

NOTES AND DISCUSSIONS

CLEVERNESS IN VIRGILIAN IMITATION

In the Sixth Book of the *Aeneid*, when Aeneas meets Dido's ghost in the Underworld, the hero declares: "invitus, regina, tuo de litore cessi" (460). This is an echo of Catullus 66. 39, where Berenice's deified lock of hair tells the Egyptian queen: "invita, o regina, tuo de vertice cessi." The clash that this involves between the trivial Catullan context and the deep emotion of the Virgilian scene has produced different reactions. Most commonly it is assumed that the reminiscence must be unconscious,¹ but this can scarcely be correct. The reference is too specific—a poet (and Virgil least of all) would surely not recall another poet's queen without remembering who she was and how she figured in his predecessor's lines. On the other hand a recent writer has denied the existence of any clash, maintaining that the quotation is entirely apt.² But Virgil's account of the last meeting between Dido and Aeneas is a world apart from the playful Alexandrian conceit; and to follow out the parallelism between the already deified lock of hair and Aeneas, destined for deification in the future, only serves to emphasize the incongruity. Finally, the line has been accepted as a conscious reminiscence in which Virgil takes the Catullan line and deliberately alters the character of its role: "Virgil took this comic line for an intensely tragic moment."³ Now if we accept this view, as I believe we should, then the clash that so concerns the modern reader⁴ was obviously of no importance to Virgil. His aim was simply to display cleverness and originality in the way he employed his model; and judged in terms

of this aim, the result must be considered a success.

In fact we have here, I would suggest, an example of a special type of reminiscence in the *Aeneid*: one in which the poet's primary concern is indeed to employ the work of a predecessor cleverly, whether by drastically changing the role of a quoted phrase or line, or by some other piece of studied subtlety. An example comparable to the first occurs in Virgil's citation of Ennius' "it nigrum campis agmen."⁵ In Ennius the words referred to the ponderous progress of Hannibal's elephants: in Virgil's passage the creatures in question are—ants. Had some other animal been involved, perhaps in this case we *could* have accepted the possibility of unconscious reminiscence, since there is nothing very specific about the line. But when the largest of land creatures suddenly dwindles to the smallest, that surely must be intentional. And here again it is worth noting that this fresh employment of the phrase (which Norden concedes is "fast lustig zu lesen")⁶ occurs in the highly emotional context of the break between Aeneas and Dido (cf. esp. 4. 393 ff. and 408 ff.). Once more it is clear that the clever manipulation of his original is Virgil's chief concern, irrespective of whether the artifice is appropriate to the general context or not.

A comparable example, involving cleverness of a rather different sort, is to be found toward the end of *Aeneid* 6, when Anchises shows Aeneas the future heroes of Roman history in the Elysian Fields. Prior to this, Aeneas has himself been on the move through the Under-

1. E.g., W. B. Anderson, *PCA*, XL (1943), 11; F. Fletcher, *Aeneid VI* (Oxford, 1941), *ad loc.*; L. J. D. Richardson, *CQ*, XXXVI (1942), 40; C. J. Fordyce, *Catullus* (Oxford, 1961), *ad loc.*

2. A. H. F. Thornton, *AUMLA*, XVII (1962), 77–79.

3. W. F. Jackson Knight, *Roman Vergil* (London, 1944), p. 90. Cf. A. Cartault, *L'Art de Virgile dans l'Énéide* (Paris, 1926), p. 510; R. E. H. Westendorp Boerma, *Acta classica*, I (1958), 59. There is a remarkable parallel to this in Virgil's

description of blazing Troy (*Aen.* 2. 310 ff.), which clearly recalls Horace's comic description of the kitchen fire in his *Brundisium satire* (1. 5). See R. G. Austin, *Aeneidos liber secundus* (Oxford, 1964) p. 141.

4. E.g., T. R. Glover, *Studies in Virgil* (London, 1904), p. 60, "This is the very last thing of which we should wish to be reminded in the situation."

5. *Ann.* 474 V.; *Aen.* 4. 404.

6. E. Norden, *Ennius und Vergilius* (Leipzig, 1915), p. 44, n.

world, but now he is static (as Odysseus was in the Homeric analogue) and it is the souls that pass by in review. The form of Anchises' commentary is skilfully varied to avoid monotony, and among the final group of heroes he addresses directly as they pass are the Fabii: "quo fessum rapitis, Fabii? tu Maximus ille es, / unus qui nobis cunctando restituis rem" (845-46). Few Ennian quotations can have been discussed more frequently or more fully than this one; but commentators concentrate, with dreary unanimity, on the conventional aspect of the rhetorical question that introduces it, on the metrical contrast between *rapitis Fabii* and the four heavy spondees of the Ennian quotation, and on "the noble close to the catalogue of heroes" thus produced.⁷ And invariably, it seems to me, the real point is missed, or at least fails to emerge with any clarity. For here Virgil was faced with the problem of employing a line from Ennius which, by his day, had become almost proverbial.⁸ How then was he to introduce it without running the risk of banality? His solution, quite simply, was to use the line to bring a sudden smile to his readers' lips. The parade is almost at an end, and Anchises is weary (*fessum*); but at this point a group of heroes make his task as reviewer more difficult by scurrying past him (*rapitis*) instead of proceeding at the stately pace of the rest of the parade. And they prove in fact to be members of the *gens Fabia*. How better, then, to chide them, than by picking out from their number the one man in Roman history one would least expect to be in such a hurry, Quintus Fabius Maximus Cunctator? Once more,

then, we have clever manipulation of the original: and once more the context stands in strong contrast with the effect thereby achieved. (The grave *excudent alii* passage immediately follows, 847 ff.)⁹

Finally, there are two interesting examples of studied cleverness in the employment of a predecessor's work, both of which occur in Book Eight, and both of which take us back to Apollonius, whose influence on that book is especially pronounced.¹⁰ In the *Argonautica* there are two celebrated similes used by the poet to illustrate Medea's emotional state. In one, her passion for Jason as it blazes up for the first time is compared to the blazing up of a heap of dry twigs, kindled by a poor woman who rises early in the morning to spin wool.¹¹ In the second, the restless anxiety of Medea's mind as she ponders the dangers facing Jason is compared to sunbeams whose rays, reflected from a caldron of water, dance round the walls of a room.¹² Now since Dido is Medea's equivalent in Virgil's poem, one would naturally expect him to recall these similes (if at all) in his treatment of the Carthaginian queen; but in fact in both cases he studiously avoids such an obvious move. Thus the simile of the reflected light is now used to describe the anxieties not of a woman in love, but of Aeneas himself as he ponders the growing opposition of the people of Italy.¹³ Moreover, instead of serving merely to describe a mental state, the simile also anticipates symbolically the help that will come from a river-god,¹⁴ as well as forming a bridge from the oppressive world of struggle in which Aeneas now finds himself, to the ideal pas-

7. E.g., E. Norden, *P. Vergilius Maro Aeneis VI*⁴ (Darmstadt, 1957), *ad loc.*; F. Fletcher, *op. cit.*, n. 1 *ad loc.*; T. E. Page, *The Aeneid of Virgil, I-VI* (London, 1894), *ad loc.*; Knight, *op. cit.*, pp. 87-88, n. 3; Thornton, *op. cit.*, p. 77, n. 2. The quotation is from Fletcher's commentary.

8. See Vahlen *ad loc.* (*Ann.* 370) for refs.

9. The cleverness here works in the opposite direction to that displayed in the first example: here a noble line in the original is treated with a sudden playfulness. Virgil was of course immune from any response in kind from his predecessors: but Ovid is surely acting as stand-in for them when he transfers Virgil's grave "hoc opus, hic labor est" from the solemn context of *Aen.* 6. 129 to his *Ars am.* 1. 453.

10. For parallels, cf. esp. the importance of Hercules in *Argon.* 1 and *Aen.* 8. Besides the similes to be discussed there are also clear parallels, e.g., between Virgil's description of the

Cyclops' forge (*Aen.* 8. 424 ff.) and that of Apollonius (*Argon.* 1. 730 ff.) and between Virgil's Evander, who tells his guest of Hercules' exploits and entrusts to him his son (8. 185 ff. and 514 ff.) and Apollonius' Lycus, who does the same (2. 774 ff. and 802 ff.).

11. *Argon.* 3. 291 ff.

12. *Ibid.* 3. 756 ff.

13. *Aen.* 8. 22 ff. It is interesting to contrast the violently conflicting views of scholars on the relative merits of the two passages. Cf., e.g., R. Y. Tyrrell, *Latin Poetry* (London, 1904), p. 141; Cartault, *op. cit.*, n. 3, p. 638; W. W. Fowler, *Aeneas at the Site of Rome* (Oxford, 1918), pp. 35-36; M. Hügi, *Vergils "Aeneis" und die Hellenistische Dichtung* (Bern, 1951) p. 36; M. C. J. Putnam *The Poetry of the Aeneid* (Cambridge, Mass., 1965), pp. 107-8.

14. Cf. K. Büchner in *RE*, VIII A (1958), 1402.

toral world through which he will move in the rest of Book Eight.¹⁵ But it is in his employment of the image of the blazing twigs that Virgil's *calliditas* is perhaps most in evidence.¹⁶ For if he was not to use this simile to describe Dido's passion, then Book Eight could indeed supply the most obvious alternative: for it contains the only truly erotic scene in the whole epic, to wit, the seduction of Vulcan by Venus. But in the actual employment of the motif Virgil seems deliberately to tease the reader who is familiar with the Alexandrian model. For Vulcan's passion as it blazes up is in fact compared, not to blazing twigs, but to lightning in the heavens.¹⁷ And Apollonius' simile of the industrious woman who kindles an early-morning fire is now transformed from

an image of blazing passion to a time-fixing device¹⁸ relating to the coldly sober aftermath: "haud secus Ignipotens nec tempore segnior illo / mollibus e stratis opera ad fabrilia surgit." Once again, moreover, the Virgilian simile explores possibilities that were lacking in the original. For (as in the last example) it forms a bridge, this time from the palace of Vulcan to the Cyclops' forge, where the god, like the Roman matron, will give instructions to subordinates, as they too work by a fire.¹⁹ And the picture of the chaste Roman matron industriously striving to preserve the home and family she cherishes makes an effective contribution to the ethos of the book as a whole.²⁰

E. L. HARRISON

UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS

15. Cf. Putnam, *op. cit.*, pp. 108-9; V. Pöschl, *Die Dichtkunst Virgils* (Innsbruck, 1950), pp. 239-40.

16. *Aen.* 8. 407 ff.

17. *Ibid.* 8. 388 ff.

18. Cf. H. Fränkel, *Noten zu den "Argonautika" des Apollonios* (Munich, 1968), p. 141 on "Stundenbilder" and their relation to similes. This particular example does actually become a simile as well in the course of its development, *cum* (408) leading on to *haud secus* as well as to *nec tempore segnior illo* (414).

19. Cf. Putnam, *op. cit.*, pp. 139-40, where he points out also that the children the housewife seeks to support are matched by the *Aeneadae* Venus wishes to protect.

20. Cf. Pöschl, *op. cit.*, p. 277. Hügi, *op. cit.*, p. 47, rightly subordinates the Homeric model used by Apollonius (*Il.* 12. 433 ff.) since it lacks the essential ingredients of the early rising and the fire lighting. It is however worth noting that Virgil's "castum ut servare cubile / coniugis et possit parvos educere natos" (412-13) has no parallel in Apollonius, but recalls the Homeric *ἵνα παῖσιν δαίκεα μισθὸν ἄρῃται* (*Il.* 12. 435).

THE *DIAPSEPHISMOS* OF *ATH. POL.* 13. 5

Mentioned in *Ath. Pol.* 13. 5 is a *diapsephismos* that took place "after the expulsion of the tyrants." Aristotle alluded to the measure to justify an immediately preceding remark to the effect that bankrupts and aliens had insinuated themselves into the citizen body by way of Pisistratus' faction. The implication was, for Aristotle, that this *diapsephismos* gave explicit recognition to and provided a remedy for that sorry state of affairs. His opinion that Pisistratus adulterated the citizenry is presum-

ably an inference from the fact of the *diapsephismos*.¹ Whether the inference is right or wrong, the alleged *diapsephismos* is not intrinsically suspicious. Yet the datum has been rejected by some modern scholars.²

Felix Jacoby insisted,³ like most others,⁴ in taking the *diapsephismos* in strict conjunction with the remark in *Politics* 1275B. Here it is said that Clisthenes enlarged the demos, after the overthrow of the tyranny, by enrolling foreigners and slaves in the tribes: πολλοὺς γὰρ

impression not only on contemporaries but on those who followed them.

2. Above all by F. Jacoby, *FGrHist* III b Suppl. I 158 ff., followed by Day and Chambers, *op. cit.*, p. 118. Aristotle's testimony is accepted by D. M. Lewis, *Hist.*, XII (1963), 38, D. Kienast, *Hist. Zeit.*, CC (1965), 281, n. 2, and, in a discussion devoted to the entire problem, by K.-W. Welwei, *Gymnasium*, LXXIV (1967), 423 ff.

3. *Op. cit.*, p. 159.

4. E.g., Hignett, *A History of the Athenian Constitution* (Oxford, 1952), p. 133; Wade-Gery, *op. cit.*, pp. 148 ff.; Day and Chambers, *op. cit.*, p. 118; F. R. Wüst, *Hist.*, XIV (1964), 370 ff.; Welwei, *loc. cit.*

1. J. Day and M. H. Chambers, *Aristotle's History of the Athenian Democracy* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1962), p. 118; cf. H. T. Wade-Gery, *Essays* (Oxford, 1958), p. 148, who supposed that Aristotle's "substantial evidence" for what he alleged of Pisistratus "is the fact of a *διαψεφισμός* and that for this he had documentary authority." It is not clear to me that there could have been any documentary evidence on this point which would have reached Aristotle. Instead I would prefer to suppose that one memory of the oligarchic regime which managed to endure was that of a wholesale disenfranchisement. Recorded in the fifth century, it was then interpreted by Aristotle (or his predecessors) in the fashion indicated in 13. 5. It follows that the *diapsephismos*, if it is historical, must have been sufficiently severe to have made an