



Review Article: Virgil's Epic Techniques: Heinze Ninety Years on

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REVIEW ARTICLE

VIRGIL'S EPIC TECHNIQUES: HEINZE NINETY YEARS ON

Few works of classical literary scholarship can enjoy as green an old age as Richard Heinze's *Virgils epische Technik* (hereafter *VET*), first published in 1903 (third edition 1915), and now published in an English translation¹ just ten years short of the book's centenary. It has become a cliché among Latinists to maintain that H.'s is still the best single book on the *Aeneid*, and this not merely among *laudatores temporis acti*. The welcome opportunity for teachers in the Anglo-Saxon world to put this fabled work in the hands of our students is a good moment to reassess the justice of this hagiolatry and also to measure the distance between H.'s reading of the *Aeneid* and contemporary fashions.

H.'s clear and energetic prose is remarkably uncluttered with references to scholarly debate, a lightness of touch the more striking when contrasted with the depth of learning deployed so masterfully in footnote after footnote. But this sense of planting footsteps in the void is the sign of a self-conscious response to the state of German criticism and scholarship at the end of the nineteenth century.² H.'s revaluation of Virgil's art was seminal for the whole of Virgilian criticism, but it was truly revolutionary only within the German context: as Friedrich Leo pointed out in his review of the book,³ while Germans considered it "Menschenrecht" to dismiss Virgil as a third-rate poet, this was not the case in England or France; and Heinze himself, in his 1906 Leipzig lecture on "Die gegenwärtigen Aufgaben der römischen Literaturgeschichte,"⁴ included among the forerunners of his new Latin literary history the works of Hippolyte Taine (on Livy) and William Sellar. In France and England the works of Ste-Beuve⁵ and Sellar⁶ had presented sympathetic and insightful accounts of the *Aeneid*, but neither is a monument of high scholarship. In Germany the Romantics' denigration of Virgil as an uninspired imitator had forced Virgilian scholars into the extremes of *Quellenforschung* and *Entstehungsanalyse*, as the texts were hacked to pieces in an ever more minute examination of their supposed component parts, distinguishable with reference either to their ill-digested Greek models, or to the different stages of composition by a poet endowed with a

1. *Virgil's Epic Technique*, trans. Hazel and David Harvey and Fred Robertson, with a preface by Antonie Wlosok (Bristol, 1993). Page references are to the English translation. For helpful comments on this essay I am indebted to Don Fowler and Richard Hunter.

2. For an excellent account of the scholarly context and intellectual genesis of *VET* see Alessandro Petrelli "Genesi e significato della *Virgils epische Technik* di Richard Heinze," *Maia* 25 (1973): 293–316.

3. *Deutsche Literaturzeitung* (1903): 594–96.

4. Published in *Neue Jahrbücher* (1907): 161–75.

5. *Etude sur Virgile* (Paris, 1857; I quote from the 1891 Paris edition).

6. *The Roman Poets of the Augustan Age: Virgil* (Oxford, 1876; I quote from the 1883 edition).

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supreme unconcern for the consistency of the several parts of the poem.⁷ The listing of inconsistencies and errors in the poems⁸ could serve only the futile end of demonstrating the enfeebled and impoverished mental capacities of the individual poet, without the wider historical interest of the conclusions of the very similar methods of the Homeric analysts.

Through a still exemplary marriage of a rigorous historical scholarship with a sensitive literary-critical intelligence, H. turned this approach on its head, and set out to look in the *Aeneid* for signs not of incompetence, but of the artistic intentions of the poet. Conscious artistry and a near (but not entirely) sovereign control over his materials emerge as the hallmarks of Virgil. H. embraces, and indeed celebrates, Virgil's indebtedness to the traditions, but where this is the beginning and end of the matter for the *Quellenforscher*, for H. it is merely the start: what matters is what Virgil does with his raw materials.⁹ Inverting the (in Germany) consensual *synkrisis* of Virgil and Homer, H. elevates the artistic maturity of Virgil over the childishness of Homer (p. 263). In a virtuoso display of his own erudition H. takes the narrative of Dido's path to death, perhaps that part of the *Aeneid* most consistently admired through the historical vagaries of taste, to demonstrate at one and the same time Virgil's masterly artistic control and his unembarrassed dependence on previous models (pp. 102–3). The detailed techniques of *imitatio* are not in fact explored in depth in the book, but H.'s positive approach to the issue of "Tradition and Originality" was undoubtedly an enabling condition for the scholarly and critical advances made in the study of Virgilian allusion and imitation in this century.

H.'s method is founded on an absolute conviction of the importance of the poet's intention, understood not in the sense of a profound meaning to be discovered beneath the surface of the text, but as the purposeful working out of solutions to a series of artistic problems, guided by an overriding series of artistic goals.¹⁰ To take an example of this "problem-solving" approach from H.'s analyses, in the first part

7. For a bibliography of *Entstehungsanalyse* see Thomas Berres, *Die Entstehung der Aeneis* (Wiesbaden, 1982), 322–29.

8. Cf. H.'s own comment on this tradition, *VET*, p. 215, n. 24.

9. Cf. also H.'s programmatic statement about the relationship to *Quellenforschung* of his analysis of the narrative techniques of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* and *Fasti* at the beginning of his 1919 essay "Ovids elegische Erzählung" (*Vom Geist des Römertums*³ [Stuttgart, 1960], 308–9). In England and France H.'s starting-point would have met with less resistance. Cf. Sellar, *Virgil*, 74, commenting on German nineteenth-century prejudice against Virgil: "The Roman and Italian character of his workmanship, the new result produced by the recasting of old materials, the individual and inalienable quality of his own genius, were for a time obscured, as the evidences of the large debt which he owed to his Greek masters became more and more apparent." Ste-Beuve, *Etude*, 95, eliding the opposition between nature and art in a discussion of the sources of Virgil's poetry, through a mystificatory reworking of a neoclassical cliché about imitation: "Cette imitation des livres et des auteurs . . . est encore une manière de naturel; c'est le sang qui parle; ce ne sont des auteurs qui se copient, ce sont des parents qui se reconnaissent et se retrouvent."

10. Again the general approach may be paralleled in Sellar, *Virgil*, 300: "Actors and action did not spring out of the spontaneous movement of the imagination, but were chosen by a refined calculation to fulfil the end which Virgil had in view." Donatus' report of Virgil's working methods has perhaps been the incentive for a recurrent critical desire to enter the "workshop" of the poet: Ste-Beuve, *Etude*, 314–15: "Virgile est un poète que nous mesurons; . . . on ne mesure pas Homère. J'appelle *mesurer*, faire la part exacte de l'homme, du talent individuel, du temps, des sources où l'auteur a puisé; démêler et savoir ce qui était dans l'air lors de la création nouvelle, et ce qui a précédé; voir clair alentour . . . pour peu qu'on y veuille regarder, on le voit en quelque sort lui-même à l'œuvre, comme le pasteur Aristée ou mieux encore Huber, à travers la ruche transparente, pouvait voir travailler ses abeilles." P. Jahn, a Virgilian "analyst" who reviewed *VET* hostilely, wrote a series of articles entitled "Aus Vergils Dichterwerkstätte," but with a very different conception of the kind of "craftsmanship" involved.

of *VET*, of individual parts of the poem, at pp. 121–22 H. talks us through the issues confronting Virgil once he had made the (in itself inevitable) decision to include a set of games in his epic:

Obviously, it had to be Aeneas who held the games. But this still left the question, in whose honour they were to be performed; and again, where should they occur in the work, at what time and at what place; finally they had to be fitted into the action so that, in spite of the fact that they would have to form an episode within the narrative, they would still appear to be an integral part of it and not a piece of decoration arbitrarily stuck on to it afterwards. We can reconstruct with some confidence the considerations that must have led Virgil to the solution of these problems that we find in the poem as we read it today.

In his 1906 lecture “Die gegenwärtigen Aufgaben” H. gives a fuller account of his methodology than in the very brief “Vorwort” to *VET*, defining “Technik” as (pp. 168–69):

... alle künstlerische Arbeit ... , die sich auf die Gestaltung des überlieferten oder tatsächlich vorliegenden oder von der Einbildungskraft konzipierten Stoffes richtet: also dasjenige Studium der Produktion, daß, ihren schematisch-normalen Verlauf angenommen, zwischen der Konzeption der Aneignung des Stoffes und der sprachlichen Formulierung mitten inne liegt.

This concentration on the intentional work of the artist is hardly fashionable these days, yet it is important to note that H. does not mean by it anything like the “biographical” approach; it is the “artistic” (*künstlerisch*) intention, not the spiritual or metaphysical yearnings of the poet that find expression. This is the poet as craftsman, consciously solving problems.¹¹ In the 1906 lecture H. gives his fullest account of what is required of the literary historian when discussing the particular case of the study of Latin oratory (p. 170; my emphases):

Auch hier gilt es, bei jeder einzelnen Rede vor allem sich das *Problem* klarzumachen, vor dem der Redner stand, also so *anschaulich* wie möglich sich *die Situation zu vergegenwärtigen*, in der er sprach, die Personen, die in Frage kamen, den *Zweck* der zu erreichen war, die *Schwierigkeiten* die sich aus dem allem zusammengekommen ergaben, die *Mittel* die sich zu ihrer Überwindung darboten und unter denen zu wählen war: gleichsam *nachschaffend* hat man dann im Geiste die Arbeit des Redners zu wiederholen, deren Resultat uns vorliegt.¹²

11. For an interesting parallel in the elaboration of a methodology of “historical explanation” by a modern art-historian writing in full awareness of twentieth-century debates about literary and artistic “intention” see Michael Baxandall, *Patterns of Intention* (New Haven and London, 1985), 14–15: “The maker of a picture or other historical artefact is a man addressing a problem of which his product is a finished and concrete solution. To understand it we try to reconstruct both the specific problem it was designed to solve and the specific circumstances out of which he was addressing it.” Baxandall’s use of his method of “inferential criticism” to construct an iconographically minimalist explanation of Piero della Francesca’s *Baptism of Christ* (121–31), in opposition to the profound symbolisms discerned in the painting by the school of “high iconography,” suggests a thought-provoking contrast between H.’s often simple “solutions” and the complexities of more recent Virgil criticism. But it is not clear that Occam’s Razor is the best instrument for the analysis of a complex painting (or literary text).

12. This task of re-creating the experience of the author may also owe something to Dilthey’s historicist tenet that different ages and individuals can only be understood through an imaginative re-creation of their specific points of view. For the influence on Klingner (H.’s successor at Leipzig) and Auerbach of a Diltheyan *Geistesgeschichte* and the idea that the historian’s job is to *nacherleben* (cf. H.’s *nachschaffen*) the *Erlebnis*

While this address to the “artistic intention” of the poet of the *Aeneid* was conditioned by the desire to confront fashions prevailing in contemporary German scholarship, H.’s “revolution” has informed the whole of twentieth-century Virgil criticism; we Virgilians are all “unitarians” nowadays, in the sense that we read the *Aeneid* as the product of an artistic mastermind. But in other ways H.’s Virgil has dated, for while few would now dispute the competence of the poet at the level of compositional and narrative technique, the history of twentieth-century Virgilian criticism, at least outside Germany, has largely been that of the rediscovery in the *Aeneid* of contradiction, disharmony, incoherence even.¹³ In the clear light of H.’s powerful analyses the *Aeneid* is stripped of mystery and ambiguity. No Celtic twilight here. Where inconsistencies are seen, H. ascribes them either to Virgil’s working methods (composition by individual book, leading to lack of consistency between the several books: H. does in fact make a major contribution to *Entstehungsanalyse*, particularly in his account of Book 3), or to the impossibility of finding a complete “solution” to the particular artistic problem.¹⁴ But in a manner analogous to some modern interpretations of Homer, inconsistencies in the Virgilian text are these days approached by many critics not as keys to the historical development of the text, but as “gaps” or “indeterminacies,” privileged sites from which to enter the profounder workings of the text, through a kind of resurrection of the medieval use of the *signum absurditatis* as trigger to allegorical interpretation.¹⁵

The distance between H.’s unproblematical Virgil and contemporary fashions can be measured through a sample of some key issues:

1. The character of Aeneas (pp. 223–27). No doubt as a reaction to nineteenth-century denigration of Virgil’s hero, H. is concerned from the first chapter to show how the narrative is manipulated to make it easier for the patriotic Roman reader to sympathize with Aeneas’ actions; this advocacy of the hero is crystallized in H.’s influential theory of a consistent character development towards a philosophical perfection, on the model of the Stoic *proficiens*. The excitement of this “discovery” at this point undoubtedly blinds H. to the violence of Aeneas’ emotionality in the later books of the *Aeneid*, an emotionality to which however he does full justice only a few pages later (p. 232) in a discussion of “Emotions.”¹⁶

2. H. finds no problem in answering the question of whether Aeneas is in love with Dido or not (p. 98): “if a hero like Aeneas can forget his divine mission for the sake

of the author, as expressed in the text, see G. B. Conte “Uno studioso tedesco di letteratura latina: Friedrich Klingner,” *Critica Storica* 5 (1966): 481–503, at 484.

13. For a powerful analysis of some of the sources and manifestations of the twentieth-century’s obsession with ambiguity in Virgil see Charles Martindale, “Descent into Hell. Reading Ambiguity, or Virgil and the Critics,” *PVS* 21 (1993): 111–50.

14. For example, p. 101 on the withholding at 4.65–66 of the result of Dido’s sacrifices, and on the vexed interpretation of 4.65 *heu uatum ignarae mentes*, a passage seized upon by modern critics trained in the school of ambiguity: see J. J. O’Hara, “Dido as ‘interpreting character’ in *Aeneid* 4.56–66,” *Arethusa* 26.1 (1993): 109–12.

15. Cf. J. J. O’Hara, “Review of J. Masters, *Poetry and Civil War in Lucan’s Bellum Civile*,” *CJ* 89 (1993): 84, n. 2, for some consideration of modern uses of inconsistency.

16. He is not too excited to stop and ask the literary-historical question of parallels and sources for this conception of character, finding, at p. 274, n. 23, nothing closer to home than Athanasius’ *Life of St. Anthony*. This literary-historical question has not been pursued by later adherents of the theory. For another example of H.’s literary-historical scholarship, cf. the frequent appeal to the Hellenistic criticism of Homer reflected in the scholia (e.g., p. 139, n. 115; p. 214, n. 20; p. 283, n. 89). R. R. Schlunk’s influential *The Homeric Scholia and the “Aeneid”* (Ann Arbor, 1974) is merely an extended exemplification of what H. already knew very well.

of a woman, even for a short time, how overwhelming his passion must be!" Compositional reasons suffice to account for the poet's reluctance to give explicit expression to Aeneas' feelings (p. 109, n. 12): the "fear of dwelling on the weakness of his hero" (i.e., a sense of heroic decorum, an important interpretative principle for H.), combined with the need to keep Dido in the foreground in order to preserve the "unity of the narrative." Many readers will sense, here as elsewhere, that a concentration on technical solutions slips into a superficial formalism.¹⁷

3. One of the most telling contrasts between then and now, "Heinze und Jetzt," is that between the hypertrophic obsession of modern critics with the death of Turnus and the very few words devoted to the last scene by H. At p. 180 the fact that, unlike the Homeric Hector, Turnus is not mortally wounded when he delivers his last speech is accounted for in terms of a striving "for dramatic tensions to the very end of the poem: there is one more glimmer of hope for Turnus as Aeneas considers the possibility of sparing his life." This formalist solution to the problem of closure is found again at p. 258 in a discussion of the principle of intensification, which makes it impossible that anything should follow the peak of tension at the end of 12.¹⁸

4. For H. action on the divine, as well as the human, plane is governed by a rational intelligibility. The problem of Virgil's inclusion of a version of the Homeric psychostasia, when "the total scheme makes it impossible for Aeneas to fall now to . . . death" (p. 278, n. 41) is solved once more with reference to the heightening of "excitement and tension." And at p. 278, n. 43 the problem of the inconsistency between what Jupiter says about the war in Italy at 10.8 and 1.263, is explained as simply the result of the difficulty in finding solutions to all the narrative problems.¹⁹

5. H.'s sharp-witted analysis of speeches and rhetoric in the *Aeneid* (pp. 314–32) leads him to a clear formulation of the relative absence of conversation, and of the remarkably "atomistic" world of men in the poem, so that "Virgil's characters almost all stand alone." But a perhaps excessive concentration on narrative economy denies him any glimpse of the kind of existential interpretation of the isolation and loneliness of the Virgilian individual that typifies much recent criticism.²⁰

Undoubtedly the kinds of explanation that H. arrives at are partly determined by the self-conscious modesty of the goal that he sets himself in writing a book on Virgil's epic *technique*.²¹ In the 1906 lecture technique is but the second of H.'s three main "tasks" for the literary historian, after "Stilgeschichte,"²² and before the study of the "Anfang und Ende der Kunst . . . nach Goethe, der innere Gehalt des

17. H.'s blindness to what modern readers often experience as a Virgilian discomfort in the portrayal of women (either repressed or Maenadic) is also seen in his breezy treatment (p. 362) of the facelessness of Lavinia; by contrast the sense of a problem wrings a contorted chapter on Lavinia from Francis Cairns, *Virgil's Augustan Epic* (Cambridge, 1989), chap. 5.

18. At p. 352 the presence of the younger Marcellus at the end of the Parade of Heroes is similarly glossed over in a discussion of the compositional unity of the episode.

19. For the modern fashion cf. e.g., R. O. A. M. Lyne, *Further Voices in Virgil's "Aeneid"* (Oxford, 1987), 88–90.

20. E.g., D. C. Feeney "The Taciturnity of Aeneas," *CQ* 33 (1983): 204–19 (acknowledging H.'s observations at 211).

21. Brooks Otis, *Virgil. A Study in Civilized Poetry* (Oxford, 1964), 414, is less than just in saying that H. "failed to see what Virgil's *technique* really meant and accomplished, viz. that it was part of a new narrative style and of a 'symbol structure.'" Self-denying limitation, rather than failure, is a fairer assessment.

22. In the preface to *VET* H. deliberately excludes from his project the language and meter of the *Aeneid* (p. vii); the result is that the book is a very powerful answer to Coleridge's sneer that "if you take from Virgil his diction and his metre, what do you leave him?"

bearbeiteten Gegenstandes," by which H. understands a comprehensive notion of the personality of the author, "seine Weltanschauung und geistige Persönlichkeit, sein Wollen, Denken und Empfinden," but always in the context of the contemporary environment of the poet. Ultimately literary-historical inquiry is coterminous with cultural history. In the course of *VET* H. has many sharp things to say about the historical and cultural context of the *Aeneid*, but the search for these kinds of meaning is not at the center of the book that he in fact chose to write (despite—or perhaps because of—the fact that an examination of the Roman and Augustan relevance of the *Aeneid* is central to the criticism of nineteenth-century partisans of Virgil such as Nettleship, Sellar, and Ste-Beuve).²³ Where he does touch on these issues, H. is clear that his *Aeneid* is a thoroughly and self-evidently adequate vehicle for the ideals of Augustan Rome, but the self-imposed exclusion of a lengthy treatment of the topic means that *VET* is marginal in the history of what was to become formulated as the problem of the "two voices" of the *Aeneid*.²⁴ The predominantly German school of "optimistic" Virgil criticism owes much to *VET*, but H.'s nuts-and-bolts approach to the poet's craft sets it apart from the very German obsession with history, metaphysics, and symbolism in the criticism of Klingner and Pöschl (recuperating Virgil for the German romantic idealism that had originally spat him out).²⁵

Yet the abundance of H.'s critical intelligence spills over the limits of an analysis of "technique" to hint at areas that were to become central in later work. Similes are discussed only in a footnote (p. 215, n. 25) that seeks to show the greater richness of Virgilian over Homeric similes in respect of psychological content; H.'s insight that a simile may embody the point of view of an actor within the text distantly foreshadows later studies of narrative "focalization" (and is a special case of the "subjectivity" that H. identifies as a central quality of Virgil's narrative manner at pp. 295–97). The statement (*ibid.*) that "it can often be demonstrated that the context of a simile contains references to the simile itself" is pushing at a door that was much later to open on David West's analysis of the Virgilian "multiple-correspondence simile."²⁶ In a manner prefiguring Pöschl's symbolic approach H. speaks at p. 126 of Virgil's "giving an inner meaning to the action," a sign of the difference between "the later, more reflective poet, and the naïve nature of his Homeric model" (by "inner meaning" here is meant the presence of the universal in the particular). At this point (discussing the ship-race) H. is however at pains to deny that Virgil intended to "create an allegory," as something *conscious*. Seeds of what was to come are visible in occasional statements such as the account of Turnus' failed stone throw (p. 167):

23. Cf. Ste-Beuve's (*Etude*, 194) striking image: "Et, de même qu'au moyen âge on dit que les manuscrits précieux étaient attachés par une chaîne aux murs du couvent ou de la cathédrale auxquels ils appartenaient, de même le poème de l'*Énéide* peut se figurer à nous comme à jamais attaché et fixé par une chaîne d'or, et scellé au marbre du Capitole: il devient une partie du monument." H.'s marginalization of these issues in *VET* is in some contrast with his later studies in Roman *Wertbegriffe*.

24. H. receives barely a mention in W. R. Johnson's survey of the "European" and "Harvard" schools of criticism, in *Darkness Visible: A Study of Vergil's "Aeneid"* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1976), 8–16. For a survey, with different biases, of the two approaches see also Antonie Wlosok, "Vergil in der neuen Forschung," *Gymnasium* 80 (1973): 129–51; for general surveys of twentieth-century Virgilian studies see Werner Suerbaum, *Vergils Aeneis. Beiträge zu ihrer Rezeption in Gegenwart und Geschichte* (Bamberg, 1981); Franco Serpa, *Il punto su: Virgilio* (Bari, 1987), 3–93; S. J. Harrison, *Oxford Readings in Vergil's "Aeneid"* (Oxford, 1990), 1–20.

25. Friedrich Klingner, *Römische Geisteswelt*⁴ (Munich, 1961), 244, pays due homage to H., but claims that "technique" does not take us to the essence of a work of art.

26. "Multiple-Correspondence Similes in the Aeneid," *JRS* 59 (1969): 40–49.

"A striking symbol of Turnus' fate: he has set himself a task which was too great for him, despite his enormous strength." And at pp. 293–95 H. develops an ancient insight into Virgil's symbolical narrative by correcting and extending Asinius Pollio's statement that Virgil's dawn descriptions are always phrased to reflect the narrative situation.

In one area H. is a thoroughgoing allegorist, in his treatment of Virgil's gods (for an explicit statement see p. 242), and this flows from H.'s inflexible conviction that Virgil used the epic divine machinery to present a deeply held belief in a Stoic *theologia physica* (235–50). H.'s parallels from the Stoics, in particular Seneca, are extremely to the point, as also in the discussion of Stoic elements in the character of Aeneas; but, as with the character of Aeneas, H. is overly schematic in forcing the poetic text on to the philosophical grid. Denis Feeney has argued persuasively that such conceptual schemata are themselves best understood as part of the poetic texture of the *Aeneid*, rather than transcendental signifieds that allow us to make final sense of the poem.²⁷ H.'s treatment of the gods and the character of Aeneas are two of the areas where his critical judgment has least well stood the test of time. In both cases H. in effect revives older allegorical readings of the poem, but with the difference that the allegory is derived from conceptual systems contemporary with the poet, rather than anachronistically from neo-Platonic or Christian ideas. But in a less extreme form H.'s exploitation of the philosophical background has been of enduring value.²⁸ The revival in a properly scholarly form of an older tradition of philosophical allegoresis of the *Aeneid* has been influential on more recent studies,²⁹ which have reached back to H.'s understanding of the importance of the ancient allegorical traditions, after the digression of Pöschl's foray into an idealist symbolism (resulting in a pernicious undervaluation of "allegory"). Furthermore H.'s argument that divine interventions in the *Aeneid* are often to be understood allegorically of psychological processes has been taken up, in modified forms, in the varying assessments by R. O. A. M. Lyne and Gordon Williams of the extent to which the scenes of divine action in the *Aeneid* may be read as figurative narratives of purely psychological events.³⁰

H.'s concentration on compositional technique and psychological effects, at the expense of spiritual, cultural, and political "meaning," is inseparable from his use of Aristotle's *Poetics* as a guide to the analysis of Virgil's epic technique.³¹ The Aristotelian

27. *The Gods in Epic* (Oxford, 1991), 154–55.

28. H.'s sensitivity to the importance of philosophical ideas in the poem doubtless reflects his 1897 commentary on Lucretius 3 (discussed by Perutelli, "Genesi e significato"). H. recognizes the importance of Lucretius as a model for Virgil's conception of his poem and of the poet (p. 374).

29. E.g., P. R. Hardie, *Virgil's "Aeneid": Cosmos and Imperium* (Oxford, 1986), passim; Feeney, *Gods in Epic*; Joseph Farrell, *Virgil's "Georgics" and the Traditions of Ancient Epic* (Oxford, 1991), 257–72.

30. Lyne, *Further Voices*, 66–71; Gordon Williams, *Technique and Ideas in the "Aeneid"* (New Haven and London, 1983), chap. 2.

31. In placing Aristotle at the center of his criticism H. is the continuator of a Renaissance and neo-classical tradition; sixteenth-century arguments about the form of epic and romance had used the *Poetics* to emphasize the requirements of unity of action and heroic decorum, as well as verisimilitude (see B. Weinberg, *A History of Literary Criticism in the Italian Renaissance* [Chicago, 1961], esp. 954–1073). Unsurprisingly, even at that time there was a temptation to stray beyond Aristotle's brief statements on epic in the *Poetics*, and to appropriate for epic some of the features specific to Aristotle's discussion of tragedy: Tasso, for example, claimed to have followed Aristotle in the rewritten *Gerusalemme liberata*, even to the extent of aiming at a purgation of the passions (Weinberg, *History of Literary Criticism*, 1054). On the importance of tragedy for Milton's major epic see J. M. Steadman, *Epic and Tragic Structure in "Paradise Lost"* (Chicago, 1976), esp. chap. 3.

model is ideal for the purpose of discountenancing the nitpicking *Quellenforscher's* impugment of the unity of the *Aeneid*; by contrast H. stresses Virgil's condensation and selection of the mass of sources (pp. 142–45).³² The analysis of the "Aristotelian" unity of the *Aeneid* laid the foundation for the neoclassical analyses of the formal perfection of Virgil's poems by critics such as Klingner,³³ and also for the spate of structural analyses of the *Aeneid* (seeds of the latter are sown on pp. 360–61, 363–64).³⁴

But H. pushes the Aristotelian model beyond the supra-generic similarities between epic and tragedy outlined in the *Poetics* (sufficient for H.'s immediate polemic purposes), to the more radical assertion that Virgil transfers to epic some of the techniques specific to drama, as presented in the *Poetics* (cf. esp. pp. 348, 372), so claiming for Virgil the greater sophistication of the Attic tragedians as opposed to the naive artistry of Homer (cf. p. 130).³⁵ As important as the formal structures of Attic tragedy are its emotional effects, pity and fear. This emphasis on emotional effect is one way of outflanking the prejudice that, compared with Homer, Virgil is an uninspired and uninspiring poet. The claim for a particularly *tragic* type of emotionality may also counter the excesses of a nineteenth-century image of a sentimental and lachrymose Virgil: for example, discussing the lament for Pallas, H. attacks (p. 169) "cheap criticisms of the poet for his sentimentality [*Rührseligkeit*]." Or p. 389, n. 22: "Anyone who is surprised that there is so much weeping in Virgil, and thinks that it proves a particular melancholy [*Weichmütigkeit*] on the part of the poet should read some of Cicero's speeches or some books of Livy: in this respect we should not judge a Roman by our own conventions."³⁶ But H.'s stress on the tragic affiliations of the *Aeneid* leads in a very different direction from what has come to be a prevailing twentieth-century "tragic" reading, robustly headed off in statements such as (p. 372): "the poet knows the final purposes served by the fall of Troy and the wanderings of Aeneas: . . . and it is just this glimpse of the future which prevents our justified pity from sinking to the agony of one condemned to watch the unnecessary and purposeless suffering of his fellow men."³⁷ And in the very final section of the book, a remarkably rich and

32. Ste-Beuve had also been struck by the pervading "concision et unité" in the composition of the *Aeneid*, but saw in them "les principales qualités romaines" (*Etude*, p. 160).

33. On whom see Conte, "Friedrich Klingner," and Antonio La Penna, "Neumanesimo, neoclassicismo, neostetismo in recenti interpretazioni tedesche di Virgilio," *Maia* 17 (1965): 340–65. Conte stresses the importance of the art-historical criticism of Heinrich Wölfflin for Klingner's conception of the formal classicism of Virgil; Perutelli, "Genesi e significato," points out that H. claimed to have learnt more from Wölfflin's *Die klassische Kunst* than from hosts of philological works (Richard Heinze, *Die augusteische Kultur* [Leipzig, 1930], 102). Ste-Beuve (*Etude*, 5) already makes the comparison with classical works of art (p. 102): like Raphael Virgil has "unité de ton et de couleur, de l'harmonie et de la convenance des parties entre elles, de la proportion, de ce goût soutenu . . . une suprême délicatesse."

34. For a useful survey of the history of this kind of structural analysis see R. Lesueur, *L'Énéide de Virgile. Étude sur la composition rythmique d'une épopée* (Toulouse, n.d.), 23–29; p. 25, n. 9, on H.

35. Karl Büchner, *RE* 8 A (1955): 1455, describes the *Aeneid* in Heinzeian terms as "eine neue Form des Epos, die es bis dahin nicht gab, das dramatische Epos."

36. The pity and tears of the *Aeneid* had become something of a cliché by the late nineteenth century, notably in Ste-Beuve, *Etude*, 100: "Virgile, comme son héros, a la pitié et la pitié, parfois une teinte de tristesse, de mélancolie presque"; 266: "*Sunt lacrimae rerum*, c'est le mot cher à tout homme de sentiment parmi les modernes, et on le cite sans cesse et on s'en l'applique volontiers." On the English tradition see R. D. Williams, "Changing Attitudes to Virgil. A Study in the History of Taste from Dryden to Tennyson" in *Virgil*, ed. D. R. Dudley (London, 1969), 119–38, at 134–35. I do not know what specific targets H. has in his sights.

37. Even within the nineteenth-century context H.'s "optimism" is striking: the "Harvard" school is adumbrated in reflections such as that by Ste-Beuve, *Etude*, 186–87: "La vue de Virgile est plus humaine et toute vraie [compared with Lucan's Stoic "théorie du vaincu"]; c'est l'idée du triomphe toujours incomplet,

compressed consideration of the sublime as the overriding artistic goal of the poem (pp. 377–84; 383: “Virgil’s highest aim was to arouse a sense of the sublime in his audience; this defines and limits every other aspect of the poem”), H. draws together formal, psychological, and historical functions in a last, hectic, burst of integration and unification. The Virgilian *pathos* is subordinated to a goal that is also served by the nationalistic spirit of the *Aeneid*, as the sublime greatness of Rome and its history merges into the sublime effects of the *pathos* aroused by the spectacle of heroic suffering. Many, perhaps most, late twentieth-century readers will feel that H.’s heroics of criticism have here over-reached themselves, and that the center will not hold.³⁸

The yield of H.’s Aristotelian “tragic” model is substantial and enduring;³⁹ fundamental too is H.’s exploration of the effects of the Virgilian emotionality on the narrative technique of the *Aeneid*, conducted above all in Part II, chapter 3 “Presentation” (*Darstellung*), an impressively penetrating and technical analysis of the narrative mechanics of the *Aeneid*, guided by the principles of unity, continuity, and emotional vividness. The careful distinction between the expression of the narrator’s own emotions and the coloring of the narrative with the emotions of the actors (p. 295) lies directly behind Brooks Otis’ analysis of the roles of “sympathy” and “empathy” in Virgil’s narrative.⁴⁰

H. leaves open the historical question of the sources of this “dramatic epic.” As in “Ovids elegische Erzählung,” H. is keenly aware of the importance of the Hellenistic material, but also of its desperately fragmentary state (cf. pp. 372–73). His own attempts to sketch out a history are further hampered by his consistent devaluation of Apollonius’ *Argonautica*, cited chiefly to show how an epic should not be written (e.g., p. 436). On p. vii H. points to the lack of an “adequate study of the technique of pre-Virgilian prose or verse narrative,” and to the obscurity of “the post-Aristotelian theory of narrative art.” In 1994 these are still great *lacunae* in Virgilian scholarship; advances in the state of our knowledge of Hellenistic literature and poetics might fruitfully be applied to a fresh attempt to place Virgilian narrative technique within the

inachevé et mêlé d’ombre: ce sont les misères mêmes de la victoire, les larmes d’Énée comme de Paul-Émile, la triste ressemblance et la presque égalité des vainqueurs et des vaincus. Virgile parlait à un peuple rassasié des guerres civiles, et en général des guerres. Il a au plus haut degré le sentiment des vicissitudes humaines”; or Sellar, *Virgil*, 321: “[in *Aeneid* 4] the tragic nature of the situation arises from the clashing between natural feeling and the great considerations of State by which the divine actors in the drama were influenced.”

38. Another aspect of this final failure to contain and delimit is the fact that the discussion of the sublime also reveals H.’s obsession with form and limit: the criticism of exaggerations at p. 381 obscures the importance of the *limitless* in the conception of the sublime, and the importance of excess in epic, and in the *Aeneid* in particular.

39. More narrowly it has spawned a number of detailed studies, particularly by German scholars, of the “Aristotelian” tragic qualities of the *Aeneid*, e.g., Michael von Albrecht, “Zur Tragik von Vergils Turnusgestalt: Aristotelisches in der Schlusszene der Aeneis,” in *Silvae: Festschrift für Ernst Zinn zum 60. Geburtstag*, ed. Michael von Albrecht and Eberhard Heck (Tübingen, 1970), 1–5; Antonie Wlosok, “Vergils Didotragödie. Ein Beitrag zum Problem des Tragischen in der Aeneis,” in *Studien zum antiken Epos*, ed. Herwig Gorgemanns and E. A. Schmidt (Meisenheim am Glan, 1976), 228–50.

40. Otis, *Civilized Poetry*, 48: “Heinze has suggested the answer in saying that Virgil puts himself in the place of his characters and narrates through them.” On the place of Heinze in the history of the narratological study of “point of view” and “focalization” in Virgil see Marzia Bonfanti, *Punto di vista e mode della narrazione nell’Eneide* (Pisa, 1985), p. 16, n. 5 and the discussion (with further bibliography) by D. P. Fowler, “Deviant Focalization in Virgil’s *Aeneid*,” *PCPS*, n.s. 36 (1990): 54–58.

Hellenistic tradition, a task most inadequately performed by Brooks Otis, and scarcely addressed by Wendell Clausen.⁴¹

For all its immediacy and readability *VET* is also a period piece, and the English translators have wisely made no attempt to update or supplement the text of the 1915 edition. H.'s footnotes, often substantial developments and illustrations of the arguments of the main text, have regrettably become chapter-end notes. The translation reads well enough, though with occasional gaucheries; in only two places did I detect the translators in serious error: at p. 253 "the abduction of Pandarus by Athena" adds an interesting variant to the *Iliad* (*Verführung* here means "suborning"); p. 385, n. 3 *ausschliesslich* means "in a manner exclusive of each other" not "exceptionally."

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41. Otis, *Civilized Poetry: Wendell Clausen, Virgil's "Aeneid" and the Tradition of Hellenistic Poetry* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1987). Our understanding of Apollonius Rhodius' narrative art and his relation to Aristotelian and Callimachean poetics has certainly made some progress since H.'s day: see R. L. Hunter, *Apollonius of Rhodes. "Argonautica" Book III* (Cambridge, 1989), 32–38; *ibid.*, 18–19 on Apollonius' debt to tragedy, another area that might help in supplementing H.'s results. Virgil has not benefitted from the same intensive scholarly interest in Aristotelian and post-Aristotelian poetics that has done so much to further understanding of Horace (see recently Kirk Freudenburg, *The Walking Muse: Horace on the Theory of Satire* [Princeton, 1993]).