</sup>. The ambiguity is so deep-rooted, however, finds so many different forms and is so concentrated around the question of the reality of Aeneas’ marriage as to suggest that this is not the random distribution of errors but a structural element in Virgil’s plot. Further, accepting that the ambiguity is deliberate sheds light on two important questions, the composition of Aeneas’ reply to Dido and the wider significance of the Carthaginian episode in the *Aeneid* as a whole.

Aeneas’ reply to Dido’s accusation has not pleased critics<sup>54</sup>. It has been seen as cold, terse and defensive, an unworthy reply to the generosity and love of a woman like Dido. More recently, however, Feeney has offered a subtle and sympathetic presentation of Aeneas reasserting the value of rational discourse in the face of Dido’s emotionalism as well as the strength of his commitments to his city and his family; Horsfall has spoken of Aeneas’ winning the argument, Highet has suggested that the speech

may be deliberately unsuccessful<sup>55</sup>. These defences substantially underestimate Virgil's skill.

Choosing the tone for Aeneas' reply must have been a formidably difficult task for Virgil. Dido was clearly meant to be the dominating character in the Book, and the reply must not thrust her out of the spotlight; the facts also meant that no reconciliation was possible (That Dido would die on a pyre, that Aeneas would bring the Trojans to Italy, that the Punic Wars would be a fight to the death, are fixed points in all his sources.). Virgil chose, as Feeney says, to portray Aeneas as a man "faced with uncompromising attack by a wife or lover". The tone he selected for his reply, however, is one which, in equivalent circumstances today, would be guaranteed to produce a violent outburst<sup>56</sup>. His opening acknowledgement of what she has done for him falls far short of his ringing words in Book I (ll.597-605) and by ancient standards is a barely minimal return for kindness and help; her charges are met with flat denial and a hint that she is exaggerating; the tone suggests an authoritarian Roman husband. The only facts which interest Aeneas are his facts; the rationality which interests him is his rationality. The speech only comes alive when he speaks of his mission and Troy. It is perhaps redeemed from being as unsympathetic as Jason's corresponding speech in Euripides' *Medea* by the introduction of one of the very few passages where Virgil gives Aeneas an emotion not directly related to the situation before him. It is wrong to say that "Aeneas wins the argument" over the facts of marriage. There is no argument; Dido's accusations are not answered but bluntly contradicted without argument or evidence; Dido's denunciation then sweeps away further pursuit of truth or fact. I believe this to be Virgil's intention; similarly, Dido's collapse, leaving Aeneas "hesitating in fear and pulling himself together to say many things" is not only a fine emotional climax and a good way of moving the narrative forward, but also a brilliant device to avoid further discussion of the facts and the reality of the marriage<sup>57</sup>.

Accepting that Virgil has been deliberately ambiguous about the marriage also helps to explain how Aeneas' visit to Carthage fits into the *Aeneid's* picture of Rome's history. It is accepted that Virgil brought Aeneas and Dido together largely in order to provide a myth to account for the Punic Wars - at whatever violence to the received chronology for the founding of Carthage. Feuds between communities are known in epic, and their causes are straightforward: woman-theft (but Virgil would hardly have wanted to make Aeneas repeat Paris' exploits<sup>58</sup>), outrage to a woman, perhaps, accidental killing of an especially honoured or valued person, a piratical raid or some piece of treachery. A myth explaining the Punic Wars, however, needed something dramatic enough to retain its motivating force for more than five hundred years. Further, although, if the myth motivated Carthaginian aggression in the Punic Wars, the Carthaginians might logically have been expected to have been the injured party, Virgil wanted to protect Aeneas' good name. He therefore sought to create a story in which Dido would passionately resent Aeneas' departure, but Aeneas' honour would be intact. Since marriage, not an *affaire*, however passionate, would carry the required emotional charge, while Aeneas could not be shown simply abandoning a lawfully wedded wife, Virgil had to invent circumstances in which Dido could maintain and Aeneas could deny that they were married. The result is a tour-de-force of invention.

The same concern for Aeneas' good name can be seen in the care taken in Book 1 (ll.526-29) to make it clear that the Trojans are not pirates (only the intemperate Iarbas uses the word later); the conventionally minded Livy, however, makes no bones about it (Book 1.i.5.). Again, in Book 6, Virgil's list of heroes is strikingly uncontroversial; Augustus, however, was prepared to display statues of both Marius and Sulla among the "*Summi Viri*" in the Forum Augusti<sup>59</sup>. The outbreak of the war with the Latins in Book 7 offers another parallel. The incident which triggered the war with the Latins was arguably nobody's fault really, just an unfortunate brawl over the accidental killing of a pet stag. All the excuses are there; the hounds got out of hand; Ascanius was excited at the prospect of a kill and could

not have known that the stag was a pet; the tragedy was that Galaesus, the leading man on the spot, was killed before he could calm everyone down. Above all, neither Aeneas nor Latinus was responsible. (7.482-539). The tradition of Dido's death on the pyre may well have seemed to offer a colourful and melodramatic story centred on a single female character, which could be shaped so that Aeneas' reputation could be largely unstained in order to support the Augustan myth. This, I believe, is what Virgil intended and his strategy was the ambiguity in which the central events and the chief characters' motives are wrapped.

This ambiguity is not just a craftsman's device to contrive a subtle plot. It also allows Virgil to express his sympathy for both sides in conflict or tension. This tendency is found throughout the *Aeneid*, never more strongly than in Book 4. He has therefore produced what is essentially a melodrama in which both protagonists retain the reader's sympathy and neither is condemned. The disadvantage, however, is the impossibility of extracting from the text an unambiguous account of the motives and intentions of the chief characters or of their understanding of their actions. (The actions of the third actor, Juno, are also impossible to work out). The difficulty is greatest with Aeneas. While Dido believed herself to have entered a valid marriage and the hints at the marriage's reality largely explain what Dido thought she was doing, we have no such explanation for Aeneas. His denial of the marriage comes out of the blue without explanation, to the lasting difficulty of readers. The basic cause of this difficulty and of the doubts on the reality of Dido and Aeneas' marriage is that Virgil has chosen to keep his reader's sympathies evenly balanced between Dido and Aeneas by creating ambiguity which ramifies through the whole book. We cannot know whether there might have been another way of shaping the story which would have kept our sympathies in equilibrium and still made the intentions and actions of all the characters clear; it would certainly have had to have been radically different from what Virgil has left us.

Logical perfection of a plot, however, is not the whole story. Eminent authors have admitted that they have got round such problems as best they could<sup>60</sup>. This paper has tried to show the enormous expenditure of craftsmanship and detailed care that Virgil used to develop his scheme. The result was a narrative which carries readers past all obstacles in an epic which is still alive.

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## NOTES

- <sup>1</sup> This paper is a revised version of a paper read to the Virgil Society on 23 November 2002. I am grateful to the Society for the honour of its invitation to read a paper and to the members then present for helpful suggestions. I am grateful to Jasper Griffin for helpful suggestions and comments and owe a great deal to Jonathan Foster for stimulus, encouragement and discussion as this paper took shape.
- <sup>2</sup> A list of those works which I have consulted is at the end of the paper. It does not pretend to be a comprehensive bibliography.
- <sup>3</sup> This is the natural inference from the way in which Dido opens with praise of Aeneas' story of his exploits (ll.13-14), while the reference to morning naturally picks up reference to the night when Aeneas' narrative began (2.8-9). There is therefore no time for the pursuit of Dido by Aeneas suggested by Lyne, *Further Voices in Virgil's Aeneid* (Oxford, 1987), pp.194-96.
- <sup>4</sup> Pointed out by Williams (1968), p. 376. It is inconceivable that a Roman lady should be shown wanting to bear a child but not to marry the father.
- <sup>5</sup> The comparison with Catullus disposes of Moles' contention ((1986), p.155) that these words show an "extreme sensuality" in Dido.
- <sup>6</sup> Servius, *ad loc.* takes it in this sense and is followed by (e.g.) Pease (1935), on l.19, Quinn (1963), p.44, Rudd (1976), p.152, Monti (1981), pp.106-7, note 29 to Chapter 4) and Horsfall (2000), pp.126-27. Moles (1986), p.154 argues that *culpa* means here "sexual misconduct". To do this, he takes "*huic uni culpae*" (l. 15) to imply a succession of previous suitors, each one a "*culpa*" and then ascribes the distaste for marriage (l.18, "*pertaesum thalami*") which led her to resist them to a special "Syphaeus Factor" needed to resist Aeneas' attractions. I am not convinced; to treat mere contact with a possible suitor as "*culpa*" seems an extreme standard, and the only reason which Virgil gives for Dido to close her mind to the idea of remarriage is commitment to Syphaeus.
- <sup>7</sup> See Rudd (1976), pp.154-59, Monti (1981), pp.53-55 and Treggiari (1991), p.235, as against Williams (1968), pp.377-78. However, Virgil needed only to make fidelity in widowhood a credible ideal, and Williams has shown that such an ideal would have been plausible. After two decades of Civil War and the proscriptions there must have been all too many widows in Rome, and the issue of their remarriage must have been a real one.
- <sup>8</sup> ll. 322-323 below, but she nowhere sounds the note struck by Cornelia in Propertius (4.35-36), and, when the time comes for her to die, her claim to fame is not faithful widowhood, but the foundation of a great city.
- <sup>9</sup> There is no implication that Dido thought that her intended course of action was wrong. *Pax et venia deorum* ("the good will and good leave of the Gods") was the normal term for the advance confirmation of divine approval of an intended action which the Romans routinely sought, see Heinze (1928/1993), p.100 and note 23 on p.111 with the passages there quoted.
- <sup>10</sup> Nausicaa's exchanges with Odysseus show what might be compatible with the dignity of epic.
- <sup>11</sup> See Corbett (1930). Note that his "free marriage" is simply one without *manus*, not one which depends only on the mere consent of the parties.
- <sup>12</sup> The formulation comes from Williams (1968), p.382. See also Quinn (1963), pp.38-39, who seems to have been the first to apply this theory about Roman marriage to the interpretation of *Aeneid* 4, and E.L. Harrison (1989), pp.14-15.
- <sup>13</sup> See Corbett (1930), pp. 90-91.
- <sup>14</sup> See Aulus Gellius, 3.2.12-3, who quotes "Mucius'" report that the Twelve tables provided for the bride to come into her husband's *manus* by prescription (*usus*), if she did not sleep three or more nights outside the marital home in any one calendar year.
- <sup>15</sup> As argued by Volaterra (1940), supported by Jolowicz and Nicholas (1972), p. 115 with notes 5 and 6.
- <sup>16</sup> For a *coemptio* between a husband and wife whose children were already grown up see "*Laudatio Turiae*" l.13-17; for the *coemptio fiducia causa* (a fictitious transfer of a wife into the *manus* of someone other than her husband, who then acted as her *tutor*), see Gaius 1.114-23.
- <sup>17</sup> For fuller explanations, see Corbett (1930), pp.24-53. Horsfall (2000), p.128 argues that Aeneas and Dido cannot have been married, since there cannot have been *conubium* between them. But was there *conubium* between the Trojans and the Latins, and, if not, how could Aeneas have married Lavinia? In that case, the political context was given by Aeneas' defeat of Latinus, not by any retrojection of later relations between Rome and the Latins. We should remember, however, that Roman readers might well have been surprised by the possibility of a marriage between the ancestor of the Romans and the founding queen of Carthage. Green (1986), p. 416-17 suggests that use of the word *conubium* of a marriage to a Carthaginian would have contributed a reader's sense of unease that all would turn out well.
- <sup>18</sup> On the qualifications for marriage, see Justinian, *Inst.* 1.10.1. For prohibition of a woman's being married in *absentia* see *Dig.* 23.2.5 (Pomponius) and Paulus *Sent.* 2.19.8. (But both Volaterra (1940) pp. 47-8 and A. Watson, *The Law of Persons in the Later Roman*

*Republic*, pp. 26-7, doubt whether the prohibition was absolute in Republican times.)

- <sup>19</sup> For *deductio* as the normal reference point for the start of a marriage see Berger, *Encyclopaedic Dictionary of Roman Law*, s.n.. Corbett's argument ((1930), p. 92) that "*deductio* is nothing more than placing the woman at the disposal of the man, and she may have been brought into his house for purposes of concubinage" is captious; *deductio* served as the public declaration of a marriage, and there were enough traditional wedding ceremonies to fix the event and its character in the memories of witnesses. But *deductio*, however traditional, was never a legal requirement, see Just. *Cod.* 5.4.22 and Scaevola's warning against concentrating on the timing of the *deductio* or the signature of the wedding contract instead of the moment when the parties made manifest their agreement to marry (Dig.24.1.66).
- <sup>20</sup> No credence can be placed in Servius' reference (on *Georgic* 1.31) to "*usus*" as one of the three forms of marriage. His text follows Gaius' statement (I.110-15) on the three ways in which *manus* can be created so closely that he must have drawn on him directly. What Servius has to say on *coemptio* is so garbled as to discredit his statement on marriage by *usus* - a year's cohabitation without any legal formalities. This looks like an attempt to remodel the way in which *manus* could be acquired by *usus* into a form of marriage.
- <sup>21</sup> Specifically applied by Ulpian (Dig. 35.1.5) to the question of when the condition attached to a legacy that a woman should marry within the family was fulfilled, whether when she was formally received into her husband's house or when the marriage was consummated, by Scaevola (Dig. 24.1.66) - what happens if the wedding contract is signed before *deductio*, or if the bride is installed (*deducta*) in her husband's suburban *horti* three days before the marriage but then lives apart from him till the actual marriage) and Paulus (Dig. 23.2.7) - dowry may be legally due to a virgin if the marriage has not been consummated.
- <sup>22</sup> Note that, at ll.338-9, in defending himself Aeneas places at least as much emphasis on the absence of torches and other ceremonial as on consent or anything which he did or did not say. This is consistent with Tib.Claudius Donatus' unwillingness to recognise the events in the cave as a wedding - see note 27 below.
- <sup>23</sup> Only Sparrow (1973, p. 8 n.3) denies this. He regards what happened in the cave as a mere betrothal because no formal religious rites had been celebrated.
- <sup>24</sup> In all the examples given in TLL, "*pronuba*" is used literally, not in some wider meaning like "favouring marriage". It is not recorded as a cult name of Juno (see J.B. Carter, *De deorum romanorum cognominibus*, Diss. Halle, 1898.)
- <sup>25</sup> For Tellus (Earth) as the first wife, see Henry (1879), p. 645 on ll. 166-68. For the role of the *auspex*, see Cic. *Div.* I. 28, Varro *ap.* Servius *ad Aen.* 4. 45. Servius Auctus (on l. 166) says that Earth was invoked when auspices were taken for a marriage; this is obviously relevant; it is a pity he did not tell us more.
- <sup>26</sup> Although Servius (on l.167) assumes that all lightning was inauspicious, Seneca, *Nat. Quaest.*2.39ff makes it clear that the experts interpreted some cases as auspicious and some as inauspicious.
- <sup>27</sup> Tib. Claudius Donatus (on l.339) does not recognise the supernatural activities in ll. 166-68 as constituting a marriage. He lists what was missing: witnesses, traditional ceremonies, marriage contract, torches (he does not specifically mention *deductio*.) Servius does comment on any deficiencies. For other lists of essential features of a proper wedding, compare Tacitus, *Ann.* XI. 27. 1 and XV. 37. 9.
- <sup>28</sup> In general, those scholars who see Dido's tragedy in a misunderstanding of an informal "consensual marriage" insist that what passed in and around the cave cannot have constituted a valid marriage, see note 11 above. E.L. Harrison (1988, pp.14-15) and Monti (1981, pp.45-48) emphasize that Aeneas and Dido were, to all appearances, man and wife on their return to Carthage and the weight which this would have carried with Roman observers in the case of subsequent dispute about the reality of their marriage. Another line of interpretation is to regard the wedding as "symbolic"; so Quinn (1963, p. 38 n3) and Monti (1981, p.3); Williams (1968, pp. 379-80) seems to lean in this direction. I do not believe that the supernatural "wedding" should be seen as symbolic; there was nothing else which might have been a marriage and nothing else for it to symbolise. Similarly Green (1986) believes that the supernatural actions were as real as the storm, but also accepts that there was some exchange between Dido and Aeneas which led to the misunderstanding as to whether they were married or not.
- <sup>29</sup> There is no need to assume, with Servius (*ad loc.*), that the only sign which Earth could produce was an earthquake.
- <sup>30</sup> Servius (on l.168) regards *ulularunt* as ambiguous, applicable to cries of both exultation and lamentation; he quotes Lucan 6.261 for a cry of exultation. For other examples of exultation, see Caesar, *BG* 5.37.3 (*ululatus*), Statius, *Theb.* 9.177, *Silv.* 3.1.173. It is interesting that the Greek counterpart, *ololuge*, is used according to LSJ "mostly in good sense, sometimes even opposed to a wailing cry".
- <sup>31</sup> Scholars' opinions are divided. Henry (1879), p.645 on ll.166-68, Conington (commentary on ll.166-68), Heinze (1928/1993), p. 101, Mackail (commentary on ll.166-68) all regard the supernatural signs as favourable. Pease (1935), *ad. loc.* acknowledges the possibility of seeing them as either favourable or unfavourable, but inclines to the unfavourable "given the outcome". Austin (1955), on l.166 regards the wedding as "ritually correct" "as one would expect from Virgil", but supernatural and uncanny; on l. 307 and ll. 331-61, however, he regards Dido as self-deceived about the validity of the marriage. Horsfall (2000), p.128 speaks of a "ghastly parody" of the omens appropriate to a wedding. The quality of the omens does not determine the validity of a marriage; it might be valid but ill-omened. Green (1986), pp. 411-17 regards the marriage as real but "shrouded in ambiguity".
- <sup>32</sup> See Williams (1968), pp.379-80. Green (1986), pp.411ff. takes the words in the sense of secret *affaire*.
- <sup>33</sup> So Green (1986), pp.411-5.
- <sup>34</sup> For Dido's belief that she is married, see Williams (1968), p.374; he accordingly denies misrepresentation in l. 172. Green (1986), pp.411-15 takes "*vocare*" as a statement in good faith, without misrepresentation or self-deception. Other commentators all take "*vocare*", without discussion, to imply some misrepresentation.
- <sup>35</sup> Lines 314ff., 324, 431, 495-6 are the strongest examples; Williams (1968), p.381 has a fuller list.
- <sup>36</sup> Williams and Green (cited in the previous notes) take "*culpa*" to be the disloyalty to Sychaeus involved in remarriage, similarly Pease (1935) on ll.71-72. Monti (1981), pp. 106-7 (n.29 to his chapter 4) argues that sexual impropriety is the only sense of *culpa* which could be "cloaked" by calling it marriage; I believe that this argument overlooks the double nature of remarriage. Moles (1986), p. 156, and Horsfall (2000), pp 127-28, see strong moral condemnation by Virgil of sexual impropriety. Quinn (1963) and Rudd (1976)

do not address the question. “Plainly enough” not married - Feeney (1983), p. 168.

- <sup>37</sup> Compare Pease (1935), p.222 (on l.190) who recognises that there is some truth in all Fama’s statements, which ought not therefore to be accepted blindly as evidence against Dido. He even concludes that “if only “luxus” and “turpi cupidine captos (surrendered to foul lust)” are to be classed as slanders, the prevalent view of relations between Dido and Aeneas needs revision”. Similarly Austin (1955), p.194. However, it is too simple to try to isolate false elements in Fama’s report and treat the residue as true; every statement is, in a different degree, coloured or biased.
- <sup>38</sup> For gifts of purple dress cloaks by Hellenistic kings to high officers, see E. Bickerman, *Institutions des Séleucides*, (Paris 1938), p.42. For Aeneas’ kit in Dido’s bedroom, see D.R. Bradley, “Swords at Carthage”, *Class. Phil.*, 53, 1958, pp 234-36. Dido’s reference to giving Aeneas the sceptre (l. 597) would be a clear reference to making Aeneas king and so to marriage (a king would carry his sceptre when sitting in judgement, not when inspecting building works), but, given her highly overwrought state when she spoke them, these words cannot be pressed.
- <sup>39</sup> See E.L. Harrison (1989), pp.14-15 and Monti (1981), pp.45-48.
- <sup>40</sup> I agree with Monti’s (1981, pp.3-8) interpretation of the references to *dextera* in this passage as the symbol of *fides*. In a Roman marriage the parties’ hands were joined (*iunctae*) by the *pronuba*, not given to one another by the parties.
- <sup>41</sup> For the way in which Dido gives most space to help and hospitality, see Monti (1981), pp.3-8; for the need to return *beneficia*, not just to acknowledge them, see M. Griffin, “*De Beneficiis* and Roman Society” *JRS* 93, 2003, pp. 92-112.
- <sup>42</sup> Other cases of action before speech has ended: Dido stabs herself on the words “*sic, sic*” in l. 660; Aeneas stabs Turnus on the words “*hoc vulnere*”, 12. 948.
- <sup>43</sup> Reminiscences of Alcestis: ll. 650-51, kissing bed (Cf. Eur. *Alc.*175-84, also reminiscent of Deianeira, the betrayed wife, Soph. *Trach.* 913-24), and ll. 698-705 (cutting lock of hair to consecrate dying woman to Death, cf. Eur. *Alc.* 74-6). Green (1986), pp. 414-6, points out that Dido never speaks of herself as still married or of Aeneas as her husband after the confrontation. However her references to “*coniugium antiquum quod prodidit*” (l. 431) and to promises (ll.373, 421, 542, 597) also show that she does not doubt that she was married, and, presumably, believes that she has now been repudiated. See Williams (1968), pp.380-84.
- <sup>44</sup> The words “*facem praetendi*” should be taken literally; *praetendere* does not seem to be used to mean “make a delusive promise of something” before Frontinus and Pliny (see OLD.). Examples from Virgil’s time use it either in a literal meaning or to mean “allege as an excuse”. The groom seems to have helped to light the torches to be carried before his bride in the *deductio*, see Calp.Flacc.*Decl.*46 (cited by Treggiari). For torches carried before the bridegroom as he made his way home to receive his bride, see *Octavia*. 570-71 and Henry (1879), p.707. In general, see Treggiari (1991), p.166.
- <sup>45</sup> For the power of the gods to do things “easily” see Hesiod *Op.*5 with West’s commentary.
- <sup>46</sup> Noted by Monti (1981), p. 39.
- <sup>47</sup> Moles (1986), p.157 and Horsfall (2000), p.126 put decisive weight on the word *pius* here.
- <sup>48</sup> For arguments that Dido’s death should be regarded as undeserved, see above all, Williams (1968), pp.380-83.
- <sup>49</sup> For convincing arguments that the life which Dido regrets is a chaste one, so that “*more ferae*” must somehow imply natural innocence see Austin (1955) on ll. 550-51 and Williams (1968), pp. 380-81. (On the other side, Quinn (1963), p.56 makes Dido regret “free love”). It is less easy to see why Virgil chose the beasts as exemplars of a chaste life and whether the choice was meant to have special resonances for a Roman reader. Parallels for the idea of wild beasts as exemplars of the virtues can be found in Philemon (Fr.2 Kock) and Menander (*Theophroroumene*, fr. 1 Koerte); Ovid also expressly calls the life of the primitive Arcadians “*vita feris similis*”- “like that of the beasts” (*Fasti* 2.289-92). A.O. Lovejoy and G.Boas, *Primitivism and Related Ideas in Antiquity*, Baltimore, 1935 (Repr. 1997), Chapter 13, “The Superiority of the Animals” pp.389-420, have collected other passages on the alleged superiority of life among the beasts. In most of them the point is not so much the natural virtue of animals but the extreme nastiness of allegedly civilised humans. Virgil, however, may have wanted not to sketch a philosophical position but to combine ambiguity and a hint of animal promiscuity in a brief suggestive phrase.
- <sup>50</sup> Quinn (1963), p.47, Feeney (1983), pp.172-6, Moles (1986), p.157, and Horsfall (2000), p.128, as well as earlier commentators, all seem inclined to accept Aeneas’ statements because they are his.
- <sup>51</sup> In theory, Dido might not have recognised the real root of her calamity and have died with her self-deception unbroken, but self-deception not recognised by the subject seems to me a comic, not a tragic, effect. Compare G.B. Conti on Petronius’ *Encolpius* (Conti, *The Hidden Author*, Berkeley, 1996).
- <sup>52</sup> Feeney (1983), esp. pp.166-76, and Braund (1998) point out the way in which Aeneas and Dido are arguing past each other and that Aeneas has “reverted to his former persona as leader”.
- <sup>53</sup> Feeney (1983), p.176, thinks that Virgil would have improved Aeneas’ speech in his final revision.
- <sup>54</sup> Pease (1935), pp.45f., and Austin (1955), p.105, conveniently assemble references for such unfavourable verdicts.
- <sup>55</sup> Feeney (1983), pp.169-76, Highet (1972), pp.72ff.
- <sup>56</sup> It will be seen that I largely follow Feeney’s analysis of the speech itself but believe that Virgil principally decided to write it in that particular way as part of the mechanism of his plot, rather than to exemplify theories on human communication.
- <sup>57</sup> We should not imagine that, when Virgil says that Aeneas wanted to console Dido and remove her distress with loving words (ll.393-94), he necessarily had any idea of what those words might have been, or of how they would have fitted with the tone of what he had just given Aeneas to say.
- <sup>58</sup> The accusations by Iarbas (4.215) and Turnus (7.321) serve to underline the difference between Aeneas and Paris.
- <sup>59</sup> For the names - so far as they are preserved - of the *Summi Viri* commemorated by Augustus in the Forum Augusti, see *Inscr. Ital.*XIII.3 (Elogia), 1-60 and 61-68.
- <sup>60</sup> Compare Goethe’s self-exculpation to Napoleon, who had censured him for some implausibility in plot, (quoted by R.D. Dawe, *Sophocles, Oedipus Rex*, Cambridge, 1982, p.22), and Henry James, quoted by Anthony Powell, *Journals 1990-92*, p. 112.

# Character and Passion in Virgil's *Aeneid*

*A paper given to the Virgil Society on 18 January 2003*

The subject of this essay is characterisation in Virgil's *Aeneid*, especially the presentation of emotions or passions. The focus is on two - very famous - portrayals of emotion, Dido's trajectory from love to hatred and self-destruction in Book 4 and Aeneas' anger-driven killing of Turnus in Book 12. My main interest is in exploring the possible relevance of ancient philosophical views of emotions,<sup>1</sup> and, in particular, the linkage between this factor and two other influences on characterisation in the *Aeneid*: political or ideological connotations and allusions to other literary works or 'intertextuality'. As regards philosophy, I suggest that Virgil draws on a variety of modes of understanding emotions and that this contributes to the subtlety of characterisation in the poem. On the other hand, the three factors examined (philosophy, politics and intertextuality) are seen here as reinforcing each other, rather than pulling in different directions.

Interpretation of characterisation in the *Aeneid* tends to be polarised between two competing kinds of reading. One view sees the poem as unified, though perhaps in a complex way, by a pro-Roman, pro-Augustan ideological stance. The other presents the poem as fractured between two, or more, authorial 'voices'; characterisation may reinforce ideology or may undercut it, for instance by giving a surprisingly sympathetic treatment of figures who are not Roman-Augustan symbols, such as Dido or Turnus.<sup>2</sup> The discussion here is closer to the first view in offering a unified reading which is broadly compatible with Roman-Augustan objectives. On the other hand, I emphasise some points that might not seem to form part of this pattern. Although Dido's story, taken overall, is seen as one of error and disintegration, she emerges as a more substantial figure, politically as well as morally and psychologically, than one might expect in this type of reading. Aeneas' killing of Turnus is also interpreted here, on balance, as an ethical lapse; this view is often associated with the 'two-voices' reading, though here it is seen as compatible with a certain type of pro-Augustan stance. However, my focus is less on trying to substantiate a new critical

interpretation than on showing how examination of the philosophical colour of Virgil's characterisation can form part of an integrated reading of the poem.

## DIDO

What are the political, intertextual and philosophical strands which are combined in the characterisation of Dido? There are two well-marked historico-political allusions in Book 4: to the Antony-Cleopatra affair, especially in the report of *Fama* in 4.191-5, and to the future wars between Rome and Carthage, above all in Dido's curse (4.622-9).<sup>3</sup> Those motifs, as well as underlying the narrative, also help to shape two of its central themes, which are portrayed in a less negative light than one might have expected.<sup>4</sup> One is that of a female monarch who seeks to advance her political situation by an erotically based alliance with a Roman (or *ur*-Roman) leader in a way that proves disastrous for both of them and ends in her suicide. The other is that of a highly civilised state whose politico-cultural identity is defined, in important ways, by differentiation from its African context, and whose historical development is centred on contact with, and, ultimately, destruction by, Rome. Those narrative themes are worked out through a complex network of allusions to earlier literature; but a special role is played by Virgil's fusion of the portrayals of Medea by Euripides and Apollonius of Rhodes, combined at certain points with Ariadne's lament in Catullus 64. The key stages of Dido's story carry strong echoes of one or other, or sometimes both, of those versions of Medea. These stages are: Dido's hesitant and faltering response to the intense impact of her love for Aeneas, her outrage at Aeneas' failure to maintain (what she sees as) reciprocal favour and good faith, her deliberative self-address in response to this failure and, finally, hatred and destructive revenge coupled with harm to herself.<sup>5</sup>

Virgil's presentation of Dido is coloured by those political and intertextual strands. It is also, I think, shaped by contemporary ways of understanding - and evaluating - emotions. The question of the relevance of philosophical thinking on emotions (in particular, Aristotelian, Epicurean and Stoic patterns of thinking) has been explored most fully in connection with anger in the *Aeneid*, in particular, Aeneas' killing of Turnus in a state of passionate rage. But the question of the psychological basis and ethical status of emotions, which is a key issue in philosophical works by Cicero, Lucretius and Philodemus in the period just before Virgil, has a more general relevance to characterisation in the poem. The tendency of scholars has been to argue for the significance of *one* of these philosophical models for the poem. In his intellectual and personal life, Virgil, like some of his readers, may have had a single philosophical allegiance.<sup>6</sup> But, within the poem, it is more plausible, I think, to see Virgil as deploying all three frameworks eclectically, in quite subtle and complex ways, to inform his characterisation, alongside his use of political and intertextual connotations.<sup>7</sup>

The main features of these frameworks, as they bear on the presentation of Dido, are these. In the Aristotelian pattern, emotions such as anger and pity are seen as, in principle, appropriate and justified responses to actions of benefit or harm. In Book 4, this pattern is most evident in the argument between Aeneas and Dido about whether or not Aeneas' decision to leave marks a breach in reciprocal ethics.<sup>8</sup> In Stoicism, by contrast, emotions, as ordinarily understood, are seen as ethically misguided and as psychological disturbances or 'sicknesses'; emotions thus form a characteristic part of non-rational (in Stoic terms, 'foolish' or 'mad') behaviour. In Book 4, as I have argued elsewhere, the main Stoic motif is the presentation of Dido's surrender to her

passionate love for Aeneas as triggering a descent into uncontrollable irrationality and, in some sense, ‘madness’.<sup>9</sup> In Epicureanism, especially as presented by Lucretius, a comparable theme is that passionate love is a product of delusion or self-delusion. This forms part of the larger Epicurean critique of the ‘empty’ character of most emotions and desires and is linked with the idea that most people fail to understand their real, underlying, fears and desires.<sup>10</sup> In Book 4, the presentation of Dido’s surrender to love and her subsequent emotional confusion can be seen as reflecting the Epicurean view of emotions as, typically, deluded, in a way that runs alongside, and reinforces, the Stoic critique of passions.

I now outline the main story-line in Book 4, as a basis for closer study of Virgil’s fusion of political, intertextual and psychological strands in his characterisation of Dido. A salient theme is that Dido’s love for Aeneas represents a breach in her *fides* to her dead husband Sychaeus. The prominence of this theme has proved difficult to explain fully.<sup>11</sup> But the most plausible explanation, I think, is that Dido’s status as queen, together with the political identity of the community she leads, is bound up with continued dedication to the memory of the Phoenician aristocrat whose murder and the attempted theft of whose gold led Dido to found the colony of Carthage. Her attitude to Sychaeus, initially at least, is one in which political, religious, ethical and emotional commitments come together.<sup>12</sup> This may account for another well-marked motif in the story, Dido’s refusal to marry the African king Iarbas or any other African leader.<sup>13</sup> This can be linked, in turn, with the implied theme that poetic Carthage (like historical Carthage or Cleopatra’s Egypt) has a cultural as well as political identity distinct from that of its African hinterland. Virgil’s Carthage is presented as a politically and artistically ‘high’ culture, strongly aware of other high cultures and major world events (above all, the war between Greeks and Trojans) and separate from that of its African neighbours.<sup>14</sup> The Trojan settlers represent another, high-culture group who are determined to maintain their political identity; and the recognition of this similarity seems to underlie Dido’s readiness to offer the Trojan exiles the prospect of uniting with her people.<sup>15</sup> Anna, indeed, argues that this is a reason for Dido to give way to her love for Aeneas and to form a politically advantageous marriage-alliance (4.36-49). But this plan is in conflict with Dido’s *fides* to Sychaeus (4.15-29), which carries ethical and emotional, as well as political, weight. The proposal is also, of course, at odds with Aeneas’ mission to found a city in Italy, the reiterated theme of his two-book narration to Dido.

This background explains why the idea of giving way to her love for Aeneas presents itself to Dido (as well as her Roman readers) as a *culpa*; and the ‘akratic’ character of her act, its being against her better judgement, is underlined in her words and those of the narrator.<sup>16</sup> The problematic and internally conflicted nature of her decision is mirrored on the divine level. Dido’s surrender to the force of her love and the outcome of this surrender (sexual union with Aeneas in the cave) are presented as the product of the collusion of two goddesses who are deceiving each other and have contradictory objectives.<sup>17</sup> Aeneas, awakened to the fact that the affair is in conflict with his Italian destiny, seeks to end the relationship (265-95, 331-61). Dido’s reactions represent an unstable mix of anger at Aeneas’ breach in reciprocity and self-blame for breaking her *fides* to Sychaeus. It becomes clear to her that her political and ethical identity (her role as the respected and effective queen of her settlement and the associated *fides* to Sychaeus) have both been lost. Her curse on Aeneas and the Trojans and her self-killing express anger at broken reciprocity and also the desire to escape from an impossible ethical and political situation.

This outline is designed to underline that, in Virgil's story of Dido, political and personal strands are intimately linked. The judgements that the poetic figures make on each other and themselves (and those which are invited in the poem's readers) reflect this seamless web of political and personal relationships.<sup>18</sup> Those judgements are framed in ways which evoke Aristotelian, Stoic or Epicurean patterns of thinking; and the patterns deployed have a bearing on the kind of judgements that are made or invited. The intertextual allusions, in particular to versions of the Medea-story, serve as a further way of defining and colouring the emotional register of the narrative. I will illustrate these kinds of interconnection by reference to a series of passages which mark the main stages of Dido's emotional trajectory.

### KEY STAGES IN DIDO'S TRAJECTORY

The first passage falls within the dialogue in which Dido is persuaded by her sister Anna to act on her passionate love for Aeneas. Dido's decision is marked as 'akratic' by her characterisation of the desire for marriage with Aeneas as a *culpa*, a source of blame (4.19). This is because it runs counter to her *fides* to Sychaeus, which she here re-affirms (4.15-29). Anna's counterargument is that Dido should not give such weight to *fides* to a dead person and that marriage with Aeneas, and union with his people, would have substantial political advantages (4.33-49). However, her advice seems also, and primarily, to be responding to Dido's partly disclosed intense erotic attraction to Aeneas; and, in the sisters' subsequent joint actions, erotic rather than political concerns are given prominence.<sup>19</sup> The dialogue contains these lines, spoken by Dido, and concludes with the subsequent narrative comment:

*si mihi non animo fixum immotumque sederet  
ne cui me uinco uellem sociare iugali,  
postquam primus amor deceptam morte fefellit;  
si non pertaesum thalami taedaeque fuisset,  
huic uni forsitan potui succumbere culpae.* (15-20)

*his dictis impenso animum flammauit amore  
spemque dedit dubiae menti soluitque pudorem.* (54-5)<sup>20</sup>

In lines 15-20, the mixed conditional is perhaps slightly surprising, and the indicative *potui*, rather than a subjunctive, might seem to leave open a possibility that the two if-clauses ostensibly rule out. However, the more striking phrase is *succumbere culpae*; one might have expected a term such as *uiro* or *amori* (if scansion allowed) to end the line. The phrase seems to combine first-personal and third-personal perspectives; *culpa* is a term with which an external critic might characterise her readiness to respond to her desire. The narrative comment in 54-5 makes explicit the ethical self-surrender implied in her words.<sup>21</sup>

How far do intertextual or philosophical parallels inform this dialogue? In *Argonautica* 3, the dialogue between Chalciope and her sister plays a similar role in encouraging the hesitant Medea to act on the basis of her intense, though concealed, love (*erôs*), rather than her sense of shame (*aidôs*).<sup>22</sup> But the 'akratic' character of the Virgilian dialogue, indicated especially in the phrase *succumbere culpae* (4.20) is prefigured, rather, by the famous monologue in Euripides' *Medea*, particularly its concluding lines, 1078-80: 'I know that what I am about to do is bad (*kaka*), but anger is master of my plans, which is the greatest source of human beings' troubles'. These lines,

like *Aeneid* 4.15-20, combine an agent's first-personal perspective with the kind of characterisation of the psychological process that a critical observer might make.<sup>23</sup> These lines were, apparently, the favourite poetic text of the Stoic philosopher Chrysippus, and were used to illustrate the conflicted state of mind of those acting in the grip of emotion. In the Stoic view, even those acting in passion are capable of recognising, in some sense rationally, that they are acting irrationally; the combination of a (passionate) agent's perspective with that of a (rational) observer in Medea's words exemplify this paradox.<sup>24</sup> Both associations, those of the famous Euripidean text of *akrasia* (*Med.* 1078-80) and of the Stoic model of passion as conscious surrender to irrationality, illustrated especially by that text, underlie and colour the unexpected phrase *succumbere culpa*.<sup>25</sup> Those associations may, in turn, be combined with the Epicurean conception of passion as delusion and self-delusion. Dido's opening speech to Anna is rich in the kind of persuasive description of a loved one that Lucretius presents as promoting the error (as Epicureans see it) of passionate love.<sup>26</sup> Also, Anna's ethical and political justification for giving way to love (4.33-49) serves as a more subtle mode of persuasive redescription, reflecting the Epicurean analysis of the complex ways in which people deceive themselves about their real motives.

The second passage forms part of Dido's speech to Aeneas, responding to his planned departure.

*dissimulare etiam sperasti, perfide, tantum  
posse nefas tacitusque mea decedere terra?  
nec te noster amor nec te data dextera quondam  
nec moritura tenet crudeli funere Dido?...  
te propter Libycae gentes Nomadumque tyranni  
odere, infensi Tyrii; te propter eundem  
extinctus pudor et, qua sola sidera adibam,  
fama prior: cui me moribundam deseris hospes  
(hoc solum nomen quoniam de coniuge restat)?  
quid moror? an mea Pygmalion dum moenia frater  
destruat aut captam ducat Gaetulus Iarbas?* (305-8, 320-26)

Here, at least at first sight, the emotional idiom is strongly Aristotelian: Dido's anger (in 305-8) and her appeal for pity (in 320-6) are presented as justified responses to Aeneas' actions.<sup>27</sup> As with the earlier passage, and despite the different emotional mode, the tone is reinforced by intertextual allusions to the versions of Medea<sup>28</sup>, here combined with echoes of Catullus' Ariadne. There are specific verbal echoes (particularly, *perfide*, *data dextera*) of the language in which, in these earlier texts, Medea blames Jason (or Ariadne Theseus) for actual or apparent failure in reciprocal ethics. In particular, Medea blames Jason for his failure to recognise the special obligation created by Medea's rescue of him and by her abandonment of her natal family and the added weight this gives to their marriage-bond.<sup>29</sup> But those very echoes contribute to destabilising the ethical force of Dido's complaints and her appeal. Is the *amor* actually 'ours' (*noster*), that is, Aeneas' as well as Dido's? With what significance was Aeneas' (or Dido's) right hand given (306)? It was not, at any rate, that of a marriage acknowledged on both sides, as was the case with Medea. Also, in what way, exactly, was Aeneas the source or ground (*propter te...propter te*) of the hostility of the rejected African suitors and of her own people?

The latter part of the speech reflects the impact that their affair has had on her political and ethical *persona* as an independent queen whose refusal to marry Iarbas or any other African leader was grounded on her *fides* to Sychaeus. Here, she holds Aeneas responsible for this impact (*propter te*), and cites this and its likely outcome (her death at the hands of her enemies or enforced marriage to Iarbas) as a ground for reproach or for pity and continuation of the relationship. But her anger and appeal for pity are at least partly undercut by her own responsibility in activating an erotic affair that she herself recognised as being in conflict with her ethical and political commitments.<sup>30</sup> In philosophical terms, the Aristotelian tone of the emotional language is underlaid, and partly undercut, by the Stoic colour of her earlier conscious surrender to error. From an Epicurean standpoint, her accusations and appeals to Aeneas are underpinned by self-delusion (a central theme of Epicurean thinking on emotions), as she seeks to persuade Aeneas, and herself, that he is the sole agent of an outcome that she at least partly anticipated.<sup>31</sup> Hence, in these lines, the layered connotations, especially those of different ways of conceiving and evaluating emotions, serve to define Dido's psychological state and its ethical quality.

*en, quid ago? rursusne procos intrisa priores  
experiar, Nomadumque petam conubia supplex,  
quos ego sim totiens iam dedignata maritos?...  
quid tum? sola fuga nautas comitabor ouantis?  
an Tyriis omnique manu stipata meorum  
inferar et, quos Sidonia uix urbe reuelli,  
rursus agam pelago et uentis dare uela iubebo?  
quin morere ut merita es, ferroque auerte dolorem.  
tu lacrimis euicta meis, tu prima furentem  
his, germana, malis oneras atque obicis hosti.  
non licuit thalami expertem sine crimine uitam  
degere more ferae, talis nec tangere curas;  
non seruata fides cineri promissa Sychaeo.* (534-6, 543-52)

These lines form part of a deliberative monologue by Dido on the night before the Trojans leave. The form of the deliberative monologue goes back to Homer's *Iliad*, and is used to special effect by Euripides' (and Apollonius') *Medea*, though the closest parallel, also ending in the decision to commit suicide, is in Sophocles' *Ajax*.<sup>32</sup> Though sometimes described as incoherent,<sup>33</sup> her deliberation has a clear - and at one level rational - structure. She considers and rejects these options: (1) seeking marriage with one of the previously rejected African leaders, (2) sailing with the Trojans as a private individual, (3) inducing her community as a whole to sail with the Trojans. She finally embraces self-killing as the only available way out of her situation.<sup>34</sup> She blames her sister and, in effect, herself for choosing what turned out to be an unacceptable course of action, embarking on an extra-marital affair with Aeneas (trying to form a liaison *more ferae*)<sup>35</sup> and thus of breaking her *fides* to Sychaeus. One option notable for its absence is that of resuming her former role as autonomous monarch of Carthage. Her deliberations reflect the fact that emotionally, as well as ethically and politically, this *persona* has become untenable for her as a result of her chosen actions and their consequences.<sup>36</sup>

Although her deliberations in this sense follow a rational sequence, they are also intensely emotional, as indicated in the introductory narrative:

*...ingeminant curae rursusque resurgens  
saeuit amor magnoque irarum fluctuat aestu.* (531-2)

The *amor* underlies options (2) and (3) above, and the *magnus aestus irarum* is apparent in the bitterly sarcastic rhetorical questions with which she articulates the three options. The anger, like the love, is in a sense directed at Aeneas for placing her in this impossible situation, though by the closing lines the anger has been refocused on Anna or herself. The emotional pattern expressed in these lines is better understood in Stoic or Epicurean than in Aristotelian terms. She outlines three courses of action, none of which she regards as fully credible (as her sarcastic tone indicates), and which she then rejects. In this respect, like Euripides' Medea in 1078-80, she acknowledges the irrationality of what she (verbally, at least) considers doing; in more Epicurean terms, she acknowledges that the options outlined are an expression of self-delusion.<sup>37</sup> This final recognition that her (now untenable) situation derives from her own actions and Anna's represents, in Stoic or Epicurean terms, a more fully rational attitude, though one pervaded by deep sadness (*tantos questus*, 553) at the terrible outcome.

*uixi et quem dederat cursum fortuna peregi,  
et nunc magna mei sub terras ibit imago.  
urbem praeclaram statui, mea moenia uidi,  
ultra uirum poenas inimico a fratre recepi,  
felix, heu nimium felix, si litora tantum  
numquam Dardaniae tetigissent nostra carinae.* (654-8)

These famous lines, spoken just before Dido's suicide, also express a kind of rationality. Dido delivers her own obituary or *res gestae*. The stance she adopts, calmly assessing her achievements and situation and doing so from a quasi-cosmic perspective, has both Epicurean and Stoic analogues.<sup>38</sup> However, her calmness here is achieved by negating her earlier recognition of her own role in producing this outcome; the loss of the *persona* she had at the start of Book 4 is presented, in the counterfactual if-clause (*si... numquam... tetigissent... carinae*, 657-8), in terms that negate personal agency, even that of Aeneas.<sup>39</sup> The rational tone is also, on the face of it, in sharp contrast to her physical situation, on the top of a funeral pyre for her quasi-marital bed with Aeneas and about to die by plunging his sword in her breast (642-50, 663-5). Her situation evokes famous tragic suicides such as Sophocles' Deianeira or, in another way, Ajax (and also that of the historical Cleopatra), each of whom, particularly Deianeira, had contributed significantly to the events leading to this result.<sup>40</sup> Like Ajax, Dido intends her self-killing to serve as an exemplary gesture, dramatising the ethically untenable situation of the self-killer but also casting blame on those who precipitated her death. Like Ajax, Dido precedes her self-killing with a terrible curse on those who have induced her to perform this act, though in Dido's case, this is coupled with acknowledgement of her own role in precipitating the relevant sequence of actions.<sup>41</sup> Hence, the quasi-Stoic rationality or Epicurean calm of Dido's lines (654-8) is heavily qualified by its context and implications. The 'philosophical' tone is at odds with the expression of the passions of anger, vengeance and wounded love in Dido's words and actions before and after these lines.<sup>42</sup> But, in a different way, the two tones work together to characterise Dido's ethical and emotional state at her death. Her death is in one sense a rationally chosen act in an untenable situation and is preceded by a brief attempt to recall her lost ethico-political identity. But the death is also the outcome of the torrent of overpowering emotion and misjudgment (viewed predominantly from a Stoic or Epicurean standpoint) that has been the dominant feature of the whole disastrous cycle of events.

In the case of Dido, I have suggested that historico-political allusions (to historical Carthage and Cleopatra) help to frame a narrative which is further coloured by intertextual motifs (particularly, echoes of Medea and Ariadne) and by a subtly layered use of philosophical frameworks for understanding emotions. The characterisation, though complex and probing, is, as I read it, unified, and not fractured into distinct ideological and sympathetic or empathetic strands. If this view is credible, can a similar claim be made about another famous example of Virgilian characterisation?

### AENEAS' KILLING OF TURNUS

*ille humilis supplex oculos dextramque precantem  
protendens...stetit acer in armis  
Aeneas uoluens oculos dextramque repressit;  
et iam iamque magis cunctantem flectere sermo  
coeperat, infelix umero cum apparuit alto  
balteus et notis fulserunt cingula bullis  
Pallantis pueri, uictum quem uulnere Turnus  
strauerat atque umeris inimicum insigne gerebat.  
ille, oculis postquam saeui monimenta doloris  
exuiasque hausit, furiis accensus et ira  
terribilis: 'tunc hinc spoliis indute meorum  
eripiare mihi? Pallas te hoc uulnere, Pallas  
immolat et poenam scelerato ex sanguine sumit.'  
hoc dicens ferrum aduerso sub pectore condit  
feruidus...*

(12.930-1, 938-51)

In this case, unlike that of Dido, the potential relevance of philosophical frameworks has been much discussed. I will outline the main alternatives before suggesting my own view, and also indicating how, in my reading, intertextual and political colour reinforces the philosophical tone. Any interpretation of these famous lines needs to account for at least three striking features. These are (1) the reason for Aeneas' pause as he considers granting Turnus' appeal for pity, (2) the significance of Aeneas' sudden change of mind as he sees Pallas' sword-belt, and (3) the effect of the language with which Aeneas embraces, and the narrator characterises, the decision to kill Turnus.

The 'Aristotelian' reading (which need not presuppose the direct influence of Aristotelian thought)<sup>43</sup> assumes as standard the kind of characterisation of anger offered by Aristotle himself:

Let anger be defined as a desire, accompanied by pain, for revenge at what is taken to be an insult to oneself or those close to one, in a situation where insult is not appropriate...Every case of anger must be accompanied by a certain type of pleasure, namely that which derives from the hope of taking revenge. (Arist. *Rhet.* 1378a30-2, b2-3)

More broadly, emotions such as anger are taken to be (in principle) justified responses to appropriate or inappropriate interpersonal behaviour. Hence, in this context, Aeneas is first of all swayed by pity, understood as another interpersonal emotion,<sup>44</sup> at Turnus' appeal, which is replaced by a surge of anger at the sight of Pallas' sword-belt. The sword-belt triggers anger because it evokes Pallas' death at Turnus' hands, which was a source of intense anger and grief in Aeneas.<sup>45</sup>

Also, it evokes Evander's grief-laden injunction on Aeneas to avenge his son's death by killing his murderer; more broadly, it evokes the theme of justified anger or merited grief which is a significant strand in Books 8 and 11.<sup>46</sup> Aeneas' final response, his being 'inflamed' (*accensus, feruidus*) with anger, his intense bitter words and violent action, signal the response of someone who feels himself wholly justified in his anger and in acting as the agent of Pallas' revenge (*poenas*).<sup>47</sup>

The Epicurean reading is, on this point at least, closer to the Aristotelian than the Stoic. The Epicureans distinguish 'natural' from 'empty' anger. 'Natural' anger is, first, an unavoidable fact of human psychology and, second, an appropriate response to harm or provocation, particularly when deliberate. Natural anger may be shown, and in an intense form, by someone with a good character (*diathesis*), who is not typically prone to anger, if a correct examination of the situation shows that anger is appropriate. A key point of distinction from the Aristotelian view is that anger is not seen as pleasurable, but, rather, as painful; pursuing revenge as a source of pleasure is a mark of 'empty', misguided, anger.<sup>48</sup> Hence, in this case, Aeneas' willingness to suppress revenge and to show pity is a mark of the good, reasonable character or attitude displayed in earlier cases such as Lausus.<sup>49</sup> The shift from forbearance to (natural) anger is brought about by recognition that this response is merited by the killing of Pallas. However, there is no sign, it is claimed, that Aeneas is presented as one securing pleasure through revenge. He seeks revenge on Pallas' behalf (*Pallas ... Pallas...poenam...sumit*), while aware of the grim, painful nature of the task (*saevi monimenta doloris*).<sup>50</sup>

The Stoic reading, like the Epicurean, stresses the fact that, elsewhere in the poem, Aeneas is often characterised as refraining from violent anger in situations where it might be expected. Hence, for instance, he is held back by his divine mother from frenzied anger and revenge against Helen in Book 2. He also enters the war against the Italians in Book 8 and re-enters it in Book 11 in a mood of sorrowful concern for the inevitable deaths on both sides rather than as someone activated by a spirit of justified anger. His killing of Mezentius' son Lausus, the parallel to Turnus' killing of Pallas, is marked by pity rather than anger.<sup>51</sup> A characterisation of the properly Stoic state of mind in such situations is offered by Seneca:

(Someone might ask) 'Doesn't the good person get angry if he sees his father murdered, his mother raped?' He will not get angry, but he will seek retaliation and defend them... 'If my father is being murdered, I shall defend him; if he is murdered, I will seek retaliation - because it is my duty (*oportet*) not because I feel hurt (*dolet*)'. Seneca, *de Ira* 1.12.<sup>52</sup>

Against this background, Aeneas' readiness to respond to Turnus' appeal for pity emerges as a characteristic and reasonable response, and perhaps one that expresses a more generalised, 'cosmic', sense of humanity.<sup>53</sup> The sudden shift of plan triggered by the sight of Pallas' sword-belt appears, by contrast, as a virtually 'akratic' impulse. It is marked as a 'passion' (non-rational, excessive, uncontrolled) by the narrative language (*furiis accensus et ira/terribilis...feruidus*), and by Aeneas' use of the language of human sacrifice (*immolat*). Although the reiteration and alliteration (*Pallas...Pallas...scelerato ex sanguine sumit*) of Aeneas' words express urgent intensity, the use of the third-personal form may suggest that Aeneas is implicitly distancing himself from acts and attitudes that he would elsewhere repudiate.<sup>54</sup>

I think it is clear that this passage is more difficult to interpret than the passages illustrating Dido's emotions considered earlier, and that a case can be made out for each of these readings.

Also, the passage does not straightforwardly match an Aristotelian or Stoic norm in the way that some previous passages do (for instance, those expressing the idea of justified or repudiated anger).<sup>55</sup> Each of the readings also encounters difficulties or, at least, raises issues. The main difficulty for the Aristotelian reading is that the presentation of Aeneas as expressing full-hearted engagement with vengeful anger runs counter to most at least, though not all, of his previous attitudes.<sup>56</sup> The Epicurean reading is, on this point, more apposite, since it accommodates the idea of an atypical outburst of (justified) anger in a characteristically mild-tempered person.<sup>57</sup> However, it is not wholly clear that Aeneas' state of mind in the final lines matches the Epicurean norm of someone going towards punishment as something 'most unpleasant' and 'gritting his teeth' (*daknôn*).<sup>58</sup> Aeneas is described as carried away by intense, burning emotion (*furiis accensus et ira/terribilis...feruidus*), expressed also in his bitter, reiterative words, which is not the state of mind associated with the Epicurean good person. So, overall, the Stoic reading seems most plausible, on the assumption that, on this occasion, and under the pressure of this situation, Aeneas fails to live up to the Stoic-type norms which are elsewhere set for him and which he often matches.<sup>59</sup> This reading perhaps best explains the puzzling fact that the passage shows Aeneas *nearly* reacting in a different way (with forbearance). It may also explain why Aeneas' final words and described state of mind have an uncharacteristic brutal intensity and are marked by other connotations (frenzy or Furies, *furiis*, and human sacrifice, *immolat*) which are particularly disturbing at the very close of the poem.<sup>60</sup>

The Stoic type of reading can be seen as reinforced by intertextual and political considerations (though it has to be acknowledged that competing readings make the same claim). The obvious intertextual parallel here is the close of one or other Homeric epics. It would be possible to see Aeneas as, in general, patterned on the more self-controlled of the two Homeric heroes, namely Odysseus; and to see the two phases of Aeneas' reactions in this scene as an accelerated version of Odysseus' response in the final books of the *Odyssey*, first conspicuously checking his anger (20.1-21) and then, with equal force, releasing it (Book 22). However, if this parallel is invoked at the end of the *Aeneid*, it is only in a rather generalised way; also, the characterisation of the nature and grounds of Odysseus' self-control is very different from that of Aeneas.<sup>61</sup> More immediately germane is the end of the *Iliad*. Turnus' call for pity, coupling an appeal in his father's name with a reference to Aeneas' own revered father, constitutes a strong echo of the terms in which Priam couches his plea to ransom his dead son's body.<sup>62</sup> Although Turnus' use of this appeal is more problematic than that of Priam (who is supplicating for the body of his son),<sup>63</sup> it is the kind of appeal to which we would expect Aeneas to be more responsive than Achilles. Aeneas has already shown himself capable of standing outside his own immediate situation and pitying others (including enemies) affected by his actions.<sup>64</sup> Hence, the fact that Aeneas, unlike Achilles in *Iliad* 24, does *not* grant supplication is the more disturbing, given the Iliadic echo; and it confirms the impression, registered in the Stoic reading, that Aeneas here falls below the standards of conduct and attitude that he sometimes reaches elsewhere.

But how would this reading square with a plausible interpretation of the political connotations of these lines? It is sometimes argued that Aeneas' symbolic role as the bearer of Roman, and specifically Augustan, destiny, makes it inconceivable that Virgil would end his epic by showing Aeneas in a negative light. Also, it is pointed out that, by contrast with Julius Caesar, who followed an explicit, and ultimately fatal, programme of *clementia*, Augustus presented himself as *ultor*,

first of Caesar's killers and subsequently of the Parthians.<sup>65</sup> As Karl Galinsky points out, Ovid in *Fasti* 5.575 re-uses Virgil's phrase *scelerato sanguine* in characterising the avenging role of Augustus in connection with the final dedication of the temple of Mars Ultor (in 2 BC).<sup>66</sup> On this view, the political connotations of the final lines support an Aristotelian or Epicurean reading.

However, it is possible to interpret the political context in a way that is more compatible with the Stoic reading. After Actium, Augustus adopted a more inclusive policy, focused on peace-making and consolidation; and poets such as Horace and Virgil seem to have encouraged, or reflected, this new approach.<sup>67</sup> The shift was formalised in the inclusion of *clementia* as one of the four virtues on the symbolic shield presented to Augustus in 27 BC. This shift informs Augustus' retrospective account of his policy in the *Res Gestae*: his response to Caesar's killers is presented as moderate and legally based, and he claims to have spared those asking for mercy.<sup>68</sup> Within the *Aeneid* itself, the programmatically 'Roman' speech of Anchises advocates the ideal of *pacique imponere morem, parcere subiectis*, while the final divine council in Book 12 celebrates the peace-making union of Trojans and Italians.<sup>69</sup> If we give weight to these features, we can see Aeneas' first reaction, that of anger-free *clementia*, as the more statesmanlike one, and his final outburst of vengeful anger as a lapse from standards that could, at this date, plausibly be seen as Augustan. Accordingly, as Harris stresses, to see this reaction as a lapse does not mean that the poem ends on an anti-Augustan, anti-Roman note.<sup>70</sup> Rather, Aeneas - not for the first time - reverts to a more typically heroic, indeed, Achillean, anger,<sup>71</sup> rather than displaying the magnanimity which an actual Augustus (like Achilles in *Iliad* 24) might have shown.

So, taking all three factors together, I think there is a reasonable case for seeing the Stoic reading of the final scene as supported by intertextual and political considerations. However, the aim of this discussion has not been to argue that the *Aeneid* is systematically Stoic in its characterisation and presentation of emotions. On the contrary, I have maintained that the poem deploys all three contemporary ways of understanding emotions as part of a subtle register of characterisation. I have also suggested that, in these cases at least, the psycho-ethical mode adopted can be seen as consistent with the predominant colour of the intertextual and political indicators. In this respect at least, the poem seems to have a single, though complex, voice rather than falling apart into divergent tones.<sup>72</sup>

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## NOTES

- <sup>1</sup> See also S. M. Braund and C. Gill (eds.), *The Passions in Roman Thought and Literature* (Cambridge, 1997), especially C. Gill, 'Passion as Madness in Roman Poetry', 213-42; also C. Gill, 'Reactive and Objective Attitudes: Anger in Virgil's *Aeneid* and Hellenistic Philosophy', in S. Braund and G. Most (eds.), *Ancient Anger: Perspectives from Homer to Galen*, YCS (2003), 208-28.
- <sup>2</sup> See S. Harrison 'Some Views of the *Aeneid* in the Twentieth Century', in Harrison (ed.), *Oxford Readings in Vergil's Aeneid* (Oxford, 1990), 1-20. For recent contributions to this debate, see K. Galinsky, 'Greek and Roman Drama and the *Aeneid*', in D. Braund and C. Gill (eds.), *Myth, History and Culture in Republican Rome: Studies in Honour of T P Wiseman* (Exeter, 2003), 275-94 (representing the more unified view) and R.F. Thomas, 'A Trope by any Other Name: "Polysemy", Ambiguity and *Significatio* in Virgil', *HSCP* 100 (2000), 381-407, and *Virgil and the Augustan Reception* (Cambridge, 2001), especially 25-54 (arguing for diversity of voices and questioning the basis of the Augustan reading). See also C. Martindale (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Virgil* (Cambridge, 1997), especially A. Laird, 'Approaching Characterisation in Virgil', 282-93, and the discussions of modern and ancient reception of Virgil by D. Kennedy (38-55) and R. J. Tarrant (56-72).
- <sup>3</sup> See further A.S. Pease (ed.), *Publi Vergili Maronis Aeneidos: Liber Quartus* (Cambridge, Mass., 1935), notes on 4.193, 622-9, also pp. 24-8.

- <sup>4</sup> N. Horsfall, 'Dido in the Light of History', in Harrison, *Oxford Readings*, 127-44, brings out the historical connotations, but seems to me to overstate the negative quality of Virgil's presentation.
- <sup>5</sup> For these stages, and intertextual parallels, see the next section below. See further R.C. Monti, *The Dido Episode and the Aeneid* (Leiden, 1981), 102-3, outlining key parallels; C. Collard, 'Medea and Dido', *Prometheus* 1 (1975), 131-51; W. V. Clausen, *Virgil's Aeneid and the Tradition of Hellenistic Poetry* (Berkeley, 1987), 40-60; D. Nelis, *Virgil's Aeneid and the Argonautica of Apollonius Rhodius. ARCA*, Classical and Medieval Texts, Papers and Monographs 39 (Leeds, Francis Cairns, 2001), especially 136-40, 159-72.
- <sup>6</sup> External evidence links Virgil with the Epicurean school (see e.g. M. Gigante and M. Capasso, 'Il ritorno di Virgilio a Ercolano', *SIFC* 7 (1989), 3-6, on a papyrus fragment suggesting Virgil was a member of Philodemus' circle); but the internal indications are more complex. For the contrast between Stoic and Aristotelian approaches in this period, see e.g. Cic. *Tusc.* 3.71-6, 4.37-47; on Lucretius, see n. 10 below, and on Philodemus, *On Anger*, see n. 48 below. See also references in n. 1 above.
- <sup>7</sup> Are readers expected to detect the philosophical implications of Virgil's characterisation? This question is no easier to answer than in the case of other forms of allusion. It seems to me that (1) the poem emerges as richer if the allusions are recognised, but also (2) that the philosophical frameworks give added depth to the presentation of emotions whether or not the intellectual background is specifically identified by the reader.
- <sup>8</sup> *Aen.* 4.305-87; on 305-8, see text to n. 27 below. See Arist. *Rh.* 2, especially 2.2, 2.8. The Aristotelian approach corresponds to a well-marked strand in ancient (or modern) conventional thinking on emotions; hence, we can talk about an 'Aristotelian' approach without presupposing the direct influence of Aristotle. See Braund and Gill, *Passions in Roman Thought*, 6-8; and, on the linkage between the Aristotelian analysis of pity and Greek and Roman thinking, D. Konstan, *Pity Transformed* (London, 2001).
- <sup>9</sup> See further A.A. Long and D.N. Sedley, *The Hellenistic Philosophers* (Cambridge, 1987), section 65; C. Gill, 'Passion as Madness' (n. 1 above), especially 228-9, 237; more broadly, J. Sihvola and T. Engberg-Pedersen (eds.), *The Emotions in Hellenistic Philosophy* (Dordrecht, 1998).
- <sup>10</sup> See (on erotic passion), *Lucr.* 4. 1037-1207, on failure to recognise underlying fears and desires, *Lucr.* 3.31-93, 1053-94; also Long and Sedley, *Hellenistic Philosophers*, section 21, especially B, E. See further M.C. Nussbaum, *The Therapy of Desire: Theory and Practice in Hellenistic Ethics* (Princeton, 1994), chs. 5-6.
- <sup>11</sup> The usual explanation is the Roman ideal of being *uniuira*; see e.g. N. Rudd, 'Dido's *Culpa*', in Harrison, *Oxford Readings*, 145-66, especially 154-60; but it is not clear why this ideal should be so important to the Carthaginian queen.
- <sup>12</sup> See *Aen.* 1.340-68, 4.15-29; note also the shrine to Sychaeus (4.457-9). My reading is here indebted to T. D. Hill, 'Ambitiosa Mors: Suicide and the Self in Roman Thought and Literature', University of London PhD thesis, 2003, 129; also Monti, *Dido Episode*, 21-2, 32, 69.
- <sup>13</sup> *Aen.* 4.36-8, 211-14, 534-6.
- <sup>14</sup> The high culture (establishment of a legal framework, artistic sophistication) is underlined in the initial picture of the emerging Carthage, above all, the murals representing the Trojan War. See 1.418-93, especially 426, 507-8 (laws), 450-94 (murals). The African neighbours are presented as war-like and threatening (4.40-3, cf. 1.523, 563-4), though not lacking in their own form of cultural development (Iarbas has 100 temples to Jupiter Ammon, 198-218). One might compare with Dido's initial attitude the ethico-political stance of Elizabeth I, after her decision to remain the 'Virgin Queen', a decision linked with English autonomy from the other European powers with which England would otherwise have been linked by her marriage.
- <sup>15</sup> 4.522-78. See also Monti, *Dido Episode*, 16-22, 33.
- <sup>16</sup> 4.19, 54-5, discussed below; for *culpa*, see also 4.171-2.
- <sup>17</sup> 4.90-128, which is superimposed on the prior presentation of Dido's love as the product of Venus' divine intervention, 1.657-722, 4.1-5. I assume that divine intervention in *Virg. Aen.*, while signalling the presence of an intense psychological force (or a larger world-historical significance), does not wholly take away individual human responsibility for actions. Otherwise the presentation of Dido as, in effect, deciding to give way to the power of her love, through the dialogue with Anna in 4. 8-55, makes no sense. See further on gods 'working with' human emotions, R.O.A.M. Lyne, *Further Voices in Virgil's Aeneid* (Oxford, 1987), 66-71, also D.C. Feeney, *The Gods in Epic* (Oxford, 1991), 164-80.
- <sup>18</sup> On this point, see also Monti, *Dido Episode*, 35, 40-3, 56-7, 61.
- <sup>19</sup> 4.38, cf. 19, 22-3 (and 1-5), 54-9, 66-9, 82-5, terminating with *amorem*, and followed by the interruption of her queenly role in carrying forward the construction of her city, 86-9. See further F. Cairns, *Virgil's Augustan Epic* (Cambridge, 1989), 43-6.
- <sup>20</sup> The text used for these and other quotations from *Virg. Aen.* is the OCT of R. A.B. Mynors, *P. Vergili Maronis* (Oxford, 1969).
- <sup>21</sup> See also the use of *culpa* in another critical narrative comment in 4.171-2: *nec iam furtiuum Dido meditatur amorem:coniugium uocat, hoc praetexit nomine culpam*. Pease (n. 3 above), note on 4.19, and Rudd (n. 11 above), 152, register, but do not explain, the fusion of first- and third-personal language in *succumbere culpae*.
- <sup>22</sup> See *Apoll. Arg.* 3.673-743 (dialogue between sisters), Medea's hesitations (645-63, 771-801), conflict between desire and shame (649, 652-3, 681, 687), Medea's indirectness about her love (687-92) and Chalciope's ready response (697-704); see further Clausen, *Virgil's Aeneid*, 41-3, Nelis, *Aeneid and Argonautica*, 136-9. A further (partial) parallel is Phaedra's dialogue with the nurse in Eur. *Hipp.*

- <sup>23</sup> On this translation, and on interpretation, of these famous lines, see C. Gill, *Personality in Greek Epic, Tragedy, and Philosophy: The Self in Dialogue* (Oxford, 1996), 223-5.
- <sup>24</sup> See further C. Gill, 'Did Chrysippus Understand Medea?', *Phronesis* 28 (1983), 136-49, *Personality*, 227-32, 'Did Galen Understand Platonic and Stoic Thinking on Emotions?', in Sihvola and Engberg-Pedersen, *Emotions in Hellenistic Philosophy*, 118-21.
- <sup>25</sup> The phrase is adopted, in similar style, in *Ov. Met.* 7.748-50; the more flagrantly paradoxical *Ov. Met.* 7.19-21 and *Sen. Phaed.* 177-9 probably derive directly from *Eur. Med.* 1078-80.
- <sup>26</sup> See *Lucr.* 4.4.1153-70 and n. 10 above.
- <sup>27</sup> On the Aristotelian mode, see n. 8 above and text to n. 43 below.
- <sup>28</sup> See *Eur. Med.* 465-519, especially 476, 482-5, 514-15; for the 'right hand', 496; on the ethical basis for the revenge of Euripides' Medea, see Gill, *Personality*, 154-74, especially, 156, 158-62. See *Apoll. Arg.* 4.355-90, especially 372-3, 387-9; Nelis, *Aeneid and Argonautica*, 160-3. See also *Cat.* 64.132-63, especially *perfidē...perfidē* (132-3), *promissa...conubia* (139-41), *certe ego...eripui* (149-50).
- <sup>29</sup> Contrast *Virg. Aen.* 4.165-72, 338-9, with *Apoll. Arg.* 4.1128-69, anticipated in 4.95-8, 355-9; see further Nelis, *Aeneid and Argonautica*, 148-52, 160-1 (also *Eur. Med.* 10-19, 21-2). Even if Aeneas acted as a husband might have done (e.g. 4.260-4) his denial of marriage (338-9) is not challenged by Dido in 365-87. For a different way of understanding the significance of *dextra*, as referring to Dido's generous hospitality and protection, see *Monti, Dido Episode*, 3-8, 41-2.
- <sup>30</sup> See discussion of 4.15-20 above. As indicated in 4.36-41, Iarbas was already angry at his rejection and the other Africans threatening; what has changed is that the moral-political basis of her rejection of African suitors (her *fides* to Sychaeus and her role as an autonomous monarch) has been lost, as is registered in Iarbas' words in 211-16.
- <sup>31</sup> This is not, of course, to suggest that Aeneas has no responsibility and is in no way blameworthy; but to explore his responsibility fully would require separate discussion.
- <sup>32</sup> See *Hom. Il.* 1.404-10, 17.91-105, 19.553-70, 22.99-130; *Eur. Med.* 364-409, *Apoll. Arg.* 636-44, 3.771-801; *Soph. Ajax* 457-80, with the implicit re-affirmation of this decision in 646-92; on these Greek deliberative monologues, see Gill, *Personality*, ch. 1 and 204-14. See also *Cat.* 64.177-87, terminating with the expectation of death (*letum*, 187).
- <sup>33</sup> For instance, R. G. Austin (ed.), *P. Vergili Maronis: Aeneidos Liber Quartus* (Oxford, 1955), notes ad loc.
- <sup>34</sup> For these stages, see 4. 534-6, 537-543, 544-6, 547. The deliberation is well analysed in Hill (n. 12 above), 136-7.
- <sup>35</sup> 4. 548-52, cf. text to n. 19 above, also the animal simile of 4.68-73 (a reference I owe to Jonathan Foster). There may be an allusion to the love-making of primitive men and women (*Lucr.* 5.962-5) who live like animals (970) before the emergence of (pre-verbal) families (1010-14). In this reading of *more ferae* (551), I follow Pease (n. 3 above), rather than Austin (n. 33 above); see their respective notes on 550-1.
- <sup>36</sup> This is made explicit in 4.596-7: *infelix Dido, nunc te facta impia tangunt?/tum decuit, cum sceptrā dabas. Monti, Dido Episode*, 62-5, stresses that the *facta impia* constitute, above all, the fact that she gave up her monarchic role to Aeneas.
- <sup>37</sup> See nn. 10 and 23 above.
- <sup>38</sup> E.g. Epicurus' famously calm and reasoned death-bed letter (Long and Sedley, *Hellenistic Philosophers* 24D); for Stoic 'cosmic' detachment from one's situation, see e.g. Long and Sedley 58J (citing Chrysippus) or Marcus Aurelius, *Meditations*, *passim*.
- <sup>39</sup> Contrast 548-52, 595-7, and 15-20. The phraseology recalls (again) *Cat.* 64.172-6 (*tetigissent* etc.), though Ariadne there more overtly blames Theseus.
- <sup>40</sup> On these and other tragic parallels, see Clausen, *Virgil's Aeneid*, 53-60; for parallels between the deaths of Dido and Cleopatra, see Pease (n. 3 above), 26.
- <sup>41</sup> *Soph. Ajax* 835-44; for his self-killing as an exemplary gesture, see Gill, *Personality*, 204-14; for Dido's curse, 607-29, preceded by acknowledgement of her own role, 595-7.
- <sup>42</sup> Contrast 653-8 with 643-50, especially 642-6 (*effera...sanguineam uoluens aciem...furibunda*), and the *amor* implied in 651-2, and *ira* in 659-62; also the confused riot of emotions in 590-606.
- <sup>43</sup> See n. 8 above.
- <sup>44</sup> That is, the kind of interpersonal emotion discussed in *Arist., Rhet.* 2.8, and not the more generalised 'pity' sometimes recognised by Stoicism (see n. 53 below).
- <sup>45</sup> 10.510-42, 552, 602-4, 11.26-9, 11.39-44.
- <sup>46</sup> 11.177-81, cf. 10.515-17; 8.494 (*furiis iustis*), 8.501 (*merita ira*), the Argyllans angry at Mezentius; cf. 8.219-20, 8.228-30, Hercules angry at Cacus; 8.482-3, 8.500-1 (*iustus... dolor et merita...ira*), Evander angry on behalf of the Argyllans.
- <sup>47</sup> For readings of this type, see e.g. K. Galinsky, 'The Anger of Aeneas', *AJP* 109 (1988), 321-48, M.R. Wright, 'Ferox uirtus: Anger in Virgil's *Aeneid*', in Braund and Gill, *Passions in Roman Thought*, 169-84.

- <sup>48</sup> See Philodemus, *On Anger*, especially 37.25, 41.3-5, 42.22-34, 44.20-2, 46.28-35; see further J. Annas, 'Epicurean Emotions', *GRBS* 30 (1989), 145-64; J. Procopé, 'Epicureans on Anger', in Sihvola and Engberg-Pedersen, *Emotions in Hellenistic Philosophy*, 171-96, D.P. Fowler, 'Epicurean Anger', in Braund and Gill, *Passions in Roman Thought*, 16-35.
- <sup>49</sup> See text to n. 51 below.
- <sup>50</sup> See further M. Erler, 'Der Zorn des Helden, Philodems "De Ira" und Vergils Konzept des Zorns in der "Aeneis"', *GB* 18 (1992), 103-26; K. Galinsky, 'How to be Philosophical about the End of the *Aeneid*', *ICS* 19 (1994), 191-201, especially 197-200.
- <sup>51</sup> See 2.567-633, especially *furiata mente...indomitas...iras./ quid furis?* (588, 594-5); *heu quantae miseris caedes Laurentibus instant!... quam multa sub undas/scuta uirum galeasque et fortia corpora uolues./ Thybri pater* (8.536-40), *nos alias hinc ad lacrimas eadem horrida bellifata uocant* (11.96-7); 10.808-32, especially *miserans... miserande puer* (823, 825). See further R.O.A.M. Lyne, 'Vergil and the Politics of War', *CQ* 33 (1983), 188-203, M. Putnam, 'Anger, Blindness, and Insight in Virgil's *Aeneid*', in M. C. Nussbaum (ed.), *The Poetics of Therapy* (= *Apeiron* 23.4), Edmonton, Alberta, 1990, 7-40, *Virgil's Aeneid: Interpretation and Influence* (Chapel Hill, 1995), ch. 8, especially 157-60.
- <sup>52</sup> See further J. Annas, *The Morality of Happiness* (Oxford, 1993), 62-6.
- <sup>53</sup> For Stoic analogues to this attitude, see e.g. Marcus Aurelius *Med.* 2.1, Epictetus, *Diss.* 1.28.10; see further Gill, 'Reactive and Objective Attitudes' (n. 1 above).
- <sup>54</sup> See further Gill, 'Passion as Madness', 239-40; also Lyne, 'Politics of War', 199-202, Putnam, 'Anger, Blindness, and Insight', 14-18.
- <sup>55</sup> See nn. 46, 51 above.
- <sup>56</sup> For avoidance of anger, see n. 51 above; for previous outbursts of anger by Aeneas, see 10.510-42, 12.494, 499, cf. 569-73, 580-2.
- <sup>57</sup> See e.g. Philodemus, *On Anger* 34.31-35.5, taken with Galinsky, 'How to be Philosophical', 196.
- <sup>58</sup> Philodemus, *On Anger* 44.20-2, 40.32-41.8; see also Annas, 'Epicurean Emotions', 159, Procopé, 'Epicurean Anger', 180.
- <sup>59</sup> See nn. 51, 53 above.
- <sup>60</sup> In *furiis accensus* (12.946), there is a disconcerting echo of Dido's self-description as *furiis incensa* (4.376). See R.F. Thomas, 'Furor and Furiarum in Virgil', *AJP* 112 (1991), 261-2, arguing against the view of Cairns, *Virgil's Augustan Epic*, 83-4, that *furiis* differs substantively in ethical colour from *furore*. For ways of reading *furiis* and *immolat* that render them less ethically problematic, see P. Hardie, 'The *Aeneid* and the *Oresteia*', *Proceedings of the Virgil Society* 20 (1991), 29-45, at 40-2, *The Epic Successors of Virgil* (Cambridge, 1993), 33-4.
- <sup>61</sup> There is no suggestion in the characterisation of Odysseus that emotions such as anger should be avoided in general, only that it should be restrained in specific situations (see further on *Od.* 20.1-21, Gill, *Personality*, 183-90); contrast the more 'Stoic' aspects of Aeneas' reactions, nn. 51 and 53 above.
- <sup>62</sup> Cf. *Aen.* 12. 932-8 with *Hom. Il.* 24.485-506. The Iliadic Achilles is, in general, not presented as a poetic paradigm for Aeneas; it is the wrath-prone Turnus who figures as 'the second Achilles' (6.89, 9.742). But in the later stages of the poem, Aeneas' outbursts of anger (n. 56 above) and avenging role bring him closer to the Homeric Achilles.
- <sup>63</sup> The appeal of the aged king Latinus to Turnus to end the bloodshed (12.18-45) is, in this respect, a closer parallel to Priam's speech, as suggested by K. Galinsky, 'Greek and Roman Drama and the *Aeneid*' (n. 2 above), 285-6.
- <sup>64</sup> See n. 51 above; note especially Priam's appeal to Achilles to pity his situation (*Il.* 24.493-506), to which Achilles responds in 24.543-51 (with a more generalised awareness of human suffering in 525-33).
- <sup>65</sup> The transition is marked in *Hor. C.* 1.2, especially 21-4, 44-52, as underlined by W.V. Harris, *Restraining Rage: The Ideology of Anger Control in Classical Antiquity* (Cambridge, Mass., 2001), 244.
- <sup>66</sup> Galinsky, 'How to be Philosophical', 201.
- <sup>67</sup> On the shift in approach, see e.g. Vell. Pat. 2.86.2, Sen. *Clem.* 1.11.1. See also S. Commager, *The Odes of Horace: A Critical Study* (New Haven, 1962), 186, 190-204, referring to *Hor. C.* 1.2, 3.4, especially *lene consilium* (41), *uim temperatam* (66), also to Virgil's reading of the peace-focused *Georgics* (especially 1.498-514) to Augustus in 29 BC (Suet. *Vit. Virg.* 61).
- <sup>68</sup> *Res Gestae* 34.2; 2: *qui parentem meum trucidauerunt, eos in exilium expuli iudiciis legitimis ultus eorum facinus* (i.e. *lex Pedia*); 3: *uictorque omnibus ueniam petentibus ciuibus peperci*. See Harris, *Restraining Rage*, 243-7, also referring to indications that Augustus was aware of the need for rulers to moderate anger.
- <sup>69</sup> 6. 852-3, 12.818-41.
- <sup>70</sup> 'We should get away from the idea that if Aeneas fails a moral text, the politics of the *Aeneid* cease to make sense', Harris, *Restraining Rage*, 247.
- <sup>71</sup> See references in n. 56 above, especially 10.510-42.
- <sup>72</sup> I am most grateful for helpful comments on oral versions of this article at a meeting of the Virgil Society in January 2003 and at the University of Victoria, British Columbia; also, for further detailed and suggestive comments on a previous written version, to Susanna Morton Braund, Philip Hardie, Ruth Parkes and Tim Whitmarsh.

# **Continuity in Pastoral: Plants and Food in Virgil**

*A paper given to the Virgil Society on 22 February 2003*

**I**t goes without saying that to be invited to address this society is a great honour and privilege. Yet a recent move of house and change of job have conspired against the original plan of this talk. For me the vacations have always been a time for reflection after the hurly-burly of school life and for quiet academic study. Whatever I study during those precious few weeks has been a huge resource during term time, both to add depth to lessons and as something very personal, not so much an escape as a vision of another place. However, those few weeks have recently been swamped by viewings and vendors and mortgage arrangements, which has meant that the more detailed slant I was intending to take on Virgil has given way to reflections on what his poetry has meant to me.

Just before I sat my final exams at St. Andrews twenty years ago, I asked myself the perennial undergraduate question of what I should do for a career after the last paper. The careers office suggested - as it did to so many of my contemporaries - the safe haven of accountancy. So the application forms were filled, an interview was forthcoming, and a position was obtained at well-known firm. Soon after the degree results had been announced, I caught the evening train from London. As day broke the next day the engineer striking his hammer on the carriage wheels woke me at Domodossola. The journey over the Alps is beautifully contrasting: it begins with the somewhat northern atmosphere of wooden chalets, sheltering pine trees and the massive greyness of the mountains; then the line runs gently down into the valley of the Po and the air quickly becomes warm and scented. At the stations the hawkers sounded almost musical as they wheeled their trolleys along the platforms advertising 'pannini, arranciata, acqua minerale'. My mind wandered to pastoral poetry and I took down my copy of Virgil from my rucksack. Thus I suppose it was Virgil and his pastoral poems that made me question my accountancy application and drew me back eventually to the study of classics.

To define pastoral is not my intention: in fact I would concur with Leach who suggests that the genre is quite protean in its elusiveness.<sup>1</sup> On the other hand, to summarise the format of pastoral poetry is relatively straightforward: the setting must be the countryside, and a maximum of three shepherds is required, either to deliver a monologue as in Virgil's Second *Eclogue* or to wage an amoebaeon debate such as that in the Fourth *Eclogue* of Calpurnius Siculus. The poet can use this structure to support his main theme, whether it be of love, or a description of a return to the Golden Age, or even to comment angrily on the system of appropriation being applied to rural properties in order to reward veterans when they had retired. Supposedly it was Theocritus who invented pastoral poetry in the third century BC. Poetry was naturally associated closely with music, and Greek herdsmen were singers and players, so Theocritus linked the two ideas for his new form of literature. Virgil broadly imitated Theocritus, but added many new and effective details of his own. Virgil himself had two imitators in antiquity: Calpurnius Siculus and Nemesianus. The Carolingian revival renewed the interest in classical poetry and Alcuin and Theodulus were among the writers of seven poems that can be described as genuine pastoral. The continuity in pastoral poetry from Theocritus to Theodulus can be traced in a wide variety of ways: for instance, through conventional themes, the conversations of the shepherds or the plots of the poems. But I would like to think here about the setting, food, flora and fauna of pastoral poetry. For what has always intrigued me about the ancient world is its archaeology in the broadest sense, which is why I have marched down Colchester High Street in the armour of a first century AD legionary with the Ermine Street Guard, cooked and eaten Roman food, helped to dig marching forts in Scotland and villas in England, and travelled to archaeological sites across the empire. My questions always revolve around the reality of a description and so the pastoral poems have focussed my mind on the *locus amoenus* of pastoral.

Coleman relates how beech trees are a re

feature of Virgil's bucolic landscape.<sup>2</sup> Some examples highlight their ubiquitous nature: Tityrus is pictured as reclining beneath a beech tree while playing his flute (*Ecl.* 1.1f) and Corydon wandering distraught among the thick beeches with their shady tops (*Ecl.* 2.3f). As Theocritus (12.8) says, beech trees were renowned for the shade they afforded. Philemon (ap. Ath. 2.52e) called beeches 'the glory of Pan', thereby underlining their symbiotic relationship with the countryside. This is not a poetic conceit: when travelling through the Apennines I have noticed many groves of beech trees. Beech wood is easily carved and can be processed into superb charcoal, whilst its mast provides excellent fodder for pigs. Here it is instructive to note that the Roman national dish was beans cooked with bacon.<sup>3</sup> Damoetas (*Ecl.* 3.12f) describes how Menalcas broke the bow and arrows belonging to Daphnis at the old beech trees. Calpurnius Siculus (1.11) describes how Ornytus asked Corydon to accompany him to a grove 'where the beech tree shelters the waters beneath its root.' Nemesianus (1.30f) has Tityrus warn Timetas that if they try to sing the pine tree might interrupt them with its rustling noise, and advises a place where there are elms and beeches instead. I once sat beneath the pine trees that grow on the flat-topped hill of Cosa from where Lepidus sailed to Sardinia after his defeat by Pompey; they do in fact rustle in the breeze and make a dull whine fitting for the melancholy memory of this doomed struggle against the repressive diktats issued by Sulla. The beech tree, with its smooth grey trunk, is a native to Europe. The young foliage is light green, turning to dark green as it matures, and the alternate ovate leaves provide an excellent shade, which is a common line of thought in all these passages. Virgil (*Ecl.* 5.13f) depicts a poem written 'on the young bark', a detail that he must have drawn from real life, for the protective covering of the soft moist rind that encloses the trunk

of a beech tree is very smooth and thus, when fresh, easy to transcribe.

Another plant that appears frequently in pastoral poetry is *cytisus* or shrub trefoil. The roots of this plant are in fact harmful to trees, but farmers in antiquity nevertheless cultivated this plant for its abundant leaves that resemble clover. Columella (5.12.1f) sings its praises as fodder for all kinds of livestock and as ideal forage for bees. Meliboeus (*Ecl.* 1.74) laments that he will no longer lead his goats to crop the 'flowering trefoil'. Corydon (*Ecl.* 2.64) says that he is turned on by Alexis in the same way as the 'randy goat makes for the flowering trefoil', an imitation admittedly of Theocritus (12.30f), but all the same a wonderful simile of voracious sexual desire.

Meliboeus (*Ecl.* 1.14) relates how one of his goats produced twins 'amidst the thick hazels'. Hazels throw up numerous suckers, and this made them a useful source of tough withies as well as firewood.<sup>4</sup> The trees themselves can grow up to six metres in height. Mopsus (*Ecl.* 5.20f) says that the nymphs lamented the death of Daphnis and that the hazels bore witness to this. In the spring hazels produce male flowers that are carried in catkins. These catkins are cylindrical, pendulous, and move slowly in the wind. Perhaps Virgil was thinking of these catkins when he wrote these lines, because their languid movement could suggest sadness and the measured pace of mourners at a funeral. At the beginning of the same poem (*Ecl.* 5.3) Menalcas and Mopsus decide to sit where the hazels intermingle with the elms. Curiously, although the hazel is a native to Europe, yet Virgil alone of the pastoral poets writes about it.

When evoking Theocritus (5.45ff), Virgil (*Ecl.* 1.51ff) introduces a wistful transformation of the humble realities of Tityrus' land into an idyllic landscape. Cyperus, a type of rush with a graceful appearance, grows in Africa, Egypt and Europe. There is a spring called today the Fonte Ciane not far from Syracuse which, according to myth, is the transformed nymph Cyane, wife of Anapo, her metamorphosis being a punishment for opposing the abduction of Proserpine by Pluto. Here there are large stretches of cyperus, and Theocritus may have used this plant in his poem through reminiscence on the town of his birth. Cyperus root was used in ancient cooking, Apicius (1.4 and 7.4.2) detailing its addition to plain Spanish olive oil to make an ersatz Liburnian oil and to a meat casserole. Although cyperus is not mentioned as such by Virgil, there are references to the *iuncus*, an aquatic or bog plant that grows in poor and acid soil all over Europe, such as where these reeds encroach on pastureland (*Ecl.* 1.48). The owner of these pastures is considered fortunate because his land is still belongs to him and has not been confiscated by Octavian's government. The reeds are almost a metaphor of the spears belonging to the soldiers who encircle the land and who might take it if they are afforded the chance. The poetry here derives much of its detail from Theocritus (7.133 ff). Like Virgil, Theocritus was careful to use appropriate plants in his poetry: *aigeiros*, the black poplar or *populus*, a fast-growing deciduous tree, is tolerant of wet soil, Virgil (*Ecl.* 7.66) remarking on it being found 'in streams'.

More peacefully Nemesianus (1.1) has Tityrus weave a basket from such reeds; Virgil (*Ecl.* 10.71) has a basket woven from the similar *hibiscus*. If *iuncus* is taken to be the equivalent of *schoinos*, Theocritus (7.133) has Eucritus and Amyntas lie down in a bed of these sweet-smelling reeds. Virgil (*Ecl.* 2.28 ff) describes Corydon wishing that Alexis would come and live with him so that they could drive the herd of goats together. There is a problem of interpretation at this point. In his commentary on the poem, Coleman asserts that *hibisco* must mean 'with a green marsh-mallow switch'.<sup>5</sup> He argues that even such omnivorous creatures as goats would not touch this unattractive

fare and that the plant only grows on treacherous and marshy soil. By contrast Servius takes *hibisco* to mean 'to the marsh-mallows'. *Compellere* is indeed found with the dative - witness Horace (*Carm.* 1.24.18: '[quam] ... nigro compulerit Mercurius gregi') - and I find what Servius offers more attractive. Marsh-mallows do not only grow on treacherous and marshy soil, but also on merely moist land. When my daughter was a baby I wheeled her pushchair through a field of marsh-mallows at Otricoli - ancient Oriculum - where the ground was anything but treacherous. These tender evergreen plants with showy, short-lived and wide funnel-shaped leaves, would be agreeable as fodder for goats, but would be rather feeble as a switch. Virgil pictures himself as weaving a little basket from slender *hibiscus* (*Ecl.* 10.71) Small baskets made of mallow were used in antiquity for gathering small fruits and olives, or for draining freshly curdled milk in the manufacture of cheese. As Columella (7.8.3) describes: 'when the milk has thickened it should be transferred to little baskets.' Theophrastus (*CP* 9.15.5) explains that the *althaia*, which is similar to the *hibiscus* and the *malache*, grows in Arcadia, which is perhaps why Virgil places it in his poems.

Tityrus (*Ecl.* 1.19ff) tells Meliboeus how, just as he measured big things by little things, so he thought Rome was just a larger version of the market-town to where he was accustomed to drive his newly-weaned lambs. In a similar way, he adds, cypress trees tower over the *uiburna*. The *uiburnum* is either a wayfaring tree or a guelder rose, although the epithet *lentum* is better in describing the latter. Cypress trees can grow as high as nine metres and would therefore dwarf any guelder rose, so this simile is particularly apt, especially as a cypress, with its dark-green and abundant foliage, looks very majestic, whilst a guelder rose is merely limp undergrowth. The cypress tree was probably imported from the Middle East, but at an early period, so that by Virgil's day it had long been a feature of the Italian landscape. But whilst lines of alternating poplar and cypress trees are today redolent of peaceful Tuscan landscapes, Virgil may have been thinking too of their funereal imagery, and thus suggesting to the reader alongside its majesty the destructive force of Roman power.<sup>6</sup>

Theocritus (11.45) has Polyphemus extolling the delights that await Galatea if she leaves the grey-blue sea, for there will be *acanthus* or bear's breeches to tickle her fancy. Bear's breeches grow to about a metre in height and their natural habitat is Italy. In the wild they have ovate, glossy, green leaves which - and so they should in this context of love - have a heart-shaped base and wavy margins. Virgil (*Ecl.* 3.45) describes them as *mollis*. The cultivated varieties of bear's breeches do indeed lack the characteristic prickles of the wild variety and the luxuriant foliage is particularly dark and soft.

Theocritus (1.21) has a goatherd bid Thyrsis sit beneath an elm. The elm tree has dark-green coarsely toothed leaves, and prefers, as the gardening catalogues might say, any sunny aspect. The *arbusta* in Virgil (*Ecl.* 1.39) were special plantations of elm around which vines were trained. Nowadays wooden or plastic frames are used for this purpose, and the low T-shaped supports entwined with vines are a typical Mediterranean sight. Late one summer afternoon I walked up from the small railway station at Tindari on the north coast of Sicily. The path ran through a citrus grove with its heady aroma and then up through a vineyard that could have been from a scene in Virgil. Virgil's Second *Eclogue* concludes with Corydon reminding himself that in his distracted state he has left his vines half-pruned and the elms they grow on thick with leaves. Earlier in the poem the fact that it is harvest time has been mentioned - and the foliage had to be cut for fodder and to allow the light to reach the grapes. Menalcas asks Mopsus (*Ecl.* 5.1-3) to sit down with him where the

hazels mingle with the elms, to which Mopsus replies that as Menalcas is his elder, he will obey whatever he asks of him, whether they retreat to the shade of the trees or to a cave. The image of flickering shadows is suggested rather than actually depicted by the adjective *incertus* and the alliterative *s* of the leaves swishing. The bright Italian sun makes for sharply defined shadows and I have spent many an hour after a midday picnic amidst some ruins contemplating the interplay of light and dark in the shade of a tree. A similar image is described by Calpurnius Siculus (1.12), whereas Tityrus in Nemesianus (1.31) asks Timetas to sing beneath the elms rather than the pine tree as the latter might interrupt them with its loud noise.

One of the most familiar sights of the Italian landscape must be the groves of stone pines with their domed crowns casting valued shade. Whenever I have caught a train heading south from Roma Termini station, I have felt as if I am in gallery looking at landscape painting, the richly ploughed fields offset by mellow stuccoed farmhouses and dark green stone pines. Theocritus (5.49) mentions the tree and seems to be saying that Comatas' oak trees afford a safer shade, because underneath the pine trees there is danger from falling cones. On the other hand, the pine tree might belong to Comatas and not to Lacon, in which case the cones might be an added bonus. For not only will Comatas enjoy a pleasant shade, but he will also be able to collect pine nuts, the edible wingless seeds of the pine tree that are used so much in Mediterranean cooking. Elizabeth David's recipe for *Salsa Agrodolce* is a reminder of the value of pine nuts and of the survival of the characteristic sweet and sour taste of Roman cooking.<sup>7</sup> Virgil (*Ecl.* 7.65) describes the pine tree as growing in gardens, which would be sensible in providing shade from the fierce heat in summer. Calpurnius Siculus (1.8ff) has Ornytus advise Corydon to head for the groves, the haunt of father Faunus, where the pine tree lifts its head to the sun. Being a tall tree, the pine does raise its head in this way, and at the same time it blocks the rays. Nemesianus (1.72) has Timetas, in the course of singing in honour of the late Meliboeus, describe the pine tree as whispering. Not far from the temple at Segesta in Sicily - up from the grandiose railway station that grandiosely proclaims its fascist origins to the empty countryside - there is a small grove of pine trees standing on a slight hill overlooking the archaeological site. Even when the wind blows only softly the pine needles rattle and a low-pitched whine is produced as the breeze rushes through the dense crowns. It is a peaceful, rustic sound as Theocritus mentions (1.1-2). The photograph of this place I have had enlarged for my classroom wall, a memento of this beautiful tree.

Virgil (*Ecl.* 2.54f) has Corydon actually address the laurel and myrtle - 'et uos, o lauri, carpam et te, proxuma myrte' - both trees associated with Apollo and Venus, who represented music and love respectively. Corydon follows this apostrophe by a list of flowers and fruit. These plants are nearly all in flower at roughly the same time, and if one or two are misplaced, it is because Corydon is more concerned about his love for Alexis than ensuring that each plant blooms in unison with the others. As Athenaeus (15.675e) reminds us, laurel was used to make wreaths for drinking bouts. Meliboeus (*Ecl.* 7.6-8) tells how he was protecting his myrtles from the cold when he caught sight of Daphnis. Pliny (*Nat.* 17.16) recommends using straw for this purpose, a method that gardeners still use with strawberries today. Nemesianus (1.65) depicts Apollo as plucking his laurel tree. The boy in the first book of Naso, alias the Carolingian poet Modoin, describes how an old priest has his temples wreathed with laurel.<sup>8</sup> The laurel, however, has deep green leaves and cannot really be described as *nivea*, so the adjective must here go with *tempora*. This apparent confusion draws attention to a feature of Carolingian poetry: rarely are any plants named and the descriptions of the countryside are very stylised and bare. Pearsall and Salter point out that the same is true in mediaeval art: for example, the Bayeux tapestry reduces the trees to mere decorations, whereas the

fresco of the garden from the House of Livia at Prima Porta is a masterpiece of naturalistic art.<sup>9</sup>

*Salictum* in Virgil (*Ecl.* 1.54) refers to a clump of *salices* or willow, both the purple and white variety being well established in Roman Italy. Willows were used to support vines, to provide cattle fodder, and to act as hedging plants. They grow especially well beside water, and the *salicta* here are situated 'between well-known rivers and holy springs'. Poplars and willows are some of the most common trees in Lombardy, which is the area where Virgil lived.<sup>10</sup> Damoetas (*Ecl.* 3.64-5) says that Galatea made a pass at him with an apple and then darted off towards the willows. Until the early modern period throwing a fruit at someone was a symbol of love. Written in the sixteenth century, the anonymous *Phyllida's Love Call* has Corydon state: 'I will gather pears, my lovely one, / To put in thy lap.' When talking about Amyntas and Mopsus (*Ecl.* 5.16), Menalcas contrasts the suppleness of willow with the more rigid olive wood. The adjective *pallenti* in this line could apply to the leaves of either tree, although olive leaves are better so described because they are a pale silvery colour. On the sides of the hills around Sorrento stand numerous heavily scented olive trees, and with bright sunlight beating down on them their light hue is emphasised. A walk from the bus stop on the main road down to the villa attributed to Vedius Pollio at the Capo di Sorrento passes under overarching olive boughs where the path is slippery with the berries that have been crushed underfoot. The olive was the more valuable of the two trees, although not the more beautiful. As a passing aside, Nemesianus (1.6-7) depicts some kids busily munching away at willow-shoots.

Virgil (*Ecl.* 2.18) refers to the *alba ligustra*. This is translated in dictionaries as the evergreen shrub privet, with ovate leaves that are a lustrous dark green, but *alba* is suspicious, unless it refers to the pale sheen on the leaves rather than the actual colour. The *uaccinia nigra* - the chiasmus 'alba ligustra ... uaccinia nigra' perhaps suggests the intertwining of the plants - has been identified as the bilberry, with bright green leaves that turn a dull purple in autumn. In August the plant bears blue-black fruits. Thus there is a metaphor between the tree losing its fruits in the latter part of the year and Alexis losing his good looks in the latter part of his life.

Tityrus offers Meliboeus 'castaneae molles' (*Ecl.* 1.81), that is chestnuts roasted or pickled to make them tender as described by Athenaeus (2.53-4). Corydon, as he fantasises about Alexis, recalls Thestylis making from garlic cloves and wild thyme a *moretum* or pesto of olive-oil, cheese and herbs (*Ecl.* 2.10-11).<sup>11</sup> Columella (12.59) gives recipes for several similar salads and there is the famous poem on this theme in the *Appendix Vergiliana*. The details of the chestnuts and of the *moretum* are highly Virgilian and are rarely found in other extant pastoral poetry from antiquity - Paulinus of Nola (11.37) compares the heights of cypress and chestnut trees in an interesting variation on a Virgilian theme - although they are popular features of mediaeval German poetry. In fact the chestnut seller in the squares of Austria and Germany is a nostalgic recurrence in the literature that followed the First World War, a wistful lament, as in Virgil, for a simpler world that had been lost in the carnage and confusion of war.<sup>12</sup>

As Virgil (*Ecl.* 10.20) relates, acorns were regularly employed by the Romans as winter-feed for livestock, a fact that Cato (*Agr.* 60) supports. Pliny (*Nat.* 16.15) even describes how, when wheat was in short supply, acorns were dried and ground into flour to make bread. That it was the people in the countryside who starved after a bad harvest can be ascribed to the practice of storing grain in city warehouses, either privately or through state intervention, in order to prevent food riots. The peasants, being scattered, were less likely to cause civil unrest.<sup>13</sup> However, acorns were employed during happier times, and in Roman Spain they even found a place at the table, served as an after dinner nibble, a custom

also of the Greek East, at least as far as the entry under *tragemata* in the *Suda Encyclopaedia* is concerned.

As has already been noted, the flowers that Corydon lists in the Second *Eclogue* do not all bloom at the same time. According to Columella (10.99), *uiolae* (*Ecl.* 2.47) are in bloom from April to June. This flower is probably synonymous with the *ion leukoion*, from which a wine was made called *uinum uiolacum* that is recorded by Palladius (5.5). The *papauera* (*Ecl.* 2.47) flower from May to August, as do most species of *lilia*. The white *narcissus* (*Ecl.* 2.48) produces flowers in late spring. The phrase ‘bene olentis anethi’ is reminiscent of Theocritus (7.63). It grows from March onwards, its flowers appearing in about June as Columella (10.120) relates. It was a common ingredient in ancient Greek and Roman cuisine, as witnessed by the fragment of a Greek cookery book known from the Heidelberg Papyrus and from the pages of Apicius, one of the more delicious recipes being the *Ofellae Ostienses* (7.4) or Ostian Meat Casserole. *Luteola ... caltha* is the yellow marigold that flowers in July. The adjective *mollia* provides a tactile sensation, highly appropriate to what Corydon is thinking. *Mala* (*Ecl.* 2.51) - ‘cana ... tenera lanugine mala’ - are quinces or peaches which are covered with *lanugo* or down when fresh. The *mala* might also refer to Alexis who is young and has down on his cheeks. The smooth texture of the plums is aptly summed up by the epithet *cerea* (*Ecl.* 2.53), and the mention of these fruits perhaps refers back (*Ecl.* 2.16) - ‘quamuis ille niger’ - plums being dark, in which case *pomo* could look back to ‘quamuis tu candidus esse’, if it were a pale apple. Just as giving a fruit to someone was a sign of love, so giving presents was part of the art of courtship. This passage not only illustrates the great wealth of plants that Virgil could muster, but also his great skill in weaving them into his poetry to provide colour, texture and allusion.

All these plants are native to the Mediterranean. The poetry of Virgil and Theocritus is rich in plants, trees and herbs. Conversely Calpurnius and Nemesianus include considerably fewer flora in their eclogues, whilst Carolingian pastoral has only scant reference to plants. By the time the twelfth century arrives, with the anonymous ‘Altercatio Yemis et Estatic’ and the poems of Henri of Avranches, the landscape of pastoral poetry is bare and desolate. Only with the revival of pastoral poetry in the vernacular is there a renewed interest in painting a picture of the countryside, but the landscape has changed. No longer is there a feeling just for the Mediterranean, but instead the landscape familiar to the poet in question is depicted. In his poem ‘Spring’, Pope presents a very English scene: ‘Now hawthorns blossom, now the daisies spring, / The Nymphs, forsaking ev’ry cave and spring, / their early fruit, and milk-white turtles bring.’ By contrast Virgil actually used the plants found in Theocritus, expected homage to his predecessor and to this genre of writing. However, he added many other species, and so it is fair to say that, whereas Theocritus wrote very specifically about the land of his birth, Virgil’s landscapes can only be described as Mediterranean and not, as might have been expected, focussed on any particular area such as Mantua, although he does seem to draw on his knowledge of the countryside around the Po. Calpurnius and Nemesianus in their turn borrow from Virgil, but include a few details of their own. The Carolingian poets draw one or two plants from Virgil, but nothing more, except for Theodulus and his *tilia*, but this seems to be an isolated case. Yet in Alcuin (49) occurs the phrase *uirides rami*, presumably referring to branches that are green with moss, and if this is so, then this is a very northern touch, independent of the earlier tradition of pastoral landscape.<sup>14</sup>

The scenery of pastoral poetry includes ploughed fields or *arua* (*Ecl.* 1.3). To work the plough

as a farmer was noble and free, a sentiment underlined by Horace's famous poem 'beatus ille' (*Epod.* 2). Even in Alcuin (48), *requies* is to be found in these fields.<sup>15</sup> There are also hills and rocks. Meliboeus (*Ecl.* 1.76) laments that he will never see his goats 'clambering far off on a brambly rock'. It is to the mountains that Corydon sings of his love for 'formonsum ... Alexim' (*Ecl.* 2.5), a theme to which Alcuin (1 and 47) returns.<sup>16</sup> The landscape of these poems is well watered, as Virgil (*Ecl.* 2.59) and Theodulus (8).<sup>17</sup> The sea is never far way either: Corydon (*Ecl.* 2.25) says that he saw his reflection on the beach and Polyphemus, as described by Theocritus (6.34-5), glimpsed his single eye reflected in the sea. Apparently it is possible to see one's reflection in the sea at the water's edge when it is very calm, although I have been thwarted so far in my attempts to see my own reflection along the Suffolk coast. And as there is only a small tide in the Mediterranean - the mean tidal range at Naples is only about 8cm, although even this was enough to allow the Roman army to storm New Carthage in 210BC according to Livy (28.45.8) - there are few rock pools to serve as a mirror. As Calpurnius (1.10) describes, here were numerous trees and woods. Meadows abound for the flocks to graze. In Nemesianus (1.32), Timetas is pleased to sing in such beautiful surroundings where the 'mollis ager' - a phrase redolent of Virgil (*Ecl.* 1042) - is covered with green grasses. Here he points out the bulls browsing quietly. Corydon (*Ecl.* 7.45) dubs the grass 'softer than sleep', an illusion to Theocritus (5.50-1). Marshland does encroach on Tityrus' pasture (*Ecl.* 1.48), but nevertheless he still possesses adequate land on which to graze his cattle. The numerous references to bog or aquatic plants show to what degree marshes were a feature of the classical pastoral landscape (e.g. Theoc. 7.133), Nemesianus (1.1) and Virgil (*Ecl.* 1.51). In Virgil (*Ecl.* 3.111) *rivi* or irrigation channels are remarked upon. These are used today, especially in southern Italy and Sicily, although now the water is carried in pipes or concrete channels to the fields; from there the water is taken, as in antiquity, along shallow trenches to the crops.

The animals that inhabit the pastoral landscape are varied and plentiful. Hybla, situated on the southern slopes of Mount Etna, is the home of the bees mentioned by Virgil (*Ecl.* 1.54), a reference perhaps to earlier pastoral because, as Columella (9.14.19) says, this area was as renowned for its honey as was Hymettus in Attica. Honey from the Greek islands of Chios and Siphnos were also prized. My copy of the Mynors edition of Virgil has a dark line along the edge of the pages of Book Four of the *Georgics*. I re-read these when travelling along the Adriatic coast of what was then Yugoslavia: only in the bars were there murmurs of the tensions that were soon to erupt in that murderous civil war. The dark line was caused by the grime on the trains and buses, but for a Roman might have presaged the darkness that was soon to cross that country. In Theocritus (7.80-1), bees are called *simai* or 'snub-nosed', an excellent description of those supposedly aerodynamically impossible creatures. Two species of birds are named in lines 57 and 58 of the First *Eclogue*. *Palumbes* can refer either to a wood-pigeon or to a ring-dove, Virgil (*Ecl.* 3.69) describing them as 'aeriae ... palumbes'. The turtle-dove is mentioned by Theocritus (7.141). In the Carolingian poets there is a newcomer to the pastoral scene, the cuckoo, although Pliny (*Nat.* 18.249) tells us that vine-dressers who were late were liable to be taunted by cries of 'cuckoo' as if the arrival of the birds had anticipated their job. The cuckoo is important in folk-lore and is a particularly northern bird. It is regarded as the herald of spring, as Thomas Nashe writes: 'Spring, the sweet Spring, is the year's pleasant king, / Then blooms each thing, then maids dance in a ring, / Cold doth not sting, the pretty birds do sing - / Cuckoo, jug-jug, pu-we, to-witte-woo!' A poem attributed to Alcuin also has a raven, another bird associated with more northern climes.<sup>18</sup>

Virgil (*Ecl.* 2.12f) mentions cicadas, bestowing on them the epithet *raucis*, a wholly apt onomatopoeia for the penetrating and persistent noise of their rasping. However, Calpurnius (5.56) is slightly kinder to them, calling them ‘argutae ... cicadae’ or merely ‘noisy cicadas’. In addition Theocritus (1.148) is by no means harsh on them. Another ubiquitous Mediterranean creature to feature in Virgil’s pastoral (*Ecl.* 2.9) is the lizard. I remember watching one from only a few metres away, basking in the midday sun among the ruins of Tiberius’ villa on Capri. They are a dull green colour and are such a common sight that Juvenal (3.231) can joke about it being better to be master of a single lizard on a farm than brave the ubiquitous hazards of metropolitan Rome.

Meliboeus (*Ecl.* 1.75f) says in pain and grief that he will never see his goats browsing on the rocky hillside again, having been forced to leave his farm. Menalcas (*Ecl.* 3.17) asks Damoetas whether or not he saw him sneaking up to cut off one of Damon’s goats. The *capreoli* (*Ecl.* 2.41) are kids of the wild she-goat *caprea*, or in other words roebucks. According to the commentator Servius, the white spots on their necks disappear after six months, and this is consistent with the fact that in the poem they are still unweaned. Corydon (*Ecl.* 2.28ff) wishes Alexis could be with him to shoot stag. After his daydreaming he suddenly realises that wild boars are paddling in his springs. Menalcas (*Ecl.* 3.75) complains that he has to watch the nets while Damoetas has all the fun chasing boars. Meliboeus (*Ecl.* 7.3) reveals that Thyrsis has sheep and Corydon has goats, whilst adding the detail that their udders are distended with milk. Sheep appear in Theodulus’ poem. Tityrus, as described by Nemesianus (1.34), shows Timetas where the cattle are chewing the grass. Damoetas (*Ecl.* 3.29ff) offers as a wager a heifer which comes to the milk pail twice a day and suckles a pair of calves as well, a sentiment reminiscent of Theocritus (1.25). Pliny (*Nat.* 8.177) says that it was rare for a heifer to produce twin calves, so this would have been a particularly special commendation.

Virgil’s landscape in the *Aeneid* is only realised sketchily. Yet here and there are pale images of his pastoral poems. Many of the references to animals belong to the stylised world of epic: heroes eating roast lamb and deer or hunting for boar and lions. But there are hints of Virgil’s fascination with the countryside: the statue of Italus, planter of the vines, standing in front of the entrance to the court of Laurentine Picus; Achaemenides living on the island of the Cyclops off stony cornel-berries and grasses torn up by the roots; the image of the strong farmers of Lydia working the rich fields of wheat. Here his preoccupations are with other themes. Food is no longer just for eating, but rather it has turned into a metaphor. While he is travelling, Aeneas survives off chunks of meat barbecued roughly by his men. It is crude and violent cuisine. What awaits him is the civilisation that will come from polite dining, the bread in baskets and the soft napkins and the changing of tables that first appears at Dido’s feast and features again when Evander entertains the Trojans. When Aeneas finally reaches his destined land, and he is eating his plates, it is with ‘pomis agrestibus’ (*A.* 7.121) that the plates of crisp bread are eaten. The world of pastoral poetry is near at hand in images of elsewhere.

A clear line of continuity may therefore be traced in pastoral, both in the different types of animals and in the wide variety of plants. There is a remarkable consistency in the depiction of what kind of place the shepherds of pastoral poetry inhabited. Although the geographical location is sometimes given, Theocritus situating some of his poems in Sicily, others in Cos or southern Italy, whilst Virgil locates his later pastoral poems in ‘Arcadia’, yet the descriptions seem to depict an

ideal Mediterranean setting, related in but few ways to the harsher realities of the true countryside. Only on one or two occasions is a glimpse provided of this side of the herdsman's life as, for example, when Virgil (*Ecl.*1.14f) depicts a goat belonging to Meliboeus producing two kids that have pathetically to be abandoned on the hard rock. Plants are not just named at random, but for a purpose, be it to create pathos, to paint a landscape, or to offer to the reader's imagination delicately beautiful and visually stunning displays of colour and form. The season forever seems to be spring or early summer, the 'formonsissumus annus' (*Ecl.* 3.57). The scenery of the countryside is rich in its hills, woods, ploughed farmland and streams. Amongst the trees, on the hillsides, or in the fields graze sheep or cattle, whilst gentle birds soar in the sky or sing. As Marlowe later wrote: 'There we will sit upon the rocks / And see the shepherds feed their flocks, / By shallow rivers to whose falls / Melodious birds sing madrigals.' We as listeners or readers are being invited into a picture, as it were, of a lovely Mediterranean setting. Just as in later mediaeval art nature became stylised and neglected, so too in poetry the delineation of the shepherds' habitat was considered of less importance than the dialogue and plot. Perhaps the later poets felt that Virgil, Theocritus, and to a lesser extent Nemesianus and Calpurnius, had exhausted this aspect of the pastoral; or more probably it was just tastes that had changed, a move away from the world around to the inner feelings.<sup>19</sup> The evening had come to this most lovely of art forms: 'ite domum saturae, uenit Hesperus, ite capellae'.

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## NOTES

- <sup>1</sup> E.W. Leach *Virgil's Eclogues: Landscapes of Experience* (Ithaca and London 1974), 19
- <sup>2</sup> Virgil *Eclogues* edited by R. Coleman (Cambridge 1977), 71
- <sup>3</sup> L.Fenaroli, *Guida agli Alberi d'Italia* (Firenze 1984), 103 on the multifarious uses of beech wood and R. Faber, 'Virgil *Eclogue* 3.37, Theocritus 1 and Hellenistic Ekphrasis', *AJPh* 116 (1995), 411-417 on beechwood cups.
- <sup>4</sup> L. Fenaroli, *ibid.*, 99
- <sup>5</sup> R. Coleman, *ibid.*, 98-9. G. Maggiulli (*Incipient Silvae Cum Primum Surgere: Mondo Vegetale e Nomenclatura della Flora di Virgilio* (Roma 1995), 311-2) elaborates on this debate.
- <sup>6</sup> C. Connors, 'Seeing Cypresses in Virgil', *CJ* 88 (1992), 1-17
- <sup>7</sup> E. David, *Italian Food* (Harmondsworth 1963), 296-7
- <sup>8</sup> R.P.H. Green, *Seven Versions of Carolingian Pastoral* (Reading 1980), 14 and 70.
- <sup>9</sup> *Landscapes and Seasons of the Mediaeval World* (Toronto 1973), *passim*.
- <sup>10</sup> D. Nardoni ('Vicis Andicus: Essay of Experimental Philology', *Helmantica* 45 (1994), 251-268) argues for the poet's birthplace as being near Castel Goffredo near Casalpoglio.
- <sup>11</sup> For ancient forerunners of pesto, see M. Grant, *Roman Cookery: Ancient Recipes for Modern Kitchens* (London 1999), 103-4.
- <sup>12</sup> E.g. J. Roth, *Weights and Measures [Das falsche Gewicht]*, translated by D. Le Vay (London 1982), 90-1.
- <sup>13</sup> P. Garnsey, *Famine and Food Supply in the Graeco-Roman World: Responses to Risk and Crisis* (Cambridge 1988), 61-2
- <sup>14</sup> R.P.H. Green, *ibid.*, 8
- <sup>15</sup> R.P.H. Green, *ibid.*, 8
- <sup>16</sup> R.P.H. Green, *ibid.*, 7 and 8.
- <sup>17</sup> R.P.H. Green, *ibid.*, 26
- <sup>18</sup> R.P.H. Green, *ibid.*, 9
- <sup>19</sup> J. Sargeant, *The Trees, Shrubs and Plants of Virgil* (Oxford 1920), 2-3 remarks on this paucity of external nature in later poetry.

# Making Virgil Strange

*A Presidential Address given to the Virgil Society on 17 May 2003*

The interpretation, reception and translation of Virgil through the years reveal many different Virgils. There are proto-Christian Virgils and the Virgil of the Pilgrim fathers; Catholic Virgils and Protestant Virgils; Royalist Virgils and Republican Virgils; Civil War Virgils and Restoration Virgils; Whig Virgils; Victorian Virgils; proto-fascist Virgils and anti-Nazi Virgils. In other words, Virgil has been appropriated for many different perspectives on the world. It is my contention that these appropriations involve assimilations which tend to erase the particularly Roman and Virgilian aspects of Virgil. In this paper I shall urge the importance of making, or keeping, Virgil strange, especially in the arena of translation.

This paper, then, concerns one aspect of the interpretation and reception of Virgil - the translation history of the *Aeneid* into English. It is a preliminary to a study of the translation history of Virgil into Russian, which I am

ly working on. Other scholars have discussed Virgil's translation history from various perspectives,<sup>1</sup> but here I am developing the work of Colin Burrow in his excellent essay in the *Cambridge Companion to Virgil* and of Theodore Ziolkowski in his book *Virgil and the Moderns*.<sup>2</sup> Burrow discusses Virgil in English translation and Ziolkowski discusses the reception of Virgil in Europe and America between 1914 and 1945. I shall start by raising some important issues about translation strategies. I shall then attempt to defamiliarize a very familiar passage - the opening 11 lines of the poem - before examining some English translations of the *Aeneid* to see how they map onto the spectrum of assimilation-dissimilation, and I shall conclude with a programme for a future translation of the *Aeneid* into English.

I start with a quotation from Ziolkowski on the inter-war interpretation of Virgil: 'Virgil's texts...became a mirror in which every reader found what he wished: populism or elitism, fascism or democracy, commitment or escapism.'<sup>3</sup> In the case of translations, then, if Virgil is our 'mirror' and speaks to contemporary concerns, it seems that translators have been intent upon familiarizing and domesticating the text for their contemporary audiences - and perhaps that is how Virgil came to be 'the classic of all Europe', in T.S. Eliot's words.<sup>4</sup> The problem here is that the process of familiarizing and

domesticating the foreign text tends to assume a transcendental humanism, which obscures or erases important differences between cultures and eras. This process tends to generate a translation which, thanks to its fluency, makes few demands upon the reader.

But consider what Nabokov said about fluency at the beginning of his 1955 discussion of translating Pushkin's *Onegin* into English:

I constantly find in reviews of verse translations the following kind of thing that sends me into spasms of helpless fury: "Mr. (or Miss) So-and-so's translation reads smoothly." In other words, the reviewer of the "translation," who neither has, nor would be able to have, without special study, any knowledge whatsoever of the original, praises as "readable" an imitation only because the drudge or the rhymster has substituted easy platitudes for the breathtaking intricacies of the text. "Readable," indeed! A schoolboy's boner is less of a mockery in regard to the ancient masterpiece than its commercial interpretation or poetization. "Rhyme" rhymes with "crime," when Homer or *Hamlet* are rhymed. The term "free translation" smacks of knavery and tyranny. It is when the translator sets out to render the "spirit" - not the textual sense - that he begins to traduce his author. The clumsiest literal translation is a thousand times more useful than the prettiest paraphrase.<sup>5</sup>

And Lawrence Venuti, a leading figure in translation studies, suggests that fluent translation strategies involve the effacement of the translator in the attempt to produce 'a text so transparent that it does not seem to be translated'.<sup>6</sup> Both Nabokov and Venuti are deeply troubled by the phenomenon of the invisibility of the translator, because it creates a false impression of direct access to the original and because it erases the difficulties and strangenesses of the original.

But this is not the only strategy available to translators. The choice was articulated starkly by the German theologian and philosopher Schleiermacher in a lecture delivered in 1813. He proposed that there are only two methods of translation: 'Either the translator leaves the author in peace, as much as possible, and moves the reader towards him; or he leaves the reader in peace, as much as possible, and moves the author towards him.'<sup>7</sup> The fluent translation does the latter, obviously, and can be seen as responsible for the many different Virgils that I catalogue at the start. Here, though, I want to make the case for the former, because I fear that fluent translations by 'invisible' translators enable people to assimilate Virgil's creation to their own concerns instead of engaging with the ways in which Roman culture was different from their own. In the end, this connects with whether you think sameness or difference is more important. Are we seeking to assimilate antiquity to the modern world, or are we bold enough to grapple with the dissimilarities? Are we self-reflexively looking to make the world in our own image, or are we prepared to face 'The Other' honestly and unflinchingly?

In the arena of translation, I believe that we can resist the model of familiarization and domestication by asking the translator to produce a 'foreignizing translation' which will indicate the difference of the alien text and the alien culture that produced the text. This we can do 'only by disrupting the cultural codes that prevail in the target language' because a 'foreignizing translation' will necessarily draw attention to itself, to its own textuality.<sup>8</sup> That means that it takes more courage, aesthetically, politically, commercially.

The challenge for my ideal translator is, how to foreignize the original text. In my view, this starts by truly reading the text as foreign, by allowing and acknowledging the very strangeness of the poetry. The process of reading for strangeness I connect with an important tenet of Russian Formalism, namely the principle that a central function of poetry is 'making strange', *ostranenie*.<sup>9</sup> I therefore propose to analyze the task facing a translator who aims to defamiliarize the text, as a preliminary to producing a

demanding, rather than a fluent and facile, translation.

To show how this might apply to Virgil, I shall here take a very familiar passage - the opening 11 lines of the poem - and try to 'make it strange' in order to highlight the challenges these lines pose to the translator. Then I shall review a few English translations, dating from the sixteenth to the twentieth centuries, to see how these highlight the recurring difficulties of producing a verse translation of the *Aeneid* in English. And I shall finish by outlining the difficulties that English in particular faces - and that I believe an inflected language like Russian does not. My aim is to have you see these lines anew, lines which are not only familiar but also introduce issues central to translation and interpretation.

*arma uirumque cano, Troiae qui primus ab oris  
Italiam fato profugus Lauiniaque uenit  
litora - multum ille et terris iactatus et alto  
ui superum, saeuae memorem Iunonis ob iram,  
multa quoque et bello passus, dum conderet urbem  
inferretque deos Latio, genus unde Latinum  
Albanique patres atque altae moenia Romae.  
Musa, mihi causas memora, quo numine laeso  
quidue dolens regina deum tot uoluere casus  
insignem pietate uirum, tot adire labores  
impulerit. tantaene animis caelestibus irae?*

There are four important features of these lines, all relevant to the translator, which I shall point out before I defamiliarize this text by focusing upon specific words.

First, the proper names. In a way these tell the story and pose a problem. As has been observed, Virgil has carefully structured his opening sentence to progress from *Troiae* (1) to its final word, *Romae* (7). This remarkable frame progresses through the logical sequence of the arrival in Italy (2), the foundation of Lavinium (2-3) in Latium (5) and the move to Alba Longa (7). The translator has to decide what to do with these proper names.

Second, the multitude of references to superhuman agency, in which Virgil lays out his whole religious system: *fato* 2, *superum* 4, *Iunonis* 4, *deos* 6, *Musa* 8, *numine* 8, *regina deum* 9, *animis caelestibus* 11. But English is particularly impoverished in this sphere, and not, I suspect, just because of the monotheistic/polytheistic divide, but because in our age of supposed rationalism we have all but lost a vocabulary for the supernatural. And yet the concentration of these Latin words here at the opening of the poem draws attention to one of Virgil's central questions - how humans fare in a world they cannot control.

Third, the loose syntactic structure. In lines 1-7, it is the long relative clause that contains the narrative: *qui...litora* expands upon *uirum*, then *ille*, tacked on to the relative clause with two participles, *iactatus* and *passus*, makes commentators struggle: Austin calls this a narration delivered in a parenthesis while Williams says the *ille* clause is in apposition to the subject of the relative clause. Tacked on to that, whatever it is, comes the *dum* clause, looking ahead to Aeneas's future foundation of a city and importation of his religion. The next link is *unde*, the reference of which is debatable: is it the man, *uirum*, i.e. 'from whom', a grandly archaic usage, according to Austin; or does it more narrowly refer to the derivation of *Latinum* from *Latio*? Lines 8-11 have a similarly loose structure. After the personal *mihi*, Virgil moves away into the story, or rather its causes, offering two alternatives with non-parallel grammar in the two indirect questions: the ablative phrase *quo numine laeso* and the

present participle *quid dolens*. The second phrase can readily be turned into a direct question, *cur dolet?*, but the first has commentators struggling, with Servius, Austin and Williams offering different interpretations.

Fourth, Virgil's use of repetition to draw attention to the central themes. Most important is *uirum*, in lines 1 and 10. Virgil's focus is upon his 'hero', who, incidentally, is not named until line 92, yet I notice that this crucial word appears in the accusative case both times. That connects with the next idea that gains emphasis through repetition, where *multum...iactatus* (3) is echoed by *multa...passus* (5) and similarly *tot...casus* (9) with *tot...labores* (10). The accusative case of *uirum* renders the hero the object and not the subject, the victim of the supernatural forces at play here, which test him again and again. The repeated words *multum* and *tot* accumulate the trials which he will endure. Lastly, the final word of the opening, *irae*, reinforces *iram* from line 4, with the significant shift that it is generalized from Juno to the plural. The themes emphasized by these repetitions are heroism, suffering and rage. All three have a contemporary resonance for us, in this post-September 11th world and all three evoke a kaleidoscope of ideas from the centuries intervening between Virgil and today, a kaleidoscope which helps explain the many different Virgils we meet through the ages.

If we now imagine ourselves as translators faced with this text, we can defamiliarize it by looking at the individual words.

- 1 *arma*: 'arms' seems too familiar by now, perhaps because of Shaw's *Arms and the Man*; maybe 'war' (justified by 8.114, where *arma* is the antithesis of *pax*) works better;  
*uirum*: 'hero, warrior', connects with Roman ideas of masculinity, cf. *uirtus*, and echoes the first word of *Odyssey*, *andra*;  
*cano*: I note the 1st person singular;  
*Troiae*: takes initial position in its clause thanks to the postponed relative pronoun *qui*;  
*primus*: what exactly does it mean? A translator needs to decide; and to give the idea prominence, because a claim to 'firstness' in the first line demands attention;
- 2 *Italiam*: its initial position in the line marks it as the destination;  
*fato*: this superhuman agency poses a problem for us;  
*profugus*: used only here of Aeneas; the combination of *pro* + *fug* may have a sense of movement;  
*Lavinia...litora*: balances with *oris*, its synonym;
- 3 *ille*: archaic, according to Servius;  
*iactatus*: mixes literal and metaphorical - Aeneas can be 'tossed' on sea but not on land;
- 4 *ui superum*: archaic genitive plural - how is the translator to refer to the gods?  
*saeuae...Iunonis*: is the adjective surprising? how strong is it?  
*memorem...iram*: the phrase personifies Juno's anger;
- 5 *dum* + subjunctive: this seems a good construction to articulate the hero's endurance;  
*urbem*: importantly 'a city', not 'the city' (i.e. not Rome);
- 6 *inferret*: certainly means 'import something foreign' (cf. 8.11-12, *uictos...penatis / inferre*), but perhaps also with military overtones of attack;  
*Latio*: picked up by *Latinum* - aetiology is important to Virgil and the translator will need to

reflect that fact;

*genus*: sc. *ortum est*; ‘race’ may work; ‘tribe’ sounds too primitive, evoking a vision of anthropologists in the field;

7 *patres*: ‘ancestors,’ but probably with a hint of ‘senators’ too;

*moenia*: not simply physical walls but representing the developed city, as at *Georg.* 2.534-5;

*altae*: used by Virgil of Rome only here - but is its reference physical or emotional?

8 *Musa*: another female superhuman agent;

*causas*: we should not ignore the plural;

8-11 indirect questions often pose a problem when translating into English; this is especially true here because of the double construction conjecturing an injury delivered to the queen of the gods or a resentment conceived by her;

*numine*: another superhuman element, a reference to divine power;

9 *dolens*: an unusual present participle; not ‘grief’ but ‘resentment’;

*regina deum*: another archaic genitive and another phrase from the pantheon, indicative of supreme power;

*uoluere*: literally ‘roll’ [along/onwards], hence ‘undergo’;

*casus*: a word that is always hard to translate: possibilities include ‘fall’ or ‘mishap’ or ‘calamity’; we have to decide whether or not to reproduce the plural;

10 *insignem*: English ‘remarkable’ captures the root *-sign-*;

*pietate*: raises a difficulty that persists throughout the poem, because there is no straightforward translation of the concept; here the reference is to Aeneas saving his father and the household gods from burning Troy;

*labores*: it is so easy to sound fustian with translations like ‘toils’;

11 *impulerit*: unusually the verb is followed by infinitives; we might note the strong pause afterwards;

*tantae*: this is a reference to quantity, not quality; these rages are huge;

*animis*: one of hardest words to translate; though most render ‘minds’, we might remember that this word also denotes ‘anger’ or ‘passion’ in its own right;

*caelestibus*: yet another word denoting the superhuman agents;

ellipse of the verb in this final question causes problems to translators: Milton at *Paradise Lost* 6.788 has ‘In heav’nly spirits could such perverseness dwell?’ where ‘dwell’ is too strong; after all, this idiom is simply the way Latin says ‘have’; i.e. ‘do sky-living minds have such huge rages?’

With these notes to remind us of the complexities of the task of translation, let us look at how some translators have tackled these issues. My approach here is to highlight successful and less successful features in some of the best-loved and most-used translations, starting with the three dominant 20th century translations, through which the majority of readers will meet Virgil for the first time. I hope it is understood that I do this in a spirit of constructive enquiry and not meanness; I wish to acknowledge strongly the difficulty of this task. I should also mention that I will not discuss Dryden’s translation, the

most renowned of all, not out of disrespect but because its tendency to expansion reduces its usefulness in this exercise. I shall however have something to say about Dryden later. First, then, the standard three 20th century translations, by C. Day Lewis (1952), Mandelbaum (1971) and Fitzgerald (1983).

### C. DAY LEWIS

I tell about the war and the hero who first from Troy's frontier,  
 Displaced by destiny, came to the Lavinian shores,  
 To Italy—a man much travailed on sea and land  
 By the powers above, because of the brooding anger of Juno,  
 Suffering much in war until he could found a city  
 And march his gods into Latium, whence rose the Latin race,  
 The royal line of Alba and the high walls of Rome.  
 Where lay the cause of it all? How was her godhead injured?  
 What grievance made the queen of heaven so harry a man  
 Renowned for piety, through such toils, such a cycle of calamity?  
 Can a divine being so persevere in anger?

Lewis is to be commended for keeping the same number of lines as the Latin, but the texture is wordy and induces stumbling when the translation is read aloud. Specific weaknesses to my ear include the clumsy opening words, 'I tell about', the omission of *saevae* (4) and *Musa* (8), the singular 'cause' for plural *causas* (9), and the specificity of 'a divine being' for *animis caelestibus* (11), which mistakenly puts all the blame on Juno.

Less serious complaints are that 'the royal line of Alba' overinterprets the text (*Albani...patres*, 7) and that 'high walls of Rome' (7) switches *altae* from *Romae* to *moenia*. The separation of the indirect questions of 8-9 into direct questions may be hard to avoid, but it represents a departure from the Latin.

In Lewis's favour, 'hero' for *uirum* (1) must be right, as is 'frontier' for *oris* (1). The phrase 'displaced by destiny' captures well the alliteration of *fato profugus* (2) and 'march his gods into Latium' reflects the militarism that *inferret* (6) may convey. Finally, the religious vocabulary: 'godhead' is not bad for *numine* (8), though the English word is rarer and seems a little quaint, while 'renowned for piety' (10) works well.

### ALLEN MANDELBAUM

I sing of arms and of a man: his fate  
 had made him fugitive; he was the first  
 to journey from the coasts of Troy as far  
 as Italy and the Lavinian shores.  
 Across the lands and waters he was battered  
 beneath the violence of High Ones, for  
 the savage Juno's unforgetting anger;  
 and many sufferings were his in war—  
 until he brought a city into being  
 and carried in his gods to Latium;  
 from this have come the Latin race, the lords  
 of Alba, and the ramparts of high Rome.

Tell me the reason, Muse: what was the wound  
 to her divinity, so hurting her  
 that she, the queen of gods, compelled a man

remarkable for goodness to endure  
 so many crises, meet so many trials?  
 Can such resentment hold the minds of gods?

Immediately we notice that Mandelbaum's translation uses many more lines than the Latin (a defect, in my opinion), but that it has a sense of rhythm entirely lacking from Lewis, which helps convey that this is epic poetry. Again, I start with defects: 'a man' for *uirum* (1) is simply not strong enough: this is not just any man. Mandelbaum breaks up Virgil's initial 7-line period, privileging the phrase *fato profugus* (2), 'his fate / had made him fugitive' by moving it forward. In lines 8-11 something similar happens: he loses the parallelism of *quo* and *quid* and he introduces a result clause ('that she...') which is not present in the Latin. The phrase 'until he brought a city into being' misses the 'could' of the subjunctive and strikes me as an odd way to render *conderet* (5), for which 'founded' is surely unavoidable, especially when talking of the Romans (or proto-Romans). Like Lewis, Mandelbaum turns the plural *causas* (8) into a singular, 'the reason'. He repeats the singular for plural in translating *tantae...irae* (11) as 'such resentment', at the same time making a worse error by using the qualitative instead of the quantitative adjective. Moreover, 'hold' strikes me as too strong for the idiom of line 11.

Felicities include 'unforgetting anger' for *memorem...iram* (4), 'many sufferings' for *multa...passus* (5), 'ramparts of high Rome' for *altae moenia Romae* (7), 'what was the wound to her divinity' for *quo numine laeso* (8) and 'remarkable for goodness' for *insignem pietate* (10). Mandelbaum's inventiveness in the religious sphere emerges when he renders *ui superum* (4) as 'beneath the violence of High Ones': this has the asset of reflecting the vertical dimension of *superum*, but 'High Ones' may sound too odd, even though I grant the need for forging an appropriate polytheistic vocabulary.

## ROBERT FITZGERALD

I sing of warfare and a man at war.  
 From the sea-coast of Troy in early days  
 He came to Italy by destiny,  
 To our Lavinian western shore,  
 A fugitive, this captain, buffeted  
 Cruelly on land as on the sea  
 By blows from powers of the air-behind them  
 Baleful Juno in her sleepless rage.  
 And cruel losses were his lot in war,  
 Till he could found a city and bring home  
 His gods to Latium, land of the Latin race,  
 The Alban lords, and the high walls of Rome.  
 Tell me the causes now, O Muse, how galled  
 In her divine pride, and how sore at heart  
 From her old wound, the queen of gods compelled him-  
 A man apart, devoted to his mission-  
 To undergo so many perilous days  
 And enter on so many trials. Can anger  
 Black as this prey on the minds of heaven?

I will confess that this translation has long been my favourite for teaching the *Aeneid* in English because of the rapidity of the translation and the way it lends itself to being read aloud. It consequently was something of a shock to realize that it is not as close to the Latin as Mandelbaum's. One

immediately striking feature is Fitzgerald's focalization of the poem from a Roman perspective, with his addition of 'our' in the phrase 'our Lavinian western shore' for *Lavinia...litora* (2-3) and with 'bring home' as his translation of *inferret* (6). This focalization is not present in the Latin, but of course it is not needed by a Roman writer writing for a Roman audience. In places he adds explicatory material: the word 'western' explains the east-west movement of Aeneas's journey; 'behind them' interprets *ob* (4); 'from her old wound' explains the participle *dolens* (9); and 'prey on' in line 11 is an extraneous idea not motivated by the Latin text. The references to Aeneas all seem to pose problems: Fitzgerald's translation of *uirum* (1) as 'a man at war' is at once an intensification and limitation; he adds value to *ille* (3) with 'this captain'; 'a man apart' is a good translation for *insignem...uirum* if you know Latin, but otherwise confusing. I am not convinced that *primus* (1) means 'in early days' nor that in line 2 *fato* should be taken with *uenit* rather than with *profugus*. He breaks Virgil's long opening sentence at line 5 ('And cruel losses...') and omits completely *unde* (6), which Virgil uses to link *Latio* with *Latinum*. Moreover, 'Alban lords' captures neither the idea of ancestors nor the idea of senators in *patres* (7), and in the same line he transfers the epithet *altae* to 'the high walls of Rome'.

At the same time, there are some fine touches. He has 'fugitive' for *profugus* (2) (as does Mandelbaum) and he gives it due emphasis by postponing it. The repetition 'cruelly...cruel' acutely reflects Virgil's repetition *multum...multa* (3, 5), and his 'so many...so many' notices Virgil's repeated *tot* (9, 10). His rendition of *numine laeso* (8) as 'galled in her divine pride' is fine, as is 'trials' for *labores* (10); 'devoted to his mission', though a little wordy, captures the central idea of *pietate*. Finally, the religious language again poses a challenge: 'by blows from powers of the air' faces similar problems to Mandelbaum's 'High Ones' and deploys many words for the neat *ui superum* (4); 'anger / Black as this' seems to refer to the quality rather than the size of the wrath and introduces a metaphor not present in the Latin.

To seek a totally different perspective, I now scroll back to the 16<sup>th</sup> century, to the first complete translations of the *Aeneid* published in Britain, Gavin Douglas's translation in Scots, written about 1513 and published in 1553, and the first complete translation in English by Thomas Phaer & Thomas Twyne, published in 1584, of which Phaer wrote the majority.

## GAVIN DOUGLAS<sup>10</sup>

The batalis and the man I wil discrive  
 Fra Troyis boundis first that fugitive  
 By fait to Ytail come and cost Lavyne,  
 Our land and sey katchit with mekil pyne  
 By forss of goddis abufe, from euery steid,  
 Of cruell Iuno throu ald remembrit fede.  
 Gret pane in batail sufferit he alsso  
 Or he his goddis brocht in Latio  
 And belt the cite fra quham, of nobill fame,  
 The Latyne pepill takyn heth thar name,  
 And eik the faderis, princes of Alba,  
 Cam, and the wallaris of gret Rome alsua.  
 O thou my muse, declare the causis quhy,  
 Quhat maieste offendit schwa quham by,  
 Or zit quharfor of goddis the drery queyn

Sa feil dangeris, sik travel maid susteyn  
 A worthy man fulfillit of piete :  
 Is thare sik grief in hevynly myndis on hie?

This early translation, with its strong rhythm and rhyme as well as the Scots dialect, has a freshness to the modern ear, which doubtless derives from our unfamiliarity with Scots English of the sixteenth century, and I therefore find it a valuable tool for making Virgil sound strange. Whether or not these same effects worked on Douglas's contemporary audience, I cannot say. Fine turns of phrase that immediately strike me include his version of line 4: 'By forss of goddis' for *ui superum*, 'cruell Iuno' for *saeuae...Iunonis* and 'ald remembrit' for *memorem*. He notices 'gret Rome' (*altae...Romae*, 7) and the plural '*causis*' (8). 'A worthy man fulfillit of piete' seems fine for *insignem pietate uirum* (10) and in line 11 I commend his translation 'Is thare sik grief in hevynly myndis on hie?' because he does not strengthen the question with an inappropriate verb.

But he misses Virgil's repetitions (*multum...multa*, 3 and 5; *tot...tot*, 9 and 10) and introduces one that is not present in the Latin when he echoes 'batalis' (for *arma*, 1) with 'Gret pane in batail' (for *multa...bello passus*, 5). In several places he introduces additions: 'from every steid' (steid = 'place'), 'of nobill fame', 'the faderis, princes of Alba', and 'drey'. He turns the opening verb into a future tense, 'I wil discrive', which to me sounds more prosaic than *cano*. But he nicely reflects the potential ambiguity of the Latin in line 2, with 'that fugitive / By fait to Ytail come', where the phrase 'By fait' can be taken with preceding noun or following verb. Less successful, to my mind, is Phaer's translation, which appeared in 1584 in a complete translation by Phaer & Twyne. The translation includes the apocryphal four lines prefixed to the *Aeneid*, which I reproduce here but will not discuss.

### THOMAS PHAER

I That my slender Oten Pipe in verse was wont to sounde  
 Of woods, and next to that I taught for husbandmen the ground,  
 How fruite vnto their greedy lust they might constraine to bring,  
 A worke of thanks: Lo now of Mars, and dreadfull warres I singe,  
 Of armes, and of the man of Troy, that first by fatall flight  
 Did thence arriue to lauine land, that now Italia hight.  
 But shaken sore with many a storme by seas and land ytost,  
 And all for Iunos endless wrath that wrought to haue had him lost.  
 And sorrowes great in warres hee bode, ere hee the walls could frame  
 Of mighty Rome, and bring the gods t'aduance the Romaine name.  
 Now Muse direct my song to tell for what offence and why:  
 What ailed so the queene of gods to dryue thus cruelly,  
 This noble prince of virtue mylde from place to place to toile,  
 Such paines to take? may heauenly mindes so sore in rancour boile?

This translation starts with the disadvantage, to the modern ear, of rhymed fourteeners, which soon seem to trivialize the content and detract from the desired epic dignity. There are additions probably motivated by rhythm and rhyme (as with Douglas above), such as 'with many a storme...ytost', 'that wrought to haue had him lost', 'for what offence and why' (an expansion of *causas*, 8), and 'thus cruelly'. Omissions include *ui superum* (4) and *saeuae* (4); and I wonder why he uses the plural 'warres' for *bello* (5). Besides that, there are several errors here: 'of mighty Rome' in his tenth line is wrong, as the reference is to Lavinium, and so is 'bring the gods t'aduance the Romaine name' in the same line. In line 1, 'the man of Troy' shows that Phaer takes *Troiae* with *uirum*, against the consensus since at least Quintilian's time.<sup>11</sup> And in line 11, he adds a verb which introduces imagery not present in the Latin: 'so

sore in rancour boile'. Finally, on the deficit side, 'This noble prince of uertue mylde' for *insignem pietate uirum* (10) seems something of an overinterpretation, with inappropriate Christian implications.

In Phaer's favour, he has fine turns of phrase in 'by fatall flight' for *fato profugus* (2), in 'shaken sore' for *iactatus* (3), in 'endless wrath' for *memorem...iram* (4) and in 'heavenly mindes' for *animis caelestibus* (11). But this seems too little to counterbalance the defects of this pioneering translation.

I have taken these five translations in this sequence because I wanted to heighten awareness of the difficulties of these lines before coming to possibly the bravest attempt to translate the *Aeneid*, that of William Morris, published in 1876.

## WILLIAM MORRIS

I sing of arms, I sing of him, who from the Trojan land  
 Thrust forth by Fate, to Italy and that Lavinian strand  
 First came: all tost about was he on earth and on the deep  
 By heavenly might for Juno's wrath, that had no mind to sleep:  
 And plenteous war he underwent ere he his town might frame  
 And set his Gods in Latian earth, whence is the Latin name,  
 And father-folk of Alba-town, and walls of mighty Rome.  
 Say, Muse, what wound of godhead was whereby all this must come,  
 How grieving, she, the Queen of Gods, a man so pious drave  
 To win such toil, to welter on through such a troublous wave:  
 -- Can anger in immortal minds abide so fierce and fell?

Before I offer some overarching comments, let me draw attention to a few specifics. Morris repeats 'I sing' at the start, which Virgil does not, but which may be justified in terms of asserting epic dignity in a literary tradition less accustomed to the genre than were Virgil's contemporaries. His translation of *uirum* (1) as 'of him who' is weaker than the Latin: we need a noun here. 'Thrust forth by fate' strikes me as excellent, conveying the movement implicit in *profugus* (2). The postponement and enjambment of 'First came' also works well to provide emphasis. In line 4, the phrase 'By heavenly might' is economical and exact; however, Morris omits *saevae* and expands *memorem* as 'that had no mind to sleep' which seems rather wordy and precise than some other renditions. In 'And plenteous war he underwent' (5), 'underwent' is good for *passus*, but the ablative *bello* is shifted in sense from the Latin, where it means 'he suffered much in war'. In line 6 Morris does well to link *Latio...Latinum* by using 'name' for *genus* to mark the etymology: 'whence is the Latin name'. 'Father-folk' for *patres* (7) sounds quaint and hobbit-ish (though it surely evokes a remote era); in 'walls of mighty Rome' the word 'mighty' unpacks *altae* (7) into a sense of pride. In the new sentence at line 8, Morris conflates *causas* with what follows, *quo numine laeso*, then separates this phrase from the rest of its indirect question (*quidue dolens regina...impulerit*), which unbalances Virgil's sentence structure. In this style of translation 'godhead' (in 'what wound of godhead') works better than it does in Lewis's more prosaic version, but line 8 ends with a clumsy and wordy expression: 'whereby all this must come'. I consider 'grieving' for *dolens* (9) an error - it certainly does not convey the right emotion - and 'a man so pious' similarly flawed: the important word *insignem* is reduced to 'so' and 'pious' cannot work because of its Christian tone. In 'such toil...such a troublous wave' Morris does reflect the repetition of *tot* (9-10), though 'such' is not the same as 'so many'; 'to welter on through such a troublous wave' seems imaginative, though it works *uolueret* (9) hard to supply both the weltering

and the wave. In the final sentence, 'so fierce and fell' is a strong interpretation of *tantae*, which denotes size rather than intensity.

Without expressing uncritical admiration for this translation, I want to defend at least the idea behind Morris's decisions. His choice of metre, the rhymed fourteenner revived from the 1584 Phaer translation, and his choice of diction is surely designed to make the *Aeneid* sound like an Anglo-Saxon poem, that is, old but native--the same kind of effect that Heaney aspires to in his translation of *Beowulf* perhaps. Hence, presumably, an expression such as 'father-folk'. If we take a closer look at the diction that Morris employs, we find a fair amount of evidence for this in words such as: 'ere', 'welter on', 'fell' (all in this passage) and, reading on, 'gleanings', 'heave aloft', 'clave', 'forsooth', 'heaped-up', 'wildfire', 'strait', 'eagr-swift', the archaic 'wend' and the third person singular in '-eth'.

In theory, Morris's translation should be successful. He has chosen a line-for-line translation, with five features that should assist the project: with a definite metrical form, with long lines that help the rendering into English (which needs more words and syllables than Latin), with rhyme to structure the verses and mark progression through narrative, with a diction that is not Latinate (there is barely a Latinate word here in opening lines) but very Anglo-Saxon, and with inventions designed to forge a new epic idiom. Yet most people would agree that Morris's translation does not work.

While pondering the difficulties faced by Morris and indeed by all translators of the *Aeneid*, I turned to a crucial document in the translation history of Virgil - Dryden's lengthy 'Dedication' to his 1697 translation. A repeated motif in Dryden's 'Dedication' is the inadequacy of modern languages to render Virgil's Latin. With customary acuity, he pinpoints the problems.<sup>12</sup> Emblematic for Dryden is the difficulty that *pietas* poses for all modern languages (page 286). He castigates English for its excessive number of consonants (319), 'the deadweight of our Mother Tongue' (329), while regarding French as equally inadequate (322). He regards the 'Teuton monosyllables' of English as precluding literal translation (329). He deplors the articles and pronouns of modern languages (330). And his final substantive point in the entire 80 page 'Dedication' is to defend himself for sometimes Latinizing (335-6).

Consequently, I have come to the pessimistic conclusion that the difficulties of turning the *Aeneid* into English are both profound and acute - and indeed very much as Dryden saw them, still. Among the essentials are a metre appropriate to the elevated genre of epic, a language that is not excessively secondary, that is, not subserviently Latinate, an inflected language flexible enough to create compounds from roots, and a tradition of poetry on grand scale that can deal with central cultural issues. It is not at all clear that contemporary English has any of these qualities. That is what has taken me to the study of translations of Virgil into Russian. There exists at least one 20<sup>th</sup> century translation into Russian, that of Bryusov, which appeared in 1933 and to my knowledge has never been out of print, which I consider highly successful because it seems to meet all the criteria mentioned above. My analysis of Bryusov's *Aeneid* will have to wait for another occasion in another venue. But my study suggests that it may not be possible to translate Virgil into English unless and until the time when we achieve our own epic idiom, the equivalent of Pushkin for Russians. And maybe that will not be possible until we achieve a greater sense of local or national community than

trends towards globalization imply.

But that does not mean we should not try. The key, I suggest, is not to fall into the trap of making Virgil too easy and too fluent, thereby assimilating him unthinkingly to our own perspective. Let us take our cue from Bryusov and from the Russian Formalists and remember to make Virgil strange. That said,

I conclude by offering my own first attempt, apprehensively and with a sense of respect for those who have been through this process before me.

I sing of combat and the hero who was first to come  
 from Troy's sea-coast, fate's fugitive, to Italy and to Lavinian  
 shores, a man much buffeted on land and sea by violence  
 from powers above, because of savage Juno's unrelenting rage,  
 and much he suffered too in war, till he could found a city  
 and install his gods in Latium, source of the Latin people  
 and the Alban fathers and the walls of towering Rome.  
 O Muse, remind me of the reasons why the Queen of gods,  
 her dignity offended, or resenting what, compelled the hero,  
 remarkable for goodness, to undergo so many risks and face  
 so many challenges. Do minds divine have such enormous rages?<sup>13</sup>

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## NOTES

- <sup>1</sup> See John Conington 'The English Translators of Virgil' in *Miscellaneous Writings of John Conington* ed. J.A. Symonds (London, 1872), vol. 1, 137-97; Gilbert Highet *The Classical Tradition* (Oxford, 1949), 115-16; R.D. Williams & T.S. Pattie *Virgil: His Poetry through the Ages* (London, 1982); D.E. Hill 'What sort of translation of Virgil do we need?' in *Greece & Rome Studies: Virgil* edd. Ian McAuslan & Peter Walcot (Oxford, 1990) 180-8; and K.W. Gransden's excellent Penguin Classics volume, *Virgil in English* (London, 1996).
- <sup>2</sup> Colin Burrow 'Virgil in English translation' in *The Cambridge Companion to Virgil* ed. Charles Martindale (Cambridge, 1997), 21-37; Theodore Ziolkowski *Virgil and the Moderns* (Princeton, 1993).
- <sup>3</sup> Ziolkowski (see note 2) 26.
- <sup>4</sup> T.S. Eliot 'What Is a Classic?' in *On Poetry and Poets* (New York, 1975) 52-74, at 73. As will be familiar, this essay started life as Eliot's 1944 Presidential Address to the Virgil Society.
- <sup>5</sup> Vladimir Nabokov 'Problems of Translation: "Onegin" in English' (1955), in *The Translation Studies Reader* ed. L. Venuti (London & New York, 2000) 71-83 at 71.
- <sup>6</sup> Lawrence Venuti *The Translator's Invisibility: A History of Translation* (London & New York, 1995), 1, a quotation from Norman Shapiro.
- <sup>7</sup> Taken from Venuti, 1995 (see note 6) 19-20.
- <sup>8</sup> Venuti, 1995 (see note 6) 20.
- <sup>9</sup> This was a concept articulated in the 1920s by Victor Sklovskii and developed by Roman Jakobson: see Victor Erlich *Russian Formalism* (New Haven, 1965) 176-81; the Jakobson quotation is from page 181.
- <sup>10</sup> This is the 1957 text of D.F.C. Coldwell for the Scottish Text Society. The following words in Douglas's translation require a glossary: katchit = 'driven'; mekil pyne = 'large effort'; steid = 'place'; fede = 'anger'; zit = 'still'; drery = 'horrid'.
- <sup>11</sup> For Quintilian's reading see *I.O.* 11.3.36: he sees a pause after *cano*.
- <sup>12</sup> In 'Safe Sex? Dryden's Translations of Lucretius and Juvenal', in *John Dryden (1631-1700): His Politics, His Plays, and His Poets* edd. Claude Rawson & Aaron Santesso (Newark & London, 2004), pages 139-57, I show how Dryden likewise goes directly to the crucial issues of translation in the cases of both Lucretius and Juvenal. In the quotations from Dryden that follow, I use volume 5 of the 1987 edition by W. Frost and V.A. Dearing.
- <sup>13</sup> I am very grateful to the Virgil Society for the honour they bestowed upon me in making me their President and for the attention they gave to my address in May 2003. I hope to develop my study of Virgil in translation considerably further and wish to thank the Society, and in particular the officers, for all their encouragement.

# The Eminent Bard and the Soldierly Greek: Refractions between Virgil and Ammianus

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Ammianus cites Virgil on three occasions. At 15.9.1 he quotes from the *Aeneid*, the work of *Mantuanus uates excelsus*, on the strength of which aficionados of the biographical fallacy may conclude that Virgil was unusually tall. In 17.4.5, an allusion to Gallus in the *Eclogues*, the poet is simply named as *Vergilius*. But at 19.9.7, another quotation from the *Aeneid*, Virgil is *eminentissimus uates*. As I have noted elsewhere,<sup>1</sup> Ammianus' conception of how to deal with foreigners is firmly based on Virgil's immortal formulation of Rome's imperial mission: *tu regere imperio populos, Romane, memento / (hae tibi erunt artes) pacique imponere morem, / parcere subiectis et debellare superbos* (*Aen.*6.851-3).

What exactly Virgil meant by these words is not immediately obvious: the word order might suggest that Rome should come in peace and resort to war only if friendly overtures are spurned. But that was certainly not the view of Horace in the *Carmen Saeculare*: *bellante prior iacentem / lenis in hostem* ('superior in war, gentle towards a defeated enemy') (CS 51-2).

I shall first examine the patterns of behaviour to be observed in Ammianus, who clearly agreed with Horace, then return to Virgil's own usage in the *Aeneid*.

## I

For Ammianus the standard scenario is as follows. Barbarians offer provocation (that is, display *superbia*, though the word is but rarely used); Rome responds, often with lightning swiftness; the terrified barbarians grovel and beg forgiveness; Rome, provided their abjection is deemed adequate, graciously grants them peace.

A general statement of the principles involved is found in the speech of Constantius when he made Julian Caesar (15.8.7). The barbarians have been running riot in Roman territory, but thanks to Julian's appointment *et colla superbarum gentium detumescent et imperii fines erunt intacti* ('the necks of arrogant tribes will be deflated and the frontiers of the empire remain intact').<sup>2</sup>

Julian's campaign in 357 offers a first example. At the outset Chnodomarius and his fellow kings are described as *caput altius attollentum* ('raising their heads too high') (16.12.2). Julian's response was appropriate: *fastus barbaricos ridens* ('laughing at their barbarian presumption') (3). But Chnodomarius continued arrogant: *ardua subrigens supercilia, ut saepe secundis rebus elatus* ('raising his eyebrows high, as one elated by frequent successes') (4). Before the battle of Strasburg Chnodomarius cut a fine figure (24); the contrast with his terrified surrender afterwards (60) is pointed. Brought before Julian he made a suitable display of subjection, *primo curuatus, deinde humi suppliciter fusus, gentilique prece ueniam poscens* ('first bending, then prostrating himself in suppliant fashion, and asking for peace with the prayers of his people') (65). Though he lost his kingdom, his life at least was spared: sent to Rome, he survived to die of senile decay (65).<sup>3</sup>

In 358 another Alamannic king, Suomarius, came to seek peace (17.10.3-4). He had once been arrogant, but now, with his looks and gait proclaiming him a suppliant, *nihil arbitrio suo relinquens pacem genibus curuatis orauit* ('leaving nothing to his own decision he begged for peace on bended knee'). Yet again peace was readily conceded. Julian then moved against another king, Hortarius (17.10.5-9), one of those who had led the attack on Strasburg in the previous year (cf. 16.12.1). Impressed by the damage the Romans were doing, *orauit ipse quoque ueniam* ('he himself also begged forgiveness') (7) and promised to do what he was told. At first he kept back some of his prisoners, but a second interview with Julian put him in a more receptive frame of mind: *Caesare trementibus oculis adorato uictorisque superatus aspectu* ('adoring Caesar with trembling eyes and overcome by the victor's appearance') (9). The terms granted were somewhat harsher than before, but this time they were observed.

So Ammianus can sum up the work of two seasons in words apt to our theme (17.10.10): *ita reges illi tumentes quondam immaniter rapinisque ditescere assueti nostrorum Romanae potentiae iugo subdidere colla iam domita et uelut inter tributarios nati et educati obsecundabant imperiis ingrauate* ('So those kings who were formerly monstrously puffed up and accustomed to grow rich on the plunder of our lands submitted their now tamed necks to the yoke of Roman power and energetically obeyed our commands as if they had been born and bred as tributaries.').<sup>4</sup>

There are also a few examples of this standard pattern that do not involve Julian. First the campaign of Constantius against the Sarmatae and Quadi in 358 (17.12.1-16). Both had been guilty of raids in Pannonia and Moesia (1). The Sarmatae first suffered a punitive attack that put them to flight (4). The survivors planned a counter-attack under the pretext of seeking peace (7). The Quadi came to their assistance (8), but they too were overwhelmed and came *rogaturi*

*suppliciter pacem* ('to ask in suppliant fashion for peace'), though Ammianus criticises their bearing as excessively confident and remarks that Constantius was too tolerant of such behaviour (9). The same could not be said of their king Zizais, who presented perhaps the most spectacular display of abjection on record. At first sight of Constantius, *abiectis armis pectore toto procubuit, exanimis stratus* ('casting aside his arms he fell face-down, lying senseless'). His mission was to beg, but fear caused him to lose his voice and sobbing hindered such efforts as he made to utter. But eventually, regaining the power of speech, *concessionem delictorum sibi tribui supplicauit et ueniam* ('he begged to be granted forgiveness and pardon for his crimes') (10). His followers then conducted themselves in such a manner, *ut uincerent humilitate supplicandi regalem* ('that they outdid their king in the humility of their supplication'). Peace was granted to Zizais and various other princelings (11), then, by a kind of domino effect, to Araharius and his Quadi, who stood *curuatis corporibus* ('with bodies bent') (13), the Sarmatae (15), and a very great number of kings and peoples (16). As Constantius put it in his speech at the end of the season (17.13.28): *restareque solam salutem contemplantes in precibus, effusi sunt uestigiis Augusti clementis* ('reckoning that their only remaining hope of survival lay in prayers, they threw themselves at the feet of the clement emperor').<sup>5</sup>

Finally Gratian and the Lentienses in 378 (31.10.2-17). The provocation was the usual: treacherous raids across the frontier (2), encouraged by the knowledge that Gratian was about to go East to assist Valens against the Goths (3-5). So *sublati in superbiam nostra confidentius irruerunt* ('roused to arrogance they invaded our territory with excessive confidence') (5). The Roman response went sufficiently well (6-11) for Gratian to think in terms of genocide (11). This inspired the Lentienses to desperate resistance (12-16). Gratian was equally stubborn, but he was also aware that time was not on his side and he needed men. So the Lentienses were allowed to surrender once the proper motions had been gone through: *deditionem, quam impetrauere supplici prece* ('the right to surrender, which they obtained by suppliant prayer') (17).

I turn now to a number of instances where this standard pattern is broken: when the Romans fail to dictate events, allowing too much initiative to the barbarians; when the Romans make excessive concessions; or when the barbarians fail to display sufficient self-abasement.

The campaign of Constantius against Vadomarius and Gundomadus in 354 (14.10.1-16) displays all these undesirable features. The scene is set in familiar fashion: frequent raids across the border by the brothers (1). But Constantius' response was sluggish (2-8), and when the Alamanni sent envoys *delictorum ueniam petituos et pacem* ('to seek pardon for their offences and peace') (9), they did so only because of unfavourable omens. Of grovelling and kowtowing there is not a word, yet it was decided to grant peace, *quae iustis condicionibus petebatur* ('which was being sought on just terms') (10): the view not of Ammianus but of the emperor and his advisers; it implies that the terms were formulated by the Germans, another obvious flaw in proceedings. Small wonder that Constantius felt the need to justify himself to his army. He claimed that it was not unRoman to show leniency to suppliants (14) - but as we have noted Ammianus' narrative makes no mention of supplication. The army accepted the peace (16), but solely because they believed that Constantius enjoyed good fortune only in civil wars. As a final indignity the treaty was made *gentium ritu* ('according to the practice of the tribes'), so the Alamanni had dictated not only the terms of the peace but also its form.

The campaigns of Valens against the Goths in 367-9 (27.5.1-10), though otherwise sound, ended in somewhat dubious fashion. In 369 the Goths were reduced to such straits *ut legatos supplices saepe mittentes ueniam poscerent pacem* ('that frequently sending suppliant envoys they sought pardon and peace') (7), which Valens decided to grant (8). It is also made clear that he dictated terms: *propositos condiciones assentiri Gothos* ('the Goths accepted the proposed terms') (9). All this is as it should be. But Athanaric claimed to have sworn an oath that he would never set foot on Roman soil, while it was obviously out of the question for the emperor to cross to the Gothic bank - Ammianus' use of *imperatorem* is pointed here. Formalities were therefore conducted on ships in the middle of the river. Ammianus voices no open disapproval. He merely observes in all innocence that Athanaric eventually died in Constantinople (10).

Even more disquieting were the negotiations between Valentinian and Macrianus in 374 (30.3.3-6). As early as 370 Valentinian gave thought *quibus commentis Alammanorum et Macriani regis frangeret fastus* ('by what means he might break the presumption of the Alamanni and their king Macrianus') (28.5.8). In 374 he planned a major expedition, but was persuaded instead to summon Macrianus to Mainz (30.3.3-4). Macrianus arrived in archetypal mode, *immane quo quantoque flatu distentus, ut futurus arbiter superior pacis* ('swollen with monstrous arrogance, as if he were to be the principal arbiter of the peace'), and stood on the bank of the Rhine *caput altius erigens* ('raising his head too high') (4). Then Valentinian, labelled *Augustus* to bring out the full shame, was rowed close enough to the opposite bank for negotiations to be concluded, *immodestis gestibus murmureque barbarico tandem sedato* ('when their immodest gestures and barbaric din had eventually been quieted') (5). Thereupon *discessit turbarum rex artifex delentus* ('the troublesome king departed mollified') (6), no doubt with his head still held high. This is obviously much worse than Valens and Athanaric. It is painfully clear that the initiative had remained with Macrianus throughout and that his arrogant assumption that he would be the arbiter of peace had been amply fulfilled. But there is a final irony. Despite the unsatisfactory nature of proceedings the peace was unusually lasting: Macrianus remained a faithful ally for the rest of his life (6).

The lengthy tale of Constantius' dealings with the Limigantes begins in 358 (17.13.1-30), following on from the successful campaign against the Sarmatae and Quadi. Constantius was again inclined to leniency (2). The Limigantes, terrified, begged for their lives, but were clearly not sufficiently cowed. Determined to resist if ordered to evacuate their lands, they came to the bank of the Danube *cum genuino fastu* ('with their native presumption') (5). Only after an attack on Constantius himself (5-10), which gave rise to a ruthless massacre by his furious troops and further counter-measures (11-20), did the survivors decide to surrender. Thus to the laurels of victory *accessit eorum quoque supplicatio* ('there was added their supplication too') and *cum precibus... inclinare ceruices* ('with prayers... they bent their necks') (21). Yet they remained quiet only briefly (23).<sup>6</sup>

After Julian's conclusion of peace with Macrianus and Hariobaudus in 359, Vadomarius had come as *precator* for three other kings who were not present, Urius, Ursicinus and Vestralpus, *pacem itidem obsecrans* ('begging for peace in like fashion') (18.2.18). But it was feared that, once the Romans had withdrawn, they would not abide by terms *per alios impetratis* ('obtained through the agency of others'). What follows is breathtaking: *sed cum ipsi quoque missis legatis, post messes incensas et habitacula captosque plures et interfectos, ita supplicarent tamquam ipsi haec deliquissent in nostros, pacem condicionum similitudine meruerunt* ('But when they too had

sent envoys, after their crops and homes had been burned and many of them had been captured and killed, and had begged as if they had themselves committed these offences against us, they were judged worthy of peace on similar terms.’) (19). Ammianus does his best for Julian, avoiding any mention of his name and reducing the Roman expedition to a prepositional phrase, but he cannot refrain from remarking that the victims had done nothing to deserve it, which left Mommsen still so shocked that he inserted *non* before *ipsi*! The principle that all foreigners are *superbi* by nature and so must be debellated before one thinks about sparing the grovelling survivors is nowhere made more brutally clear.

Another instance of insufficient self-abasement comes in 369 (28.2.5-9). Envoys from the Alamanni complained about Valentinian’s decision to build a fort on Alamannic soil (5-6). Their attitude was satisfactory (7): *flexis poplitibus supplicabant* (‘they begged on bended knees’), but not their words, which warned Rome against persisting in an unjustifiable plan. Moreover, when they received the inevitable unfriendly answer, the Germans attacked and annihilated the troops who were working on the fort (8-9).

The events which led to Valentinian’s death were more complex. The story starts in 373 (29.6.2-6). Valentinian decided to establish a camp across the Danube (2), which provoked mild protests from the Quadi. Then the Roman commander Marcellianus, *intempestive turgens* (‘inopportunistically puffed up’), treacherously murdered the king Gabinius, who had protested *modeste* (4-5). The news of so atrocious a deed (6) stirred the Quadi to fury. Thus far the Romans seem clearly in the wrong. But old mindsets die hard. Once the Quadi, along with the Sarmatae, take the field, they become *ad raptus et latrocinia gentes aptissimae* (‘peoples most inclined to pillaging and brigandage’) (8), and their justification is largely forgotten.<sup>7</sup> When Valentinian prepared to attack them in 375 (30.5.11), they are labelled *tumultus atrocis auctores* (‘those responsible for the atrocious disturbance’). The Roman advance was swift and effective (13-15), and although the narrative is interrupted by portents of Valentinian’s imminent death (16-19), we seem to be back with the old familiar pattern. The Quadi sent envoys, *pacem cum praeteritorum oblitteratione suppliciter obsecrantes* (‘begging in suppliant fashion for peace and forgiveness for the past’) (30.6.1). It was agreed that peace should be granted, but when they were admitted to the presence, though they stood *membris incuruatis... metu debiles et praestrici* (‘with bended limbs... weak and paralysed with fear’), they again pointed out that the cause of all the trouble had been Rome’s unjust and inopportune plan to build the camp (2). Whereupon Valentinian lost his temper, had an apoplectic fit and shortly died (3-6).

So far then we have seen first a standard pattern, then diverse variations and defects to which it may be subject. But that most traumatic of all confrontations between Rome and the barbarians in Ammianus, Edirne and its aftermath, has almost the air of a farcical parody on these themes.

We begin with another ironic reversal. The Thervingi, who in 376 asked with humble prayers (31.4.1) to be admitted to Roman territory, came not as marauding barbarians but as themselves the victims of barbarian incursions by the Huns. They were then subjected to largely unprovoked Roman aggression (31.7.3). Before the battle it was Valens and his flatterers who were overconfident (31.12.5). Wiser heads advised him to wait for Gratian (6), so that *tumor barbaricus flammans* (‘blazing barbarian presumption’) might more easily be crushed. But Valens did not want to share the glory of victory and so was determined to fight alone - a sign of *tumor*, one might think.

Yet there were negotiations. A letter from Fritigern implied that the Goths, like the Romans, were civilised people subject, alas, to annoyance by savage tribes. He promised perpetual peace in exchange for Thrace - hardly a token of subjection (8). The mission came to nothing. But just before the battle the Goths, whether terrified or merely playing for time, sent an embassy to beg for peace (12-13). The Romans were still too confident: the envoys were spurned as of insufficient social standing. Yet when Fritigern sent to ask for hostages of high rank, the suggestion was approved (14-15). But the hostages had barely set out when their mission was aborted by a premature attack on the part of undisciplined Roman units (16-17). So three years of Roman error and misjudgement were brought to the blackest of farcical climaxes.

And yet, after the catastrophe, came a glimmer of resurgent dignity. The Goths besieged Edirne (31.15.2) and in their arrogance demanded its immediate surrender (5). But the proprieties reasserted themselves. For all the impudence of his message the envoy did not dare to enter the city: the letter was brought in 'by some Christian' (6). The reaction was impeccable: *portatis scriptis et recitatis utque decebat contemptis* ('when the letter had been delivered, read and treated with the contempt it deserved'), the defence continued. Edirne did not fall, and the besiegers eventually dispersed to range annoyingly but ineffectively over the northern provinces (31.16.7). Meanwhile in the East the *magister militum* Julius, aware of what had happened in Thrace, was able to gull the Goths in his territory with false promises of pay and then massacre the lot (8). Ammianus' approval of this act of treachery is pragmatically unabashed: *quo consilio prudenti sine strepitu uel mora completo, orientales prouinciae discriminibus ereptae sunt magnis* ('when this prudent plan was carried out without fuss or delay, the eastern provinces were freed from great dangers').

So much for *parcere subiectis et debellare superbos*, or rather vice versa. There is, as we have seen, copious evidence for how Ammianus thought the principle ought to work, how it did work when things went as they should, and how and why it sometimes failed. What of *pacique imponere morem*? Ammianus is too realistic to descant on this theme. Barbarians make and keep the peace only through fear, and break it again as soon as they reckon they might get away with it. Constantius had a vision (15.8.14) of himself and Julian which again echoes Virgil: *militabimus simul, una orbem pacatum, deus modo uelit quod oramus, pari moderatione pietateque recturi* ('We shall stand side by side, to rule together with equal moderation and dedication a world at peace, provided God grants our prayers.'). But God or the gods had other ideas.

## II

I turn now to *superbia* and *superbus* in the *Aeneid*. I shall consider first those instances that refer to peoples or cities. The earliest, significantly, alludes to the Romans, whom Juno had heard would one day destroy Carthage: *hinc populum late regem belloque superbum / uenturum excidio Libyae* ('hence will come to destroy Libya a people widely ruling and arrogant in war') (1.21-2). *Bello* is to be construed with *superbum*; thus we have here an example of a phenomenon familiar in Ammianus and indeed found elsewhere in Virgil: *superbia* engendered or enhanced by success in war.

Next Dido is ironically presented as a near precursor of the Romans, hailed by Ilioneus in the words: *o regina, nouam cui condere Iuppiter urbem / iustitiaque dedit gentis frenare superbas*

(‘o queen, whom Jupiter has allowed to found a new city and curb arrogant tribes with justice’) (1.522-3), presumably the tribes of North Africa, though their *superbia* is not further defined. A few lines later he assures the queen that the Trojans are not like that: *non nos aut ferro Libycos populare penatis / uenimus aut captas ad litora uertere praedas; / non ea uis animo nec tanta superbia uictis* (‘We have not come to ravage the homes of Libya with steel or to carry captured booty to its shores; that violence is not in our minds, nor do the conquered have such great arrogance.’) (527-9).

Hindsight might prompt us to qualify this claim: not any more, and only because they are defeated, since other passages present Troy as a clear example of *superbia* brought down by war: *postquam res Asiae Priamique euertere gentem / immeritam uisum superis ceciditque superbum / Ilium* (‘After it seemed good to the gods to cast down the cause of Asia and Priam’s undeserving people and arrogant Ilium fell.’) (3.1-3). Here *immeritam* acts as palliative, but the fact is still stated, while if Priam in his fall may represent his city we may add: *tot quondam populis terrisque superbum / regnatorem Asiae* (‘once arrogant ruler of so many peoples and lands of Asia’) (2.556-7), which appears to assimilate Priam to those who show *superbia* in the exercise of power, a theme to which I shall return.<sup>8</sup>

For the shade of Creusa it is not surprisingly the Greeks who merit the epithet. She deems it better to die on Trojan soil than be carried off a captive: *non ego Myrmidonum sedes Dolopumue superbas / aspiciam* (‘I shall not see the arrogant seats of the Myrmidons or Dolopes’) (2.785-6), where *superbia* may connote both the effect of the success in war which might have led to her enslavement and the harsh exercise of power towards its victims.

Once the Trojans reach Italy the behaviour of the Latins gives rise to typically proto-Roman judgements. Aeneas complains of it when he makes his people known to Pallas: *Troiugenas ac tela uides inimica Latinis, / quos illi bello profugos egere superbo* (‘you see natives of Troy and weapons hostile to the Latins, refugees whom they have harried with arrogant war’) (8.117-8).<sup>9</sup>

What the Greeks were to Creusa, the Trojans themselves are to Juturna. Immortal glory awaits Turnus, but *nos patria amissa dominis parere superbis / cogemur...* (‘we, our country lost, shall be forced to obey arrogant masters’) (12.236-7). Again the *superbia* of the Trojans will be increased by their predicted success in this war and will manifest itself in their treatment of the defeated.<sup>10</sup>

The words are far more frequently applied to individuals. They too may be rendered proud by success in war or some other form of competition. So Entellus, after his victory over Dares in the boxing match (5.473) is described as: *uictor superans animis tauroque superbus* (‘the victor exulting in spirit, made arrogant by winning the bull’). His *superbia* manifests itself in typical ways: first boastful speech (474-6), then ostentatious action, as he literally fells an ox with a single blow (477-81), and finally a gibe specifically aimed at his defeated opponent: *hanc tibi, Eryx, meliorem animam pro morte Daretis / persoluo* (‘I sacrifice this better spirit to you, Eryx, in lieu of the death of Dares’) (483-4).<sup>11</sup>

Agrippa’s rostral crown at Actium is called *belli insigne superbum* (‘an arrogant emblem of war’) (8.683). It too was a mark of success in war, awarded for his previous naval victories. No

improper speech or action is attributed to him and the goodwill of the gods is attested by favouring winds (682). A little later Augustus receives the gifts of the conquered and dedicates them to Apollo (8.721-2): *dona recognoscit populorum aptatque superbis / postibus; incedunt uictae longo ordine gentes* ('he reviews the gifts of peoples and fixes them on arrogant portals; the conquered tribes approach in long procession'). The grounds for *superbia* are again supposed military success and Augustus too is guilty of no overt impropriety. But whether these instances are wholly positive or testify to some residual distaste for Agrippa's ambitions and Augustus' marked tendency to brag of imaginary victories is a question that may here be left open.<sup>12</sup>

Hercules affords another example: *nam maximus ultor / tergemini nece Geryonae spoliisque superbis / Alcides aderat* ('for the mighty avenger Alcides was at hand fresh from the death of thrice-twin Geryon with arrogant spoils') (8.201-3). The use of *ultor* here recalls the comment on the first Brutus: *animamque superbam / ultoris Bruti* ('the arrogant spirit of Brutus the avenger') (6.817-8). In both cases one might once more wonder about the connotations: justifiable pride in glorious achievements or discreet doubts about the merits of vengeance as a motivating force for action.<sup>13</sup> In the case of Hercules we were told only five lines before how his next opponent Cacus kept the heads of his victims *foribusque adfixa superbis* ('fixed to his arrogant doorposts') (8.196). The risks inherent in such behaviour had been proved at the fall of Troy: *barbarico postes auro spoliisque superbi / procubuere* ('the portals arrogant with barbarian gold and spoils fell') (2.504-5).

*Superbia* may also be inspired by the distinction of one's family. The most striking instance might seem at first sight positive: *coniugio, Anchisa, Veneris dignate superbo* ('Anchises, deemed worthy of [or perhaps 'made self-important by' - or of course both] your arrogant union with Venus') (3.475). Pride in such a connection is surely justified - or had some been inclined to boast about it too much? *Dignate* is also suggestive: the dangers of a preoccupation with *dignitas* cannot yet have faded from men's minds. One version of the story records that Anchises himself was smitten with a thunderbolt by Jupiter for bragging of his conquest in his cups (Hygin.*Fab.*94). No such doubts subsist in the case of Drances. There is more than a hint that his lineage was not in fact sufficient to warrant such an attitude: *genus huic materna superbum / nobilitas dabat, incertum de patre ferebat* ('nobility on his mother's side gave him arrogant lineage, his father's ancestry was uncertain') (11.340-1).

The term may also connote splendour of physical appearance. The most interesting instance is the description of the luxurious appointments of Dido's palace: *arte laboratae uestes ostroque superbo, / ingens argentum mensis, caelataque in auro / fortia facta patrum, series longissima rerum / per tot ducta uiros antiqua ab origine gentis* ('Cloths worked with art and arrogant purple, much silver on tables, and the brave deeds of her forebears engraved on gold, the very long sequence of deeds wrought by so many men from the ancient origin of her people.') (1.639-42). Here the purely physical aspect is reinforced by the number of Dido's forebears and the distinction of their achievements.<sup>14</sup>

Cruel or tyrannical behaviour also justifies the accusation of *superbia*. Thus Pyrrhus, according to Andromache: *stirpis Achilleae fastus iuuenemque superbum / seruitio enixae tulimus* ('we have borne, struggling with slavery, the presumption of the stock of Achilles and the arrogant young man') (3.326-7). Here *superbum* has several shades of meaning, connoting not only Pyrrhus' harsh treatment of his captive but also the arrogance inspired by his birth and his own achievement in the war.

Dido applies it to Aeneas: *i, soror, atque hostem supplex adfare superbum* ('go, sister, and speak as a suppliant to our arrogant enemy') (4.424). The use of *hostem* underlines the paradoxical situation: not the proud reduced to begging, but the virtuous pleading with an arrogant enemy, though (425-8) she has done nothing to deserve to be put in such a position.<sup>15</sup>

But the arch-tyrant is Mezentius, according to Evander's lecture to Aeneas on Italian geopolitics: *hanc multos florentem annos rex deinde superbo / imperio et saeuis tenuit Mezentius armis. / quid memorem infandas caedes, quid facta tyranni / effera?* ('Then king Mezentius held it flourishing for many years with arrogant rule and savage arms. Why should I mention his unspeakable slaughters, the savage deeds of the tyrant?') (8.481-4). The focus here is entirely on his treatment of his own subjects, who are finally driven to try to put down his arrogance by civil war (491-5).<sup>16</sup> But the task will require a military adviser: *nulli fas Italo tantam subiungere gentem* ('it is not permitted for any Italian to subdue so great a people') (502).<sup>17</sup>

Perhaps this is also the rubric under which to set one of Virgil's most striking uses of *superbus*, when Juturna becomes aware of the approach of the Dira: *nec fallunt iussa superba / magnanimi Iouis* ('nor do the arrogant commands of great-spirited Jupiter escape me') (12.877-8). In the lines that follow she accuses Jupiter of behaving with a cruel and wilful perversity that might well mark the actions of a mortal tyrant, and Virgil's own comments a few lines earlier hint that he might almost have agreed with her: *meritas* (852) is only a partial palliative. The war in Italy exhibits a number of instances, some straightforward, some less so. The earliest is also the most bizarre. Rhamnes is killed by Nisus: *simul ense superbum / Rhamnetem adgreditur, qui forte tapetibus altis / exstructus toto proflabat pectore somnum, / rex idem et regi Turno gratissimus augur, / sed non augurio potuit depellere pestem* ('At once he attacks with his sword arrogant Rhamnes, who by chance lay on thick rugs, snoring with all his might, himself a king and an augur most valued by king Turnus, but he could not by his augury ward off destruction.') (9.324-8). Can a man sound asleep and snoring loudly be *superbus*? Apparently so. Perhaps he was guilty of arrogance brought on by his kingly power and in particular by his gift of prophecy, said, perhaps a little unfairly, to have proved inadequate. Moreover, since he was killed in his sleep, he hardly had a chance to demonstrate subjection.

Remulus is a much simpler case: *digna atque indigna relatu / uociferans tumidusque nouo praecordia regno / ibat et ingentem sese clamore ferebat* ('Shouting things worthy and unworthy of record, his spirit puffed up with his new kingship, he advanced and made himself great with noise') (9.595-7), sneering loud and long at the 'twice-captured Phrygians' (598-620). Such arrogance is not to be born: *talia iactantem dictis et dira canentem / non tulit Ascanius* ('Ascanius did not endure his boastful words and dire threats') (621-2). He succinctly dismisses his dead opponent's bombast: *i, uerbis uirtutem inlude superbis! / bis capti Phryges haec Rutulis responsa remittunt* ('Go, mock courage with arrogant words! The twice-captured Phrygians return this answer to the Rutuli.') (634-5), a very proper proto-Roman response. Virgil notes with approval his brevity and moderation: *hoc tantum Ascanius* ('Ascanius said no more than this') (636) - not quite two lines as against twenty-three, as the singular *hoc* points up.

More complex is the case of Camilla's victim, the son of Aunus. She accuses him of *superbia*: *uane Ligus frustra que animis elate superbis, / nequiquam patrias temptasti lubricus artis, / nec fraus te incolumem fallaci perferet Auno* ('Futile Ligurian, elated to no purpose by your arrogant spirits, slippery you tried in vain your father's arts, but trickery will not bring you back safe to

deceitful Aunus.’) (11.715-7). Yet he has shown no manifest signs of *superbia*. On encountering Camilla he was terrified (699), thought first of flight and only when that proved impossible resorted to guile (702-4). The speech he then makes (705-8) might well be judged arrogant in different circumstances, since he accuses Camilla of being the one who is running away and taunts her with being afraid to dismount and face him on foot. But in fact he wants only to trick her into dismounting so that he will have a chance of getting away on horseback. Nor is Camilla’s response to be explained on the ground that she takes his words at face value, since it is clear that she has seen through his ploy. Perhaps overconfidence in his inherited powers of deception led him to believe that Camilla would be stupid enough to fall for such a pitiful device - that is certainly the cause of her anger.

The brothers Bitias and Pandarus, who opened the gates of the Trojan camp, are called *fratres... superbos* (9.695). The reason is discreetly adumbrated earlier. Their action was a breach of discipline inspired by overconfidence in their own abilities: *portam, quae ducis imperio commissa, recludunt / freti armis* (‘trusting in their arms they opened the gate which had been entrusted to them by order of the commander’) (675-6).

So we come to the *superbia* of Turnus. When he sets out in quest of Pallas (10.441ff.), his *iussa superba*, at which Pallas is amazed, are further glossed as *dicta tyranni* (448), to which Pallas replies with conspicuous moderation (449-51). Once he has killed Pallas, Turnus at least returns the body for burial (10.492-4). His arrogance now lies in his action, as he despoils his victim of the fatal *balteus*, or perhaps more precisely in his reaction (500): *quo nunc Turnus ouat spolio gaudetque potitus* (‘now Turnus celebrates and rejoices at winning that trophy’). It appears to be this that inspires Virgil’s comment: *nescia mens hominum fati sortisque futurae / et seruare modum rebus sublata secundis* (‘The mind of men does not know its fate or what the future will bring, nor how to preserve moderation when borne up by success.’) (501-2). The failure *seruare modum rebus sublata secundis* is pretty much a definition of that form of *superbia* which is engendered by success, and when Aeneas hears of Pallas’ death and sets out in search of his killer, Turnus is indeed described as *superbum / caede noua* (‘made arrogant by this new death’) (514-15).

Success, though in delusive form, is also the spur to his last display of *superbia*. The spectacle of Aeneas retiring from the field and the Trojan leaders thrown into confusion stirs him to false hope and leads him to call for his horses and weapons (12.324-6): *saltuque superbus / emicat in currum et manibus molitur habenas* (‘leaping into his chariot he gleams in arrogance and plies the reins in his hands’) (326-7). After describing the havoc he caused Virgil speaks of him as: *caesis / hostibus insultans* (‘trampling on slain enemies’) (338-9). The meaning is of course literal - Turnus’ horses are trampling on his fallen foes - but also indicates his haughty attitude.

There are also a few relevant passages where *superbia* does not appear. Jupiter, reassuring Venus, describes the task awaiting Aeneas in Italy in words closely akin to 6.852-3: *bellum ingens geret Italia populosque ferocis / contundet moresque uiris et moenia ponet* (‘He will wage a great war in Italy and will hammer fierce peoples and impose customs and walls on men.’) (1.263-4), while Anchises warns him: *gens dura atque aspera cultu / debellanda tibi Latium est* (‘in Latium you will have to overcome in war a hard race, rough in its ways’) (5.730-1).

When Venus complains to Jupiter about the successes of Turnus and the Rutuli, her words pre-echo 12.338-9: *cernis ut insultent Rutuli Turnusque feratur / per medios insignis equis*

*tumidusque secundo/ Marte ruat?* ('Do you see how the Rutuli vaunt and Turnus advances through the midst, marked out by his horses, and charges puffed up by success in war?') (10.20-1) - the familiar phenomenon of arrogance born of success.

After his killing of Camilla, Arruns is observed by his impending nemesis Opis: *ut uidit fulgentem armis ac uana tumentem* ('when she saw him gleaming in arms and vainly puffed up') (11.854). Once more ostentatious appearance and arrogant conduct go together, while Arruns has already been guilty of insolent speech in his prayer to Apollo (789-93), where a superficial modesty gives rise to a series of scathing insults to Camilla.

Potential occasions to spare the submissive are largely confined to Aeneas' killing spree in the tenth book and are uniformly spurned. The first missed opportunity is provided by Magus, who dodges Aeneas' spear: *et genua amplectens effatur talia supplex* ('embracing his knees as a suppliant he spoke thus') (10.523). He pleads for his life in the name of Anchises and Iulus and offers a ransom (524-9). Aeneas scorns the offer: the killing of Pallas has excluded all deals. Such is the vote of Anchises and Iulus (531-4). This striking evasion of moral responsibility prefigures his final words to Turnus.

Next is Tarquitus, *exsultans contra fulgentibus armis* ('exulting against him in gleaming arms') (10.550). Aeneas overpowers him: *tum caput orantis nequiquam et multa parantis / dicere deturbat terrae* ('then he cast to earth his head as he begged in vain and was preparing to say many things') (554-5), and gloats because his body will not receive burial (557-60).

Liger too is at first boastful (10.580-5). But after the downfall of his brother Lucagus he begs for mercy (595-8). Aeneas not only kills him but treats him with contempt: *pluribus oranti Aeneas: 'haud talia dudum / dicta dabas. morere et fratrem ne desere frater.'* ('To him as he begged at length Aeneas replied "You weren't talking like that a while ago. Die and let brother not desert brother".') (599-600).

He sneers again at the fallen Mezentius (10.896-908), who rebukes him with much dignity and begs, not for his life, but only that his body be returned for burial: *unum hoc per si qua est uictis uenia hostibus oro: / corpus humo patiare tegi* ('I beg this thing by whatever mercy there may be for vanquished enemies: allow my body burial in earth.') (903-4). Mezentius seems unsure whether any such principle exists, or at least is known to Aeneas, for which he can hardly be blamed. Notoriously Virgil does not tell us whether Aeneas granted his request, though some infer that he did from the opening lines of the following book.<sup>18</sup>

That book offers an example of a very different kind. On the next day *oratores* come from the Latin city to beg for peace (11.100-1), who actually use the word *parceret* (105). Aeneas is ready to grant it: *haud aspernanda precantis / prosequitur uenia* ('forgiveness follows those whose prayers are not to be despised') (106-7), exclaiming: *pacem me exanimis et Martis sorte peremptis / oratis? equidem et uiuis concedere uellem* ('Do you beg me for peace for those who are dead and carried off by the fortunes of war? I would grant it also to the living.') (110-11).<sup>19</sup> But later it is made quite clear that the terms will be dictated by the proto-Romans, as is proper: *regique iubet responsa Latino / certa referre uiros et pacis dicere leges* ('he orders men to take back a firm answer to Latinus and dictate terms of peace') (12.111-12). At this stage his demands are moderate: *paribus se legibus ambae / inuictae gentes aeterna in foedera mittant* ('let both peoples

undefeated commit themselves to an eternal treaty on equal terms') (12.191-2). Less measured is the ultimatum he issues before his final duel with Turnus: *urbem hodie, causam belli, regna ipsa Latini, / ni frenum accipere et uicti parere fatentur, / eruam et aequa solo fumantia culmina ponam.... / hoc caput, o ciues, haec belli summa nefandi. / ferte faces propere foedusque reposcite flammis* ('If they do not agree to accept the bit and obey when defeated, today I shall destroy the city, the cause of war, and the kingdom of Latinus, and level its smoking towers with the ground.... This is the fount, citizens, this the nub of dreadful war. Bring torches quickly and demand the treaty back with flames.') (12.567-9, 572-3). The pattern could not be clearer: provocation - reaction - subjection - peace - or else!

And so at last to the death of Turnus. Turnus begs, for his father's sake, that Aeneas return him to Daunus, alive or dead: *miseri te si qua parentis / tangere cura potest, oro (fuit et tibi talis / Anchises genitor) Dauni miserere senectae / et me, seu corpus spoliatum lumine mauis, / redde meis. uicisti et uictum tendere palmas / Ausonii uidere; tua est Lauinia coniunx, / ulterius ne tende odiis.* ('If any care for a wretched father can touch you, I beg you (your father Anchises too was such a man) to pity the old age of Daunus and return me, or, if you prefer, my body, deprived of the light, to my own. You have conquered and the Ausonii have seen me extend my hands in defeat. Lavinia is your bride. Do not carry your hatred any further.') (12.932-8). It is almost as if Turnus were quoting at Aeneas the principles by which his descendants were allegedly destined to abide and challenging him to observe them himself. Aeneas is swayed (939-41) till he sees the fatal baldric. Overcome by madness and anger (941-7), he kills Turnus and cries: *Pallas te hoc uulnere, Pallas / immolat et poenam scelerato ex sanguine sumit* ('It is Pallas, Pallas who sacrifices you with this blow and exacts vengeance from your criminal blood.') (12.948-9). We are reminded of the death of Magus above, voted for by Anchises and Iulus. Another, most unedifying parallel springs to mind: the sanctimonious Athenian husband, who exclaims 'It is not I but the law that kills you' as he murders his wife's lover (Lys.1.26).

Which leads to a final question: what does the last line mean? To render *indignata* as e.g. 'resentful' does not do the word full justice. It surely suggests something like 'resentful at being treated in a manner inconsistent with one's *dignitas*'. That is clearly true in the line's previous application to Camilla (11.831). There it is instantly apparent why Camilla feels her *dignitas* has been infringed: she has been first insulted and then killed by a coward, and so lacks even that cold comfort that Aeneas offers to Lausus (10.825-30: note *dignum* in 826). Also transparent is the reference to the Araxes as *pontem indignatus Araxes* (8.728): any great river might regard a bridge as an affront to its . Perhaps Turnus too felt that he deserved better, that Aeneas ought to have played by the as yet unwritten rules of a different world - but a world that Aeneas already inhabits when he is dealing with ambassadors, not engaging in epic single combat. Did Virgil agree with him? We cannot be sure: *indignata* is deponent, not passive. And when it comes down to what Virgil thinks, we very rarely can feel we know. Yet he could certainly, had he wanted to, have written a completely different line.

### III

There is another important and suggestive link between Virgil and Ammianus. For Ammianus *superbia* is only one of a constellation of words and concepts that are typical of barbarian behaviour. Among the most significant of these are anger, madness, savagery, burning, swelling, seething, and suggestions that an individual, an army or a people is out of control or behaving like

an uncontrollable force of nature.<sup>20</sup>

When this language is applied to barbarians it carries no moral blame. That is simply how such peoples naturally behave. The civilised man does not criticise them for it. He simply sends a gunboat or runs away: the choice is a pragmatic, not an ethical one. But when Ammianus uses such notions to describe Romans his tone is almost always severely critical. It means that they have betrayed their civilised heritage and sunk to the level of savages themselves.<sup>21</sup> There is, however, one significant exception. Roman troops in the heat of battle may burn and boil; they are often found in the grip of anger and madness. At worst this is seen as excusable, while if it arises from some such provocation as a treacherous attack on themselves or their commander, especially if he be the emperor, it may even be cause for commendation.<sup>22</sup> Now exactly the same vocabulary as Ammianus applies to barbarians and at times to Romans is constantly employed by Virgil of Aeneas and many others on both sides. There may, I feel, be lessons to be drawn from Ammianus to help us with a problem that has greatly exercised scholars: how are we to judge Aeneas?

First and perhaps foremost, the principle of *parcere subiectis*, both when it works and when it does not, appears in Ammianus only when the fighting is over. It is about an emperor in council or on his tribunal, receiving an official embassy to which he may choose to dictate terms. There is never the slightest hint that it is meant to apply in the course of an actual battle. In other words it operates only in precisely those situations where Aeneas too observes it. I would therefore suggest it is unfair to criticise Aeneas for failing to live up to it in circumstances to which it simply does not apply.<sup>23</sup>

Nor do I feel that Stoicism is helpful here.<sup>24</sup> If Aeneas is doing anything wrong, it is not that he is sometimes failing to live up to some Stoic ideal, but rather that he sometimes behaves like a barbarian, not like a (proto)-Roman. But even this, I suspect, is also unfair. There is no simple dichotomy in Virgil between Trojans and Italians to match that in Ammianus between Romans and barbarians, itself highly artificial, since many of Julian's men were themselves Germans and Franks. Nor is Aeneas a straightforward example of supposedly civilised man. He stands at the cusp between a barbaric/heroic and a more settled age. Nor again do the epic single combats in which he and others engage allow him or them to be fully assimilated to either a Roman general or a Roman private.

And yet Virgil does keep hammering home the point, as he need not have done, that Aeneas makes a habit of gleefully killing men who are down and begging for mercy. His behaviour is disquieting. We do at least regret it, even if we cannot fairly blame it. But that is in part at least because we take Aeneas seriously, as Virgil surely meant us to do, in a way that we never could Achilles.<sup>25</sup>

So.... Have I proved anything to you? I am not sure that I was even trying to. Perhaps just this: that those who study Rome's greatest poet might do well to give some attention also to her greatest historian.<sup>26</sup>

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## NOTES

- <sup>1</sup> Cf. Seager, *CQ* 93 (1999), 605.
- <sup>2</sup> The limited and purely defensive objective is fundamental to Ammianus' perception of Roman frontier policy. Cf. Seager, *CQ* 91 (1997), 267-8; *CQ* 93 (1999), 579, 604-5. It is, however, fairly flexible: Julian's invasion of Persia is presented as a defensive measure; cf. *CQ* 91 (1997), 262-5.
- <sup>3</sup> For more or less similar examples from Julian's campaigns of 357 and 358, cf. 17.1.2-12, 17.8.3-5.
- <sup>4</sup> For similar examples from 359, 360 and 361, cf. 18.2.1-18, 20.10.2, 21.4.7-8.
- <sup>5</sup> For further trouble with the Sarmatae in 374, appropriately dealt with by the future emperor Theodosius, cf. 29.6.15-16.
- <sup>6</sup> In 359 events followed a very similar course (19.11.1-15), again culminating in an attack on Constantius in person (10-12) and an even fiercer response by the outraged Romans than in the previous year (13-15).
- <sup>7</sup> It is recalled in passing at 12 and out of context at 30.1.1.
- <sup>8</sup> On the Trojans before their arrival in Italy, cf. also 4.537-41, even if Dido is hardly an impartial witness.
- <sup>9</sup> His mother is of similar mind (8.613-4).
- <sup>10</sup> The description of Tibur as *superbum* (7.630) is probably an allusion to its impressive setting. One may also recall the aggressive pride at the possession of a Tibur postcode felt by Catullus (44.1-4).
- <sup>11</sup> For *superbia* born of success, cf. also 7.544 on Allecto.
- <sup>12</sup> It is hard to see Agrippa as *fidus Achates*. Dio consistently presents an unresolved ambiguity between ambitious ostentation and much-advertised modesty (53.23.1-4, 27.1-6, 31.3-32.1; 54.4.5-7, 24.7). It often seems as if Dio (or his source) is refuting a predecessor who claimed that Agrippa was dangerously ambitious and untrustworthy. Note also Maecenas' alleged advice at Dio 54.6.5; also Vell.2.93, Suet.*Aug.* 66.3, Plin.*NH* 7.149.
- <sup>13</sup> Cf. Hor.*C.* 1.2.43-4.
- <sup>14</sup> Cf. also 1.697-8 on Dido's reception of Achates; 5.268-9 on the victors in the games; 12.125-6 on the leaders before the final conflict.
- <sup>15</sup> The epithet is transferred to the dwellings of the cruel in the cases not only of Cacus (8.196) but also of Circe (7.12).
- <sup>16</sup> Cf. also 11.539 on Camilla's father Metabus: *pulsus ob inuidiam regno uirisque superbas*.
- <sup>17</sup> When Aeneas dedicates the spoils of Mezentius (11.2ff.) he too calls him *rege superbo* (15-16), but the meaning is not glossed further.
- <sup>18</sup> Cf. also the treatment of Aulestes by Messapus (12.293-6).
- <sup>19</sup> We may note in passing the savage irony with which Drances recommends to Latinus the cession of Lavinia to Aeneas (11.352ff.). Here the language of self-abasement and pleas for peace are addressed not to the enemy Aeneas but to Turnus (358, 365-6).
- <sup>20</sup> Cf. Seager, *Ammianus Marcellinus, seven studies in his language and thought* (1986), 34-6, 48-58.
- <sup>21</sup> Cf. Seager, *Ammianus*, 131-5.
- <sup>22</sup> Cf. Seager, *Ammianus*, 35, 51, 132-5.
- <sup>23</sup> Cf. Lyne in S. J. Harrison (ed.), *Oxford Readings in Vergil's Aeneid* (1990), 321-33; Nisbet, *ibid.*, 387-9; Bowra, *ibid.*, 372-4.
- <sup>24</sup> Cf. Lyne, *ibid.*, 319-22; Bowra, *ibid.*, 363-77.
- <sup>25</sup> Cf. Bowra, *ibid.*, 376-7; Nisbet, *ibid.*, 388-9.
- <sup>26</sup> Before its presentation to the Society, versions of this paper were delivered to the Classics and Ancient History Research Seminar in Liverpool and as the Elizabeth Hunter Lecture at the Florida State University, Tallahassee. I have endeavoured to preserve as far as possible the characteristics of the oral genre, not least by restricting references to modern scholarship to an absolute minimum. Translations of Virgil and Ammianus are my own, make no claim to literary merit, and are literal except where literality might prove unintelligible.

# Housman emending Virgil (A. 4. 225)\*

*vade age, nate, voca Zephyros et labere pennis  
Dardaniumque ducem, Tyria Karthagine qui nunc  
225 expectat fatisque datas non respicit urbes,  
adloquere*

A hundred years ago A. E. Housman (*Classical Review* 19, 1905, 260 f.) rejected out of hand *expectat* in the sense of *moratur, terit tempus* (Servius *ad loc.*). He proposed instead *Hesperiam* and was careful trying to make it sound palaeographically probable. In this he has evidently failed to convince. Most editors of the 20th century have taken no notice of his article: e.g. W. Janell (Teubner 1920), H. Goelzer (Budé 1925), R. A. B. Mynors (OCT 1969), J. Perret (Budé 1977). An exception is the edition of R. Sabbadini - L. Castiglioni (Corpus Scriptorum Lat. Paravianum 1944) and their successor M. Geymonat (1973) where Housman is at least mentioned in the *apparatus criticus*.

Housman, however, deserves serious consideration. Since his time the *Thesaurus Linguae Latinae* (s.v. *expecto* vol. V, col. 1897, 77 [by O. Hiltbrunner 1950]) has A. 4. 225 as its only example for the use of *expectare* in the sense of *desidere, otiosum esse*. Though R. D. Williams (1972) without discussion found the “very unusual usage” (i.e. ‘delays’) “perfectly acceptable” R. G. Austin (1955), in a sober discussion, dismissed on the one hand the emendations made (by Housman and A. Campbell<sup>1</sup>) and on the other the parallels adduced by A. S. Pease (1934) in defence of the traditional interpretation of *expectat*. Against Pease Austin rightly maintained that *expectare* clearly implies waiting with expectation for something to happen. In view of such ‘parallels’ (cf. also *OLD* s.v. *ex(s)pecto* 4 a) Virgil’s *expectare* here cannot easily be defended by instances like Juv. 1. 109 (to wait in a queue), Cic. *Fam.* 15. 17. 1 (at a gate for somebody to appear), Justinus 5. 4. 1 (fully armed to meet the enemy), Quintil. 4. 5. 19 (in court for evidence to be presented), Plaut. *Truc.* 916 (for the loved one to turn up), Cic. *Quinct.* 54 (for a friend to

settle his accounts), Sen. *Ben.* 5. 12. 1 (for a particular line of thought to be finished), Pers. 4. 19 (for the truth to be revealed).

So far, so good. What, then, about Austin's own solution? "... Aeneas is 'waiting expectantly' for something - the completion of Carthage, the work on which Mercury finds him busy (260): and the object to *expectat* can be supplied from *urbes*; it is in Carthage that he is awaiting his city, without any thought for the cities that Fate has already made his." The natural *transitive* usage is found at *A.* 4. 430 *expectet facilemque fugam ventosque ferentis* (Dido begging for a last concession to her need for a respite), or at 4. 134 *expectant* (where the leading persons are waiting for Dido to appear). Nevertheless, the arbitrary nature of understanding *expectare* along Austin's line is evident. If *expectare* is taken in the usual sense of 'wait for' the most natural object to be supplied would be *fatis ... datas ... urbes*, the exact opposite of the situation Jupiter is pointing at. Even if *urbes* alone could be taken with *expectat* the natural way to understand the reference would be to the promised city in Italy, not Carthage.<sup>2</sup>

If one compares Jupiter's message (223 - 237) to Mercury an observation seems relevant to our issue: Jupiter's complaint is that Aeneas has *no thought for the city* (*urbes* being probably<sup>3</sup> pl. for sing.) granted him by fate (reflecting in a milder form 221 leading up to Jupiter's intervention: *oblitos famae melioris amantis*). At the end of this passage (236) Jupiter returns to the reproachful *non respicit* (225) in the form of *nec prolem Ausoniam et Lavinia respicit arva*, giving *urbes* more substance and sting by means of the *nomina propria*. Though loyally passing on the gist of Jupiter's mandate Mercury is, at least partly, more excoriating (265 - 276). Instead of the first *non respicit* he laments Aeneas' forgetfulness (cf. 221): *regni rerumque oblite tuarum* (267). *Aut qua spe inimica in gente moratur* (235) becomes *qua spe Libycis teris otia terris*. And the two lines *Ascanione pater Romanas invidet arces?* (234) and *nec prolem Ausoniam et Lavinia respicit arva* (236) Mercury combines to become the exhortation *Ascanium surgentem et spes heredis Iuli/ respice, cui regnum Italiae Romanaque tellus/ debetur* (274 ff.). - The notion 'dally' is thus prominent in both accounts (respectively *moratur* and *teris otia*), Aeneas' 'forgetfulness' is taken up twice in each passage (respectively *non respicit/ nec ... respicit* in Jupiter's mouth, and more forcefully: *oblite* and the imperative *respice* in Mercury's). Thus *expectat* would create an imbalance in Jupiter's monologue by stressing the dallying of Aeneas twice.

In view of all this an emendation seems indeed called for. Housman's *Hesperiam* is elegant and gives excellent meaning. *Fatis datas* would then have to be taken with *Hesperiam* as well. I can see no objection to it from a linguistic or contextual point of view, and *-que*, of course, does not need to combine two finite verbs. But in my opinion Housman's attempt can be improved on by reading

*qui nunc  
optatas fatisque datas non respicit urbes*

For the reader, who has in the Third Book heard about the futile attempts at founding a new city, *optare* is by now established as a term used in connection with the quest for a new home: 3. 131 ff. *et tandem antiquis Curetum adlabimur oris./ ergo avidus muros optatae molior urbis* (cf. also 3. 509 *sternimur optatae gremio telluris ad undam*). Crete turned out not to be in accordance with the 'will' of fate. Apollo sends the Penates as his messengers to tell that he will grant an empire to the future city pointing to *Hesperia* (163), alias *Italia* (166), alias *Corythus*

(170), alias *terrae Ausoniae* (170/ 171) as the original home of Dardanus.<sup>4</sup> The address ends by maximizing the authority and will it rests on in the last resort: Jupiter himself forbids them to settle in Crete (171).

I see 225, in the above emended form, as reminding us of what has been the ardent wish on Aeneas' part (*optatas*) in the same breath as alluding to what is the highest will (*fatis datas*): Jupiter wants to remind Aeneas of the basis on which his whole enterprise depends, that there must be harmony between his own longing for a new city, i.e. a national existence, on the one hand and what is granted him by Fate on the other. It is exactly this kind of alliance between human wish and divine decree that would be conveyed by *optatas fatisque datas*. Aeneas has only to be reminded.

What might have happened at some narrow stage in the ancient transmission was that *expectare* ousted *optare*, e.g. by a comment, either interlinear or marginal, like: *optatas ... urbes: id est: urbes quas expectat*.

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## NOTES

\* I am most grateful to the Editor for his corrections and suggestions.

<sup>1</sup> Campbell would have *exceptat* 'grabs', *Classical Review* 52, 1938, 162 f. combining it with *Tyrias* at 224 proposed by 'S.W.' *Classical Review* 2, 1888, 226.

<sup>2</sup> Austin was preceded in this interpretation by O. Jahn, who was rejected by R. Dietsch, *Theologumenon Vergilianorum particula*, (Programm) 1853 (I rely for this information on A. Forbiger and Pease).

<sup>3</sup> I leave the editor's question for the readers to decide: "I wonder if here it means what it says - i.e. Lavinium > Alba Longa > Roma, three in all!" (cf. 234 *Ascanione* [as heir to Alba Longa] *pater Romanas invidet arces* and likewise 274-275).

<sup>4</sup> *Dardaniumque ducem* (224) recalls 3. 94-98 and 3. 163-168.

# Review

**Nicholas Horsfall: Virgil, *Aeneid* 7, a Commentary.  
Leiden: Brill, *Mnemosyne Supplementum* 198, 2000.  
xliv + 567 pp. ISBN 90 04 10842 4**

To attempt even a short critique of this mighty work has proved exceedingly daunting. I have had to remind myself repeatedly that this is not a contribution to *Gnomon*, nor yet a report on a doctoral dissertation, such as indeed was the origin of Horsfall's commentary.

My excellent father, to whom, like the poet Horace, I feel a great debt, was a devoted pupil of the eminent literary critic Sir Herbert Grierson; he used to warn me against 'peering scholarship', by which he meant, I think, unilluminated/-ing pedantry, and it was a salutary warning. No doubt Eduard Fraenkel's observation about the frequent disproportion between learning and judgement which he found in his juniors says something not wholly dissimilar. One is therefore on one's guard.

I must declare at the outset my unbounded respect and personal regard for the author, a splendid maverick in his generation, whose scholarly career has embraced Cambridge, Oxford, UCL and Rome. This descendant, as I have been told, of the towering philosopher-critic, Moses Mendelssohn, known as 'the German Socrates', was Fraenkel's bibliographer; his *prolegomena* and subsequent allusions in the present volume bespeak close personal communication, sometimes '*per litt.*', with the best and the greatest in recent Latin scholarship. Such is the stratosphere which he inhabits, one of truly European amplitude, that any reservations which one may express about his work must seem wretchedly Telchianian, the cackling of geese against swans.

The ready availability of Mynors' and Geymonat's texts means that a conventional *apparatus criticus* could be dispensed with, but careful attention is paid to Orthography, Punctuation (a new paragraph at 58 ??) and Text in the notes. We are offered a translation, intended for clarification, which might fairly be described as workaday; apart from one or two oddities like 'hoggets' = *bidentis* (93) and 'merlons' = *pinnis* (159), it does not, in the words of our emerita president, 'make Virgil strange'. At 441 Turnus addresses Allecto/Calybe as 'reverend mother' (lower case)! H's tenses are inconsistent, but then so, I suppose, are Virgil's, if in a different way.

The commentary itself has, it must be said, certain idiosyncratic features of presentation which can render it opaque to the simple-minded reader: here telegraphic or enigmatic brevity (TCD not a great seat of learning in Ireland but the commentator *Donatus*(2)), there a seemingly endless nexus of parentheses. Overall the work is enormously long, self-avowedly ‘thorough’; at a guess it is a good two-and-a-half times as long as the densest Austin commentary. A colleague has described it to me as ‘encyclopaedic’; perhaps that is why it is not notably enjoyable to read *in extenso*. The learning is quite prodigious: that goes without saying. Lexicographical information is given in profusion: *sexies* in this poet, *octies* in that. But very often neither these statistics nor the immense bibliographical litanies are suggestively enucleated: encyclopaedic is a good term for this, and it may be what is required of a commentary in an epoch when scholarly tools, we are told, are available of which Austin and Fordyce knew nothing.

And yet, may I wistfully record how much I hanker after the warmth, the grace and the modesty of an Austin commentary. Proud as I am to have been RGA’s apprentice in the 60’s, I can now set down the indignation I felt inwardly when a senior classicist kindly explained to me that Austin was ‘not really a scholar of the first rank’ - this in response to my attempt to spearhead a commemoration of his 70th birthday in 1971. The wonderful address given to the Society by John Henderson in May 2004 has changed all that, debunking as it did the rather patronising way Austin was at times treated by the establishment, and revealing his dignified refusal to revise his *Aen.*4. Austin wrote, ‘One reason I am against a complete overhaul is perhaps an odd one. The book as it stands was to a great extent the product of emotion...’ This in a nutshell is what made - and makes - Austin such a sympathetic Virgilian.

But back to Horsfall’s achievement: *maius opus moveo* (45). No-one could claim a greater mastery of Italian topography, geography, mythography, ritual or *archaeologia* (variously spelt) than H. Such are the *desiderata* of the task which he fulfils to admiration; *à propos* he is rather addicted to the note of admiration, vulgarly known as the exclamation mark: I counted four in one two-page spread. Sometimes the joke is rather lost on one.

I believe that it has been observed that Housman’s critical notes on Lucan are even harder to fathom than the text itself. One might say this of H.’s note on *vitisator* (179), with multiple brackets and parentheses. I was initially utterly bemused until, by a judicious series of deletions, I was left with ‘The correct explanation ... seems to be that the *falx*... is a common attribute of agricultural deities.’ (Is this so surprising ?) Rather as in a GCSE mathematics paper, where candidates are enjoined to show all working, this takes up 25 lines of commentary including Latin quoted from I am d....d if I can make out whom, but which confusingly incorporates a Horsfallian [*vix!*] in the same italic type as the main quotation, some Greek, and, finally, a word accidentally omitted ‘[of] the wine’, followed by another screamer.

H. can bring to bear a rigour on a par with that of the great Latin grammarians of our age, such as Watt or Fordyce, however much stick the latter worthy takes *obiter*. So let me turn to that most interesting and poignant passage about Latinus’s having no surviving male issue :

*filius huic fato divum prolesque virilis  
nulla fuit, primaque oriens erepta iuventa est.* (50f.)

Why does H. start his explication with the particular idiom ‘*nullus sum*’ (‘not exclusively comic’ - no indeed: Plaut.*Cas.*621 is in a context identified by Vahlen as paratragic)? This is *nihil ad*

*rem*, because in it the verb is *copulative*, whereas at 7.50f. the verb is surely existential, with *huic* denoting the possessor. (I wonder that commentators have not picked up on the tense of *fuisset*. Can it be because they assume that it stands *metri gratia for erat*?) Latinus had a son once, but he has one no more because he has been snatched away, a true perfect.

Central to this short review is an assertion of the excellence that lies at the heart of the whole concept. On line 4 we read ‘His Circe is exotic and fascinating, at a distance, but altogether sinister and dangerous (contrast Hom. ...).’ What follows lacks this patrician luminosity, and yet this has to be taken in good part as essential to his prerequisite of ‘thoroughness’. Time and time again he makes marvellous comments on the exact sense and colour of words in Virgil: on 36 *laetus* ‘an adj. of fundamental thematic importance’. Its appearance in the very first line of *G.* is surely profoundly significant. Fruitfulness or joyfulness, which is primary? *OLD* does not decide. The word comes to denote a reaction to how life can be when things go aright; according to nature, as it were.

The cackling goose had to report a good two dozen typographical and similar errors in the first half of the work. After that the critical faculty was shamed into being engrossed in higher issues. Of the two dozen the majority are obvious or ‘quotidian’. Is it *proemium* or *prooemium*? In S.Dan. on 51 read *Aenege* not *Aeneas*. On 274 for *eligo* 15x read *deligo*, else the note is self-contradictory. Hereabouts too the Greek accents gang oddly agley. On 319 the quotation from 6.93f. omits the probative word *coniunx*. RGA would have arrogated himself a decade in Purgatory for countenancing ‘accomodate’ (*sic*) on 45-57.

*Sed anser iam taceo, ne improbus (G.1.199) fiam.* Virgilian studies are colossally in Dr Horsfall’s debt. Who will now review his 11 for *PVS* 26? In the words of Sixtus Beckmesser, ‘*Fanget an*’!

**JONATHAN FOSTER**



# IN MEMORIAM

## HARRY MacL. CURRIE

### and DAVID W.T. VESSEY

The Society notes with deep regret the passing of two former Editors of the *Proceedings*.

Professor Harry Currie was responsible for no fewer than fifteen issues, from the very first in 1961 through to 1980. His energetic and affable Scottish character was a boon in those often difficult years. We were happy to honour his distinction by electing him President for 1995-98.

Dr David Vessey, a scholar of quiet refinement and literary accomplishment, was Editor of the 1991 issue and of the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary volume *Pentekontaetia*, of 1993. He thus consolidated the 'new look' *PVS* established by Herbert Huxley with the skilful typography of Ernest Buckley.

Both these friends in truth '*sui memores aliquos fecere merendo*'.

JCBF