

‘Maffeo Vegio’s Virgils: Refiguring Virgil’s poetry in
fifteenth- and sixteenth-century Italy, Scotland and wider
Europe’

PhD Thesis,

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Abstract

This thesis analyses the varied allusive employments of Virgil's poetry in the literary *corpus* of the Italian humanist Maffeo Vegio (1407 – 1458). Across his lifetime, Vegio's uses of Virgil ranged from the stylistic to the moralistic, and the antiquarian to the devotional, with his attitudes in these usages spanning the faithful to the irreverent. Genre, a hitherto-overlooked factor, is consistently seen to determine this diversity of response. The study is structured chronologically, grouping Vegio's Virgil-influenced works by the periods in Vegio's life in which they were written. It therefore adopts a comparative methodology to objects and images as well as to texts: by studying the works of Vegio's contemporaries in the locales and networks within which he worked at specific moments in his life, more historically contextualised suggestions can be made as to how his individual works can be interpreted. Again, this approach demonstrates the vitality of genre in Vegio's Virgilian allusions, yet it also facilitates a greater re-situation of Vegio within his cultural moment, in which he was praised above all for his ability to imitate Virgilian style. This perception survived into the following century, as his works were printed, commented-upon, illustrated and translated across Europe. A survey of this posthumous reception follows the analyses of Vegio's works themselves, showing how Vegio's responses to Virgil were by turns preserved and adapted by subsequent thinkers. The final chapter then applies the forensic comparative-textual methodology advocated by the entire study to one particular artefact of this Vegian reception, Gavin Douglas' 1513 Scots translation of Vegio's *Supplementum*, revealing new influences, valences, interpretations and contexts for that work. Altogether, this study reclaims Vegio's central place in the extraordinarily varied Renaissance European reception of Virgil, while advancing studies of literary theories, practices and networks, cultural history, classical reception, and approaches to interdisciplinary historical enquiry.

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Given the highly historicist nature of this project, it could not have been completed without the indulgence (especially pre-COVID) of libraries and archives, the foremost of which include the Biblioteca Nazionale in Florence, the Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana in the Vatican City, the British Library in London, the University Library of Cambridge, Oxford's Bodleian Library, and the UEA Library. The staff in all of these were always helpful and deserve appropriate thanks. An equally vital institution was the Accademia Vivarium Novum just outside Rome: the tutors I met and the friends I made there taught me more about Latin language and literature than I will ever be able to utilise in a lifetime, and introduced me to much which I will never again be able to live without. A fraction of this knowledge has made it into the present thesis, but even that fraction has improved it beyond measure. The opportunity, following this experience, to teach Latin at UEA as part of a course funded by the AHRC, via CHASE, has been invaluable for consolidating my own understanding of the language, and some of my teaching experience has doubtless found its way into nuances of my translations. Among my students (at UEA and elsewhere), Dr Rebekah Compton, Mr John Raspin and Miss Jessica Honey deserve mention and thanks for pushing me to consider more diverse texts, and find ways of explaining complex grammatical forms, than I would otherwise have done by only working independently on my own research. CHASE are also ultimately responsible, in financial terms, for my ability to conduct this research at all, so I cannot sufficiently express my gratitude to them for granting me a full studentship and stipend which have gone on to provide me with opportunities I could never have expected when I began this project three years ago.

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Finally, my family have always supported me, at times beyond their means and beyond my deserts. This thesis, like much else in my life, is quietly dedicated to them in respectful acknowledgement of how a great many things might have been so very different.

Brett Mottram,

Norwich, 2021

Introduction to the Study

I. 'Alter Maro': The Importance of Maffeo Vegio

This study examines how the most important poet of Latin antiquity was received by a remarkable writer of the early *quattrocento*. The extensive influence of that ancient poet, Virgil, on the culture of the early Renaissance and upon the cultural worlds of later antiquity and the middle ages, is already comprehensively acknowledged. Such is the extent of this appreciation that it has even been argued that a familiarity with Virgil's works is a prerequisite for any serious study of these periods.¹ The manifold impacts this Virgilian influence had on the works of this *quattrocento* inheritor and imitator Maffeo Vegio, however, have not yet received the full treatment they deserve. This is in spite of their interest to studies of Neo-Latin, Italian, Classics, English, Comparative Literature, and the Histories of Art, Ideas, Material Texts, Literary Networks, Intellectual Communities and the Church, not to mention the Renaissance reception of classical and medieval culture, and the consequent historiographical debate over what exactly distinguished the culture of Vegio's time from the middle ages.² Across almost all his writings, from his classicising, poetic juvenilia to the study of Christian

¹ T.S. Eliot's description of Virgil's *Aeneid* as 'the classic of all Europe' reflected the fundamental centrality of the work to the development of European cultural history, especially in the medieval and Renaissance periods, however defined. Almost continuously from the fourth century to Vegio's fifteenth – and even beyond to the seventeenth – the *Aeneid* was read, revered, adapted, allegorised, imitated, contested, supplemented, commented upon, alluded to, and used as a guide to virtue and a model for eloquence. The medieval importance of Virgil has been demonstrated in the classic studies of Domenico Comparetti (*Vergil in the Middle Ages* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1997)) and Christopher Baswell (*Virgil in Medieval England: Figuring the Aeneid from the Twelfth Century to Chaucer* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008)), not to mention the scholarship of Ernst Robert Curtius and Erich Auerbach, who contributed to this discussion while not focusing exclusively on the reception of Virgil. Consideration of the role of Virgil's influence in the development of Renaissance culture has received important new impetus from the recent and wide-ranging scholarship of Craig Kallendorf and David Scott Wilson-Okamura to which we will refer later, as well as a recent collection of essays edited by L.B.T. Houghton and Marco Sgarbi (*Virgil and Renaissance Culture* (Arizona, USA: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2018)). In addition to these responses to what we now consider to be Virgil's works, these centuries inherited the *Appendix Vergiliana*, containing playful compositions which we no longer attribute to Virgil, as well as medieval legends and tales which depict him as everything from an omniscient sage to a spirited if easily-fooled (and consequently vengeful) lover. Altogether, the reception of Virgil, especially in this period, is almost unbelievably both varied and important. As Houghton notes on p. 14 of his introduction to *Virgil and Renaissance Culture*,

language, imagery and narratives derived from the works of Rome's foremost literary figure came to permeate so many different aspects of Renaissance life and culture. One result of this is that the study of any one of the uses made of the poetry of Virgil during this period offers a valuable point of access to the world of the Renaissance itself. Without Virgil – or rather, the multiple versions of Virgil in circulation at the time – as our guide, it is impossible to trace adequately the contours of the landscape of learning and taste, of artistic and literary imagination, from which emerged so many of the most enduring achievements of western civilization.

² This historiographical debate, though it may be settling down, still goes on: it would be encouraging to see more scholars follow Christopher S. Celenza's call to treat the long fifteenth century as a subject of interest in its own terms rather than assessing the extent to which it exhibited 'medieval' or 'Renaissance' characteristics, but for better or worse this kind of assessment has produced long-standing assumptions about the period which

archaeology which he wrote in his final years, Vegio responded to Virgil intimately, inventively, and in a range of strikingly diverse ways, from the stylistically imitative to the earnestly moralistic. In Vegio's works, Virgil is regarded as, by turns, a master of Latin verse across several genres, a role model for how to pursue a poetic career, and an intellectual and ethical sage. Vegio's literary range therefore enables greater insights into how Virgilian fragments were interpreted and employed in different genres in the *quattrocento*, from the epyllion to the epigram to the educational treatise, and also into how these genres were theorised and practised. Additionally, his works illustrate several distinct ways in which Virgil himself was viewed and treated at this time, to the extent that we might justifiably speak not of Vegio's 'Virgil' but of his 'Virgils'. Furthermore, given the impact of Virgil's poetry on every artistic medium in this period, Vegio's adaptations and reapplications of these antique verses enhance our understanding of other aspects of Renaissance culture. This can be seen especially clearly when Vegio's allusive practices and interpretations are compared with those found in analogous visual and material, as well as textual, sources produced by his contemporaries and associates. Such an interdisciplinary approach, grounded in comparative-textual study of Vegio's allusions to Virgil while remaining ever conscious of chronological situation and contemporary cultural productions, provides more reliable insights into Vegio's world, as well as into the texts he composed while living in it. Many of these texts have so far been imperfectly interpreted due to a lack of detailed, sustained attention to his entire body of work. This study, consequently, uses Vegio's Virgilian allusions as a means of enriching understandings of this complete *corpus*, thereby preparing the ground for future studies, or even a literary biography.³ Altogether, this analysis of Vegio's

must still be interrogated. See Celenza's *The Intellectual World of the Italian Renaissance: Language, Philosophy, and the Search for Meaning* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2018).

³ Such a biography would be the first in over a century, since Luigi Raffaele's *Maffeo Vegio: Elenco delle opere, scritti inediti* (Bologna: Ditta Nicola Zanichelli, 1909). More cursory biographies of Vegio exist, though even among these the fullest and best was in 1930, and took the form of an introduction to his *Supplementum* ((Anna Cox Brinton, *Maphaeus Vegius and His Thirteenth Book of the Aeneid* (London: Bristol Classical Press, 2002 reprint of 1930), pp. 5-24). As useful and lively as Brinton's work is, it can now be seen to need certain revisions. For example, her idea that Vegio wrote the more serious *Golden Fleece* in response to Bruni's helpful criticism of his epigrams, which had urged him to write of grander things (p. 22), has since been disproven from the dating of the *Golden Fleece* to 1431 and the epigrams' dedication to Bruni to the late 1430s (even if some of them were composed earlier, as Nicolle Lopomo notes in her 'Maffeo Vegio, Elegiae, Rusticanalia, Disticha ed Epigrammata: edizione critica e commento' (Università Degli Studi di Firenze doctoral thesis, 2012)). The main preceding biography of Vegio, apart from Raffaele's, was Mario Minoia's *La vita di Maffeo Vegio umanista lodigiano* (Lodi: Quirico e Camagni, 1896). These two, which provided the bases of Brinton's brief biographical sketch, in turn were largely syntheses of fragmented earlier material found in Marguerin de la Bigne, *Maxima bibliotheca veterum et antiquorum scriptorum ecclesiasticorum*, vol. XXVI (Lyon: Anisson, 1677), p. 632; G. Tiraboschi, *Storia della letteratura Italiana*, vol. VI, part 2 (Rome:1784); and other sources, as V.J. Horkan notes in *Educational Theories and Principles of Maffeo Vegio* (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1953), p. 1. Horkan also draws (pp. 1-9) on the biographical summary given in the introduction to M.L. Fanning and Anne Stanislaus Sullivan (eds. of books I-III and IV-VI, respectively), *Maphei Vegii Laudensis de educatione liberorum et eorum claris moribus libri sex : A critical text of books I-III [and] of books IV-VI* (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1933 and 1936, respectively), itself based on the earlier sources cited here. Such derivation informs also the brief biographical outlines in Craig Kallendorf, 'Maffeo Vegio,' in *Centuriae Latinae II: Cent une figures humanistes de la Renaissance aux Lumières*, edited by Colette Nativel, *Travaux d'Humanisme et Renaissance* 414 (Geneva, Switzerland: Librairie Droz, 2006), pp. 817-822; G.A. Consonni, 'Intorno alla vita di Maffeo Vegio da Lodi: Notizie inedite,' *Archivio*

lifelong literary employments of Virgil's poetry, arranged chronologically by clusters of works produced during different phases of his life, offers an essential and hitherto incompletely explored case study for the nature of Virgilian reception in the Renaissance, across distinct genres, media, and cultural contexts. Further demonstrating Vegio's significance in this regard, this study examines not only his writings themselves, but also how their responses to Virgil went on to be received and used as influences in their turn after Vegio's death by readers on the Continent and in the British Isles.

Vegio is an especially outstanding case study for Virgilian imitation because his perceived affinities with Virgil were attested in his own lifetime as well as afterwards, as he was praised as a great poet and prose stylist whose works revived the spirit of Virgil's. This was primarily because he wrote a frequently copied and reprinted sequel to Virgil's *Aeneid*, a *Supplementum* or 'Thirteenth Book' to be added to Virgil's twelve. For this and for his general facility for producing writings which contemporaries regarded as accomplished imitations of Virgil, Vegio was hailed as another Virgil, being called 'Alter Maro' and 'Alter Parthenias', and we find such praise applied to him in the mid- to late-fifteenth century by anonymous commentators, as well as earlier in the century by more famous figures closer to Vegio himself such as Francesco Filelfo and Lorenzo Valla.⁴ As we will see, they were not the only ones to celebrate or recommend Vegio's skills: Enea Silvio Piccolomini, among other things a poet himself who eventually achieved eminence as Pope Pius II, included Vegio, in the early days of their friendship, as a character in his poems.⁵ When writing to the King of France Charles VII, he even recommended Vegio as a poet capable of immortalising the great man's deeds. The *Supplementum*, unsurprisingly, is still the work for which Vegio is best known, or even notorious. The poem is the work which most obviously constitutes an artefact of Virgilian reception, and it has certainly attracted, and still attracts, the majority of scholarly attention. An unfortunate consequence of this insistent focus, however, is that attention has been diverted from Vegio's other compositions, which include numerous other poems, as well as treatises, dialogues and even a study of the Christian archaeological remains of Old St. Peter's, all of which allude to Virgil, too. Across all Vegio's works,

storico italiano 5.42 (1908), pp. 377–388; V. Zaccaria, 'Vegio,' in *Dizionario critico della letteratura italiana*, Vol. 4, edited by Vittore Branca (Turin, Italy: Unione Tipografico-Editrice Torinese, 1986), pp. 387–389; A. Gambaro, 'Maffeo Vegio', in *Enciclopedia Italiana* (1937) [access via Treccani, online]; and V. Zabughin, *Vergilio nel Rinascimento Italiano da Dante a Torquato Tasso* (Bologna: Nicola Zanichelli, 1921–23). In short, a comprehensive work is required which both synthesises previous studies fully, and accounts for more recent scholarship and new evidence.

⁴ 'Maro' was Virgil's surname; 'Parthenias' might refer to his burial place in Naples (founded, according to legend, by the nymph Parthenope) or to his moral character ('Parthenia' being Greek for 'virgin'). On the contemporary praises of Vegio, see Brinton, pp. 4–5, 30, 49 (the latter on the British Library Arundel MSS. 82 and 193. Brinton notes that the verses recall the Carmina Virgiliana 'quoted by Bährens in his *Poetae Latini Minores*' (two further examples of which are noted by Raffaele, p. 100). The Filelfo comment is recorded in the 1544 Giunta edition, fol. 533v; for other praise of Vegio's Virgilianism, by Giuseppe Brivio and Antonio da Rho, see Leah Whittington's 'Qui Succederet Operi: Completing the Unfinished in Maffeo Vegio's *Supplementum Aeneidos*', *I Tatti Studies in the Italian Renaissance* 21, no. 2 (Fall 2018), pp. 217–244 (pp. 232–233).

⁵ As we will see in the second, third and fifth chapters, on Vegio's elegies, epigrams and the later reception of his *corpus*, respectively.

therefore, we can see how a writer of the early *quattrocento* was responding to Virgil's poetry in remarkably varied ways, utilising multiple types of allusion, in multiple genres, for multiple audiences. It is therefore surprising that Vegio, in comparison with many of his contemporaries, is still regarded as a minor literary figure.⁶ This investigation into Vegio's engagement with Virgil proves that he is far from a minor figure, while enhancing understanding and awareness of him and his work, and in the process offering a case study which adds necessary details and nuances to the history of Virgilian reception, 'humanism', and the broader *Nachleben* of both the classical and post-classical past in this extraordinary period.⁷ This reception is an especially significant issue, given that Vegio lived in a period, and composed works, which lie between those two conceptual eras 'the medieval period' and 'the Renaissance'.

Many of the significant dates in Vegio's life, however, are easier to pinpoint than such period divisions, even if only by year.⁸ He was born in 1407 in Lodi and was educated there and in nearby Milan before he began his studies at the University of Pavia, where he knew, however briefly, figures including Lorenzo Valla, Antonio Beccadelli and the friar Antonio da Rho. At university, he became more interested in literature and the practice of poetry than in the legal work which was his main subject, and some of his early poems from this time survive and will be discussed below. It was also in Pavia, as a twenty-one-year-old student of the law, that he wrote his famous *Supplementum* (1428) which was swiftly disseminated across Italy. Remaining as a teacher at Pavia, yet attempting to use his developing renown to gain patronage with the powerful, he appealed, often via well-placed friends, to the court of Filippo Maria Visconti in Milan. Eventually, however, having been unsuccessful in gaining a post there, he managed to become part of the entourage and Curia of Pope Eugenius IV as an administrator and drafter of official documents. He joined the Curia in Bologna in

⁶ This perception of Vegio's status may be the result of how his eclectic works fit untidily into different disciplinary boxes, meaning that an attempt to look at them together has not yet been seriously attempted.

⁷ Due to its multiple and conflicting definitions, the term 'humanist' will for the most part be avoided in this study unless it is used as the most general shorthand. As for the term 'extraordinary', it seems justified given that the time in which Vegio lived was one of the most transformative in European and world history. It was the era described by the insightful and lively memoir-like *Commentaries* of Vegio's friend, and Pope-to-be, Pius II. It was the age which saw the rediscovery of some of the most influential classical texts by writers such as Cicero and Lucretius, the rise of classicising Italian dukedoms and courts, the art of Donatello and Filarete, the figure of Cosimo the Elder at the height of his influence, the reestablishment of the Papacy as a power in Rome after the hostilities and divisions of Church councils which had seen the Curia in exile, the beginning of rigorous archaeological study, the idea of the first Vatican library, and unparalleled literary experimentation which saw the revival of the elegy (in the hands of Giovanni Marrasio), the epigram (notoriously from the Sicilian poet Antonio Beccadelli – also known as Panormita, 'the man from Palermo' – and his book *The Hermaphrodite*) and civic history (Leonardo Bruni's *History of the Florentine People*). It also saw the most prominent of the Church councils, that of Florence, which saw the arrival in Italy – and the city of Bruni, Carlo Marsuppini, Poggio Bracciolini and other men at the height of their renown – of Greek luminaries and books which were to transform the intellectual life of Europe, especially yet by no means only in philosophy. Importantly for us, Vegio was at the rockface of all these developments, working alongside the greatest (and even to us, the most impressive and well-known) figures of the day.

⁸ Many biographical details noted here are referenced and discussed later in the thesis, and so for the most part will be footnoted here only if the evidence used or point made do not appear later.

1436 and followed it when it moved to Florence for the Council in 1438. From the period between Pavia and Florence survive Vegio's 'short epics' (hexameter works on Hector's son Astyanax, the tale of Jason and the Golden Fleece, and a religious epic on St Antony Abbot) and some series of elegies and epigrams, the latter of which came to be dedicated to Marsuppini and Bruni. Almost all Vegio's works up to this point were purely classicising: his *Supplementum* (naturally, given that it was a sequel to Virgil's *Aeneid*) used Virgil extensively, especially for affecting, pathos-filled moments, in combination with more contemporary concepts concerning the maintenance of social order and justice. His *Astyanax* and *Golden Fleece* continued exploring these ethical questions through classicising narrative forms, and likewise imported Virgilian moments in order to do so. Even Vegio's *Antoniad*, which took as its subject a Christian saint, presented that saint as an Aeneas-like figure in a religious setting expressed in epic terms. The style of the entire poem, indeed, could be described as that of a modest forerunner of Milton's *Paradise Lost*. Vegio's elegies, written alongside these epyllia, presented prospective patrons as modern analogues of classical heroes, while his epigrams, compiled once he had joined the Curia, alluded to Virgil in less reverential ways. In contrast to the mostly reverent and epic treatment of Virgilian material seen in Vegio's earlier works, these epigrams instead provocatively employed Virgil's verses as sources of material for playful poems which made observations about ancient worthies such as Aeneas which were as ironic, and at times barbed, as those he directed towards his contemporaries. Yet with the Florentine Council concluded, Vegio moved with the Curia to Rome in 1443 as part of the triumphal return of the Papacy to Saint Peter's city, and here his works were mostly concerned with devotion and moral edification. He no longer sang in classicising poetry, and though his Virgilian allusions were still present, they spoke in different tones of voice when set within the dialogues and treatises (dealing with topics such as how to remain steadfast in faith, and how best to educate children) which Vegio composed between writing hymns and religious offices. Virgil here speaks more as a philosopher, or even a preacher, than as a poet. Vegio's official position as a canon of St. Peter's Basilica perhaps meant that it seemed more decorous to write these works than the sorts of pagan verses he had composed in his youth, yet these years might also have seen an increase in his personal piety. His devotion to Saint Augustine and his equally sainted mother Monica, instilled in him during his childhood, developed during this time, and he dedicated a chapel to Monica at the church of Sant'Agostino in Rome. His final work was the study-cum-guidebook of the antique Christian remains of Old St Peter's Basilica. In this work, Virgil is viewed both as a historical source and a historical actor within an Augustinian-influenced view of history as a divinely-directed drama. Vegio's own part in this drama ended shortly afterwards: he died in 1458 and was buried in the chapel he had dedicated to Augustine's mother.

II. *Review of Scholarship and Structure of Study*

Vegio's body of work, while it offers a vast wealth of material for the study of Virgilian reception, is prolific. It is therefore unsurprising that while there have been illuminating studies of aspects of it, other areas remain obscure. To a great extent this is due to the fact that the majority of attention has always been devoted to Vegio's *Supplementum* (and to the translation made of it by Gavin Douglas in 1513). This is unsurprising and not without justification, but it has too often distracted attention from Vegio's other works, and how he used Virgil within those too. In some cases, these other uses of Virgil are more subtle than those found in the *Supplementum* (and this might account for the fact that they have so far been overlooked), yet numerous instances are equally explicit. Furthermore, much revision must be made to the way in which even this *Supplementum* is currently interpreted and understood. Despite earlier granular studies of Vegio's metrical and lexical imitative practices in the work, there has grown over the past few decades something like a dominant critical narrative about Vegio's most famous work which makes rather grander claims about not only that work, but about Vegio's worldview.⁹ One of the arguments of this thesis is that these claims demand to be rethought. The dominant interpretation in question, advanced by Craig Kallendorf but informed also by the earlier ideas of Anna Cox Brinton and Ben J. Hijmans, is that the poem, written with the aim of correcting and resolving the abrupt and morally ambiguous end of Virgil's epic, seeks to do this by praising Aeneas and vilifying Turnus. Attendant on this interpretation is the claim that the poem was written in a cultural context which, while it was capable of reversing the roles and depicting Aeneas as an immoral figure, was incapable of representing either character in an ethically non-binary and non-epideictic fashion.¹⁰ The historically-contextualised study of Vegio's Virgilian allusions enacted by this study will be set in opposition to this view that historical figures were, in modern moral terms, cardboard cutouts. As the recent work of Anne Rogerson has also noted, such a view does not account for Vegio's full text, which offers a wealth of evidence against this consensus. Using more of that same text, together with contemporary sources in other media, this present study seeks to extend Rogerson's claim, and suggest how the poem's employments of Virgilian allusions can be seen as presenting a coherent ethical worldview reflecting that of early *quattrocento* society. Within such a worldview, Aeneas is a just if flawed victor, and Turnus a victim of fate who is both wicked and pitiable.

Turning to a review of scholarship on Vegio's other works, attention to them has been disparate and, from the point of view of Virgilian reception, incomplete. There is limited but sound treatment of Vegio's short epics (treated in the first chapter of this study), most of it assembled alongside

⁹ For both the granular studies and this critical narrative, see the first chapter; the discussion of the *Supplementum* and its critical fate is too complex to be explored any further here, so for ease of reference, the works expressing these views are footnoted there.

¹⁰ For examples of this, see Craig Kallendorf, *The Other Virgil: Pessimistic Readings of the Aeneid in Early Modern Culture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013).

translations of those works into English in the I Tatti edition curated by Michael C.J. Putnam; the other recent work consists of an essay by Emma Buckley on the *Golden Fleece*, which had appeared earlier in a German edition.¹¹ In all these, the occasional Virgilian allusion is noted, but comprehensive and interpretative work is not done in a sustained manner. For the elegies, anti-rustic poems, distichs and epigrams which occupy the second and third chapters of this study, Nicolle Lopomo has only recently produced a fine critical edition noting textual parallels from classical and contemporary authors (more on which later in this introduction); until this point there had only been scattered Italian scholarship looking at them cursorily.¹² Structurally, the categorisations of these shorter verses, all contemporaneous, within extant codices accounts for how their discussion is divided here in this study.¹³ Since redactions in the late 1430s clearly separated the elegies off into their own collection (and one, furthermore, with its own unique cultural context), the elegies and rustic poems will be discussed in the second chapter, and the distichs and epigrams will be given their own space in the third.¹⁴ With one partial exception, all translations of these shorter poems appearing

¹¹ Maffeo Vegio, *Maffeo Vegio: Short Epics*, edited and translated by Michael C.J. Putnam with James Hankins (Cambridge, MA.: Harvard University Press, 2004); Emma Buckley, 'Ending the *Argonautica*: Giovanni Battista Pio's *Argonautica-Supplement* (1519)', in R. Simms (ed.), *Brill's Companion to Prequels, Sequels, and Retellings of Classical Epic* (Leiden: Brill, 2018), pp. 295-315; Reinhold F. Glei and Markus Köhler, *Vellus Aureum -- Das Goldene Vlies (1431). Einleitung, kritische Edition, Übersetzung* (Trier: Wissenschaftlicher Verlag Trier, 1998).

¹² Lopomo, 'Maffeo Vegio', cited above. Earlier treatments include Cesare Picci, *Maffeo Vegio Epigrammatista* (Varallo-Sesia: Unione Tipografica Valsesiana, 1911) and A. Caretta, 'L'epigramma di Maffeo Vegio per il ritrovamento delle opere retoriche di Cicerone', in Socrate Corvi (ed.), *Studi su Maffeo Vegio* (Lodi: Archivio Storico Lodigiano, 1959), pp. 7-12.

¹³ The *Rusticanalia* poems form a distinct collection in extant witnesses, whereas the *Elegies* and *Epigrams* were intermingled, with their arrangement varying between codices produced across the 1430s. The *Elegies* and *Rusticanalia* are extant in several redactions, which have been traced and described by Lopomo: there was an original redaction of c.1431 preserved in a codex in Verona, then an intermediate redaction, and then a final redaction from a time after 1438, when Vegio was in Florence as part of the Papal Curia. The orders of the poems and of course their arrangement vary between these collections, but the issue here is not so much with this reordering as with how Vegio was engaging with Virgil in the 1430s, and this engagement can be ascertained from the critical edition Lopomo has curated, which presents us for the first time with a philologically accurate and usable primary text and apparatus as well as meticulous notes on its history and variants. This is the edition used here. Nonetheless, it is crucial to note that in the earlier redactions, the poems which later became designated as 'elegies' and 'epigrams' were intermingled, and the 'In Rusticos' poems formed a distinct block (see Lopomo, pp. 88-152, 316-343).

¹⁴ Nonetheless, connections will occasionally be made between the earlier *Elegies* and *Rusticanalia* and these epigrams; several epigrams were written later and tailored to their recipients, but many, as has been said, were composed contemporaneously with the other types of poem, and therefore such connections can be insightful as well as expected. See Lopomo, p. 120. This demarcation is consonant with the emerging notions of generic conventions in the late 1430s which distinguished between these poetic forms. Moreover, as we will see in the third chapter, this collection of epigrams was explicitly dedicated to Leonardo Bruni, the Chancellor of Florence, during Vegio's time there in the late 1430s. This unique context requires that these epigrammatic verses (as well as the distichs dedicated to Carlo Marsuppini) be examined independently. As for the *Elegies*, those directed towards gaining patronage and using Virgilian allusions in an attempt to obtain this will be examined first, before the focus shifts to those poems which are more concerned with generic questions, namely the relation between epic and that other, 'minor' genre, elegy. Within these poems, allusions will be taxonomized as they are throughout this study. This thematic focus is due to the alterations in the ordering (and in some cases even the dedicatees) of the poems across Vegio's numerous redactions of them. In other words, they cannot be approached in any kind of 'original' order. Though the discussion will open with the first poems in Lopomo's edition (modelled on what she designates codex *L*), various analyses will move through chains of

in this study are the first which have been made in English. The textual history of Vegio's next work, the *Antoniad* (discussed in the second chapter), is more straightforward, and its Virgilian influences have been treated more fully by Susan Weingarten and Antonios Augoustakis, even if they could be extended and seen in the context of Vegio's *corpus*.¹⁵

Moving forward in time, and to the fourth chapter of this study, Vegio's late moral and educational treatises still await treatment beyond that given by early twentieth-century editions. So far, the majority of attention has been devoted to *De educatione* and *De perseverantia*, and consists of the (subsequently highly influential) comments by Brinton and Kallendorf which use these works in support of their arguments concerning the *Supplementum*. Accordingly, only the moralistic, allegorising uses of Virgil to be found in these works have been highlighted. Previously, Italian scholarship of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries focused on these works and others, but mainly for the purposes of creating critical editions, introducing them to a scholarly audience, and dwelling on Vegio's combination of classical and Christian interests. Such works resulted in F.J. Köhler's *Pädagogik des Mapheus Vegius*,¹⁶ the manuscript lists, brief descriptions and (in the case of the hymns) texts, to be found in Luigi Raffaele,¹⁷ and the texts of the hagiographies to be found in G.A. Consonni.¹⁸ The same is true of the edition of *De educatione* produced by M.L. Fanning and Anne Stanislaus Sullivan in 1933 and 1936 (respectively), which has provided this study with an edition from which to work.¹⁹ Studies such as those by Mario Minoia and Andrea Franzoni have provided analyses of Vegio's pedagogical works.²⁰ David Marsh has summarised and advanced the best studies of Vegio's dialogues in relation to their engagement with Lucian and Alberti, important models for Vegio.²¹ Christopher Robinson has noted some of the Virgilian allusions in one of these,

consecutive poems, and the poems' numeration here will follow the numeration of that edition. Occasionally, too, poems' positioning within a collection will serve as evidence for a specific interpretative observation, but for the most part their grouping in this chapter's discussion, beyond their 1430s division into elegies and rustic poems, reflects instead the concerns they demonstrate and their manners of engagement with Virgil. Another reason for this approach is that not all the poems contain Virgilian allusions, and some of those which do are far too long for full inclusion and translation; a thematic treatment, rather than a poem-by-poem one, seems therefore to be very much more practical.

¹⁵ Susan Weingarten, *The Saint's Saint: Hagiography and Geography in Jerome* (Leiden: Brill, 2005), pp. 38-39; Antonios Augoustakis, 'Epic Re-Fashioning of an Egyptian Saint in Maffeo Vegio's *Antoniad*', *Neulateinisches Jahrbuch*, 8 (2006), pp. 5-12. The current English translation of that poem prepared by Putnam and Hankins will be quoted when necessary (Vegio, *Antoniad*, provisional critical edition and parallel text translation in Maffeo Vegio, *Short Epics*, pp. 130-165, with introduction and notes on pp. xxxvi-xlvi, lvi-lviii). Translations of other verses are my own.

¹⁶ F.J. Köhler, *Pädagogik des Mapheus Vegius -- Vorsteher der Datarie unter dem Pontificate Pius II : mit vergleichenden und erläuternden Noten al Beitrag zur Geschichte der Erziehung und des Unterrichts im Mittelalter* (Schwab. Gmünd [Germany]: Im Verlage des Verfassers, 1856).

¹⁷ Raffaele, *Maffeo Vegio*.

¹⁸ Consonni, 'Un umanista agiografo, Maffeo Vegio da Lodi' (Ravenna: Premiata Tipo-Litografia Ravegnana, 1909).

¹⁹ Fanning and Sullivan, *Maphei Vegii*.

²⁰ Minoia; Andrea Franzoni, *L'opera pedagogica di Maffeo Vegio* (Lodi, Italy: Società Tipografica Sugg. Wilmant, 1907).

²¹ David Marsh, *Lucian and the Latins: Humor and Humanism in the Early Renaissance* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1998).

Vegio's *Palinurus*.²² Buckley has produced a summary of Vegio's engagement with Augustine in his *Antoniad*, *De educatione*, hagiographies, and works explicitly concerning Augustine's mother Monica.²³ Vegio's *De rebus* has had a unique and especially enduring fate, being long used by historians of art and architecture for its insights into the monuments and structure of Old St. Peter's Basilica. Most recently, the work of Tino Foffano and Charles Stinger and on Vegio's archaeological method and use of Christian symbolic interpretation,²⁴ Della Schiava on a critical edition and additional commentary,²⁵ and, most recently, Christine Smith and Joseph F. O'Connor on a superbly-annotated and contextualised edition and translation,²⁶ has shown enduring interest in the work as a *quattrocento* composition rather than a mere stepping stone to discovering more about antique remains. Smith and O'Connor's work has been especially welcome for its insightful introduction and notes about Vegio and his work, and their ideas have been elaborated upon in this study's discussion of *De rebus*. Also, readers interested in the material state of Old St. Peter's will be indebted to them for their English translation of Vegio's treatise and their digital reconstruction of the basilica as Vegio would have known it. The other works considered in this fourth chapter await full English translations.

It is clear from the above survey of scholarship that there has been only very partial consideration of these works from the point of view of Vegio's Virgilian reception, if only because his works were so varied and have been approached by scholars with interests in other fields of study who are less concerned with Vegio's entire body of work.²⁷ Naturally, any treatment of Vegio's *Supplementum* necessarily deals to some extent with this question of Virgilian influence, but as with previous studies of Vegio's other writings, only a small handful of passages have been examined. A comprehensive

²² Christopher Robinson, *Lucian and His Influence in Europe* (London: Duckworth, 1979).

²³ Emma Buckley, 'Maffeo Vegio', in *Oxford Guide to the Historical Reception of Augustine*, ed. by K. F. Pollmann, D. Lambert, & A. Visser (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), pp. 1357-1358.

²⁴ Tino Foffano, 'Il "De rebus antiquis memorabilibus Basilice Sancti Petri Rome" e i primordi dell'archeologia cristiana', in *Il sacro nel Rinascimento. Atti del xii Convegno internazionale (Chianciano Pienza, 17-20 luglio 2000)*, ed. by L. Secchi Tarugi (Florence: F. Cesati, 2002), pp. 719-29; Charles Stinger, *The Renaissance in Rome* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1998).

²⁵ Fabio Della Schiava, "'Sicuti Traditum Est A Maioribus': Maffeo Vegio Antiquario tra Fonti Classiche e Medievali", *Aevum*, 84 (2010), fasc. 3, pp. 617-639; 'Il "De rebus antiquis memorabilibus" di Maffeo Vegio tra i secoli XV-XVII: la ricezione e i testimoni', *Italia Medioevale e Umanistica* LII (2011), pp. 139-196; 'Roma pagana e Roma cristiana nel primo libro del *De rebus antiquis memorabilibus* di Maffeo Vegio (1407-1458)', in *Roma pagana e Roma cristiana nel Rinascimento: Atti del XXIV Convegno Internazionale (Chianciano Terme – Pienza, 19-21 luglio 2012)*, edited by Luisa Secchi Tarugi (Florence: Cesati, 2014), pp. 39-50; 'Il *De rebus antiquis memorabilibus basilicae S. Petri Romae* di Maffeo Vegio: Edizione critica e commento' (Università Degli Studi di Firenze doctoral thesis, 2009). Della Schiava is also one of the few scholars to consider Vegio's juvenilia: see his 'Le *Fabellae* Esopiche di Maffeo Vegio: Spigolature da un Codice Lodigiano Poco Noto', pp. 133-164 in *Tradition et créativité dans les formes gnomiques en Italie et en Europe du Nord (XIVe-XVIIe siècles)* (2011), pp. 160-161.

²⁶ Christine Smith and Joseph F. O'Connor's edition of the *De rebus antiquis* (*Eyewitness to Old St. Peter's: Maffeo Vegio's Remembering the Ancient History of St. Peter's Basilica in Rome* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019)).

²⁷ This might be changing, for example through the research of Ivàn Parga Ornelas, in his ongoing University of Warwick thesis on Vegio's religious writings and their role in shaping his identity as an author.

consideration of the full range of Vegio's writings across his life is therefore necessary if we are to be able to answer the question of what Virgil meant to Vegio, and how Virgil's persona and writings were being deployed and adapted. The structure of this study, as the foregoing will have suggested, will be for the most part chronological, arranging the material so as to give a representative idea of Vegio's progression through life alongside how his responses to Virgil developed and were variously expressed.²⁸ This study will therefore make an advance on existing research into this subject, but it must be emphasised that there is more left to do, and, looking to the field of Renaissance Studies as a whole, these works of Vegio's have much to offer, and should, with the results of this study in mind, be approached also by scholars with different approaches and questions. This broader impact and interest is the rationale for the fifth chapter, which demonstrates Vegio's posthumous influence across Europe across the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, using sources which have almost all been neglected by scholarship on this author. Together, these sources demonstrate the survival of his modes of interpreting and reworking Virgil, in contexts which range from schoolrooms to religious polemics. They also offer differing views of his status as 'Alter Maro'. The sixth and final chapter considers Gavin Douglas' 1513 Scots translation of the *Supplementum*. This translation has been far from overlooked, but the argument advanced here suggests how his treatment of Vegio's poem was informed by the literary and cultural traditions prevalent in Douglas' contemporary Scotland. The translation thereby affords an additional case study for the scholarly approach used here, since it has yet to be analysed through the combination of forensic comparative-textual and contextual study which underlies the methodology of this entire project.

III. *Identifying Vegio's Virgils: A Methodological Approach to Allusion*

This methodological approach is founded on allusion, and its analysis of allusion is inspired by a very historically grounded kind of classical scholarship, exemplified by the work of Giorgio Pasquali, Giuseppe Giangrande, and above all Gian Biagio Conte and Alessandro Barchiesi. We will explore this approach and the rationale for adopting it shortly; immediately, however, we need a definition of the term 'allusion' itself. Richard F. Thomas states the central methodological problem here: 'determining when a reference [Thomas' preferred term for 'allusion'] is really a reference and when it is merely an accidental confluence'. The solutions to this problem, other than 'judgement', are that the model, the text alluded to, 'must be one with whom the poet is demonstrably familiar, and there must be a reason of some sort for the reference – that is, it must be susceptible of interpretation, or

²⁸ It should be clarified that the intention is not to give the impression that this progression is linear and consecutive and has defined moments at which varying and mutually-exclusive responses to Virgil begin and end; there are, naturally, blurred areas and coexistences, especially, as we will see, in the 1430s. Nonetheless, trends, mostly relating to genre, can be observed within different works and chronological periods, and every study requires some structuring features.

meaningful’.²⁹ These to me seem to align with the ‘judgement’ of common sense, as well as to satisfy on a more empirical level. Still, an implicit element of Thomas’ criteria here must be made explicit: the would-be allusion needs to sharply resemble the model in phrasing, or line-position, or meter, or rarity, or in some other way or combination of ways, enough to unmistakably recall it. There is an inevitable amount of subjectivity in this, of course, but in practice things become easier to decide.

An example illustrates these principles. When analysing Vegio’s elegies, rustic poems, distichs and epigrams in the chapters devoted to them below, the critical edition curated by Nicolle Lopomo will be used.³⁰ As a critical edition, this work is invaluable, but, perhaps because Lopomo’s focus is not the same historical-interpretative one to be followed here (and because, of course, her main focus is not the reception of Virgil, though she does substantially contribute to this discussion), her footnotes sometimes include, alongside genuine allusions (as they are here defined by Thomas above, possessing the criteria of familiarity and significance), instances which could better be called textual parallels, or parallels in shared subject-matter. It must be said, though, that sometimes the resemblances of these footnoted quotations to Vegio’s phrases are not even as slight as the word ‘parallel’ suggests. This is by no means intended as a serious criticism of Lopomo’s work; the target is the typical ‘classicist’ approach which Conte (himself, obviously, a classicist) rejects for being, on the whole, ahistorical or insufficiently rigorous in textual-critical, close-reading terms.³¹ Lopomo’s work, while unquestionably historical, merely shares the impulse towards footnoting texts which are probably irrelevant as allusive models, or of only partially putting these parallels to interpretative work, which is characteristic of the expectations of that same disciplinary tradition. For instance, her

²⁹ Richard F. Thomas, *Reading Virgil and His Texts: Studies in Intertextuality* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1999), pp. 116-117. The point about the poet being ‘demonstrably familiar’ with a source should also be a key criterion when determining whether a reference is an allusion or a *topos*, or, more precisely, identifying where the author has got it from, and which textual place (common or otherwise) they are alluding and gesturing towards. It is important to note alongside this, for the sake of completeness, my own commitment to the idea that authorial intention is not a requirement of allusion, even if familiarity is: an author accidentally alluding to Virgil (such as Petrarch, as he admitted to Boccaccio), is still significant to the history of Virgilian reception, but such an author would still have to have been ‘demonstrably familiar’ with Virgil and have read his works, otherwise the would-be allusion would indeed be a *topos* or ‘accidental confluence’. Thomas Greene distinguishes allusions from *topoi* by considering the intertextual literacy of the alluding work’s intended audiences as well as the literacy of the author, another helpful consideration in this regard (*The Light in Troy: Imitation and Discovery in Renaissance Poetry* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1982), pp. 49-50). The level of availability of some texts rather than others which use the same *topos* is important here. For the present study, it is convenient that Virgilian references are more likely to have been more familiar to *quattrocento* writers and readers than the other numerous and varied textual instances of a particular phrase, word or idea. On all these issues, and working substantially with the same scholars, see Stephen Hinds, *Allusion and Intertext: dynamics of appropriation in Roman poetry* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), most specifically pp. 17-19.

³⁰ Lopomo.

³¹ Gian Biagio Conte, *The Rhetoric of Imitation: Genre and Poetic Memory in Virgil and Other Latin Poets*, ed. by Charles Segal (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1986), p. 23. The same criticism can of course equally be levelled against Renaissance scholars who, with varying levels of rigour and persuasiveness, allege Petrarch’s ‘allusive’ indebtedness to Dante, for example. Conte here elaborates the methods of Pasquali and Giangrande. For Barchiesi’s work, see his *Homeric Effects in Vergil’s Narrative*, translated by Ilaria Marchesi and Matt Fox, with foreword by Philip Hardie (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2015).

critical apparatus for Vegio's epigram LXXXI, 'In Annam et Susibianam', in his first book of poems addressed to Leonardo Bruni, elaborates various folkloric or legendary traditions which coalesced around the name Anna, many of which stemmed from the Virgilian companion of Dido (though sometimes these Virgilian tales were modified through Ovid).³² In the epigram itself, however, there is no allusion to Virgil or his works. Additionally, it must be borne in mind that Anna is quite a commonly encountered name, and if a textual model for the epigram had to be located, it would probably be by Martial. This is because although Vegio does not allude to any Virgilian Anna found in Martial's poetry, he does, as Lopomo notes, allude to Sosibianus, a character of Martial's, in the feminised Susibiana, and the tone of Vegio's epigram as a whole recalls the racy quips for which Martial is and was famous, especially in the period and milieu in which Vegio was writing.

In the example above, we can see the differences between the coincidental, irrelevant and non-allusive, and the strikingly similar, relevant and significantly allusive, the latter of which can also be historically supported through the attested popularity of the model's works with the author and his contemporaries. Vegio was writing himself into this epigrammatic tradition. In other words, and following Thomas, Vegio was 'demonstrably familiar' with his model's works, and the allusion is 'susceptible of interpretation', 'meaningful'. And this example does not even centre around anything as substantial and unmistakable as a memorable phrase, since it uses only a distinctive name in a distinctive generic setting; if it had, it would more securely meet the criteria, and offer greater interpretative rewards. For example, the phrase 'pignus amoris', 'pledge of love', appears in Vegio's dedication of his distichs to Carlo Marsuppini, and in his relation, in the *Antoniad*, of how Saint Antony donned a humble cloak in imitation of Saint Paul. We will later examine how the alluded-to origins and new allusive employments of this phrase shape those works of Vegio's, but for now the central concern is to determine whether the phrase is an allusion. It is demonstrable that Vegio knew its classical precedents: as Lopomo notes, it appears in the *Aeneid* twice, referring to a bowl given by Cisseus to Anchises as a pledge of his affection, which Aeneas in turn awards as a prize to Acestes (5.538) and, in another place, referring to a horse given to Iulus by Dido (5.572).³³ Claudian also used the phrase, to describe statues erected in honour of a consul, and Ovid employed it to denote gifts exchanged by lovers.³⁴ Given that Vegio, as we will see in more detail later, uses the phrase to describe gift-giving, there is a clear significance to these moments, and they can be interpreted. The two criteria have been met. But how can we be sure which textual moment, or moments, Vegio is alluding to? The answer is essentially through a process of informed elimination, and we can make a strong case that Vegio is alluding to Virgil, and not Claudian or Ovid, in exactly this way. The non-Virgilian precedents, firstly, appear in narrative scenarios which are not apposite to any Vegio's own;

³² Lopomo, p. 879.

³³ Lopomo, p. 440.

³⁴ Ibid.

the kind of gift-giving is different, as Vegio never uses the phrase in a context relating to erotic affairs or affairs of state. This does not in itself disqualify Claudian's and Ovid's usages from the title of alluded-to text, as it is possible that Vegio deliberately utilised them in contexts significantly different to their original ones. However, given that the contexts in which Vegio does use them depict sincere acts of donation, it seems unlikely that their employment is meant to modulate their original significances, as to do so would have no interpretative purpose. Through such a process of elimination, we can securely suggest that the allusion is indeed Virgilian. We can be even more sure of this given that both Virgilian instances appear in close proximity to each other within the *Aeneid*, and are part of a sequence concerned intensely with gift-giving: the fact that the graven bowl has passed between so many hands in itself demonstrates this, and overall these Virgilian instances would without doubt have been the most memorable and resonant usages of the phrase. These examples illustrate why not every textual reference noted by previous scholarship, even such extensive and painstaking-prepared scholarship as Lopomo's critical apparatus and edition (which will be used heavily here), will be treated as an allusion and followed to analysis in this study. In the same way, other textual instances not found in such scholarship will be advanced as allusive models with which Vegio was engaged.

Once allusions have been identified as such, their effects must be determined. The historical turn in this study comes most obviously at this point, though, as the 'pignus amoris' example illustrates, it might come earlier when trying to identify the allusions to begin with. That example shows that a forensic analysis of allusion (though, again historically, confined to those works with which Vegio was familiar) can be used to identify allusions within their new texts, and to suggest what their effects there might be. That same instance also, however, demonstrates that contextual detail must sometimes be sought in order to enable such preliminary analysis to tackle the question of what wider issues might be at stake in this repurposing or redeployment.³⁵ In the epigram above, the contextual detail is that Martial was a model and hallmark for the epigram genre, which was enjoying a vogue when Vegio was writing his own. This is a necessary context for interpreting Vegio's allusions in these poems, as will be shown in chapter three, below. For now, this very basic instance suggests the methodology in sufficiently clear outlines. Writers in the *quattrocento* did not comment so much on how they were writing themselves into an epigrammatic tradition, or how (as we will see) they imported Virgilian material to advance this aim. This is because, to themselves and their readers, who

³⁵ This point touches upon the question of intention. See Joseph Farrell, 'Intention and Intertext' in *Phoenix* 59 (2005), pp. 98-111. Yet whether intentional or not, allusions gain meaning within the allusive context shared by their authors and readers. For this reason, historical contextual detail is needed to determine how allusions operated within different situations. See Stephen Hinds, *Allusion and Intertext: Dynamics of Appropriation in Roman Poetry* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998); Lowell Edmunds, *Intertextuality and the Reading of Roman Poetry*, (Baltimore, MD.: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002); Helen Kaufmann, 'Intertextuality in Late Latin Poetry', in J. Elsner and J. H. Lobato (eds), *The Poetics of Late Latin Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), pp. 149-75.

shared a frame of reference (of texts and, equally importantly, genre conventions), this self-fashioning was obvious, and obviously witty.³⁶ They did, however, sometimes make explicit comments justifying their actions, often by referring to ancient precedents. Again, we will see more of this later; the key is that hunting for such commentary, methodologically speaking, is the second stage. The first stage is the historical work of stepping back, drawing these allusions from the texts, making explicit the shared allusive frames, and thereby reconstructing what these texts before us now actually were, in their most mechanical sense, to their original authors and readers in the *quattrocento*. For this task, the only sufficiently rigorous approach is that modern branch of historicised classical scholarship we were discussing, and to which we will now return.

Allusions, once identified using the criteria outlined, can be seen to serve a variety of functions within texts. Thomas, as we will see, posits a detailed taxonomy of allusion, but a more basic and generally applicable taxonomy of two kinds of allusion, which can encompass Thomas' finer distinctions, is outlined by Conte. He explains these basic types as being: (a) quotation-based, using words and phrases to harmonise with the alluding text's meaning and 'create a single "word", enriched by internal resonance'; and (b) dialogic, in which the model is used differently from its original sense, so that the two meanings given by alluding and alluded-to text do not create a new totality, but instead retain their own natures and are seen side-by-side.³⁷ These two categories might seem obvious, but the theoretical exposition hinted at in the brief descriptions is characteristic of the sophistication with which Conte discusses allusion as a whole, especially through textual examples. Furthermore, the perception that some allusions are intended to import their original nature into a new work intact, while others are meant to import it only to set it alongside another nature which cuts against it or at least provides a foil against which it is to be viewed, is one which every critic shares, even if they try to taxonomise allusion in greater detail.³⁸ Vegio's Virgilian allusions offer plenty of examples of this: we would term the 'pignus amoris' allusions harmonising, whereas Vegio's epigram 'LXVII. IN ORCUM', which uses Virgilian phrases describing the terrifying, gaping mouth of hell in order to refer, in the spirit of playful banter, to a friend's insatiable appetite,³⁹ would be termed dialogic.

Other terms convey similar ideas, even if they also identify subdivisions within them. Thomas Greene, to cite a critic who attempts to create such a fine-grained taxonomy, identifies the 'sacramental' allusion, in which the model is treated respectfully and left unaltered; the 'eclectic' allusion, also

³⁶ Using the term coined by Stephen Greenblatt in *Renaissance Self-Fashioning: From More to Shakespeare* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980).

³⁷ Conte, pp. 57-69.

³⁸ A recent attempt at this is made by Craig Kallendorf in *Printing Virgil: The Transformation of the Classics in the Renaissance* (Leiden: Brill, 2019), using an allegedly new methodology formulated at the Humboldt University, Berlin. This methodology, with its reception categories of 'focalization', 'appropriation', 'creative destruction' and 'nescience', within 'reference' and 'reception' 'spheres' united in 'allelipoiesis', will not be adopted here, since its neologisms merely express in a fussier manner the core functions of allusions more precisely adumbrated before by Conte, Greene *et al.*

³⁹ Lopomo, p. 862.

called ‘contaminatio’, which produces a textual patchwork; the ‘heuristic’, in which the model is signposted, but then distanced through being used differently to the way in which it functions in its original setting; and the ‘dialectical’, which explicitly argues with the model.⁴⁰ Returning to Thomas, we find a similar typology, consisting of: ‘casual’ (which create atmosphere; though many allusions which appear to be casual are actually discovered later to be more significant and therefore not classifiable as such); ‘single’ (in which the reader recalls the context of the model and applies it to the new context; the allusion imports great significance); ‘self-reference’ (the model is from the poet’s own work; a sub-species is ‘internal reference’, where the allusion is to another moment in the same text), ‘correction’ (what Giangrande termed ‘*oppositio in imitando*’; the allusion indicates a source, but then adds details altering or contradicting it); ‘apparent’ (one model is evoked, but then another is used; Thomas gives the example of Virgil evoking Homer, but then listing nymphs found nowhere in Homer’s work); and ‘multiple’ or ‘conflation’ (multiple models are recalled, and, with and through them, a kind of tradition; this can work to situate the alluding text into such a tradition, and even to claim superiority within and over it).⁴¹

These might be more specific and narrowly-defined categories, but anyone who has studied allusion has recognised examples of them, just as they have recognised Conte’s more easily-grasped point that sometimes allusions are used in their original spirit, whereas at other times they are repurposed in order to produce a certain different effect. Nevertheless, when dealing with an individual writer, not all of these categories will be suitable descriptors of that writer’s allusive practices, and some will have to be combined and reconceived. It is easy, for example, to expect that many ‘harmonising’, ‘sacramental’ or faithful uses will be found, as well as straightforwardly ‘heuristic’ or ‘dialectical’ ones, but it might also be expected that the latter will often be accompanied by something like ‘multiple reference’ or ‘conflation’, in order to contest one model while simultaneously aligning that same model with other, competing texts and, in the process, other traditions. As Greene notes, it can be difficult to fit all allusions into such categories, and it might be best to devise new taxonomies in individual cases.⁴² Then again, it might ultimately be more useful simply to be aware that, hypothetically and to the limited extent demonstrated here, such taxonomies can be postulated. This way, they can be used as tools to think with, rather than boxes into which bits of texts can be deposited before being given a reductive critical label. Joseph Farrell is similarly hesitant about fully adopting this approach to Virgil’s works, regardless of how much he broadly sympathises with the methods of Conte and Thomas.⁴³ In a profound way, however, this hesitancy seems true to the

⁴⁰ Greene, pp. 38-48.

⁴¹ Thomas, pp. 117-141.

⁴² Greene, p. 53.

⁴³ Joseph Farrell, *Virgil’s Georgics and the Traditions of Ancient Epic: The Art of Allusion in Literary History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), p. 25 (but pp. 3-25 more generally); ‘The Virgilian Intertext’, in Charles Martindale (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Virgil* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), pp. 222-238.

methods of these scholars. Their intention is always to discern the specific ways in which literary allusions work within texts, and these will be different from text to text and example to example, even if this does not mean that we are unable to discern trends within and between these more specific instances of allusion and the interpretative ideas they embody.

The outstanding value of their approaches can be sensed in Conte's remarks about 'internal resonance'; the aim is to hear the other voices inhabiting a text, and to make out what tone of voice they use when they speak within their new context. The nature of this tone of voice carries the significance or meaning of the allusion. And the only way of finding this is by working historically with what alluding authors read, how they read it, how they could expect their readers to read it, and how those readers actually did read it. This returns us to the importance of determining whether an author was familiar with a text to which we think they might be alluding, which of course is the second qualification any potential allusion must possess. To summarise, the essential points are that there are established criteria for securely detecting allusions, and that those allusions can be complex and perform various functions within a text. It will be unsurprising to see this variety in Vegio's allusions to Virgil (especially given the few varied examples already seen), considering the range of works for which Virgil was known, and the multiple interpretations and reworkings they accreted between their time of composition and the early fifteenth century.

Nonetheless, unsurprising as their variety might be, identifying these varied allusive strands is essential for a better understanding of Vegio's works and their context, and in the course of this investigation the typologies of allusion just discussed will be seen to run from the faithful and reverent to the oppositional and indifferent, the directly and faithfully evoked to the clustered and contested. They will also be seen to constellate around several modes of reading and engaging with Virgil, the 'trends' and 'interpretative ideas' mentioned previously. These include, but are not limited to, the more purely imitative or rhetorical (using Virgil's writings faithfully as models for the composition of epic), the moralistic (using them in imitative form in ways which present a moral argument, or interpreting them in moralistic terms), the satirical (often constructed from faithful allusions juxtaposed with other, undercutting or contesting, material), and the playful (irreverent towards the original text and turning anything it may offer to the witty purpose of the epigram). The use of these categories, as well as providing a kind of critical shorthand (such as that used by Christopher Baswell in his *Virgil in Medieval England*, an explicit model for this categorical aspect of methodology), will enable highly pertinent (and sometimes non-textual) material, which relies on no clear allusive model and so cannot be studied in the same, allusion-focused way just outlined, to be incorporated into the discussion. Sometimes, such material, deriving as it must from the wider historical milieu in which Vegio's works were produced, can suggest further significances or even motivations for his particular allusive strategies, such as the use of the faithful imitation of epic forms in order to aggrandise and impress a prospective patron. Again, the picture resulting from this wider

look at ‘moralistic’ or ‘playful’ contemporary uses of Virgil is a very dynamic and diverse one, and illustrates the usefulness of conceiving of the issue not as the reception of ‘Virgil’, but of ‘Virgils’.

What Virgil or Virgils were, materially and ideally, in Vegio’s time is the final point this methodology must tackle. Materially, the text of Virgil which Vegio would have seen, and the lines of which he reworked, can be regarded as a singular thing. We find records of such manuscripts in the Visconti library at Pavia (to which Pavian scholars such as Vegio’s friend Catone Sacco, and probably Vegio himself, had access),⁴⁴ and the texts of Virgil’s main works remained consistent, despite – ironically – exhibiting minor textual variants, which due to the ubiquity of these texts in educational institutes and learned circles, seemed to in practice cancel each other out.⁴⁵ In other words, given that readers encountered so many copies of the texts which were overwhelmingly consistent and for the most part identical, the occasional variant had little effect on their idea of what a particular text, such as the *Aeneid*, looked like. The question of how a particular copy of a text was formatted and presented, and which commentaries accompanied it, however, shows greater variety, and will be considered again in different ways in the analyses in each of the following chapters. Vegio would probably have seen Servius and Aelius Donatus (both fourth century; the other Donatus, the fourth- and early-fifth-century Tiberius Claudius, was rediscovered too late to have been used by him in any of his poetic works), with their formal, etymological and historical observations on Virgil’s *corpus*. For allegory, especially moral allegory, Vegio would have had to look elsewhere, such as in the rarer Fulgentius in the Pavian library, or in his familiar Boccaccio or Petrarch (though this way of reading does seem to have been significant to him only indirectly and only in his later works).⁴⁶ Knowing all this is essential methodologically, in order to know what physical text Vegio was responding to directly, but it does not convey the diversity of responses to and versions of Virgil embodied in such volumes, in the legends about him current in Vegio’s wider culture, and in the uses to which Virgil’s writings could be put. These were far from singular.

Something of the ideal position, vitality and potential of Virgil’s works in Vegio’s cultural moment can be expressed most clearly through the metaphor of a great building. Like an ancient, grand but still-functional mansion in a thriving city, the Virgilian *corpus* and the memory of its author had been

⁴⁴ Christopher de Hamel, *Meetings with Remarkable Manuscripts* (London: Penguin, 2018), pp. 482-3 for Sacco’s possible access to Visconti’s library (which contained much of Petrarch’s library, which Filippo Maria had inherited) in Pavia in the 1420s. Lopomo observes that the dedicatee of Vegio’s first book of elegies was Lanzarotto Crotti, the governor of the Castle of Pavia, whose brother was ducal secretary and therefore managed the library, thereby increasing the probability that Vegio had access to its collections (p. 68). For the inventories of the library itself, see Elisabeth Pellegrin, *La Bibliothèque des Visconti et des Sforza ducs de Milan, au XV^e siècle* (Paris: Publications de l’Institut de Recherche et d’Histoire des Textes, 1955): in the inventory of 1426 we find one copy of Homer’s *Iliad* (in Latin), two copies of Virgil, two of Servius and one of Fulgentius (pp. 76-77, 108, 112, 282).

⁴⁵ M. Geymonat, ‘The Transmission of Virgil’s Works in Antiquity and the Middle Ages’, in Nicholas Horsfall (ed.), *A Companion to the Study of Virgil* (Leiden: Brill, 1995), pp. 293–313.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

utilised and regarded in a variety of ways by the time Vegio and his contemporaries lived. Looking back on what they had inherited, they saw what their predecessors had done to the *Eclogues* reception room, or the great *Aeneid* dining hall (the old photographs were in the library along with the dusty inventories and account books which had recorded the décor before then), and they had heard rumours of the bawdy stories, jokes and acts which had been shared along with cigars and brandies in the dubious smoking lounge-cum-bar-cum-bordello of the *Gnat*, *Barmaid* and *Priapea*. They could choose to remember, ignore or forget previous wallpaper choices or furniture arrangements, and they could revive or adapt for their own present purposes one of the older styles just as easily as they could maintain, rearrange or completely dismantle what they found in the property as it came to them. Rooms could be updated, repartitioned and repurposed. Where would the children's nursery be: should they use the old room, or make a new one somewhere else? And perhaps the smoking lounge should disappear and be converted to a different use; after all, had it really been part of the original design anyway? And what about that old room on the top floor, which used to be the private study of the first owner, the man who first designed and built the place, and who had imported some of its furniture and design ideas from even older properties? What about that man himself, the great ancestor, the family patriarch? Some said he had been the wisest figure of his age (what was that thing about him boring a hole through a mountain for that new road? Sorcery, his critics had called it), others that he'd had an eye for the ladies – and the boys – which sometimes got the better of him (what was that story about getting stuck in a basket half-way up a tower?). Yet whatever the new owners did, the house was full of these memories, and these spectral presences had to be negotiated (left alone, propitiated or exorcised), and decisions about them had to be made, if the family were to keep the place at all instead of letting it fall into disrepair. Because it would have been impossible to sell it, if only because it was still a by-word for all things great, grand and good, even among the rich and famous, who always commented on it and longed to host parties beneath its splendid ceilings, and to look divine beneath the light thrown by its chandeliers. But for too many other reasons as well, from the sentimental to the practical, the family had to keep it.

If the relevance of every detail in the suitably lengthy if otherwise not entirely Virgilian simile above is intelligible, then it has served its purpose, and the point will have been made about the richness and complexity to be found in the reception of, and engagement with, inherited Virgils on the part of Vegio and his contemporaries. A study of this, through the particular focus on Vegio's Virgils (or, to return to our opening, how 'Alter Maro' responded to 'Alteri Marones') will be the subject of the following pages.

Chapter One –

Vegio's Short Epics: The *Supplementum*, *Astyanax* and *Golden Fleece*

It doesn't make any sense, this tragic ending;
In spite of the evidence, there's something still missing.
– Dream Theater, 'One Last Time' (1999)

Introduction

The epyllia or 'short epics' discussed in this chapter were written between 1428 and 1431, while Vegio was at university, first as a student and then as a lecturer. They are united not only by their classicising nature, being imitations, adaptations and above all supplementations of ancient epic narratives, but also by their insistent use of moments of pathos from Virgil's poetry.¹ Such pathos had been preserved through the romance readings of epic which exercised an equal influence on Vegio's idea of the 'Virgilian'. Furthermore, in Vegio's hands, this element of Virgil's work provides a vehicle for expressions and explorations of the exercise of power and its relationship to ethical, legal and just conduct in society. In Vegio's *Supplementum* to the *Aeneid*, for instance, we see how Aeneas deals with the aftermath of the war in Latium, unites the peoples who had formerly been enemies, marries Lavinia and presides over years of peace before he dies and is deified. In the 1430 *Astyanax*, the setting is the Fall of Troy, and the main event is the death of Hector's young son, whose execution is ordered and justified by Ulysses. In the *Golden Fleece*, composed in 1431, Vegio rewrites the narrative of Jason and the Argonauts' capture of the fleece in Colchis, and dwells in particular on the plight of Medea and whether her actions render her a victim of the gods' manipulation, or an impassioned, callous murderess who violates all ties of kinship.

Such a confluence of classical poetic imitation, responses to the afterlives of epic in medieval romances, and moral meditation, was natural for Vegio. Firstly, he was a young man obsessed with classical poetry and familiar with the popular narratives of his time. Secondly, he was also a student of dialectic and the law, a system which in medieval and Renaissance Italy was bound to theology and was regarded as the earthly embodiment of divine authority and justice as manifested in temporal rulers and in the civic bodies and codes responsible for maintaining the stability of society's moral fabric. It was no accident that humanists were often men with legal training who became notaries in Italian courts. Such ideas about social order were also, as we will see, more widespread, being expressed through other artefacts of Vegio's culture, especially those produced within and around the

¹ On such post-classical readings of pathos, see Marjorie Curry Woods, *Weeping for Dido: the Classics in the Medieval Classroom* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2019).

court of Filippo Maria Visconti in Milan, where Vegio had connections and would not have minded being employed himself.² Such artefacts, textual, visual and material, express the same contemporary conceptions of society and just conduct seen in Vegio's short epics. These conceptions, indeed, shaped interpretative responses to Virgilian, and other classical, texts in this particular cultural climate and moment. For this reason, such interdisciplinary sources shape how we can interpret Vegio's poems historically, and understand how he utilised Virgilian allusions within them. This is not to say that Vegio's epyllia were designed as ethical manifestoes; rather, they were showcases of Vegio's skills as an imitator of classical (and in some respects also post-classical) verse which were necessarily shaped by the literary and political traditions and conditions of their time.³ Moreover, it is reasonable to believe that this classicising skill was the qualification which would gain him renown. It certainly explains the repeated imitations of epic seen in these epyllia.

We will begin by studying Vegio's engagement with Virgil within the first of these short epics, the *Supplementum* or 'Thirteenth Book' to the *Aeneid* which even today is Vegio's most famous work. Through the following analysis, it will be seen that fundamental modifications need to be made to current critical interpretations of this work, primarily the idea that it was an exercise in epideictic rhetoric praising Aeneas and blaming Turnus for the war. The very different understanding of the poem demonstrated by this chapter's analysis will be informed by not only the intertextual landscape of the poem, but by considerations of a range of classicising objects and images created within and for the Visconti court, as well as for the nobility of Florence, where Vegio lived in the late 1430s and early 1440s, when his Virgilian sequel had become well-known in literary and artistic circles across Italy. The conclusions reached through this exploration of the *Supplementum* and analogous engagements with its classical sources in other media will then inform, in turn, analyses of the *Astyanax* and *Golden Fleece*, which Vegio wrote soon afterwards.

The uses of Virgil seen across these three works show Vegio using highly faithful and reverent, if creative, imitations of Virgil in order to write miniature epics. At the same time, and substantially through the technique of constructing correspondences between Virgilian characters and the protagonists of his own works (the latter deriving from elsewhere in classical mythology), Vegio in these epyllia explores the moral dilemmas arising from the ravages of war and the decrees of Fate, humanity and the gods. Vegio is repeatedly drawn to Virgil's pathos and the way he depicted figures

² We will explore the fate of Vegio's ambitions towards patronage in the next chapter, which deals with works which can verifiably be identified as patronage pleas. For now, his hope that Calliope would win him some financial security as a poet or – a likelier outcome of such Latinate transferable skills – an official drafting administrative documents for the Visconti, is a more (if not entirely) incidental detail.

³ This engagement with social structures should be considered on its own terms rather than as any form of Hans Baron's 'civic humanism', if only because the Visconti state was a composite one in which there was no real sense of active citizenship. See Nicholas Scott Baker and Brian Jeffrey Maxson (eds.), *After Civic Humanism: Learning and Politics in Renaissance Italy* (Toronto: Centre for Reformation and Renaissance Studies, 2015), and Jane Black, *Absolutism in Renaissance Milan: Plenitude of Power Under the Visconti and the Sforza 1329 – 1535* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009).

experiencing suffering and intense emotion, but he uses this sympathy to suggest how social stability might be maintained in the aftermath of violent conflicts. Vegio's moral landscape, to contest the prevailing critical view, is not one of monochrome binaries expressed by epideictic praise and blame, but rather a nuanced understanding shaped by the consideration of multiple perspectives spanning heaven and earth, and a commitment to what in the early *quattrocento* was deemed pragmatic and beneficial for an entire community. He debates these issues most obviously in the way he continues the narrative of the *Aeneid* in his *Supplementum*, showing how peace was achieved after the war in Latium. Aeneas was successful in establishing peace, but how did he do it? And did he do it justly? Was Turnus a vicious criminal, or a victim of the gods and the invaders they sponsored? Yet Vegio expresses such concerns in the *Astyanax* as well. Did Ulysses act justly for the Greeks' safety when he killed Hector's child heir, or was this a crime? Likewise in the *Golden Fleece*, to what extent was Medea a victim of the gods when she fell in love with Jason and then killed and dismembered her young brother Absyrtus so that she could swiftly escape Colchis with her new lover? Vegio's importations of allusions to Aeneas, Turnus and Dido into his rewritings of these narratives shows that he thought such serious and complex questions demanded serious and complex thought, rather than simplistic solutions. This chapter traces the literary and social sources of this dialectical approach to moral quandaries.

There has been much scholarship on the *Supplementum*, and, naturally, on Vegio's uses of Virgil in this work, from the macro-level of narrative to the micro-level of meter, tone and rhythm.⁴ Yet there is more to be said on this topic, even given Bernd Schneider's 1985 critical edition of the text. This edition is utilised by Michael C.J. Putnam, who builds analyses of allusive significances upon its copious footnotes,⁵ and offers close analyses of several passages which in turn are enriched by Rogerson's consideration of many relevant Virgilian features of the poem which will necessarily be overlapped by some of the arguments made here.⁶ Yet Putnam's analyses must be reviewed within the recast interpretative framework outlined above, as hitherto only the epideictic interpretation of the *Supplementum* has prevailed, and further details, especially about the form of the tragic lament, must be brought into play to elaborate this framework. A taxonomy of Vegio's allusion, even a basic one,

⁴ W.S. Maguiness, *The 13th Book of the Aeneid* (Exeter: Sydney Lee Ltd., for Virgil Society, 1957), p. 9; D. Blandford, 'Virgil and Vegio', *Vergilius* 5 (1959), pp. 29-31; G. Duckworth, 'Mapheus Vegius and Vergil's *Aeneid*: A Metrical Comparison', *Classical Philology* 64 (1969), pp. 1-6; Andrea Dessi Fulgheri, 'Eloquenza e arte oratoria', *Res publica litterarum* 11 (1988), pp. 111-124; Dessi Fulgheri, 'Aspetti linguistici', *Sandalion* 12-13 (1989-1990), pp. 205-218; Vicente Cristóbal López, 'Maffeo Vegio y su libro xiii', *Cuadernos de filología clásica*, 5 (1993), pp. 189-210; J. Solana Pujalte, 'El hexámetro del Aeneidos liber XIII de Maffeo Vegio y sus modelos clásicos (II)', *Latomus* 59, 3, (2000), pp. 645-664.

⁵ Bernd Schneider (ed.), *Das Aeneissupplement des Maffeo Vegio: Eingeleitet, nach den Handschriften herausgegeben, übersetzt und mit einem Index versehen* (Weinheim: Acta Humaniora, 1985); see Putnam, *Short Epics*, p. 169 for the 'Note on the Text'. It might be worth mentioning, for the sake of completeness rather than utility, that two Italian editions exist of the *Supplementum*: Stefano Bonfanti (ed.), *Supplementum, libro XIII dell'Eneide* (Cinisello Balsamo (Milano): San Paolo, 1997), and M. Michela Fidanza, *Il Supplementum all'Eneide di Maffeo Vegio: testo, traduzione e commento* (Ospedaletto, Pisa: Pacini, 2013).

⁶ For Putnam's analysis, see his Introduction to *Short Epics*; for Rogerson's analysis, see future references.

also remains to be undertaken. Most importantly, Vegio's poem demands to be viewed alongside contemporary literary, visual and material artefacts which also engage with Virgil and the classics as much as with ideas of justice and order. Such artefacts will enable us to characterise the moment of Virgilian reception within which Vegio was writing and living, and see how it was possible to read his Virgilian sequel and his other short epics at their time of composition. Again expanding Putnam's existing work,⁷ the Virgilian allusions in these short epics, the classically-themed hexameter epyllia the *Astyanax* and the *Golden Fleece* which he wrote within a few years of the *Supplementum*, also deserve to be examined in relation to the *Supplementum* and the wider context of sources which – excepting the paintings of Apollonio di Giovanni – have never before been considered alongside Vegio's work.

Overall, this chapter delivers an originally contextualised account of Vegio's responses to Virgil in his well-known *Supplementum*, and then uses the conclusions reached through the previously unexamined evidence informing this account to offer new insights into how he alluded to Virgil in the lesser-studied short epics he composed shortly afterwards. This interdisciplinary historical contextualisation will rest on the constant comparative-textual work which is, and must be, the foundation of this study of allusive practices. There has already been substantial attention to the intertextual landscapes of these poems, which this chapter acknowledges and utilises. Yet this chapter also extends this work, and above all turns it to more interpretative effect by regarding it alongside other historical sources. Together, these two approaches reshape scholarly understandings of how Vegio was reworking his sources, and employing and interpreting Virgil, in the epyllic imitations which he composed at the start of his poetic career, and which formed the basis of his later fame.

Supplementum

I. Introduction and Critical Responses

In 1428, when Vegio was a twenty-one-year-old law student at the University of Pavia, he wrote an imitation of Virgil which continued the narrative of the *Aeneid* in the form of a 'Thirteenth Book', or *Supplementum*, to be added to Virgil's twelve. In this work, Turnus is mourned, the Trojans and Latins join in a peaceful alliance, Aeneas marries Lavinia and, after his death, is stellified. This poem of Vegio's went on to be copied in manuscripts throughout the *quattrocento* and reprinted in most of the editions of Virgil's works from 1471 into the middle of the seventeenth century, along the way receiving critical commentaries, woodcut illustrations, and translations into the vernacular. The most notable of these translations was that into Scots by Gavin Douglas, and English by Thomas Twyne.⁸

⁷ In the same Introduction to *Short Epics* cited earlier.

⁸ Putnam, 'Introduction' to *Short Epics*, pp. vii-lviii (vii, xxiii). The *Supplementum* or *Book XIII* of the *Aeneid* occupies pp. 1-41 of this volume.

All of these varied receptions of Vegio's poem will be examined in the final two chapters of this study, together with the receptions of his other works across Europe into the sixteenth century. This longevity enjoyed by the *Supplementum* is partly a testament to the feeling, on the part of many readers (first expressed in the *Life* of Donatus, which says that Virgil intended to spend a further three years on his epic, before death cut this time short), that Virgil's epic required this addition in order to happily resolve the narrative, and comment on its more problematic events.⁹ Foremost among these events was the final groan uttered by Turnus as his plea for mercy is refused, and he is killed by Aeneas, an action which seemed to negate the virtuous conduct of the epic's protagonist and directly contradict the injunction delivered to him by his father Anchises to 'spare the defeated'.¹⁰ Another equally important though less cited reason for the *Supplementum*'s popularity, especially given the fact that not everyone believed the *Aeneid* actually had been left incomplete, was the quality of its imitation of Virgil. The degree of this quality has been debated ever since the poem was written, but the fact that the 'Alter Maro' title was bestowed on Vegio by his contemporaries (not to mention scholars and readers throughout the sixteenth century), largely if not entirely due to his production of this work, forces us to take the claim seriously.

Vegio's *Supplementum*, then, is by far his most famous and critically-commented-upon work, and for many it is the only work by which he is known. Despite this attention, its allusive practices and the possible motivations behind them have been consistently simplified. Remarkably, the work has until very recently been read by all scholars as a substantially and deliberately uncomplicated resolution of Virgil's narrative, which corrected the problematic elements outlined above. This simplifying interpretation of Vegio's *Thirteenth Book* has a long scholarly lineage, beginning in the early twentieth century with Anna Cox Brinton's work *Mapheus Vegius and His Thirteenth Book of the Aeneid*, in which she argued that the text was intended as an allegorical, moral and Christian resolution of the troubling and inconclusive elements within the *Aeneid*.¹¹ This is valid up to a point, as the tradition of allegorical readings of the *Aeneid* was not unprecedented and in Vegio's time, though to a limited degree, current. Fulgentius and Bernardus Silvestris, for example, offer classic illustrations of the general attempt to interpret the epic as a lesson in how the moral man progressed

⁹ The *Life* of Donatus, 35, cited in relation to Renaissance ideas by David Scott Wilson-Okamura, *Virgil in the Renaissance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), p. 192. For the problem of the *Aeneid*'s ending throughout this period (and well into the sixteenth century), see the same book, pp. 192-203, as well as Lars-Håkan Svensson, 'Remembering the Death of Turnus: Spenser's *Faerie Queene* and the Ending of the *Aeneid*', *Renaissance Quarterly*, Vol. 64, No. 2 (Summer 2011), pp. 430-471 (pp. 436-450, but also 466-468 and indeed throughout for Spenser's diversity of moral engagement with the figures of Aeneas and Turnus). Whittington also discusses Vegio's text as a completion of Virgil's. For studies of Virgil's ancient biographies, see Anton Powell and Philip Hardie (eds.), *The Ancient Lives of Virgil: Literary and Historical Studies* (Swansea: Classical Press of Wales, 2017).

¹⁰ Virgil, *Virgil in Two Volumes*, parallel text with translation by H. Rushton Fairclough (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1950), *Aeneid* 6. 981-984, as translated in Virgil, *The Aeneid*, translated by Robert Fagles, introduced by Bernard Knox (London: Penguin, 2010), p. 210.

¹¹ Brinton, pp. 26-29.

through life and finally reaped rewards for his virtue. Similarly, there were interpretative frameworks which saw the classics as expressions – however incomplete or imperfect – of Christian truth.

Boccaccio expressed the latter view in *De Genealogia Deorum Gentilium*, and his *De Claris Mulieribus* presented the classics as sources of moral exempla (such as Dido as a model of chastity).¹² Boccaccio's friend Petrarch, in the *Secretum* and some of his letters, read the *Aeneid* as an allegory of the life of the virtuous man, drawing on late-antique and medieval traditions of allegoresis.¹³

Such interpretations survived into and after the period of the *Supplementum*'s composition: Francesco Filelfo's December 1427 letter to Cyriac of Ancona from Venice regards Virgil as an omniscient sage, transmitting truths through veiling verses, and his epic as an allegory of life combining natural and moral philosophy. In this view Aeneas is brave and just, and Turnus is unjust and cowardly.¹⁴ So such views were undeniably current when Vegio was writing, and we will see them in some of the works Vegio wrote later in his life, when he lived and worked in Rome. Yet the details in the latter, moral reading are enough to demonstrate that Vegio's vision of the *Aeneid* as he wrote his *Supplementum* was at least at times completely opposed to this. In the *Supplementum*, Turnus, as well as being condemned as unjust or led astray by madness, is repeatedly praised as brave and noble, even by Aeneas himself. Turnus is also movingly mourned as a hero by multiple characters.¹⁵ A final moralistic reading can be found in Cristoforo Landino's allegoresis of the *Aeneid*, to which Vegio's work is often compared. Yet Landino's work appeared far later, in the mid-1470s, and was imbued with a revived Neoplatonism which unsurprisingly emphasised the sublimation of earlier, earthly matters to ultimate celestial ones.¹⁶ Furthermore, in Vegio's own time there were other ways of engaging with Virgil's writings which, including in the commentary tradition, hardly stressed moral progress or significance at all, being focused overwhelmingly on historical knowledge and grammar.¹⁷

In short, even if the aforementioned works overemphasise the allegorical valences of Vegio's resolution of the *Aeneid* narrative, they do highlight the undeniable fact of that resolution itself. The

¹² Giovanni Boccaccio, *Genealogy of the Pagan Gods*, Vol. 1, edited and translated by Jon Solomon (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2011), pp. xvi-xix; Giovanni Boccaccio, *On Famous Women*, edited and translated by Virginia Brown (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2001), Introduction, Preface and pp. 175-176.

¹³ Francesco Petrarca (Petrarch), *Petrarch's Secret or The Soul's Conflict with Passion*, translated by William H. Draper (Norwood, Pennsylvania: Norwood Editions, 1975), pp. 100-102; also his letters to his brother Gherardo (Fam. X. 4) and to Virgil (Fam. XXIV. 11).

¹⁴ Cyriac of Ancona, *Life and Early Travels*, edited and translated by Charles Mitchell, Edward W. Bodnar and Clive Foss (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2015), pp. 274-283 (especially 282-283).

¹⁵ See, for example, *Supplementum*, ll. 1-40, 125-301, 468-473. Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale MS. Naz. II. IX. 148 even explains the *Supplementum* as 'de morte turni' (f. 303r).

¹⁶ Thomas Herbert Stahel, 'Cristoforo Landino's Allegorization of the Aeneid: Books III and IV of the Camaldolese Disputations', The Johns Hopkins University, Ph.D., 1968 Language and Literature (Baltimore, Maryland: 1968).

¹⁷ See the earlier comments in the Introduction to this thesis on Servius and the commentary tradition.

Supplementum's opening image shows Aeneas as serene rather than filled with Virgilian *furor*; its closing images present the beginnings of peace in Italy, sealed by a marriage (that staple of conflict conclusions in both romance narratives and real life) between Aeneas and Lavinia, and followed by Aeneas' apotheosis.¹⁸ Yet, as Charles Ross (himself quoting one of Brinton's reviewers from 1931) and Anne Rogerson have noted, there is no basis within the *Thirteenth Book* for inferring, as Brinton does, a consistent allegorical, let alone Christianising, intent on Vegio's part, and the evidence she uses derives instead from Vegio's moral treatises, written in his later, and more devotional and Augustinian, life.¹⁹ Vegio certainly inherited the allegorising ideas of Petrarch and Boccaccio, as can be seen in his later comments about the *Aeneid*,²⁰ but were these later comments a result of his Augustinian piety deploring as frivolous his youthful infatuation with the classics for their own sake rather than as veiled or incomplete expressions of Christian doctrine? Such a retraction was undoubtedly conventional, if possibly sincere too. Or are they to be explained, with the same conclusion, as exercises in a completely different genre, the moral and educational treatise, which naturally involved reading the *Aeneid* in this moralistic way? As we will see in chapter four, the answer to both questions is affirmative, however qualified. Vegio in his later religious works uses Virgil and the character of Aeneas very differently and for quite different purposes, for reasons relating to genre and audience as much as any personal spiritual motivations. Nonetheless, Brinton's idea was influential. Echoes of it can be found, alongside those of Ben J. Hijmans (who first suggests the presence of epideixis in Vegio's text) in Kallendorf's repeatedly-expressed argument that the *Supplementum* was an exercise in epideictic – and therefore, quite literally in effect, moralistic – rhetoric, extolling Aeneas while vilifying Turnus.²¹

¹⁸ Wilson-Okamura, pp. 230-250; John Watkins, *After Lavinia: A Literary History of Premodern Marriage Diplomacy* (Ithaca, NY.: Cornell University Press, 2017).

¹⁹ Charles S. Ross, 'Maffeo Vegio's "schort Cristyn wark," with a note on the *Thirteenth Book* in early editions of Virgil', in pp. 215-226 of *Modern Philology*, 78, no. 3 (1981), p. 216; Anne Rogerson, 'Re-evaluating Turnus: multiple voices in Vegio's Supplement', in L.B.T. Houghton and Marco Sgarbi (eds.), *Virgil and Renaissance Culture*, pp. 119-137. Related, but less relevant, are Rogerson's other essays on Vegio ('Vegio's Ascanius: Problems in the continuation of the *Aeneid*', *Classical Receptions Journal* 5 (1) (December 2012), pp. 106-125, and 'Vegio's Supplement: Classical learning, Christian readings', in Simms (ed.), *Brill's Companion to Prequels, Sequels and Retellings of Classical Epic* (Leiden: Brill, 2018), pp. 267-294) and Buckley's review of Brinton's book in *Bryn Mawr Classical Review* (02/02/2003), along with her article 'Ending the "Aeneid"? Closure and Continuation in Maffeo Vegio's "Supplementum"', *Vergilius* 52 (1) (January 2006), pp. 111-140.

²⁰ Fanning and Sullivan, *Maphei Vegii*, 2.18. See also Horkan, Andrea Franzoni, *L'opera pedagogica*, and Vegio's *De perseverantia religionis*, discussed by Craig Kallendorf, 'Maffeo Vegio's Book XIII and the *Aeneid* of Early Italian Humanism', in Anne Reynolds (ed.), *Altro Polo: The Classical Continuum in Italian Thought and Letters, a volume of Italian Studies* (Sydney: University of Sydney, 1984), pp. 49-50 and Brinton, pp. 27-29.

²¹ Ben J. Hijmans, 'Aeneia Virtus. Vegio's *Supplementum* to the *Aeneid*', *Classical Journal* 67 (1971-72), pp. 144-55; Kallendorf, 'The Rhetorical Criticism of Literature in Early Italian Humanism from Boccaccio to Landino', *Rhetorica*, Vol. 1, No. 2 (Autumn 1983), pp. 33-59; 'Maffeo Vegio's Book XIII', pp. 47-56; *In Praise of Aeneas: Virgil and Epideictic Rhetoric in the Early Italian Renaissance* (Hanover, New Hampshire: University Press of New England, 1989), pp. 100-128; *Virgil and the Myth of Venice: Books and Readers in the Italian Renaissance* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1999), pp. 52-53; *The Other Virgil: Pessimistic Readings of the Aeneid in Early Modern Culture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), pp. 41-43; *The Protean Virgil: Material Form and the Reception of the Classics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015). It is interesting that,

Vegio's *Supplementum*, however, though it does effect a narrative conclusion in many ways, is not exclusively concerned with this aim, as there is simply too much which undermines, cuts against or at least complicates this picture of resolution. Foremost among such complicating elements are the passages attending to the cost and suffering endured by both Aeneas and the Trojans, and Turnus and the Latins, as they play their parts in the drama that leads to the foundation of Rome. Combined with these passages, moments such as Aeneas' marriage to Lavinia, which are intended to be sublimations of earlier moments such as Aeneas' affair with Dido, do not entirely dispel the troubling and pathetic natures of these earlier episodes, but rather revive them. This counterargument has been recently expressed by Rogerson,²² in an essay which this chapter intends to extend.²³ Robert Cummings, in an essay focusing on Douglas' translation, has noticed this emphasis too, but in different, more oblique ways, attempting to connect it with Vegio's political context of Visconti pleas for peace and unification under their rule.²⁴ This last idea deserves bearing in mind, however tentatively, as a context for the later discussion of Vegio's work in relation to broader ideas about governance and social order.

The interpretation advanced in this study is that the moral stance advocated by Vegio is more complex than has been supposed (except, notably, by Rogerson in her essay and Houghton and Grafton in their more casual remarks), combining pity with pragmatism, and the poem contains more lamentation than

as Rogerson notes ('Re-evaluating Turnus', pp. 127-130), Hijmans' own speculations about the possibility that Vegio has captured something of 'Virgilian sympathy' have been disregarded by subsequent scholars who emphasise only the epideictic part of his analysis. Kallendorf admits to the possibility that elements of Renaissance Virgilian reception complicate such epideixis (especially in *The Other Virgil*), but tends to see these as complications as binarily oppositional, rather than – as I argue here – as parts of a coherent conception of the moral landscape of the poem which accommodates praise and blame for both Aeneas and Turnus. Considerations, such as those offered later in this study, of the reduced applicability of such interpretative frameworks to Virgilian allusions within non-epic poetic genres, also remain unattended to. Nonetheless, the echoes of the epideictic argument can also be heard in Stephen Beale, 'From Vocational Emulation to Addition: The "Complementing" of Vergil by Mapheus Vegius and Dante', *Brown Classical Journal* 14 (2002), pp. 43-52, as well as in essays on Vegio and his (and Virgil's) Scots translator Douglas by Margaret Tudeau-Clayton and Kantik Ghosh (Margaret Tudeau-Clayton, 'Supplementing the "Aeneid" in Early Modern England: Translation, Imitation, Commentary', in *International Journal of the Classical Tradition*, Vol. 4, No. 4 (Spring, 1998), pp. 507-525; Kantik Ghosh, "'The Fift Quheill": Gavin Douglas' Maffeo Vegio', in *Scottish Literary Journal* 22 (1995), pp. 5-21). Since Tudeau-Clayton and Ghosh only follow the arguments of this earlier scholarship, they are not cited in the final chapter of this study, which discusses Douglas' translation partly in relation to the epideictic argument.

²² Rogerson, 'Re-evaluating Turnus'. The reminiscence is also clear even from the inclusion of Marie-Madeleine Fragonard's "'Le 'treizième livre' de l'Énéide", in René Martin (ed.), *Énée et Didon: naissance, fonctionnement et survie d'un mythe* (Paris: C.N.R.S., 1990), pp. 79-88.

²³ Much of it deriving from earlier research undertaken by the present author: 'Maffeo Vegio's *Supplementum*: A Study in the Renaissance of Virgilian Pathos?' (final undergraduate assignment, 05/07/2017); the discussion of Vegio's work in 'Gavin Douglas' Maffeo Vegio: Refiguring the *Thirteenth Book* of the *Aeneid* in Early-Sixteenth-Century Scotland' (University of Warwick MA dissertation, Summer 2018); 'Brett Mottram on Gavin Douglas' Translation of Maffeo Vegio's *Book XIII* of the *Aeneid* (*Supplementum*)' (interview with Dr Bryan Brazeau as part of the University of Warwick's Centre for the Study of the Renaissance Podcast series, 27/08/2018 <https://warwick.ac.uk/fac/arts/ren/outreach/podcast/>).

²⁴ Robert Cummings, "'To the cart the fift quheill": Gavin Douglas's Humanist Supplement to the "Eneados"', in *Translation and Literature*, Vol. 4, No. 2 (1995), pp. 133-156 (especially pp. 139-141).

celebration. Aeneas is a character who does the right thing by killing Turnus, yet is not immune to identifying with his antagonist, who, furthermore, is praised and mourned by several characters, including Aeneas himself, as someone worthy of honour. Turnus can be pitied, as a defeated suppliant and as a victim led astray by fury (and by the will of supernatural agents), while simultaneously being condemned as a deadly force of destruction who violated peace agreements and would have caused countless additional deaths had he not been stopped. This all seems plain from what Vegio's characters do and say, and how much space the poem devotes to presenting these multiple perspectives. Taking as its evidence a closer attention to such elements in Vegio's poem and its allusive structures, together with a range of contemporary visual, material and textual sources and the ideas of social order expressed by them, this interpretation fundamentally and comprehensively challenges the prevailing understanding of not only the *Supplementum*, but of the attitudes of the culture which produced it.

II. *Analysis: Virgilian Epic Pathos*

Vegio's imitations of the Virgilian tragic lament are especially pertinent to the debates outlined above. The *Supplementum* contains several speeches which mourn Turnus, including orations by Aeneas and Latinus, but the most consummate imitation of the form is that of Turnus' father, Daunus, in which the grieving father exclaims:

O felix tam grato caedis Amata
successu laetare tuae; quae tanta dolorum
fugisti monimenta gravisque immania casus
pondera! Quid misero genitori plura paratis,
O superi? Natum rapuistis et Ardea flammis
consumpta in cinerem versa est; nunc aethera pennis
verberat. Ah me, Turne, tua plus caede cruento.
Deerat adhuc sors ista patris suprema senectae.
At vero quem saeva premunt et numina torquent,
illum incense odiis atque acrem concita in iram
funditus evertunt miserum. Sic fata rotant res.”
Dixerat, et multa illacrimans largo ora rigabat
perfusa imbre trahens duos e corde dolores,
qualis ubi incubuit validis Iovis unguibus ales
et parvum effuse divulsit sanguine fetum,
cerva videns miseri tristatur funere nati.

Ah, fortunate Amata, take joy in the welcome advent of your death. What reminders of suffering you

have escaped, what huge burdens of misfortune's weight! What more, gods above, are you contriving for a father who is sick at heart? You have seized my son, and Ardea, devoured by flames and turned to ash, now batters the sky with wings. Ah, Turnus, how I further torture myself from your slaughter! For your father the final destiny of old age still remains to come. But the poor creature whom the gods, kindled by hatred and driven by anger's violence, fiercely hound and torture, him they utterly ruin. Thus the fates revolve man's affairs."

Words at an end, he drenched his cheeks with a flood of tears, drawing forth woeful sorrows from his heart: as, when Jupiter's eagle has swooped down with mighty talons and has torn apart her small fawn, its blood gushing, the doe looks on, in sorrow at the death of her youngling.²⁵

We may compare this with an extract from Virgil's lament of Juturna:

alarum verbera nosco
letalemque sonum, nec fallunt iussa superba
Magnanimi Iovis. Haec pro virginitate reponit?
Quo vitam dedit aeternam? Cur mortis adempta est
condicio? Possem tantos finire dolores
nunc certe, et misero fratri comes ire per umbras!
Immortalis ego? Aut quicquam mihi dulce meorum
te sine, frater, erit?²⁶

Too well I know
the beat of your wings, the drumbeat of doom.
Nor do the proud commands of Jove escape me now,
our great, warm-hearted Jove. Are these his wages
for taking my virginity? Why did he grant me life
eternal – rob me of our one privilege, death?
Then, for a fact, I now could end this agony,
keep my brother company down among the shades.
Doomed to live forever? Without you, my brother,
what do I have still mine that's sweet to taste?²⁷

Naturally, any scene of a father mourning over the body of his dead son will be filled with pathos, and the mood might be similar between this lament and Juturna's for her doomed brother, but the

²⁵ Vegio, *Supplementum*, ll. 286-301, with Putnam's translation.

²⁶ *Aeneid* 12.877-883.

²⁷ Eagles translation, ll. 1016-1025.

significant point here, other than that Vegio included this devastating scene in his *Supplementum* at all, along with the other laments, is that Vegio presents it in the form of a lament, with the generic conventions and textual reminiscences that involves. In both, there is frantic questioning of a divine will which the speakers already know is against them: Daunus asks what more the gods are plotting against him, and Juturna sarcastically asks whether her eternal sorrow is Jove's recompense for taking her virginity. Daunus additionally speaks of mortals as victims of the gods, who 'fiercely hound and torture' and 'utterly ruin' them. Both speakers express the view that death would bring them peace from a life of suffering: Daunus dreads the 'destiny of old age', and Juturna is 'doomed to live forever', cut off from the 'one privilege, death'.

Daunus' lament also incorporates another feature of Juturna's: the conception of Jupiter as a predator. Whether on a nymph or a fawn, as himself or via an intermediary, this image is common to both, and is even recalled in Daunus' reference to Ardea 'batter[ing] the sky with wings', which could allude to the event which directly prompts Juturna's lament, namely Jupiter's sending of the Fury to beat Turnus' shield with its wings as a sign of his doom.²⁸ The swooping movement of Jupiter's eagle towards the fawn itself echoes the movement of this Fury towards Turnus.²⁹ Furthermore, this image might constitute another Virgilian echo from the *Aeneid*, the description of the hunting Ganymede being snatched up by Jupiter's eagle while his elderly guardians lament and vainly stretch their hands to the stars.³⁰ Again, we find the image of Jupiter as a predator, aided and symbolised by his eagle, and this enriches an already tightly-woven nexus of Virgilian allusions lamenting the loss of the young. The most essential characteristic of the form also applies to both Juturna's and Daunus' laments: narrative context is needed to appreciate the fact, but neither speech will be heard by those to whom they are addressed, nor will they have any influence whatsoever on future events.³¹ It is furthermore significant that the closest literary models, for subject matter rather than for form, are Homer's account (available to Vegio in Latin translation) of Priam mourning Hector, and Virgil's descriptions of Aeneas and Evander mourning Pallas,³² thus associating Turnus with more unambiguously virtuous heroes. Finally, the main model, Juturna's lament itself, appears in the *Aeneid* directly before its final moments depicting the death of Turnus, the event which had raised all the questions about the rightness of Aeneas' conduct and the extent of the epic's completeness in the first place. It is the final swan-song of other voices before the establishment of the fated order.

²⁸ *Aeneid* 12.843-871 (865-866).

²⁹ There may also be a similarity in image here to Jupiter's eagle snatching up Ganymede in *Aeneid* 5.252-257, but since there is no textual resemblance this should not be considered allusive.

³⁰ *Aeneid* 5. 252-257.

³¹ See, for this and for a general understanding of Virgilian pathos, Alessandro Barchiesi, 'The Lament of Juturna', pp. 95-113 in Alessandro Barchiesi, *Homeric Effects*.

³² Homer, *The Iliad*, translated by Robert Fagles, introduced by Bernard Knox (New York: Viking Penguin, 1990), 22.477-515; Virgil, *Aeneid*, 11.30-59, 139-168.

Overall, this comparison shows Vegio evoking the tragedy within epic through the use of Virgilian models, and it is, additionally, clear evidence of Vegio devoting space, in a way inspired by Virgil, to suffering and cost as well as to Aeneas' triumph.

Furthermore, this is only an extract; similar concerns, albeit not exclusively formal laments (though there are proportionally more speeches in Vegio than Virgil), make up approximately two thirds of the *Supplementum*, as the celebration sequence only really begins at line 402 (the whole poem numbers 630), and even after this it is interrupted. The latter fact complicates the long-standing and suggestive idea, recently reiterated by Emma Buckley, that the *Supplementum* is composed of a tragic, Iliadic first half (complete with laments), and a comedic, Odyssean second half.³³ Such a division could also be claimed for the *Aeneid* itself. In fact, however, these concerns seem not to be partitioned, but mingled throughout Vegio's work. Even the marriage between Aeneas and Lavinia (which, as Wilson-Okamura notes, shows Vegio's inheritance of the romance tradition in which the use of such unions as conclusions is a generic staple) is celebrated with a banquet which recalls that in Virgil's Dido episode (that tragic play set on the stage of Carthage), and in which Latinus' affectionate interactions with Iulus recall Dido's.³⁴ The point may be to show that this time around all will be well, but by recalling a situation which had tragic consequences, the prospects are not entirely reassuring.

Vegio also devotes space to pathos by incorporating other voices which sympathise with victims. Such voices are those of fictional characters drawn from narratives by Virgil and Ovid. In Virgil's poetry Vegio found Juturna, who speaks out against the fate or divine will that she – and the reader – knows will prevail. In Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, Vegio could see victims' perspectives expressed in the passage focusing on Ardea,³⁵ as well as modulations of Virgil's narrative which had the opposite, resolving effect, such as Aeneas' apotheosis.³⁶ Both are clear inspirations for Vegio in terms of, respectively, rhetorical form and *topoi*, and narrative focus and perspective. The Ardea vignette, itself a tale of destruction and loss, is one, as we saw, to which Daunus refers. It is surprising to note that in the twelfth-century Flemish Aeneas-romance composed by Heinrich von Veldeke, Turnus is given an encomium by Aeneas.³⁷ It is extraordinary that in the unfinished, 89-verse-long continuation of the *Aeneid* written in 1419 by one of Vegio's future friends associated with the Visconti court, Pier Candido Decembrio (who later playfully accused Vegio of plagiarising this work), the perspective is

³³ Cited by Putnam, p. 1.

³⁴ *Supplementum*, ll. 417-421 and 501-530 recall the Dido episode from the divine grandeur of Aeneas' appearance to the banquet and the retelling of the fall of Troy. The Latinus-Iulus moment occurs in ll. 501-508.

³⁵ Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, 14.654-661, in Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, Two Vols., translated by Frank Justus Miller (London: William Heinemann, 1951 reprint).

³⁶ Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, 14.662-692; also Servius, in his note on *Aeneid* 12.794, had explained 'indigites' as meaning a god created from a mortal. For more on the role of Ovid, see Joaquín Luis Navarro López, 'Ovidio virgilianizado el final del *Supplementum ad Aeneidos* librum XII de Maffeo Vegio', *Humanismo y pervivencia*, vol. 1 (1997), pp. 277-386.

³⁷ Putnam, pp. x-xi.

Italian, not Trojan, and entirely sorrowful and grief-stricken rather than celebratory.³⁸ The only voice we have is from the side of the vanquished. These details all provide serious evidence against the reading of the *Supplementum* (and the pre-modern reading of the *Aeneid* and the *Supplementum*) as exclusively praise of victorious Aeneas, blame of defeated Turnus, or resolution and celebration. Their presence is partly attributable to popular, pathos-filled romance visions of epic which, as we will see, shaped Vegio's *Supplementum*. With regard to how Vegio is using Virgil in a less mediated form, however, these passages show that he is using a literary form, the lament, characteristic of tragedy but found in examples from the epic *Aeneid*, alongside other tragic elements from that epic (and Ovid's). Moreover, he uses these Virgilian examples faithfully as allusive models to recreate a sense of the Virgilian attention to the suffering which is the cost of a cosmic order which must see Aeneas as victorious.³⁹

Naturally, Vegio also uses equivalent allusive techniques to evoke epic. The poem's subject-matter as a continuation or completion of the *Aeneid* signals this already of course, and the point just made about the cosmic order reflects a faithful allusion to the more overarching narrative sweeps of Virgil's epic, but we can also see the genre being evoked in minor details. Line 483's 'pignus amoris', as we saw in the introduction to this study, is a Virgilian phrase used to describe gift-giving, and we will see it used later by Vegio in similarly appropriate contexts in order to evoke with great fidelity this image of love. Line 561's 'laudibus orbem' will be discussed in more detail in the next chapter, but for now we can note that it adapts, while remaining true to line-position, one of Drances' flattering phrases from *Aeneid* 11.125, except that here, as in a later elegy (to be discussed in that chapter) which uses the same adaptation in an address to a patron, it seems to be a sincere expression of praise for a figure of epic grandeur. Line 583's 'leves [...] auras' we will also later see to have many Virgilian models, but it appears in typical epic scenes of departing goddesses, as it does here. Similarly, lines 593-619 recall the Venus-Jupiter counsel which appears in the *Aeneid* and which we will see reworked by Vegio again later in this chapter. Along with the Virgilian-inspired epic similes, another key device scattered throughout the *Supplementum*,⁴⁰ these show Vegio alluding to Virgil in more formulaic ways, from short phrases to more extended generic-specific forms, in order to evoke epic. These might be regarded as examples of what Barchiesi calls 'genre model' allusions.⁴¹

The most striking examples of such allusions, as observed by Putnam, appear at the very beginning of Vegio's poem, as its opening line recalls that of book 12 of the *Aeneid*, while Vegio's second and

³⁸ Rogerson, 'Re-evaluating Turnus', pp. 122-123.

³⁹ This understanding of the *Aeneid* as expressive of multiple perspectives within a cosmic framework is propounded most compellingly by Philip Hardie, *Virgil's Aeneid: Cosmos and Imperium* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989).

⁴⁰ *Supplementum*, ll. 6-7, 107-116, 220-231, 299-301.

⁴¹ Barchiesi, p. xvi and the entirety of chapter 4, 'The Death of Turnus: Genre Model and Example Model'.

third lines recall that Virgilian book's close.⁴² From the outset, then, Vegio evokes the final Virgilian book which his own book seeks to supplement.⁴³ Yet alongside this fidelity of setting, Vegio makes subtle alterations to his Virgilian model (in this case the end of book 12) which remove fury and blame from Aeneas in order to present him as calm, even when he's standing over Turnus, a position described in words ('Turnum super adsistens') which recall Turnus' standing over the body of Pallas, whom he has just killed.⁴⁴ The effect is that the arrogance of Turnus becomes Aeneas' matter-of-factness, collectedness, and lack of pride. Virgil is here being adapted, or even silently emended, in order to convey – through what, as Putnam says, is the speech Aeneas could have given before he killed Turnus – a message justifying what was a political and ethical decision. This message tells us that Turnus was wild, that he offended the gods, and that he broke a peace treaty, all of which in fact (according to Virgil's narrative) are true. Yet as we have seen, Turnus is also praised and mourned in the poem, and depicted as a victim of the gods.

Viewing these tragic and epic elements together, the former are thereby seen as playing a role in the attempt to understand and reconcile the divisions which had led the Italians and the Trojans to war. The loss is constantly acknowledged, because a period of grief is needed before it is possible to move forward, and due process of ceremony and burial, even or perhaps especially for Turnus, are followed through as part of the reestablishment of order. For Virgil to have allowed the pathos he so often expresses to have dominated the final moments of his narrative would have violated the epic tradition in which he was working. However, once Aeneas has – correctly in the view of this tradition as well as political wisdom – killed Turnus, such pathos, Vegio's work suggests, must be given its proper space. Vegio's 'correction' of Aeneas' behaviour at the start of the poem can also be read as an assimilation of Virgil's depiction of the character's fury into a new moral framework. This framework is both post-war, for the reasons just described, and also, unsurprisingly in the later worldview in which Vegio lived and wrote, distinctly Christian. If we look at the simile Vegio uses describing Aeneas as a mother hen,⁴⁵ we find no Virgilian source for it but do find a Christian one (Matthew 23:37). What the image conveys is that Aeneas and the mother hen are usually peaceful, but when their loved ones are threatened they can be roused to ferocity in order to protect them. The moment is even more Christological in that it can be rephrased as 'Greater love hath no man than this; that a man lay down his life for his friends' (John 15:13). And the friends here are transformed from Aeneas' Trojan comrades to the entire, united community of Latium, whom Aeneas reassures will now live in

⁴² Putnam, p. xix.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Putnam, pp. xx-xxi.

⁴⁵ *Supplementum*, ll. 107-116.

peace, with their customs, laws and peoples combining as one.⁴⁶ The purpose is this very progression away from war and towards stability.

Such a progression might account for why the courting between Aeneas and Lavinia, so extended in the medieval tradition,⁴⁷ is confined by Vegio to a moment when Aeneas first sees Lavinia and ‘—a wonder in the telling —, he paused enchanted at the sight, and to himself pitied the bitter chain of sufferings endured by Turnus’.⁴⁸ This moment reprises the Petrarchan *innamoramento* and the Boccaccian *amorosa visione*, but its Virgilian model again supports the idea of new political and moral possibilities, even exigencies. Here, Aeneas does not blame Turnus; rather, he identifies and sympathises with him, and the description even echoes Virgil’s image of Turnus himself being struck by Lavinia’s beauty.⁴⁹ The sympathy is there, but then the marriage and the banquet follow, and the uneasy echoes of the events in Carthage serve as a salutary reminder of, and warning against, the risk of a repeat performance of that tragic episode.

Finally, we can note that the trials of the Trojans are also considered, in moments such as when Aeneas tells Iulus that they have ‘discovered rest’ after being ‘driven by the vicissitudes of fate, guided through the vast crises of our wanderings’,⁵⁰ or when he ponders ‘the diverse perils now past and peace procured through dint of effort’.⁵¹ Such passages seem to give voice to both celebration and lamentation, the two tones of the work as a whole. As has already been noted, Vegio’s *Supplementum* is a resolution in many ways, and more than anything else it presents an image of a community moving forward in the aftermath of conflict. The argument here is that it is by no means a complete, uncomplicated or unambiguous resolution, and that this awareness of loss and suffering is essential to any attempt to come to terms with and move beyond the contemporary consequences of grievous historical realities.

To summarise, while Vegio does justify Aeneas’ actions in the *Supplementum* (to the extent that the hero is deified at the end),⁵² and advance a political and moral position, his stance is not one which seeks to silence debate or suppress complication.⁵³ It is not even the stance of a political theorist; as we will see, such ideas are current in Vegio’s poem because they were current in the worldview of his

⁴⁶ *Supplementum*, ll. 381-387. This unification is emphasised in its early stages in the welcome and celebration of ll. 402-414, and its future, more complete fulfilment is related in ll. 586-592.

⁴⁷ Putnam, pp. x-xi, and Wilson-Okamura on the romance tradition and marriage, cited earlier.

⁴⁸ *Supplementum*, ll. 468-471.

⁴⁹ *Aeneid* 12.64-70 (70).

⁵⁰ Vegio, *Supplementum*, ll. 75-78.

⁵¹ Vegio, *Supplementum*, ll. 103-104.

⁵² On allusions to Ovid and Virgil here, see Putnam, pp. xiv-xvii.

⁵³ See David Quint’s discussion of the hesitancy over triumphalism and the popularity of Lucanian epic in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries (*Epic and Empire: Politics and Generic Form from Virgil to Milton* (Princeton, NJ.: Princeton University Press, 1993), pp. 131-210).

society. Additionally, his poetic sensibility, or to put it another way his rhetorical practices and concerns based on a tightly woven web of Virgilian allusions, encouraged such dramatization of varying perspectives and precluded this possibility of presenting only a triumphalist tract. As Anthony Grafton phrases it, 'Vegio knew what he was doing. He saw, under the august surface of Virgil's text, the same tensions that have bothered and stimulated readers in recent times: the harm done by Aeneas in his travels, the innocents who suffered' and, something which almost all critics actually have noted, 'the strange ending [...] in which Aeneas savagely kills Turnus, and the latter's death scream is the last sound heard'.⁵⁴ Or, as L.B.T. Houghton puts it, somewhat more suggestively: 'Virgil's speeches, his pageantry and ceremonial, his memorable similes, his etymologies, his pathos, his sense of history - these are the favoured characteristics of Vegio's master as mirrored in his disciple's 'completion' of the fortunes of Aeneas'.⁵⁵ The most perceptive and thought-provoking elements here are the references to 'speeches', 'pageantry', 'ceremonial' and 'pathos'; as much as these have bases in Virgil's original texts, these also happen to be elements which survived into romance retellings of the *Aeneid* narrative, as we will go on to see in the final chapter. Vegio, in comparison with the version told in the *Roman d'Énéas*, for example, might have truncated the moment between Aeneas and Lavinia, but he retained the Virgilian moment which had inspired imitations by his *trecento* predecessors Petrarch and Boccaccio. Together with his fondness for pathos-filled speeches and ceremonies of sorrow and celebration, not to mention Christian similes, this all suggests a post-classical, and even contemporary, influence in Vegio's work which has not received enough attention.

III. Contextual Sources: Virgil in Genealogies, Tarot Cards and Marriage Chests

The *Supplementum* has never before been considered alongside contemporary responses to Virgil outside of the textual traditions of imitation, adaptation and commentary. The visual and material depictions and uses have been largely ignored. Yet when the ideas in the *Supplementum*, as it is interpreted in this study, are contextualised with those expressed through a variety of these other classicising and Virgilian-influenced sources from Vegio's cultural climate, they are seen to be widespread and understandable from an early *quattrocento* perspective. We can, in fact, use such sources to inform our interpretation of the *Supplementum*, so long as we approach such sources with interpretative care, and ensure they originate from as close to Vegio as possible. Accordingly, we can begin in the court of Filippo Maria Visconti, the duke of Milan whose state was centred on Pavia, the prestigious ancient city in which Vegio studied, and the castle of which housed the extensive Visconti

⁵⁴ Anthony Grafton, *Commerce with the Classics: Ancient Books and Renaissance Readers* (Ann Arbor, Michigan: Michigan University Press, 1997), p. 84.

⁵⁵ L.B.T. Houghton, 'Virgil the "Renaissance Man" and his Medieval Antecedents', pp. 89-104 of *The Proceedings of the Virgil Society* Volume xxvi, 2008, pp. 90-91.

library. It is also significant that Vegio knew figures in the court, such as Decembrio, mentioned earlier, and that he later (as we will see in the following chapter) attempted to use these contacts to gain patronage from Visconti. In the genealogy belatedly completed in 1403 by Michelino da Besozzo after the death of its dedicatee, Gian Galeazzo Visconti, Filippo's father, we see Filippo as 'Philippus Maria' (in his position of 'Comes Papie'), having ultimately descended, via Aeneas, from Anchises and Venus, who are depicted at the top of the tree being married by 'Iupiter Rex', perhaps an analogue for the Christian God.⁵⁶ Similar allegorical syncretism of the pagan and Christian appears in a genealogy in the *Semideus* manuscript produced by Catone Sacco, a jurist friend of Vegio's at Pavia, and dedicated to Filippo Maria Visconti himself. In this manuscript, the duke's ancestry is traced not only from Venus, Anchises and Aeneas, but also from his namesake the Virgin Mary.⁵⁷ These works show the *Aeneid* being used for panegyric purposes to aggrandise contemporary rulers, and relate only to the conclusive elements reprised by Vegio's poem, in which Aeneas and Lavinia are foretold to beget a line of kings.

In another product of the Visconti court, the first set of a series of playing cards (which in such early incarnations resemble what we would call Tarot cards) made by the same Michelino in 1424-25 according to designs by Marziano da Tortona,⁵⁸ we see something far more relevant to our previous discussion. The deck does not survive, but later decks made for the Visconti in the middle of the century are extant,⁵⁹ so we can have some idea of their aesthetic features. We do, though, have details about their designs and iconography, because Marziano also wrote an accompanying treatise explaining the cards' images and, most usefully of all, their significances. It seems that the cards depicted gods, heroes, emblematic animals and birds, arranged in suits for the edification of the duke. Marziano writes:

Consider therefore this game, most illustrious Duke, following a fourfold order, by which you may give attention to serious and important things, if you play at it. Sometimes it is pleasing to be thus

⁵⁶ Paris, BnF, MS lat. 5888, fol. 7 (r or v unspecified in catalogue record on Gallica): Michelino da Besozzo, genealogy illumination in Elogium on Giangaleazzo Visconti by Pietro da Castellato (1403), 376 x 242 mm, produced around Milan. See also <http://trionfi.com/visconti-genealogy> [accessed 31/03/2019].

⁵⁷ See Christopher de Hamel, *Remarkable Manuscripts*, pp. 479-481, 498-504.

⁵⁸ A letter written by Jacopo Antonio Marcello to Isabelle of Lorraine, in November 1449 (Paris, BnF, MS lat. 8745, fols 1^r – 32^v, available in microfilm on Gallica), describes this: 'Now I was aware that the most distinguished, illustrious Prince of Milan [Filippo Maria Visconti] had thought out a certain new and exquisite sort of triumphs ['trumps', cards] [...] They were indeed sixteen celestial princes and barons, to which were added four kings presiding over different kinds of birds. Afterward he gave the plan of this entire game to someone most learned among men, most expert in both the stars and the heaven, to be set up and described [...] he summoned Michelino [da Besozzo], the finest painter, another Polycleitus of our time, that he should paint this entire game with greatest artifice and ornament.' (translation adapted from that of Ross Gregory Caldwell, first published in *The Playing Card* vol. 33, no. 2 (October-December 2004), pp. 111-126). For the context of the production and transmission of the cards and letter, see Oren Margolis, *The Politics of Culture in Quattrocento Europe: René of Anjou in Italy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), pp. 114-115.

⁵⁹ Such as the Pierpont-Morgan Bergamo and Cary-Yale decks. Cards from the latter can be viewed in digitised form on the Yale website for the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library <https://brbl-dl.library.yale.edu/vufind/Search/Results?lookfor=Visconti+Tarot&type=tag> [accessed 31/03/2019].

diverted, and you will be delighted therein. And it is more pleasing, since through the keenness of your own acumen you dedicated several to be noted and celebrated Heroes, renowned models of virtue, whom mighty greatness made gods, as well as to ensure their remembrance by posterity. Thus by observation of them, be ready to be aroused to virtue [...]

Indeed the first order, of virtues, is certain: Jupiter, Apollo, Mercury and Hercules. The second of riches, Juno, Neptune, Mars and Aeolus. The third of virginity or continence: from Pallas, Diana, Vesta and Daphne. The fourth however is of pleasure: Venus, Bacchus, Ceres and Cupid. And subordinated to these are four kinds of birds, being suited by similarity. Thus to the rank of virtues, the Eagle; of riches, the Phoenix; of continence, the Turtledove; of pleasure, the Dove.⁶⁰

We therefore have another panegyric response, which additionally fashions the duke as a cultivator of learning and a ruler of magnificence through the luxurious quality of the cards. Yet we also have a connected, moralistic use of the classics: the lessons of the ancients can be used as guides to virtue in the present, and the reward for such ‘noted and celebrated heroes, renowned models of virtue’ will be, as in the *Supplementum*, deification, as their ‘mighty greatness made gods’ out of them, and granted them ‘remembrance by posterity’. This is the usual, most basic moralistic scheme to be found in the *quattrocento*, and may even be derived from allegorical works available to Marziano in the ducal library at Pavia.⁶¹

Looking at Marziano’s treatise in more detail, however, enables us to nuance this straightforwardly moralistic picture and see its similarities to the one Vegio presents in the *Supplementum*. Which kinds of action, after all, qualify as virtuous conduct? When writing about Jupiter, Marziano explains – in a manner which incidentally exhibits another, euhemeristic interpretation of the classics current in the period – that he

was the King of Athens while antiquity was still rough and wild. For the race of man, there was yet no justice, and man followed savage rites; Jupiter established the first laws. And he instituted matrimony, and banished the abominable feasts on human flesh, and forbade them by strict rigour. [...] He is seated on a starry throne, with regal emblems. Four stars appearing above, attend him, while by the right part a splendour of right reason of the conduct of humanity, in which customs he instructed ignorant men, the first leaders of the state. At the left that light by which he published the inviolable laws and he decreed the society which would be cherished by humankind, being guarded by equality. On the lower right side appears a burning star like Mars, which he lets loose frightfully if scorned, but especially so that the republic may be preserved. How the illustrious example of Jupiter shines for men! Who for the sake of sacred worship happily defeated the blaspheming Giants by war. To the left, a thunderbolt, which at one time he often used to protect his sacred laws against so many lustful and violent men.⁶²

⁶⁰ Marziano da Tortona’s treatise; translation adapted from Caldwell’s.

⁶¹ Even if the only such allegorical work available in the Visconti library might have been Fulgentius. See Pellegrin footnote, above.

⁶² Marziano da Tortona’s treatise; translation adapted from Caldwell’s.

This vividly sets out the arrangement of images on the card, as well as telling us that the same focuses on societal stability, justice, the maintenance of laws, the equality of citizens and the preservation of the public good (all responsibilities of ‘the leaders of the state’) are to be found in Vegio’s wider context too, and in a document produced in the court of his local duke four or five years before Vegio wrote his poem. Furthermore, this order is divine, instituted by Jove, who in order to preserve it and the human society it serves, is willing to let loose his ‘burning star’ and ‘thunderbolt’ against the ‘blaspheming Giants’ and ‘violent and lustful men’ who violate it.

It is impossible not to be reminded here of Turnus, just as the commitment to maintaining order and equality recalls Aeneas’ determination, supported by the gods, to defeat Turnus and unite former enemies.⁶³ By Virgilian design (and familiarity with Virgil would have shaped how viewers saw these images), Aeneas represents the order and duty symbolised here and in the *Aeneid* by Jupiter, whereas Turnus and the Titans (and elsewhere Juno too) symbolise the potential for gigantomachy and chaos.⁶⁴ The emphasis on war as a means of bringing peace, which appears in Marziano’s account of Hercules too (‘having killed monstrosities of wild beasts, he facilitated a peaceful world, opened the way to heaven, and filled the thirteenth place among the gods’) also echoes Anchises’ words to Aeneas: ‘break the proud in war’.⁶⁵ The accompanying instruction to ‘spare the defeated’, in this light, is seen not to apply to figures such as the giants or Turnus, who are incurably proud and destructive, contemptuous of every treaty; they cannot be the defeated until they are dead and beyond sparing. Yet perhaps at this point, as Vegio shows us, they can be pitied, especially if, as they are in Vegio’s laments and their classical models, they are depicted as victims of Fate and the gods. To summarise, mythological figures which feature, similarly characterised, in Virgil’s widely- and deeply-read text are being used here in a moralistic manner which legitimises the authority of temporal princes, but which does so in a way which we find echoed in Vegio’s responses to the problem in his Virgilian sequel of how to effect a transition from unstable war to secure peace.

We find a similarly ethical use of Virgil, albeit transposed to a primarily more familial setting, in the *cassone* panels made in the mid-*quattrocento* in Florence by the workshop of Apollonio di Giovanni di Tomaso (1416-65).⁶⁶ *Cassoni* (marriage chests) were made in pairs and carried, transporting the clothing and precious objects they contained, during marriage processions from the house of the bride’s father to that of her new husband.⁶⁷ Their images and messages were therefore public, and for

⁶³ There is another close parallel in Vegio when Aeneas and Latinus tell old tales, one of which concerns Saturn’s instituting of humankind’s rights and laws (ll. 516-523).

⁶⁴ Hardie, *Virgil’s Aeneid: Cosmos and Imperium*.

⁶⁵ *Aeneid* 6.851-853; in Fagles’ translation, 6.981-984.

⁶⁶ See the brief profile on him given by the Victoria and Albert Museum, London <http://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O14938/the-continenence-of-scipio-oil-painting-apollonio-di-giovanni/> [accessed 31/03/2019].

⁶⁷ See previous footnote, but for Apollonio, his life, works and times more generally and fully, see Ellen Callman, *Apollonio di Giovanni* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1974).

this reason, together with the context of marriage, it has been suggested that their purpose was to encourage husband and wife to pursue virtue in this new stage of their life, and to publicise this intent. Gombrich has also suggested an additional purpose: their final destination was the domestic space shared by the newly married couple, often in the bedroom at the foot of the bed, and the inner lids of some examples (with depictions of nudes, or Helen and Paris, etc. as opposed to, e.g. decorative vine leaf designs) seem intended for medical purposes, lucky charms which, when seen during pregnancy, would produce a healthy, beautiful child.⁶⁸

Subjects for depiction on the panels of such chests were often chivalric romance or classical narratives, or a hybrid of both, which is evidenced in these examples of chivalric representations of Virgilian episodes which situated them in contemporary settings and costumes. We often see this too in Apollonio's illuminations for the Riccardiana Virgil, which sometimes resemble his *cassone* scenes and which do things like represent the Pantheon (complete with a Christian monstrance) in a scene depicting the fall of Troy, in order to make the Anatolian city an Old Rome in order to reinforce the idea that Rome is a New Troy, or show a banquet scene in what, in costume, musical instruments and probably even architecture, can only be described as *quattrocento* style (Fig. 1).⁶⁹ In one of a pair of *cassone* panels now in New Haven, Aeneas reassuring his men after they land in Carthage by telling them about how Rome will one day rise, the great city is represented complete with the Pantheon (again), Trajan's column, the Ara Coeli, and the Castel Sant'Angelo (Fig. 2).⁷⁰ It can be imagined that these details made the scenes more accessible to their viewers, encouraging them to regard as more attainable the emulation of both the cultures and virtues depicted within them.

Most relevant for us, however, is a panel depicting, in the centre, Aeneas killing Turnus while everyone looks on, before the conquering hero, on the right-hand side of the image, is married to Lavinia (Fig. 3).⁷¹ All the contemporising alterations feature here too, and Vegio's personal presence

⁶⁸ E. H. Gombrich, 'Apollonio di Giovanni: A Florentine Cassone Workshop Seen through the Eyes of a Humanist Poet', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, Vol. 18, No. 1/2 (Jan. - Jun., 1955), pp. 16-34 (p. 27). The same principle was true of the naked male figures on *spalliere* (e.g. Botticelli's *Venus and Mars*) which were believed to cause women to give birth to male heirs. For more on this kind of research into Italian Renaissance domestic interiors and interactions with objects, see Marta Ajmar-Wollheim and Flora Dennis (eds.), *At Home in Renaissance Italy* (London: V&A Publications, 2006) and Luke Syson and Dora Thornton, *Objects of Virtue: Art in Renaissance Italy* (London: British Museum Press, 2004). For the receptions of Homer on such objects and their roles within the social sphere, see Michelle Zerba, 'Renaissance Homer and Wedding Chests: The *Odyssey* at the Crossroads of Humanist Learning, the Visual Vernacular, and the Socialization of Bodies', *Renaissance Quarterly*, 70 (3), 831-861 (2017).

⁶⁹ Florence, Biblioteca Riccardiana, MS. Ricc. 492.

⁷⁰ Apollonio di Giovanni, 'Aeneas at Carthage', c. 1450, tempera on panel, 49.7 x 161.9 x 5.4 cm, produced in Florence, now in New Haven, Yale University Art Gallery <https://artgallery.yale.edu/collections/objects/292> [accessed 31/03/2019].

⁷¹ Apollonio di Giovanni, 'Aeneas meets Latinus King of Laurentum, Alliance of Aeneas, Pallas and Evander, Defeat of Turnus, Marriage of Aeneas and Lavinia', c. 1435-1465, [tempera on] panel, 44.2 x 132.2 cm, Florentine, now in Écouen, Musée National de la Renaissance <http://catalogo.fondazionezeri.unibo.it/scheda/opera/14886/Apollonio%20di%20Giovanni%2C%20Enea%20inc%20on%20Latino%20re%20di%20Laurento%2C%20Alleanza%20di%20Enea%2C%20Pallante%20e%20Evandro%2C%20Disfatta%20di%20Turno%2C%20Nozze%20di%20Enea%20e%20Lavinia>. For a coloured image,

in Florence in the eminent literary and political circles of the late 1430s and early 1440s, in addition to the popularity of his works among such circles across Italy, make it probable that Apollonio knew the *Supplementum* and used it as a source. Having said this, the influence of the *Supplementum* is not necessary to make this a valuable source for us: even if the marriage scene was inspired only by suggestions from earlier in the *Aeneid*, it offers evidence of how this fictional event was regarded by contemporary craftsmen and viewers. Like the other sources here, it therefore helps us to contextualise and make sense of Vegio's own responses to Virgil in his work.

Several critics (to be discussed shortly) have commented on these panels in relation to ways of reading the *Aeneid* and Vegio's *Supplementum* in the *quattrocento*, going into great detail about the divergences in plot and the possible reasons for them. All of these critics, however, albeit to varying extents, make the same argument we have seen too often in the course of this discussion, maintaining the influence of allegorical or straightforwardly moralistic modes of interpretation. The point made earlier, that the updating of the classical or classicising narratives might enable them to be utilised more readily as models for virtue, is seen as a key element in these arguments, but it should be said also that the updating might be less due to the influence of allegorical and moralistic commentaries on and interpretations of Virgil than on a tradition of romance adaptations of classical texts and the political and social conditions of early *quattrocento* Italy, which had, after all, been reflected in the popularity of Boccaccio's *novelle* as *cassone* subjects earlier in the century.⁷² In other words, this was simply how craftsmen of this period depicted such narratives, whether ancient or modern. The popularity of these tales and the reality of the social context resulted in classical and classicising narratives becoming framed in contemporary values, costumes and customs, focused on military skill, chivalric honour, tournaments over damsels and subsequent marriage. The combat between Aeneas and Turnus is presented in exactly this way, as they are surrounded by onlooking soldiers and viewed from above by spectators gazing from windows hung with draperies, and the marriage, conducted in an intimate space hung with tapestries, would have been similarly familiar to a *quattrocento* viewer. The reason the marriage described by Vegio was selected for depiction was undoubtedly because, as a marriage (especially one which established the Roman people, the alleged ancestors of the Italian couples commissioning such *cassone* panels), it was ideal for celebrating a wedding and being part of the occasion's ceremony and rhetoric of virtue.

see https://art.rmngp.fr/fr/library/artworks/di-giovanni-apollonio_panneau-de-cassone-l-histoire-d-enee_peinture-sur-bois_1460 [all accessed 31/03/2019]. Patron unknown.

⁷² See, for example, the *cassone* with scenes from the *Decameron* made in the studio of Giovanni Toscani, c. 1420-1425, pine, gesso, gilt, tempera on panel, front painted panel with cusped border: 41.90 x 142.00 cm; *cassone*: 82.50 x 195.50 x 68.60 cm, made in Tuscany, now in Edinburgh, Scottish National Gallery <https://www.nationalgalleries.org/art-and-artists/5518/cassone-scenes-boccaccios-decameron> [accessed 31/03/2019]. Vernacular romance traditions also shaped Douglas' 1513 translation of Vegio's poem, as we will see in chapter six.

The Aeneas-Turnus-Lavinia panel nonetheless, like all *cassoni*, carries a moral message and values for the couple's emulation, but again it must be analysed more closely if it is to contribute to our contextualised analysis of the *Supplementum*. The panel's emphasis on wifely submission noted by Franklin (and to significantly lesser extents by Morrison and Callmann) and implicit in Lavinia's taking of Aeneas' hand in the marriage ceremony on the right-hand side of the panel, is a key part of the object's moral message.⁷³ Indeed, even as *cassone* panels, such a message was implicit in them as properties and symbols of the marriage. What Franklin does not note is that the obligation of the husband, equally founded on Biblical vows and the social practice of this period and many others, to love and be willing to defend his wife, and by extension his family and community, often in war and at the risk of his own life, for the sake of social stability and peace, is the other side of the (not entirely financial) marriage contract.⁷⁴ This is shown clearly by Aeneas around the mid-point of the panel as, watched by Latinus, Lavinia and the wider community, he defeats and kills Turnus. The moral message is that society, at the level of the family outwards, must be defended, and that destructive elements which threaten this stability must be restrained or, if they cannot be restrained, killed. Such a code of ethics, when shared by such a well-functioning community, has practical uses which ensure that community's continued survival and welfare. This is a universal anthropological truth, as communities without such codes self-destruct or are destroyed. In the harsh, war-torn world of the *quattrocento*, this truth must have been all too close to home.⁷⁵ This panel, when viewed alongside the other evidence considered so far, is seen to express all of this.

As for the choice of the storm and meeting in Carthage as subjects for the New Haven panels (for the storm panel, see Fig. 4),⁷⁶ messages can again easily be suggested (though necessarily more tentatively) by thinking within this conceptual framework. The storm, a conflict between the chaotic force of Juno and the governance of Neptune (and the will of Fate or Jove) could represent the perils of life in the world, and the subsequent look at a (soon to be amorous) encounter between two figures, Aeneas and Dido, who are each committed to providing for their people through building a city and a community, might have been seen as a good model for a newly married couple's emulation as they (or their families) pooled resources and made a new home and family. The fact that the Carthage panel

⁷³ Margaret Franklin, 'Vergil and the "Femina Furens": Reading the "Aeneid" in Renaissance "Cassone" Paintings', *Vergilius* (1959-), Vol. 60 (2014), pp. 127-144; Callman, *Apollonio di Giovanni*; Jennifer Klein Morrison, 'Apollonio di Giovanni's "Aeneid" Cassoni and the Virgil Commentators', *Yale University Art Gallery Bulletin*, (1992), pp. 26-47.

⁷⁴ Ephesians 5:25 ('Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it') and 5:28-31 ('So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies [...] even as the Lord the church: For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they shall be one flesh.')

⁷⁵ This is seen later in the century in the context of Venetian orations on the threat posed by the Turks, in which *concordia* is the prevailing societal virtue; see Amos Edelheit, *Ficino, Pico and Savonarola: The Evolution of Humanist Theology 1461/2 – 1498* (Leiden: Brill, 2008), pp. 134-135.

⁷⁶ The other panel in the pair, matching that depicting the arrival in Carthage, is a storm scene, 'The Shipwreck of Aeneas', c. 1450-60, tempera on panel, framed: 50.17 x 164.15 x 6.03 cm, made in Florence, now in New Haven, Yale University Art Gallery <https://artgallery.yale.edu/collections/objects/291> [accessed 31/03/2019].

depicts the construction of the city, complete with cranes and workmen, supports this interpretation. Additionally, the fact that Juno, goddess of marriage, instigated the storm (and bribed Aeolus to release the winds by promising him a nymph in marriage), might provide another obvious if problematically turbulent relevance. Likewise, the consequences of the relationship between Dido and Aeneas, who naturally are also depicted, were dire, and their affair was morally problematic since they were never formally married. These events, however, are conveniently elided in the panels. Yet even if such improprieties were in the minds of viewers, perhaps they could serve as negative examples to avoid, or prompts to do better, just as the disorder and destruction of the storm on the one panel gives way to the order and construction depicted on the other. Again, the messages are moralistic, and may even contain hints of allegory, but they are also capable of making pragmatic sense when viewed in a manner more open to understanding the worldview of *quattrocento* (and, more broadly, pre-modern) society. The visual and material sources here therefore demonstrate that the emphases and concerns inherent in Vegio's particular uses of Virgil in the *Supplementum* are amply evidenced, in various ways and to differing degrees, by other aspects of his wider culture. A fruitful further direction for research in this area would be to analyse how Vegio and his contemporaries might have responded to similarly moralistic depictions of non-Virgilian themes. Oren Margolis has noted that frescoes (now lost) painted by Masolino in 1432 on the wall of the *sala theatri* in Cardinal Giordano Orsini's Roman palace depicted historical subjects and provided a setting for humanists associated with Eugenius IV (before his enforced exile from the city) to dress in ancient costume and discuss the conduct of the historical figures depicted. Given that Vegio associated with these humanists, who included Lorenzo Valla, Leonardo Bruni and Poggio Bracciolini, and shortly afterwards – as we will see – joined Eugenius' Curia, it can be imagined that such images (now recoverable only through later descriptions), and the humanist responses to them, might provide similar evidence of the worldviews through which Vegio and his contemporaries regarded such artefacts of visual and literary culture.⁷⁷

To summarise, in the *Supplementum* we have seen faithful allusions to Virgilian epic and tragic forms, from the level of short phrase and line-position to those of the simile, the heavenly dialogue, and the tragic lament. As we noted before, these could be labelled, using Barchiesi's shorthand, as allusions to or uses of 'genre models'. We have also seen some manipulations of larger Virgilian narrative content which, while preserving a Virgilian focus on cost and risk as well as triumph, present Vegio's Aeneas as more conformable to the ideas of the just and effective ruler current in Vegio's society, especially the milieu in and around the Visconti court. Though it is inadvisable to insist upon specific historical events as models for literary treatments, it is suggestive that the use of such decisive and violent

⁷⁷ See Oren Margolis, *The Politics of Culture in Quattrocento Europe: René of Anjou in Italy*, p. 113, drawing on the work of R. L. Mode, W. A. Simpson and S. T. Velli. Other visual depictions worthy of investigation include the Neapolitan images of Aeneas, Dido and Lavinia discussed by Giuseppe De Blasiis in 'Immagini di uomini famosi in una sala di Castelnuovo attribuite a Giotto', *Napoli nobilissima* Bd. 9 (1900), pp. 65-67.

action as Aeneas' killing of Turnus in defence of the maintenance of power and stability in a politically hostile region seems to have characterised the early Visconti state in which Vegio lived and wrote, as the Visconti dukes assumed an authority above the law in order to consolidate and maintain their governing position. This use of 'plenitude of power' was even, by turns, defended, debated and challenged by the legal scholars at Vegio's own University of Pavia, and figures close to Vegio, such as Sacco, were important figures who politically represented the university and the city in key moments.⁷⁸ This is a suggestive direction for future research. In short, Vegio's response to Virgil here is stylistically and generically imitative, and informed by contemporary social and political thought.

Having said this, it must be emphasised that Vegio's desire to showcase his imitative literary abilities was foremost as a motivation here; it is hardly likely, despite Vegio's clear concern with the political and ethical dilemmas discussed, that the *Supplementum* was composed as a tract or textbook.

Supporting this view is that contemporary praise of it focused only on its Virgilian style. Nonetheless, these widespread theories about governance and society necessarily informed the worldview with and through which Vegio read the *Aeneid* and wrote his continuation of it, and they amply explain why Turnus, for the good of peace and the wider community, needed to die. But where does this leave Vegio's tragedy-influenced revival of Virgilian pathos, if there seems little sympathy for the blasphemous disturbers of the peace in Marziano's treatise? It seems that some form of it can be found in that same concern for the common weal, which would require that the suffering and grief endured by the formerly warring peoples must be acknowledged and allowed to run its course, at least for a time, so that they can both move on into unified peace. The unpleasant facts must initially be faced. In turn, this might explain Aeneas' impatience, noted by Rogerson, with Drances' flattering speeches which praise the new victor and insist on condemning Turnus: to the new victor especially, these epideictic, monochromatically moralistic efforts seem, at best, a waste of time.⁷⁹

Situating these ideas on a wider scale, such evidence contests the prevailing view, adumbrated by Kallendorf, that Vegio's moral vision in this work is 'black and white',⁸⁰ as well as his idea that even if Vegio could have had a latent awareness of these complicating elements, it was impossible in the *quattrocento* to express such elements except in the form of binaries.⁸¹ This chapter's argument, additionally, can be supported by Wilson-Okamura's tracing of the same justifications for Aeneas' conduct, combined with presentations of Turnus as in some sense a tragic hero, into the epics and criticism produced in the sixteenth century. This again suggests the foundational nature of these theories of governance and order in Renaissance society, especially in *quattro-* and *cinquecento* Italy,

⁷⁸ Jane Black, *Absolutism in Renaissance Milan*; Paolo Rosso, 'Catone Sacco e l'umanesimo Lombardo: notizie e documenti', *Bollettino della Società Pavese di Storia Patria*, 52 (2000), pp. 31-99; Zanino Volta, 'Catone Sacco e il collegio di sua fondazione in Pavia', *Archivio storico lombardo*, 18 (1891), pp. 562-600.

⁷⁹ Rogerson, 'Re-evaluating Turnus', pp. 131-134.

⁸⁰ Kallendorf, *In Praise of Aeneas*, p. 127.

⁸¹ Kallendorf, *The Other Virgil*, pp. 41-42.

and their importance in shaping the responses to Virgil formulated in such contexts. Furthermore, his discussion of this makes no mention of Vegio's work; the evidence is completely independent.⁸² Of particular note in this *cinquecento* context are the 'romance epics', such as Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso*, in which, as Colin Burrow has shown, Virgilian *pietas* becomes the pity, 'the key chivalric virtue', of Italian *pietà*.⁸³ This is a suggestive idea, but as we have seen in this chapter (and as will be discussed further in the final one), Virgil's *pietas* might well have involved pity originally, with the concept surviving in the romances of the post-classical period to be revitalised by the newly classicising (and therefore hybrid) works of Vegio in the fifteenth, and Ariosto and Spenser in the sixteenth, centuries. In the *Faerie Queene*, we can see the influence of both Vegio and these later Italian 'epic romances' in Spenser's moral ambivalence towards the characters of Aeneas and Turnus.⁸⁴ Another effect of this observation, of course, as well as supporting the points made here about political conditions, is to highlight Vegio's importance as an early *quattrocento* pioneer of this particular style of engagement with Virgil. This will be discussed further in the final two chapters.

Astyanax

A similar combination of pathos-filled epic imitation and exploration of the responsible uses of power to that investigated above, can be seen in Vegio's *Astyanax*, completed in Pavia in June 1430, less than two years after the *Supplementum*. Drawing mostly on Seneca's *Troades*,⁸⁵ this poem narrates the fate of Hector's young son in the aftermath of the fall of Troy, when the Greeks, inspired by the concerns of Agamemnon and, especially, the rhetoric of Ulysses, and fearful of the boy growing up to take revenge on them, force him to fall to his death from the highest tower of the citadel. Again, the Virgilian allusions made by Vegio are a combination of the generic and formulaic, signalling epic and tragedy, and the more specific, creating associations between the characters of this new work and Virgil's Aeneas and Turnus. We will focus here on the latter kind of allusion, but an instance of a phrase-based version of the former kind is the opening line's 'Musa, refer quae causa' and the fourth and fifth lines' 'Tu, diva, canentem/ prosequare', which are modelled on *Aeneid* 1.8 ('Musa, mihi causas memora') and 7.41 ('tu vatem, tu, diva, mone. Dicam horrida bella'), respectively. Needless to say, the invocation of the Muse is essential to any epic enterprise, and Vegio does not neglect it. It is a faithful, if rather non-specific, allusion to a Virgilian model which situates the *Astyanax* in the tradition of the epic or epyllion. Putnam has identified these and the other key allusive moments in

⁸² Wilson-Okamura, pp. 192-199 (especially pp. 192-194).

⁸³ Colin Burrow, *Epic Romance: Homer to Milton* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), pp. 52-75 (especially pp. 57-63).

⁸⁴ Svensson, *passim*.

⁸⁵ As Giorgio Dossena discusses in 'La poesia di un classicista', pp. 13-51 of Corvi (ed.), *Studi su Maffeo Vegio* (pp. 36-41).

this poem,⁸⁶ and the investigation here rests on his findings, but some of his analyses and suggestions about their wider significance should and will nonetheless be taxonomized, disputed, augmented and analysed in more detailed relation to the material seen so far in this chapter.

Moving to more substantial examples of the epic-signalling type of allusion, we see Vegio showing equal fidelity in his recollection of Virgilian models, but these models take the form of short narrative sequences, evoking scenes and characters for the purpose of situating the text in a generic tradition. For example, in what Putnam notes is the main, lengthy departure Vegio makes from the Senecan text which otherwise provides his narrative, there comes an original movement from human to divine affairs in which Venus begs Jupiter to intercede on Astyanax's behalf, sparing him from the Greeks. The clear origin of this is the similar scene between the two divinities in the first book of the *Aeneid*, and even the order of who speaks when in the exchange is preserved (Venus in lines 86-103, to be compared with *Aeneid* 1.229-53; Jupiter in lines 105-121, to be compared with *Aeneid* 1.257-97). Jupiter, citing the Fates' decrees, answers that he is powerless to help, but he then, in consolation (and in another allusion by Vegio to the *Aeneid* more broadly), reassures Venus that Aeneas will survive to found Rome, so that the Trojans will still, in a sense, live on.⁸⁷ This innovation serves the same purpose as the phrases just seen, denoting the epic genre, but it does so through importing a set piece sequence of events, in this case the divine dialogue, a kind of formula-through-action. This dialogue in turn spurs Venus to take matters into her own hands, and she decides to appear, in the guise of Hector, to Andromacha, telling her to hide the boy Astyanax somewhere safely away from the Greeks (136-41). Although Seneca's *Troades* has Andromacha relate a similar experience (452-56), the immediate model here is instantly recognised to be Virgilian, the moment when Hector's bloody and scarred ghost appears to Aeneas and tells him to flee Troy (*Aeneid* 2.268-97).⁸⁸ The allusive practice is similar, consisting of a specific reference to a Virgilian event, while participating, as the previous example did, in a *topos* frequent in epic. In this case, the *topos* is the descent of a god or goddess from a conversation in the heavens to intervene in human affairs on earth.

As well as epic, Vegio shows a commitment to the tragic, as we saw also in the lament of Daunus in the *Supplementum* (and as we will see in the speeches of Medea and especially Aeetes in the *Golden Fleece*). Towards the end of the *Astyanax*, once the boy has fallen to his death, Andromacha's final, grieving speech offers a fine example of the form, and highlights just how horrific and affecting the poem's main event actually is.⁸⁹ Vegio introduces her speech with an allusion to *Aeneid* 9.474, in which Rumor tells Euryalus' mother of her son's demise (her speech occurs in lines 481-97).⁹⁰ In addition to this, the tragic lament seems to have been an especially important form to Vegio's

⁸⁶ Putnam, 'Introduction', p. xxv; footnotes will record the sources of his other observations as they are cited.

⁸⁷ For all these points, see Putnam, pp. xxv-xxvi, liii.

⁸⁸ Noted by Putnam, p. xxv.

⁸⁹ *Astyanax*, ll. 251-310.

⁹⁰ Putnam's observation, p. xxv.

contemporaries: in the poem's dedicatory verse, Vegio notes (alongside claims to immortalise the recipient which we will encounter again in the next chapter) that the reader can expect from this work 'a son's death, cause for mourning' and 'the grief of a mother' (l. 5). The subject matter's sensational nature would doubtless be a source of appeal, as would its status as a rhetorical composition, but the other advertisement which Vegio makes immediately after these two, that the reader will also find 'the unjust decrees of the people of Greece' (l. 6), suggests, by making a judgement about the event of Astyanax's death, that the pathos might, as we suggested in the case of the *Supplementum*, serve a moral purpose. Readers, in other words, might value the text as an edifying guide to emotional education which could lead them to make more just political decisions.

Moving onto the second type of allusion mentioned above, we again find short narrative sequences, but the evocation of scenes and characters is effected not in order to signify epic, but in order to draw parallels between Vegio's characters and Virgil's. This kind of allusion is similar to Barchiesi's 'example model', yet not identical to it; here, the connections such allusions evoke are consistently reiterated, or rather the allusions form a series of echoes of moments from the model text which overlap with one another, producing a more prolonged effect. We will see this showcased later in the *Golden Fleece*. In the *Astyanax*, the parallels such allusions draw between characters do not reach the same proximity to allusive identification between those characters, even if they tend in this direction. The echoes are less frequent, or resonate for longer.

An example begins to illustrate the technique. In a simile likening Ulysses talking with Andromacha to a wolf lying in ambush before a sheepfold, cogitating upon how to snatch a lamb from its mother's udders (150-154), Vegio is intensifying a Virgilian simile describing Turnus besieging the Trojan camp.⁹¹ Yet in Virgil, the wolf lying in wait beside the sheepfold rages in torment as he waits, starving, for inspiration to strike; in Vegio's version, Ulysses is driven by no such viscerally-described need, he is presented as calmer and more calculating, and his desire to tear the young from its mother is stated more explicitly. As Putnam phrases it, Vegio's Ulysses has a 'stealthiness and innate savagery' absent from Virgil's Turnus.⁹² It is an even more ingenious detail that this calculating Ulysses is reminiscent of the Homeric Odysseus, as in book six of the *Odyssey* the naked hero tries to decide how best to approach Nausicaa and ask her for aid. Vegio returns us to the moment which might have inspired Virgil's own simile. In typological terms, Vegio's allusion is faithful but applies the subject of the model to a new character.

For us, however, the most intriguing aspect of the allusion, given the interpretative and moral problems we have already seen, is that it relates to Turnus. A comparable instance likens Astyanax to a bird pursued by a hawk, alluding slightly to the simile which compares Aeneas tracking Turnus to a

⁹¹ *Aeneid* 9.59-66.

⁹² Putnam, p. xxvi; whole analysis here and on p. liii.

hound chasing a deer in *Aeneid* 12.749-57. Putnam notes that the line preceding the simile in Virgil's text, 'insequitur trepidique pedem pede fervidus urget' (12.748) is echoed by Vegio's 'cum volucrum insequitur curvis trepidam unguibus urgens' (229), a fact which justifies the attribution of allusion by making the resemblance closer than merely a shared theme of pursuit.⁹³ The effect is again to connect Vegio's characters with Virgil's, but this simile reverses the connections seen in the previous example, making Ulysses resemble Aeneas while Astyanax becomes Turnus, in a similar way to that in which Virgil's own Aeneas and Turnus resemble, by myriad allusive turns, both Achilles and Hector.⁹⁴

Altogether, this sort of specificity of allusion, shorn of wider generic associations and significances, works to forge links between characters, but the complex and even seemingly contradictory analogues created through this process result in an equally convoluted moral situation. The lament of Andromacha, the inherent pathos of Astyanax's death, and the role of Ulysses in causing it, as the dedication suggests, clearly demand to be discussed in moral terms, and the analogies drawn between the two characters, Aeneas and Turnus, whose relations, as we have already seen, raise the most serious moral and interpretative questions, only underline this need.

A final allusion makes this nexus explicit: after lecturing to Ulysses about the vicissitudes of Fate and the need to be restrained in the exercise of a victor's power (207-16), Andromacha tells Astyanax to emerge from his hiding place in his father's tomb, and to step forward as a humble suppliant, begging mercy of Ulysses (217-18). There are Virgilian models for this: Vegio's 'per spes Telemachi' in Andromacha's appeal to Ulysses that he imagine himself into her position, defending his own son (199), echoes the plea of Palinurus' shade to Aeneas in which, begging for burial, he invokes the rising hope which Aeneas places in his son Iulus ('per spes surgentis Iuli', *Aeneid* 6. 364). There might be an element of foreshadowing here which also casts shade on Andromacha's optimism: in Virgil's epic, the Sibyl swiftly disabuses Palinurus' ghost of any hope that he will be buried, and therefore able to cross the Styx (*Aeneid*, 6.372-376). The most famous Virgilian model for Vegio's plea, however, is the famous moment of Turnus' plea to Aeneas to spare him for the sake of his father Daunus' grief (*Aeneid* 12.932-936), a plea which is refused, as it is here. Putnam suggests that this scene shows Vegio rethinking his earlier stance in the *Supplementum*; by depicting Ulysses as a merciless monster intent on murdering a child, Vegio is hardly presenting the alluded-to Aeneas as a paragon of virtue.⁹⁵

But this requires further thought. Ulysses is indeed in Aeneas' position here, just as he was as the hawk in the simile relating the pursuit of the helpless bird Astyanax. Yet we have just seen that the

⁹³ Putnam, pp. xxvi-xxvii.

⁹⁴ These complex and interlocking allusions are discussed at multiple points throughout Barchiesi's *Homeric Effects in Vergil's Narrative*.

⁹⁵ Putnam, xxvii-xxviii.

links created between characters by allusion are not consistent, and that Ulysses is as much like Turnus as Aeneas (just as Aeneas and Turnus as literary constructs feel, at different points, the allusive pressures of both Achilles and Hector); in the wolf simile, he is even worse than Turnus. If the association of Ulysses with vice is all that is needed for Putnam's hypothesis to work, the narratorial voice offers supporting evidence, being as explicit as it is about his wickedness and the 'unjust decrees of the people of Greece', as the dedicatory poem says. Also, more basically, Astyanax, as a Trojan like Aeneas, is fundamentally on the good side of the cosmic drama which results in Rome, whereas Ulysses, as a Greek, is on the bad side.⁹⁶

The problem with this whole interpretation is that Vergio's poem expresses more than a dichotomous vision of good and evil. There are ways in which Ulysses's act of killing Astyanax for the security of the Greeks resembles Aeneas' killing of Turnus for the security of the Trojans and Latins. When Andromacha tells Ulysses that the Greeks have already conquered and ruined Troy (205-206), and tells Astyanax, by the names of his ancestors, to put aside his distinguished lineage and let the walls of Troy be things of the past (219-220), there is a reminiscence of Juno's words in *Aeneid* 12.828, where the goddess says 'Troy is fallen, and fallen, with her name, let her remain'. Ulysses and Aeneas, in this view, are coagents and cobeneficiaries of the fate which has destroyed Ilium. Similarly complicating the idea that the Trojans are virtuous while the Greeks are wicked is the fact that the poem offers reasons for its judgement of Ulysses. The Greek strategist understands that living according to *pietas* is often a case of conflicting virtues: *pietas* to Astyanax, versus *pietas* to his own Greek family and countrymen who might suffer if Astyanax takes revenge on them for the destruction of Troy.⁹⁷ Again we see Virgilian *pietas*, the virtue of Aeneas, manifested as pity. This capacity for compassion is seen also, redirected, in the Greek tears which are shed in response to Astyanax' nobility and courage as he stands on the tower about to fall to his death.⁹⁸ We even receive diverse views of Astyanax, as by turns he is described as a potential future threat to the Greeks (how Ulysses views him), and as a helpless child: Andromacha describes him as closely resembling his father Hector and laments that he will never, like his father, bring laws or rights to his people (284-287), yet earlier she had told him to forget his father's purpose and his own heritage and asks why he wraps his arms around her neck and calls on her 'iterum iterumque', again and again (221-223). There is a potential for Astyanax to take up his father's role, and this is further intensified by these moments' Virgilian allusions, and yet he remains a boy who is unable to yet do so. These comparisons of sons to fathers recall Aeneas' words to Iulus, telling him to learn valour from his father, as well as – in a

⁹⁶ The medieval tradition's negative treatment of Ulysses is worth bearing in mind, for example his depiction in Dante, *Inferno* 26.55-142 (esp. 55-63), in *The Portable Dante*, translated, edited and with an introduction and notes by Mark Musa (New York: Penguin, 2003).

⁹⁷ Ll. 49-72 (68-70) for Ulysses' speech; in 33-44 Agamemnon states the outlines of the case for killing Astyanax.

⁹⁸ *Astyanax*, ll. 243-247; marginalia in Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale MS. II. IX. 148, ff. 301r-v shows that readers noticed this moment as an affecting rhetorical model to imitate, as well as Andromacha's lament.

moment of great apposition to the narrative context of *Astyanax* – his late uncle Hector (*Aeneid*, 12.435-440). The ‘iterum iterumque’ also supports such a familial focus by quoting Aeneas’ attempts to call after Creusa during the fall of Troy (*Aeneid* 2.770), while Astyanax’s embrace of his mother makes possible Aeneas’ frustrated attempts to embrace the shade of his wife which he encounters soon afterwards in Virgil’s epic (*Aeneid*, 2.792-793). Vegio’s allusive preoccupations are with the sack of Troy which has led to the events of the *Astyanax*, and with the issue of sons assuming their fathers’ responsibilities and continuing their legacies. Yet despite this, the poem foregrounds Astyanax’s status as an innocent boy as opposed to a young revenger, and Ulysses is therefore, ultimately, presented as desirous of the death of a harmless child, and unconcerned about how he might use (and abuse) great eloquence in order to deceive Andromacha and bring about this death. In the context of Andromacha’s speech to him about the turning wheel of Fate (an image found in Seneca, as well as earlier and later authors),⁹⁹ and the importance of protecting the downtrodden, raising up the fallen and pitying the beggared (many themes that Ulysses himself had spoken of earlier when persuading the Greeks of the necessity for *not* sparing the boy),¹⁰⁰ Ulysses’ actions can be viewed in two ways. Either he can be seen as abandoning these principles in the Trojan case, or else adhering to them in the interests of the Greeks. Are the Trojans, notwithstanding the fall of their still-smouldering city, truly downtrodden and helpless while the heir of Hector still lives? Is this Ulysses being pragmatic, if appallingly callous? Or is he being overly cautious, which would make his act seem bloodthirsty because it causes an unnecessary death?

These considerations and the critical debates they occasion, like those we saw in the *Supplementum* surrounding the necessity and justness of Aeneas’ killing of Turnus, show that these poems of Vegio’s, like certain passages of the *Aeneid*, are in part meditations on the responsible and effective use of power. The arguments made by Ulysses and Andromacha, Astyanax’s fate never to be a giver of laws and rights, and the dedicatory poem’s description of the Greeks’ actions as ‘unjust decrees’, all support this sense that law and justice are the key concerns of Vegio’s poem. How can conflicts be definitively and indefinitely concluded with the least loss of human life? How is the threat of continued hostilities best eliminated: through immediate clemency, to figures like Turnus or Astyanax, or through a final act of violence in the service of later, and greater, clemency to the wider population of both the victorious and the defeated? How and to whom can and should mercy be shown while still maintaining stability and peace in the aftermath of war? In the case of the *Astyanax*, given the expression of these varied viewpoints together with the condemnation of Ulysses, the only tenable interpretation seems to be that the murder of the child was wicked, but that its possible justifications are easily understandable. This dialectical approach had for centuries been seen in late-

⁹⁹ For a transhistorical survey, see David M. Robinson, ‘The Wheel of Fortune’, in *Classical Philology* Vol. 41, No. 4 (Oct., 1946), pp. 207-216 (p. 212, quoting Seneca’s *Agamemnon*).

¹⁰⁰ In the fifth chapter, we will see that readers in Cagli later in the century attended to this moral message about avoiding overmightiness in victory.

medieval explorations of moral quandaries, a fact which suggests it was regarded as a credible and pragmatic way of judiciously dealing with real-world conflicts.¹⁰¹

Vegio expresses all of these associative and dialogic ideas through Virgilian allusions, by presenting Ulysses sometimes as a pursuing Aeneas, sometimes as a wilier and more callous Turnus, and Astyanax as, by turns, a helpless, hunted Turnus and a besieged Trojan. Yet of these two characters, only Ulysses is likened to Aeneas (a fact which itself eloquently expresses the problematic nature of Virgil's protagonist, who is never here identified with or shown as a victim), and in a way which is imbued with the doubts over the morality of this character's conduct which we have already seen in abundance. Aeneas, in Vegio's works, in his direct presence in the *Supplementum* or in his allusive presence in the *Astyanax*, is, on the whole, a moral man because of how he negotiates the practical dilemmas of efficient rulership as a victor balancing mercy and social stability. In the *Supplementum*, which of course presents the character of Aeneas directly, this image is seen in an unmediated form. Turnus was a victim to be sympathised with like any other, but he was also an uncontrollable, destructive force, and so, for the good of everyone else, he had to die. Aeneas made the right decision in killing him, and is consequently praised and deified at the poem's close for bringing about a time of peace. In the *Astyanax*, however, Ulysses is at times allusively associated with Aeneas and is certainly aware of the same dilemmas, yet ultimately he does not live up to Aeneas' example, and instead, through his role in leading the innocent Astyanax to his death, acts in a way which the narrator explicitly and on multiple occasions says is unjust, cruel and tyrannical. Foremost among these instances, he is called, drawing on the *Aeneid*'s description of him as 'artificis scelus' (2.125), 'scelerum fabricator' (146), an artificer of wickedness, evil deeds, crimes.¹⁰² This poem's Virgilianism, to conclude, functions through the use of genre-signalling allusions evoking epic, as well as allusions which work towards associating Vegio's characters with Virgil's. Together, these importations of Virgilian moments result in a short epic poem which is just as expressive of the morally complicated as Vegio's *Supplementum* and the other material considered so far in this chapter. Also like Vegio's earlier poem, and similarly following Virgil as a generic model, the *Astyanax* suggests that tragic pathos was regarded as a necessary feature of epic. As we will see, the same techniques and expectations are carried over, in enhanced forms, into his next composition, the *Golden Fleece*.

¹⁰¹ Alex J. Novikoff shows the prevalence of this dialectical approach across multiple sectors of late medieval society in his *The Medieval Culture of Disputation: Pedagogy, Practice and Performance* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2017).

¹⁰² Il. 146-8: 'adventans scelerum fabricator Ulixes/nectebat fraudes animo, quo cingere matrem,/ quo capere eloquio posset' (Ulysses, craftsman of wickedness, approaches, inwardly weaving deceits so that his eloquence may encircle and capture the mother); in the dedicatory poem (l. 6), the Greeks' collective decrees are termed 'iniqua' (unjust).

The Golden Fleece

In the *Golden Fleece*, completed in Pavia in September 1431, we find Vegio's most extended imitation of the classical epyllion, especially the sea- and sun-drenched narratives characteristic of passages such as the opening of Catullus 64 and, inspired by it, *Aeneid* 9.114-122. Ultimately these derived, via Neoteric verse, from the wonderworld of Homer's *Odyssey* and parts of his *Iliad*, with their ocean voyagers, nymphs and monsters. We also see in Vegio's *Golden Fleece* the same kind of allusion as in the previous short epics – linking Vegio's characters and scenes to Virgilian ones – achieved much more comprehensively across an entire poem. Additionally, because of Vegio's choice of main model, the Dido episode from the *Aeneid*, we again see a continued concern with pathos-filled, tragic moments. The investigation here is indebted to the edition of the poem prepared and annotated by Reinhold F. Glei and Markus Köhler, and Putnam's introductory analysis in the I Tatti edition.¹⁰³ Following the methodological approach of the present study, however, means that many of the parallels identified by Glei-Köhler cannot be treated as allusions (not least those which rely only upon a single word or word-position), and even those which are allusive often still require sustained analysis to identify their significances and functions in Vegio's new work. Often such analyses modify existing interpretations, notably Putnam's. The resulting overall analysis of the poem's allusions can then be viewed alongside what we have seen in the *Supplementum* and *Astyanax*, in order to enrich whatever conclusions may be drawn about how Vegio was responding to Virgil in these early hexameter poems imitating the epic or epyllion.

More could be said of the Glei-Köhler parallels,¹⁰⁴ not only for methodological clarification but because it helps to justify the focus adopted by the treatment of the poem here. Most of these parallels seem too tenuous when the criteria for allusion outlined in the introduction to this study are applied, but even the secure Virgilian allusions are too numerous to discuss. The majority of those tackled here will therefore relate to a central allusive analogy Vegio draws between Colchis and Carthage, between the tale of Medea and Jason and that of Dido and Aeneas. This parallel to the Dido episode of the *Aeneid* has been noted before by critics, but its function as a structural principle spanning the entire poem has not been dwelt upon, and nor has its recreation of a tragic narrative set into Virgil's epic been turned to any account in discussions of Vegio's poem. Given the concern with tragic pathos and lamenting which we have already seen in Vegio's previous two 'short epics', this deserves attention for how it can nuance our interpretations of all of these works. There should also, on a more basic level, be closer attention, of the kind demonstrated by Putnam's approach, across a greater range of examples, to how individual allusions are actually working in the text.

¹⁰³ Glei and Köhler, *passim*; Putnam, pp. xxviii-xxxvi.

¹⁰⁴ See Glei-Köhler, pp. 29-34 and more generally in footnotes throughout the text of their edition.

Scholars disagree over Vegio's non-Virgilian sources for the poem. There is a consensus that Ovid, in the opening to the seventh book of the *Metamorphoses* (ll. 1-158), in *Heroides* 12, and in *Tristia* 3.9.5-34, was a key source, since Vegio certainly knew these works of his which relate events from the Argonautic tale, and Gleis-Köhler and Putnam have noted that Vegio hints at the later events to be found in Seneca's tragedy *Medea*.¹⁰⁵ There is still debate, though, over the roles of Apollonius of Rhodes' *Argonautica* and Valerius Flaccus' later, Virgilianising but abruptly-concluded and probably incomplete version of the same narrative.¹⁰⁶ Gleis-Köhler argue that Flaccus' version was unknown to Vegio,¹⁰⁷ but that the *Golden Fleece*'s catalogue of heroes (1.18-227) is derived from Apollonius' work,¹⁰⁸ suggesting that he knew the Greek text. Buckley disputes this, suggesting instead a debt to at least the first half of Flaccus' work, discovered in 1416 in the monastery of St Gall by Poggio Bracciolini (the second half only being found and transcribed by Niccolò Niccoli in 1429). She notes that lacunae in similar areas of Vegio's work and Flaccus' suggest the latter, or at least the part of it found by Poggio, as a source rather than Apollonius' Greek work of which Vegio's poem shows limited awareness or deep understanding, and which his linguistic abilities might have been insufficient to fully engage with. Vegio, in this view, was supplementing Valerius Flaccus,¹⁰⁹ or at any rate, as Putnam suggests, developing and elaborating the events of the earlier part of the narrative only touched on by Ovid.¹¹⁰

Vegio himself, in the opening of the poem, evokes this idea of supplementation, as he lists what his work will not recount (and which, the implication is, others already have).¹¹¹ What Vegio does recount in the poem, however, demonstrates that he is supplementing the narrative by importing Virgilian reminiscences into it, since these innovative details do not appear in the Ovidian, Apollonian or Valerian versions. Their concern with the Dido narrative, framed as a tragedy by Virgil, and the pathos-filled situations and speeches, also complement the focuses on victims, suffering, tragedy and their associated rhetorical forms which we saw in the *Supplementum* and *Astyanax*. In fact, Vegio's later-collected epigram to Cambio Zambeccari, 'In Vellus Aureum', which explains that he is writing of love affairs ('Scribuntur amores') and that a new work on Medea in love, is now coming into being ('Medeaeque novum surgit amantis opus'), states that 'whether right lies on the side of Medea or on that of Jason, the repute of each is worthy of expression' ('Quod seu Medeis seu ius dicatur Iason/

¹⁰⁵ Gleis-Köhler, p. 145, n. 25; Putnam, pp. xxix, liii.

¹⁰⁶ 'Virgilianising' is used in this study to mean 'written after the style of Virgil'; the term 'Virgilian' refers to Virgil-produced works.

¹⁰⁷ Gleis-Köhler, pp. 20-21, pp. xxviii, liii in Putnam.

¹⁰⁸ Gleis-Köhler, pp. 21-27 for comparative table; p. liii in Putnam; p. 41 in Dossena.

¹⁰⁹ D. Bruno Vignati, *Maffeo Vegio umanista Cristiano, 1407-1458* (Lodi, Italy: Banca Provinciale Lombarda, 1959), p. 14, had also argued for this kind of supplementation; W.W. Ehlers argues for the poem as an alternative to Flaccus, and Gleis-Köhler see it as a Virgilianisation of Ovid. See Buckley, 'Ending the *Argonautica*', pp. 296-298.

¹¹⁰ Putnam, pp. xxx-xxxi.

¹¹¹ *Golden Fleece*, 1.1-23.

dignum materia nomen utrumque sua est').¹¹² The interest in depicting the torments of passion, in a brief description which suggests Virgil's presentation of Dido, is combined with a rhetorical commitment to present both sides of an ethical debate.¹¹³ These are yet more indications of Vegio's exploration of questions of justice in these epyllia, as well as his supplementation of existing narratives which are seen as incomplete.¹¹⁴ In relation to such questions of justice, the realm of Colchis is described as a place 'ubi nec fas est nec iura nec ullus/ iustitiae et pietatis amor' (3.176-177), 'where there are neither rights nor laws nor any love of justice or piety' due to Aeetes' murder of his father and son-in-law. Aeetes' crimes are also referred to again later in 4.139-149, in which Ocean predicts that the king's murdering of his mother will soon bring divine punishment upon him. Medea's flight from her father's land might in this view be seen as justifiable. However, later in the poem, when she murders her brother Absyrtus in order to facilitate such an escape by delaying the pursuit of her father, equal condemnation is placed upon her, as her deed is described as a crime or wicked deed, a 'facinus' (4.159), 'facinus [...] atrox' (4.216), and 'scelus' (4.163), while she herself is termed a 'scelestus' (4.239). Combined with the foreshadowings of Jason's future infidelity to Medea, the entire cast and setting seem to be possessed by impiety.

To begin the discussion of how this kind of ethically minded supplementarity is effected allusively, we can notice the Virgilian allusions which work to situate the poem within a genre. As we saw with previous examples, these can offer economical signposts towards the epic, and accordingly we see phrases such as 'leves delapsa per auras' (2.155), from the classic (and classical) image of gods departing through or into light breezes, similarly denoted as 'tenues [...] auras' (3.203). We also see another formulation which, like the immediately previous ones, Vegio uses in his later *Antoniad* (discussed in the next chapter): 'roseis Aurora quadrigis', from an equally common classical image seen multiple times in Virgil's *corpus* describing Aurora or the Dawn (3.106-107 (106)). There is also, as Putnam notes, an echo of the unmistakably Virgilian 'arma virumque' in *Golden Fleece* 4.214 ('arma virosque'), as Aeetes calls for aid and pursuit after Jason and Medea have absconded from Colchis, and the appeal to the Muse of *Aeneid* 1.8 ('Musa [...] causas memora') is recalled in line 1.18's 'Vos memorate, deae'. Putnam also notes Vegio's playful turning of epic to pastoral,¹¹⁵ in the scene (1.177-178) when the Sun drives his chariot beneath the Ocean at sunset, and then, having unbridled the horses, becomes Apollo the pastoralist, reclining and playing a rustic pipe in words ('modulantur avena') which recall Eclogue 10.51, or the pseudo-Virgilian 'Ille ego qui quondam gracili modulatus avena'. Yet more significantly, there are tragic forms, too, such as the lament which

¹¹² This epigram to Zambeccari is quoted on p. 167 of *Short Epics*.

¹¹³ See Novikoff, *Medieval Culture of Disputation*, and David Marsh, 'Dialogue and discussion in the Renaissance', in G. Norton (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Literary Criticism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp. 265-270.

¹¹⁴ Putnam, p. xxix; pp. xxviii-xxxi discuss (non-Virgilian) sources.

¹¹⁵ Putnam, p. lvi.

we have already seen Vegio so interested in imitating. In 4.207-247 Aeetes laments his infant son Absyrtus, murdered by Medea, and his grief over his loss and the fratricide, as Glei-Köhler observe, is modelled on the grief of Euryalus' mother for her son (*Aeneid* 9.473-502) and Evander's mourning for Pallas (*Aeneid* 11.139-181).¹¹⁶ These must also be seen in relation to the laments of Daunus and Andromacha already seen in Vegio's works, and their Virgilian models.

There are also, as we saw in the *Astyanax*, generic signposts which take the form not of phrases, but of fragments of narrative, working to associate the poem with its epic antecedents, while not evoking specific character-to-character links between the model text and Vegio's own. Among these are several noticed by Glei and Köhler,¹¹⁷ such as the worry and concern of the Argonauts in the face of their difficult task of claiming the fleece in 1.179-192, which is based on Aeneas' anxieties in *Aeneid* 8.18-25, and Juno's dispatch of Iris to Chalcioppe in 3.41-48, together with Iris' consequent appearance to Chalcioppe in 3.70-105, which are modelled on the Virgilian episodes in which Juno sends Iris to the Trojan women (5.604-610 and 620-40). Likewise, Vegio's shaping of the scene of Mars' anger in response to Jason's predicted success in the three tasks in 4.35-40 along the lines of Neptune's anger in *Aeneid* 1.124-141, and the way that Venus' subsequent soothing of Mars in 4.41-59 reminds the reader of how she placates and seduces Vulcan in *Aeneid* 8.387-393, are equally representative instances of how allusions can lack narrative significance, while still carrying a generic significance and working to evoke the *Aeneid* as a whole. Still, such general examples are only one end of a continuum stretching to the secure allusive identifications already mentioned. Slightly further along the continuum in this direction can be placed Medea's greeting of Jason in 3.230-238, which recalls Anchises' welcoming of Aeneas into Elysium in *Aeneid* 6.684-694, thus suggesting a slight Jason-Aeneas parallel (only slight because, of course, the corresponding Medea-Anchises parallel does not quite work), and, more completely (given the interchangeability of divinities in Vegio's reworkings of divine interventions in the *Golden Fleece*'s evocation of epic), Venus' consolation of Jason in 3.192-220, which immediately evokes the Tiber's reassuring speech to Aeneas in *Aeneid* 8.26-80. Like the latter example, the stirring speech of Jason to his men, recalling that of Aeneas to his (2.67-86, to be compared with *Aeneid* 1.198-207), works to build an analogy between the two characters.

Moving further in this same direction towards firmer, even if necessarily temporary and cumulative, allusive character-to-character correspondences, we find allusions which originate in the Dido episode of the *Aeneid*, and which thereby evoke the narrative setting within which the characters of Dido and Aeneas, who act as analogues for Medea and Jason, operate. Venus' outrage at being disregarded and insulted by human and divine affairs is modelled on Juno's in *Aeneid* 1.34, recalling the beginning of

¹¹⁶ Noted by Glei-Köhler, p. 33.

¹¹⁷ Most of them, but not all, from pp. 29-34. The arrangement and argument here, like the exceptional examples, are not found in Glei-Köhler.

the epic and the events which lead Aeneas to Carthage, and even their monologues resemble each other (2.1-22 compared with *Aeneid* 1.34-49), though Vegio might also be using Juno's similar complaint in *Aeneid* 7.286-322, and Medea's lament in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* 7.26-36, as sources. The divine machinations worked by the Sun and Pallas in the *Golden Fleece*, including the dialogues between Pallas and Jupiter in 2.119-129 and 4.1-19, are based on Venus' efforts on Aeneas' behalf from *Aeneid* 1.223-296, and the Sun's request for Pallas' aid in 2.87-118 echoes Venus' request for Cupid's help in *Aeneid* 1.657-890. Aeolus asking for Juno's assistance in 3.11-40 is modelled on Juno's enlisting of the same wind-guardian's support in *Aeneid* 1.50-80, and the joint enterprise between Juno and Venus is based on the compact between the same goddesses in *Aeneid* 4.90-128. More sources are brought into play in the dialogue between Medea and Pallas in 2.159-244, as in addition to *Aeneid* 1.314-401, Medea's speeches in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* 7.11-71 and *Heroides* 12 seem to be present. Even here, however, the final touch (and therefore probably the previous model, too) is Virgilian: just as the allusion to *Aeneid* 1.314-401 evokes a conversation between Aeneas and Venus, Vegio's lines 2.251-266 summon up the end of that conversation, as Medea, like Aeneas, recognising the recent presence of a goddess in disguise, complains that she only ever encounters her in beguiling forms, and that the protective deity to whom she is bound in love always shuns her embrace. As this catalogue of examples shows, most of the characters differ between Vegio's text and Virgil's, but the events are substantially the same, and the effect is to evoke the actions of gods and goddesses around and within the Dido episode. Additionally, and more specifically here, they make Jason and Medea the focus of these attentions, as Aeneas is the focus of them in Virgil's text.

Further examples elaborate this parallel by introducing Dido as a model for Medea. This is built up geographically through the ways in which Vegio's allusions suggest Carthage. Some examples, having numerous Virgilian sources, raise the images of Latium as well, but given what we have already seen, and the moments about to be described, it is Carthage which dominates the allusive landscape. In 1.22-35, the Argonauts arrive in Colchis and are received by Aeetes, and the passage resembles *Aeneid* 7.160-193, when the Trojans arrive in Latium and are welcomed by Latinus. Continuing this same evocation, Jason's speech in 1.78-103 resembles Ilioneus' speech to Latinus in *Aeneid* 7.212-248. When the gift-giving begins in 1.109-111, however, Jason's presentation of gifts to the king echoes not only Aeneas' gifting of Latinus (*Aeneid* 7.243-248), but also of Dido (*Aeneid* 1.647-655). So Carthage rises. The same is true when Aeetes welcomes the Argonauts in his speech (1.118-128), which recalls Evander's greeting to Aeneas (*Aeneid* 8.152-174) yet also Dido's to Ilioneus (*Aeneid* 1.562-577). Even the palaces resemble those in both Italy and North Africa, as Aeetes' royal seat in 1.159-178 echoes both Latinus' fortress (*Aeneid* 7.170-191) and Dido's temple to Juno (*Aeneid* 1.441-493), as well as the Ovidian source describing the palace of Aeetes' father, the Sun, in *Metamorphoses* 2.1-18.

Now we are nearing the other end of the continuum mentioned earlier. The banquet in 1.193-200 clearly evokes that thrown by Dido for the Trojans in *Aeneid* 1.695-708, and, as Putnam notes, such a feast closes the opening books of both the *Aeneid* and the *Golden Fleece*.¹¹⁸ This would identify Aeetes with Dido, but in 1.201-216 Medea first appears, and the love theme is introduced by the moment's resemblance to Cupid's appearance, disguised as Ascanius, in *Aeneid* 1.695-722. This is carried through into the next book, as in 2.23-36 Venus orders Cupid in the same way as she does in *Aeneid* 1.663-688. This stratagem immediately (2.37-66) results in Medea falling in love with Jason, as Dido falls for Aeneas in *Aeneid* 4.1-5 and 66-73, and when Vegio's protagonists meet again (3.106-125), the model features the same Virgilian figures in *Aeneid* 1.588-591, and Medea's pangs of love recall Dido's in *Aeneid* 4.1-5. It is to be expected that if Medea is a victim of love and an analogue for Dido, she should be likened to a doe struck by a hunter's arrow, as she is in 2.43-47 (echoing *Aeneid* 4.69-73).¹¹⁹ This importation of Virgil by Vegio, as Putnam notes,¹²⁰ immediately enhances the psychological insight we have into the character of Medea and our ability to sympathise with and even pity her.¹²¹

The allusive identifications are now abundantly clear, and the interested reader can consult any of these instances in the original verses in order to notice the parallels.¹²² Yet Vegio then extends these identifications to encompass a third character, Medea's sister Chalciope, with whom she talks in 3.123-191 in a way reminiscent of how Dido confides in her sister Anna in *Aeneid* 4.9-55. In this dialogue, as in her previous address to Chalciope in 2.171-181, Medea speaks in words which evoke not only the same Ovidian monologue (*Metamorphoses* 7.11-71) which, as has been said, was a key non-Virgilian source for Vegio's Medea, but also Dido's expressions of wonder at her beloved's eloquence, handsomeness, endurance of hardship, beauty, nobility and eloquence, as related in *Aeneid* 4.6-30. Jason's speech of thanks at the end of his meeting with Medea, for her guidance on how to triumph in the tasks lying between him and the fleece (3.251-274) echoes Aeneas' thanks to Dido in *Aeneid* 1.595-610, and are linked to Jason's pledge of love and loyalty to Medea in *Metamorphoses* 7.94-97. As a final instance in this section, Medea's 'magicas [...] artes' of 4.96 are, in line-position

¹¹⁸ Putnam, p. xxxi.

¹¹⁹ An image which Virgil possibly drew originally from the *Argonautica*'s description of Medea; if so, and even if Vegio had not read Apollonius, it offers a remarkable example of a metaphor coming full circle and being reapplied to its original subject.

¹²⁰ Putnam, p. xxxiii.

¹²¹ Marginalia in *quattrocento* manuscripts confirm this: the only two manicules present in the copy of the *Golden Fleece* in Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale MS. Naz. II. IX. 4 point to 2.125-128 (where Medea is described as having been pierced by the pitiless love god's smouldering arrow which has caused flames and bitterness) and 3.176-180 (where Medea is encouraged to flee the sin-polluted house of her father and seek a land of true faith, law and mercy). These appear on ff. 149v and 163v.

¹²² The lack of direct quotation and comparison here must be excused, since all these examples are equally relevant to the argument being made here, and to quote every one of them would be lengthy to the point of diluting the argumentative thrust of this section of the chapter. The line references enable an interested reader to pursue them independently.

and in the fact that both characters practise them, reminiscent of the ‘magicas [...] artis’ of *Aeneid* 4.493, performed by Dido.¹²³

To summarise the allusions just described, the *Golden Fleece* exhibits a combination of faithful allusions based in formulae, forms, events and short narrative sequences, which work to evoke the *Aeneid* as an epic and tragic model for the poem as a whole. The latter two kinds of allusion also produce more specific effects and associations, evoking the divine machinations and, so to speak, cosmic setting, as well as the more straightforward human setting (Carthage) of Virgil’s Dido episode, even if the characters and places involved in Vegio’s text are often different to the corresponding figures in Virgil’s. Throughout Vegio’s poem, such allusive techniques are scattered among more precise parallels in action and phrasing which work to identify the Argonauts with the Trojans, Colchis with Carthage, Medea with Dido and Jason as Aeneas, sometimes through supporting cast members such as Chalciopé, who plays an analogous role to Dido’s sister Anna. The allusive practice is therefore similar to that which we saw in the *Astyanax*, remaining faithful to Virgilian sources whether the effect is merely to signal the epic genre, or to associate Vegio’s characters with Virgil’s. The difference is that it is done here more comprehensively and consistently.

One final continuity between these short epics must be discussed in the case of the *Golden Fleece*, and that is the allusive presence of Turnus as a representative of the problematic figure of what might be termed the ‘criminal victim’. The fact that Dido is also so central to the *Golden Fleece* because of a similarly allusive presence, while additionally being a figure who necessarily suffers because of the will of Fate, yet who can also be seen as having fallen into vice (the concept expressed by Boccaccio and others that she was virtuous as a queen yet vicious as a lover), makes the matter especially important here for what it can tell us about the moral presentation of Turnus in the *Supplementum*. This is because Vegio’s Medea, extraordinarily, is modelled on Dido, Turnus and Aeneas, making her the heroine of the poem just as much as Jason is the hero. A reason for this is clearly Virgil’s own careful crafting of a series of links between Dido and Turnus,¹²⁴ but Vegio’s attention to this linking is still noteworthy as it tells us something else about what he considered to be characteristically ‘Virgilian’. If we look at what must be considered the climax of Vegio’s poem, a moment far more arresting (and literally so, given that it stops Aeetes in his tracks) than Jason’s sorcerous accomplishment of the deadly tasks, from the fire-breathing bulls to the armed men grown from serpents’ teeth to even the dragon, not to mention his subsequent seizure of the fleece, we see this allusive modelling in action.

This narrative climax (climactic for its allusions to the most climactic parts of Virgil’s epic) is the moment when Medea is about to kill her infant brother Absyrtus, in order to scatter his dismembered

¹²³ Glei-Köhler, p. 130.

¹²⁴ On this, as well as parallels between Turnus and Camilla, see Svensson, pp. 440-442.

limbs in the hope of delaying Aeetes, whose love for his murdered son will compel him to gather them, in his pursuit of her and Jason. As Medea has her sword readied and is about to perform the deed, she hesitates (4.171-178), just as Aeneas hesitates before he kills Turnus (*Aeneid* 12.937-941). Later (4.199-200), she is compared to Aeneas tracking Turnus like a hound hunting a deer (*Aeneid* 12.749-55). So Medea is a murderous, hound-like Aeneas, driven by an idea that the murder is necessary yet still (in one allusion) merciful enough to question its justness, and Absyrtus is a helpless, deer-like Turnus. As Medea wavers, the Fury Tisiphone appears and incites her to go through with the act (4.179-196). The model here could be Ovid, as in the *Metamorphoses* this Fury inspires Ino and Athamas (*Metamorphoses* 4.481-511), but this inspiration is a sudden onset of madness prompted by Juno's enlisting of Tisiphone's help in her revenge: Ino and Athamas are not at this moment already contemplating murdering their children. Still, the description of Tisiphone is similar. The closer model is *Aeneid* 7.406-470 (445-470), in which another Fury, Allecto, after inciting a similar frenzy in Amata, plunges an enraging torch into Turnus' chest, banishes his reluctance and fires him up for war with Aeneas.

Medea therefore becomes a victim of manipulative divine powers, whether heavenly or infernal, just as we have already seen her as the object of divine meddling in mortal affairs, in the events which all recall those concerned with Dido, forcing the two heroines to fall in love with the heroic strangers. Again, we see Vegio recalling the parallels Virgil creates between Dido and Turnus, and, related to this, we have seen him both condemn and treat sympathetically the actions of both characters. It is striking, too, that a comparison of the *Golden Fleece's* depictions of Medea's love for Jason with those in Flaccus and Ovid,¹²⁵ reveals Vegio's version as even more unmistakably Virgilian. It might even be wondered whether Vegio's Medea-Dido parallel was reinforced by his recollection of the moment in *Aeneid* 4.600-602 when Dido, as Aeneas departs, asks herself why she had not torn him and his men limb from limb, scattered them on the waves, and served Ascanius to him at a banquet. Yet there is more to say here to underline Vegio's innovation in the scene with Medea and Absyrtus: in Ovid's *Tristia* 3.9, line 27-34, Medea's murder of Absyrtus is described, but in very straightforward terms: there is no moment of crisis or questioning such as we have seen in Vegio's Virgilian models. The analysis can be taken yet further by reading the scene alongside a comparable one in Seneca, who describes the later event in which Medea kills her own children: here, the Furies are present only in Medea's speech as opposed to being additional characters on the stage, and so she persuades herself to commit the murder.¹²⁶ Only in Vegio is the Fury actually present, compelling her. As Putnam notes, having only considered the Virgilian allusions, Aeneas' rage is 'self-generated', whereas Medea 'acts

¹²⁵ Flaccus, *Argonautica*, books 6-7; and Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 7.1-158; *Heroides* 12.

¹²⁶ Seneca, *Medea*, pp. 225-316 in *Seneca's Tragedies in Two Volumes*, Vol. 1, parallel text with translation by Frank Justus Miller (London: William Heinemann, 1917), p. 427.

only when Tisiphone takes matters into her own hands, exhorting her to savagery'.¹²⁷ Finally, to complete the review of sources, there is no comparable scene in Flaccus' *Argonautica*.

The murder itself (4.197-206) recalls Aeneas' killing of Turnus (*Aeneid* 12.945-952) in especially specific ways: as Putnam notices, Vegio uses the word 'condit' for her plunging of her sword into her brother, which of course recalls Aeneas' planting of his sword into Turnus at the end of the *Aeneid*, and the foundation of Rome projected at the poem's beginning.¹²⁸ Yet even here Medea is simultaneously an analogue for Turnus as a victim, as Tisiphone lodges her dire passion 'sub pectore [liquit]' (4.197), in a phrase which, if the final word of the line was 'condit', would be an exact replica, even in line position, of Virgil's phrase describing Aeneas' burying of his sword in Turnus' breast (*Aeneid* 12.950). Furthermore, if the final word was again altered, it would equally closely resemble the moment of Allecto's stabbing of the furious torch into Turnus: 'sub pectore taedas' (*Aeneid* 7.456-457 (457)). Medea and Turnus are both criminals on a terrestrial level, and victims on a cosmic, celestial one, driven by divinely-sanctioned and infernally-enacted fury, and Vegio's Virgilian allusions produce this impression, enabling us, additionally, to sympathise (in the etymological sense of 'feel or think with') Medea. Taxonomically, the Virgilian allusions here are still faithful, but they work through closer textual echoes, and the Aeneas and Turnus analogues which they superimpose on or cluster around those identifying Medea with Dido have the effect of creating a far more complex and compelling characterisation, allowing us to see Medea's moral position within both a celestial and terrestrial framework, just as the *Supplementum* allowed us to see Turnus' actions from the same diversity of perspectives. As a finishing Virgilian touch, as Aeetes sets out to pursue Medea after the murder, he calls for 'arma virosque' (4.214), thus recalling the opening words of the *Aeneid*.

To summarise, in the *Golden Fleece* Vegio uses Virgilian allusions to construct a new narrative, rich in associations, which elaborates the previous versions of the *Argonautica* tale. His allusions are faithful, and range from those evoking epic and tragic traditions to those evoking more specific parallels in event and character. Such correspondences, while enhancing this evocation of the Virgilian text, above all recreate other characteristics of Virgil's work too, greatly extending the psychological and moral depth and complexity of the characters in his poem, and thereby enabling the sorts of imaginative, ethical explorations which we saw in Vegio's two preceding epyllia. Another similarity shared with those earlier works is the sense that pathos is integral to the epic genre, and that it can be incorporated using allusions to Virgil's epic.

¹²⁷ Putnam, pp. xxxiv-xxxv.

¹²⁸ See Putnam, pp. xxxiii-xxxiv; and S. James, 'Establishing Rome with the Sword: *Condere* in the *Aeneid*', *American Journal of Philology* 116 (1995), pp. 623-37.

Conclusions

To conclude, we have seen that all of Vegio's short, supplementary epics use Virgil at least for the most part with fidelity. Their allusions (notwithstanding their application to different characters and situations) remain true to the spirit and mood of the original textual instances on which they are based, recalling their Virgilian associations, and show an abiding – and equally Virgilian – interest in pathos-filled moments within the genre of epic. In fact, the combination of epic and tragic elements which are most faithfully evoked through Vegio's allusions to Virgil contribute to recreating this distinctly Virgilian sense of the variety of voices, perspectives and concerns present in the celestial, terrestrial and indeed moral landscapes of the poems. The emphases made by Vegio in his reworkings of the narratives he received, most notably in his *Astyanax* and the *Golden Fleece*, show that these affecting moments were what he was most drawn to in Virgil, perhaps even what he considered to be most 'Virgilian'. This accounts for the multiple allusive returns to (or rather importations of) Dido and Turnus, even, arrestingly, when depicting Ulysses and Medea.

This would support Dossena's characterisation of Vegio's (what we might now call) Neoteric-styled short epics as examples of 'L'Epica Sentimentale'.¹²⁹ It could even be suggested that this recycling of earlier, memorable Virgilian moments was what (in addition to the ceremonial and pragmatic conclusiveness we noticed earlier) made the *Supplementum* so popular as an imitation of Virgil; the recollections of Juturna's lament, or of the banquet in Carthage, reminded the reader of the Virgilian moments and the strong emotional effect they produced. Such Virgilian allusions in this epyllic context also carried with them an eloquence in the discussion of moral complexity, especially when they created correspondences and associations between characters. The contextualising sources examined in this chapter (and Vegio's own note to the *Golden Fleece* concerning Medea's actions) demonstrate that Vegio's society, especially within the Visconti state, had a conceptual framework of social ethics in which such complexity could be appreciated, and his own legal training, as well as the politically engaged legal debates of his associates, only augmented this by making him alert to questions of law and justice. That these ethical frameworks were more nuanced and dialectical than the epideictic motivations and worldviews which have previously been suggested as motivations and contexts for Vegio's works is a major insight which demands emphasis in subsequent work on Vegio, Virgilian reception, and pre-modern cultural history as a whole.

Given the critical commentary devoted to it over the years, the above conclusion applies most of all to the *Supplementum*, but there is a continuation of this interest in post-war *realpolitik*, justice and ethics, however contested, in the *Astyanax*. In the latter, we also find an even greater evocation of

¹²⁹ Dossena, pp. 35-45.

genres through faithful allusions to formulaic phrases, set-piece scenes, rhetorical forms such as the tragic lament (inspired by Virgilian examples), and similes or scenes relating to Aeneas and Turnus. Such allusive correspondences work to comment upon the justness of the actions performed by the characters in Vegio's poem, especially Ulysses. Many of the allusive techniques found here appeared also in the *Supplementum*, but in the *Astyanax* they proclaim even more clearly Vegio's project of recreating classical epic; this aspect of the *Supplementum*, by contrast, being as it was a continuation of the *Aeneid*, already spoke for itself. This exceptional status of the *Supplementum* also highlights a difference between how Vegio alludes to Virgil here and how he does so in the other two poems. Because the *Supplementum*, naturally, already features Virgil's characters, it is less possible or desirable to associate its characters with those of the *Aeneid*; the only moves in this direction are the ways in which Latinus reflects Dido, and Aeneas reflects Turnus upon first seeing Lavinia. In the *Astyanax*, and especially in the *Golden Fleece*, however, such allusions to characters are an instrumental technique for delivering information about them and making them come to life as more developed personalities and, insistently, moral agents whose actions demand to be analysed from an ethical standpoint. In the latter poem, this character-correspondence produces a comprehensive, poem-wide conceit likening Colchis to Carthage, Medea to Dido (and sometimes Aeneas and Turnus, too) and Jason to Aeneas. Even in the *Golden Fleece*, however, within what may count as a more impressive synthesis of sources, the same moments we saw Vegio returning to as early as in the *Supplementum* appear again.

This recurrence suggests a firm conception of which kinds of image or event (perhaps surprising to modern scholars after the debates surrounding Parry's 'two voices' thesis resulted in accusations of ahistoricism) were most 'Virgilian',¹³⁰ at least within a predominantly epic context such as that of these epyllia or 'short epics', which all additionally incorporate Virgilian tags signifying the epic genre in a more general and conventional manner. There is more to be said about this conception of the 'Virgilian': in its emphases on pathos (often delivered through moving speeches) as well as its familiarisation of elements of classical narratives, Vegio's classicising imitations suggest romance influences too. Such post-classical retellings shaped how Vegio regarded Virgil, and this can be seen in his contemporary visual culture too, especially in the *cassone* panels.

¹³⁰ Adam Parry, 'The Two Voices of Virgil's "Aeneid"', in *Arion: A Journal of Humanities and the Classics* Vol. 2, No. 4 (Winter, 1963), pp. 66-80; Kallendorf, 'Historicizing the "Harvard School": Pessimistic Readings of the Aeneid in Italian Renaissance Scholarship', *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology*, Vol. 99 (1999), pp. 391-403; Putnam, 'The Loom of Latin', *Transactions of the American Philological Association*, Volume 131 (2001), pp. 329-339; Richard F. Thomas, *Virgil and the Augustan Reception* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

This combination of qualities might provide another explanation for the popularity of Vegio's *Supplementum*: it was esteemed as an imitation of classical Latin, yet it also catered to the tastes of readers with certain ideas of social order, who were also fond of romances. Indeed, to be Virgilian in this period meant reading Virgil through the lens of the still-contemporary romance tradition, and this did not conflict with Vegio's more classicising imitations of Virgil's tragic laments. The romance lens, in fact, enabled Vegio to read Virgil more closely, and attend to this element in the *Aeneid* itself. Given what we have seen across his epyllia, it seems that for Vegio, the epic genre required moments of intense emotion characteristic of tragedy. Dossena's 'sentimental epic' is a fine description of this, but a better one might be Burrow's 'epic romance'. The latter term might refer primarily to the poetry of sixteenth-century writers such as Ariosto, but this chapter's analysis shows that such poetry's combination of the ancient and the modern (or, in relation to a wider scholarly conversation, the 'humanistic' and the 'medieval') may well have begun a century earlier, with writers such as Vegio. Furthermore, as we will see in chapter five, Vegio continued to be praised as a Virgilianising stylist for precisely these pathetic emphases into the sixteenth century.

The focus on Virgilian pathos will continue to be relevant in other ways as this study progresses, if only as a point of comparison. If this is how Vegio understood the genre of epic, his later works show what 'Virgilian' signified in several other generic contexts. These generic contexts, furthermore, were associated with, and sometimes necessitated by, personal as well as political contexts of associations and connections. As was noted at the opening of this chapter, the Visconti court was nearby, and Vegio's network of contacts was expanding. His short epics made him someone to notice, and gaining patronage through his poetry was soon to become a serious possibility, and indeed a priority.

Chapter Two –

Poetry, Patronage and Piety: Vegio's *Elegies*, *Rusticanalia* and *Antoniad*

They don't do no good,
They never be working when they oughta should [...]
They're lying and lazy,
They can be drivin' you crazy.

– Frank Zappa, 'Flakes' (1979)

I'd sell you my soul just to get me somewhere.
What's there to do in this dead old town?
No, I can't believe I live here now.

– Wolf Alice, 'Fluffy' (2015)

I had heard the whispered tales of immortality,
The deepest mystery,
From an ancient book I took a clue [...]
Oh, I will dine on honeydew
And drink the milk of Paradise.

– Rush, 'Xanadu' (1977)

Introduction

Vegio stayed in Pavia while was composing his 'short epics', completing his studies and then beginning to teach poetry and jurisprudence at the university.¹ His *Supplementum* had garnered him renown in literary circles across Italy, and this work, together with his *Astyanax* and *Golden Fleece*, are among those found most frequently in manuscripts of his writings from the 1430s and 1440s.² Amidst these poems, however, the manuscripts contain works by Vegio which were aimed at gaining patronage; his epyllia had made him known, but he was not financially independent, and he needed such support in order to maintain and develop his literary reputation through new, and ever more pioneering, works.³ His short epics had explored issues of law and governance which spoke to the

¹ Aeneas Silvius Piccolomini, *Europe (c. 1400-1458)*, translated by Robert Brown, introduced and annotated by Nancy Bisaha (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2013), p. 242, note 662.

² E.g. Florence Biblioteca Nazionale MSS. Naz. II. IV. 704, Naz. II. IX. 4, Naz. II. IX. 148, and the Lodi manuscript in the following footnote.

³ E.g. Lodi, Biblioteca Comunale Laudense, MS. XXVIII.A.11 (formerly known, to Raffaele and others, as Lodi, Biblioteca Civica. MS. 28, 8 (https://manus.iccu.sbn.it/opac_SchedaScheda.php?ID=218556)), containing works from Vegio's juvenilia to his period in Eugenius IV's Curia. Among these, in addition to the *Elegies* and *Rusticanalia*, are separate and explicitly patronage-directed verses, such as the 'Carmen heroicum ad Philippum Mariam Anglum ducem Mediolanansium', and *Convivium deorum* praising Visconti (which, as the title suggests, describes a heavenly meeting of the gods, and classicises the contemporary using Virgilian and other classical phrases found in other early works by Vegio, such as 'sententia menti', 'pulcher Phoebus', 'sic ore

concerns and policies of the Visconti, and this might have advanced his case for ducal patronage, but his imitations of Virgilian style also worked to support his claims to be someone worth hiring. Indeed, the way that the poems discussed in the previous chapter and in this one showcase a Virgilian level of generic virtuosity makes them resemble a sort of literary *curriculum vitae*. The verses discussed below would both impress potential patrons in a personal sense by promising them immortal glory and a virtuous image in the eyes of contemporary subjects, allies and rivals, while at the same time convincing them that Vegio's Latin was more than up to the administrative and public-relations tasks to which it would be turned were he to hold an official position. Additionally, Vegio's classical erudition and experimentations with generic hybridity would be appreciated by the secondary audience of the patron's learned entourage, meaning that his allusions and innovations might encourage them to advance his chances of employment.

Accordingly, in these poems, Vegio faithfully evokes Virgilian epic in order to present himself as a poet in the ancient mode, capable of praising and immortalising his potential patrons, rulers and *condottieri*, as modern analogues of the heroes and emperors of antiquity. If he was patronised as a new Virgil, his patron would become a new Maecenas or even Augustus. He models this argument on those made by Propertius, Ovid and Martial in defence of elegy, yet intensifies it by depicting his own situation as especially squalid, and expressing the 'complaint to the purse' *topos* so common to the poet-patron relationship. Likewise, following such precedents, he defends elegy in order to suggest that he will write additional epics once he has the privileged leisure to do so, and demonstrates generic virtuosity by composing actual elegies which use Virgilian passages in ways which by turns recall their epic origins, and modulate them through the filters of the classical elegy and epigram traditions. We will see an extension of Vegio's work with minor genres in the next chapter, when looking at Vegio's distichs and epigrams, but the poems seen in this chapter more show the beginnings of the poetic virtuosic experimentation which would characterise his later poetic productions. Given Stephen Harrison's argument for Virgil's own skill in combining genres,⁴ Vegio's commitment to such generic hybridity might additionally have been seen to augment his self-presentation as 'alter Maro'. It is important, too, that all these poetic approaches, proclaiming skill as well as need, enhanced the effectiveness of his pleas for patronage.

A constant thread running through these verses is therefore the splicing together of different poetic genres within single works. In Vegio's first two collections, *Elegies* and *Rusticanalia*, we find examples of the epic being imported into elegy, the elegiac imported into the epic, or the epic grotesquely introduced into the pastoral in order to satirise the ideal vision of rural life which the pastoral genre conventionally presents. In 1436, after gaining favour with lesser intermediate patrons,

locutus', 'placidam duxit per membra quietem'). All of these works share a panegyric drive which we will explore on a wider scale in this chapter.

⁴ Stephen J. Harrison, *Generic Enrichment in Vergil and Horace* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007).

he finally succeeded in securing prestigious patronage, but it was from the Pope, Eugenius IV, rather than from a prince. Yet the work which Vegio first dedicated to Eugenius in 1437 was no less an experiment in generic grafting than his earlier efforts had been; if anything, and especially within the Curial context, it was the ultimate hybrid: the Christian epic. This chapter will conclude by discussing this work, the *Antoniad*, which Vegio had been working on for a few years prior to its dedication. In this work we see faithful uses of Virgil within the classical epyllion form, combined with hagiographical sources and relating events from the life of a saint. Again, the appeal to patronage can be seen even here: this poem told the story of a saint who had been instrumental in the devotional life of Eugenius' own primary spiritual inspiration, Saint Augustine, and its stylishly pagan treatment of a pious subject was consonant with the concerns of a re-established Papal court which was a powerhouse of both Christian and classical learning. Incidentally, in scholarly hindsight, all these experiments can be seen to have laid the groundwork for the productions of later writers.

Vegio's aspirations were motivated by a need to escape current conditions as well as a desire for poetic glory. During his time in Pavia, Vegio was in close contact with figures associated with the Visconti court in Milan, notably Catone Sacco, the jurist and university lecturer, and Pier Candido Decembrio, the counsellor, diplomat and rival Virgil imitator.⁵ Even in the *Pompeiana*, a work of his juvenilia written when Vegio was staying at the villa of that name during the 1423 plague, we can see that his yearning to be a part of this milieu was the result of desperation at his current life, as he remained confined to a rural farmstead and was forbidden to re-enter Pavia or Milan. In the

⁵ These connections branch further outwards, too, revealing the renown being acquired by Vegio's works. Cesare Colombo, 'Altri inediti guariniani', *Italia medioevale e umanistica*, X (1967), pp. 219-257, quoted in Lopomo, p. 77, cites a letter from Guarino Veronese to Sacco, confirming Guarino's connections with the Pavese circle and, through its reference to an earlier letter, the praise Vegio's verses enjoyed between its members. From 1430 onwards, Guarino himself refers often to Vegio in letters, in particular those to the Pavese Luchino Belbello, who it seems included some of Vegio's verses in such letters so that they might be appraised by Guarino (p. 238 in Colombo). In Guarino's letter to Sacco, the former is awestruck at Vegio's mind and the weight and sweetness of his verses, which he says almost resemble those of the ancients (pp. 244-245): 'quamque admirandum Vegii istius ingenium, quanta canendi mixta suavitati gravitas, quanta carminis maiestas, quibus ad priscos scriptores illos proxime videtur accedere!'. See also Remigio Sabbadini, *Epistolario di Guarino Veronese*, I (Venezia, 1915), pp. 505 e 702; II, pp. 209; III, pp. 197, 321 and II (Venezia, 1916), nn. 614, 623, 648, 656, 659, 661, cited by Lopomo and by Mario Speroni, 'Il Primo Vocabolario Giuridico Umanistico: Il *De Verborum Significatione* di Maffeo Vegio' (Siena: Circolo Giuridico dell'Università, 1976), p. 11 footnote 13 (respectively). Speroni's preceding footnote, 12 (citing Gianvito Resta, *L'epistolario del Panormita. Studi per un'edizione critica* (Messina, 1954), p. 251), refers to a letter from Beccadelli to Zambeccari in November 1429 concerning Vegio, 'a poet by no means to be rejected' ('poetam haud reiciendum'). In this same month or earlier in October, so Lopomo notes (pp. 241-248), Beccadelli had written from Pavia to Zambeccari to thank him, partly on Vegio's ('compoeta meus') behalf, for his letters, and to wish him well for his coming voyage on the Po, imagined in Vegio's poem 'Congratulatio Eridani ad Cambium Zambeccarium' (I). Speroni says that Zambeccari in turn wrote to Beccadelli on 3 December 1429 concerning the *Aeneid* (a letter preserved in Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Vat. lat. 3372, f. 58r: https://digi.vatlib.it/view/MSS_Vat.lat.3372: on this folio appears a letter containing the phrase 'Vale cum Mapheo nostro', after a request that Beccadelli send him Tibullus and whatever seems to him 'elegans'; the following letter (which Speroni must have been referring to) beginning on the same folio and continuing onto f. 58v mentions this copy of Virgil's text and its emendation. For our purposes Vegio's appearance in this correspondence is the important point).

conclusion of the *Pompeiana* he states: ‘This only is left: I will recommence versifying, and I will utter songs’.⁶ And this is precisely what Vegio did. Later, when the plague returned in 1431 and he found himself taking refuge in Villa Pompeiana once more among the rural population whom he despised, he wrote many poems which stated this situation more starkly, and constituted *Elegies* and *Rusticanalia*. The poems here express a similar desire to escape the rural backwater and enjoy a more secure official and financial position, as well as one more suited to his cultured tastes. Such a desire, part of the ‘complaint to the purse’ theme, was a *topos*, certainly, but the insistence of its message across poems which are otherwise so varied suggests it was sincere, as well as a conventional or rhetorical exercise.

Elegies

I. The Power to Eternize

The first poem, ‘Ad Quintilianum’,⁷ demonstrates the key trends observable in many of Vegio’s uses of Virgil through this collection, as it asserts his status as a divinely-inspired poet in need of patronage who can help immortalise the powerful through his verses. It appears first in the Verona codex (c.1431) as a verse dedicated to Francesco Piccinino, a *condottiere* in the employ of Filippo Maria Visconti, and is based around a vision of Apollo and the Muses experienced by the poet as he languishes in exile in the country, away from the comforts, cultural stimulations, society and friendship of Pavia. The main model for the poem is Propertius 3.3, in which Apollo admonishes the poet for his attempts at epic, and tells him to instead write love poetry, but into this frame Vegio imports Virgilian epic elements which aggrandise the speaker’s own situation within the mundane conditions of his exile. In the opening two lines we find the phrase ‘hospita [...] terra’, from *Aeneid* 3.539, which originally describes a land of ill omen on which the Trojans almost landed as they sought their new home. It might also specifically allude to the ‘scelerata [...] terra’ of *Aeneid* 3.60, where the Trojans hear the woeful tale of Polydorus. In either case, Vegio’s speaker is cast in the role of the exiled Trojans, and he goes on to explain (ll. 3-8) that the anger of Jupiter has necessitated this flight from his dear city to Villa Pompeiana.⁸ The new location is, equivocally, a welcome haven from peril, or a region in which perils abound; the implication is that the ideal rural retreat might not be ideal at all.

⁶ ‘Hoc superest, repetam modulans, et carmina dicam’ (quoted from *MAPHAEI VEGII LAUDENSIS Opera* (Lodi: Paulli Bertoeti, 1613)).

⁷ Lopomo, pp. 155-166.

⁸ The name of which, he explains, comes from the idea that Pompey first inhabited it.

Alongside the Virgilian echoes, ‘hospita terra’ carries Tibullan and Ovidian ones too, which emphasise epic piety rather than epic hardship: Tibullus 2.5.42 speaks of the host land welcoming wandering gods, and Ovid’s *Ex Ponto* (a major precedent for Vegio’s poetry of exile) 4.9.5-6 states ‘nor is my piety unknown: a host land sees that a shrine to Caesar is in my house’.⁹ This of course also speaks of (perhaps Aenean) *pietas*, but is more relevant to the throng of Muses about to enter the scene of Vegio’s poem, as is Ovid’s tale of Filemon and Baucis in the *Metamorphoses* 8.637-724, who welcome the disguised Jove and Mercury into their humble home. Still, Virgil is present here too in Vegio’s phrase ‘pulcher Apollo’ (l. 20), which appears in a scene of sacrifice to the god in *Aeneid* 3.118-119. Finally, there are clear allusions to poetry: on line 37, Vegio writes ‘cui semper cordi cytharae, cui carmina semper’, words which, rearranged, describe Crethea in *Aeneid* 9.775-776 (‘Crethea Musarum comitem, cui carmina semper/ et cytharae cordi numerosque intendere nervis’), who, comrade of the Muses, ever delighted in song and the chords of the lyre. In Vegio’s poem, these words are used by Apollo to the speaker. Furthermore, Cretheus was an epic poet who in the *Aeneid* sang of wars, and another important innovation by Vegio is that Apollo in this poem, unlike in Propertius, does not dissuade the poet from writing epic; he promises to support him however he can in his unfortunate predicament and state of despondency. This is why he brings the court of the Muses with him to perform all of the speaker’s household tasks. Finally, Vegio alludes to Virgil’s *Eclogues* too through the phrase ‘quocunque vocarer’ (l. 81), which recalls Menalcas challenging Damoetas to a poetic duel (*Eclogues* 3.49). Altogether, then, these abundant allusions are faithful to their models, only transposed to a more domestic, personal and contemporary setting, with the effect of likening the speaker to an inspired ancient poet, in an epic narrative of exile, humble piety and divine vision.

There is an obvious sense in which this technique in itself could help to gain patronage through inspiring compassion in friends in high places; in poem VI, ‘Ad Laelium’,¹⁰ which Lopomo believes to be addressed to Catone Sacco,¹¹ Vegio makes a touching allusion to *Aeneid* 3.393, Helenus’ prophecy to Aeneas about the site of Rome, and just as that place would be a ‘requies [...] certa laborum’ for Aeneas, ‘Laelius’ would be the same haven of repose for the poem’s speaker. Here, a faithful allusion to Virgil, even if its relocation approaches the hyperbolic, serves to elevate the speaker in a similar way to that which we have just seen. In ‘Ad Quintilianum’, however, the implications are broader: through this fashioning, Vegio begins to advertise an ability to classicise not

⁹ Ovid’s *Tristia* and *Ex Ponto* are influential predecessors for the theme of the poet writing from exile. *Ex Ponto* 2.5, for example, while not alluded to in the poems examined here, contains many of the elements seen in them, from praise of the recipient, complaints at being away from home, the relationship between epic and other, lesser genres, and the attempt to win favour with a patron. *Ex Ponto* 3.3, with its account of Love/Cupid appearing to the poet, finds a sort of echo in the apparition of Apollo here, and its description (l. 93) of Love disappearing into ‘tenues [...] auras’ uses a Virgilian phrase which we will see utilised by Vegio in his *Antoniad* (Ovid quoted from *Tristia* and *Ex Ponto*, translated by Arthur Leslie Wheeler (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1959)).

¹⁰ Lopomo, pp. 178-179.

¹¹ See Lopomo, pp. 176-177 for this identification.

only himself, but also his contemporaries. This was a valuable skill in the eyes of patrons, whether ‘Quintilianus’ or the original dedicatee Piccinino, who might desire to be depicted in similar ways to the great men of antiquity. In fact, we see exactly this faithful use of allusion as panegyric in poem XXI,¹² addressed to Piccinino, which in its twelfth line uses the Virgilian phrase ‘oppida capta’ (*Aeneid* 12.22-23) to describe the towns taken, not by Turnus, but by the *condottiere*.

The theme of poets giving praise and immortality to the powerful in return for patronage is a central one for Vegio in this collection.¹³ In another poem ‘Ad Laelium’ (XIII),¹⁴ the Virgilian allusions are to ‘fera [...] bella’ (l. 2) and ‘famae [...] amore’ (l. 3), alluding to the epic genre and the events it sings of and commemorates, as well as to Anchises’ effect on Aeneas in 6.888-889, when he ‘fires his soul with love of fame that was to be’. Virgil’s presentation of this fame as worthwhile gives the ambition some legitimacy through poetic authority, though it might be important that Aeneas was in love with virtue as much as fame, two things which, as we saw in the Visconti cards and their accompanying treatise, were linked at this time, at least in princely self-presentation.¹⁵ By drawing attention to this, Vegio feeds a desire for fame. The next step is highlighting poetry’s ability to confer such renown,¹⁶ and this concept can be summarised in more general terms. It is well-known that, as Vegio points out in a poem ‘Ad Cambium’ (XXIII),¹⁷ Aeneas, Achilles and Hector are remembered through the works of the poets Virgil and Homer. Contemporary heroes (and their memorial legacies) therefore have something valuable to gain from being patrons to poets. Looking to wider literary history, although Petrarch had attempted to revive the epic genre with his *Africa* (1343), this poem still dealt with a classical hero, Scipio Africanus, and it would take until the 1450s for Italian poets to try writing epics about contemporary rulers.¹⁸ Vegio’s promises here, in the 1430s, therefore seem ahead of their time, and it might be worth reflecting on and investigating further that these mid-century epics originated in the same northern Italian regions in which Vegio had worked. One of the first, in fact, the 1451 *Sforziad*, was composed by Vegio’s associate Francesco Filelfo.

It is also worth noting here that, just as Filelfo had earlier praised Vegio as ‘alter Maro’, other poets often advertised their poet friends’ abilities to answer this desire for fame and immortality. Enea Silvio Piccolomini mentions Vegio in a poem which depicts the two poets as shepherds seeking

¹² Lopomo, pp. 213-215.

¹³ The influence of Horace on Vegio’s works is, in this regard and in others, an investigation worthy of further pursuit.

¹⁴ Lopomo, pp. 193-194.

¹⁵ The connection also of course had classical precedents, such as in Cicero’s *Somnium Scipionis* and *De Officiis*.

¹⁶ Though, as we saw in the praise for Aeneas in the *Supplementum*, the qualifications for and types of renown could be more varied and complicated than might be initially be expected or assumed.

¹⁷ Lopomo, pp. 219-222.

¹⁸ Kristen Lippincott, ‘The neo-Latin historical epics of the north Italian courts: an examination of ‘courtly culture’ in the fifteenth century’, *Renaissance Studies* Vol. 3, No. 4 (December 1989), pp. 415-428.

‘Caesar’ (depicted using Visconti symbolism) and the patronage he can offer,¹⁹ and in a poem to the King of France Charles VII which we will return to briefly in the next chapter, Piccolomini explicitly says that Vegio is a poet capable of immortalising the great man’s deeds in timeless verse.²⁰ The poem to Laelius immediately preceding XVIII uses Virgilian allusion in exactly this faithful, panegyric way, emphasising poetry’s immortalising power. ‘Nam quantum stabunt, quantum mea carmina vivent,/ tantum te celebri nomine fama feret’ (XVII. ll. 9-10) recalls, in its ending of the first quoted line (despite the substitution of ‘vivent’ for ‘possunt’), Virgil’s address to Nisus and Euryalus in *Aeneid* 9.446-447, stating that if his verse can do anything, no day will ever banish them from the memory of time.²¹ Vegio writes: ‘For however long my songs will stand, however long they’ll live,/ So long will fame bear you with honoured name’.

Of course, this kind of appeal lent itself easily to parody, and Vegio hints at it in ‘Ad Marcellinum’ (XI),²² addressed to Marcolini, the brother of Francesco Barbavara, the ‘Maecenas’ addressed in the preceding poem in the collection (X),²³ which makes the same case for poetry’s role in preserving great deeds. To Marcolini, Vegio writes: ‘Marcelline, quibus dignum te laudibus ornem?’, recalling Drances’ words to Aeneas ‘Vir troiane, quibus caelo te laudibus aequem?’ (*Aeneid* 11.125). Here, Drances’ words are used sincerely, as we will see they do later in the *Antoniad* dedicated to Eugenius IV, but the suggestion of insincerity is there: it could be interpreted as too fulsome, especially (or perhaps, given the Papal dedication, because) in a poem written to the brother of one of Vegio’s usual targets (the one he called ‘Maecenas’, no less) for patronage pleas. It can also be observed that in one of Vegio’s juvenilia, a poetic composition modelled on Aesop’s fables, a speech of Drances’ is put into the mouth of a flattering magpie, again raising the possibility of irony here. The allusion to Martial’s XIV.73, from which Vegio lifts ‘Pica loquax’ (‘chattering magpie’), enhances this ironic, epigrammatic impression. Furthermore, as Rogerson notes, Vegio had continued Virgil’s depiction of a fawning Drances in his *Supplementum*.²⁴ This might indicate the different levels of audience Vegio addressed: such flattery to a patron would be sincere; to the literati in a patron’s entourage, aware of such classical contexts, it might seem more tongue-in-cheek. Yet this is equivocal on both levels: in another counterturn towards the sincere, in line 561 of this same *Supplementum*, ‘laudibus ornem’ is

¹⁹ Enea Silvio Piccolomini, *Cinthia*, 24 ‘Egloga: Vegius. Silvius’, in Enea Silvio Piccolomini, *Eneae Silvii Piccolominei postea Pii PP. II Carmina*, ed. by Adrian Van Heck, in *Studi e Testi*, 364, (Vatican City: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, 1994), pp. 38-46.

²⁰ This poem appears in an appendix of Giovanni Marrasio, *Angelinetum and Other Poems*, translated by Mary P. Chatfield (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2016), pp. 202-205, and Piccolomini, *Carmina*, pp. 80-82.

²¹ Lopomo, pp. 201-202.

²² Lopomo, pp. 188-190.

²³ Lopomo, pp. 186-187.

²⁴ Fabio Della Schiava, ‘*Fabellae* Esopiche’. ‘De philomena et pica’ (itself informed by Martialic models) opens: ‘Dum Philomena canit, stimulus erumpit amarus/ Pica loquax, verbis talibus ausa queri:’. ‘Stimulus [...] amarus’ (‘bitter/sour/sarcastic goads’) recalls Drances in *Aeneid* 11.335-339: ‘Invidia stimulisque agitabat Amaris’. Drances is not good at fighting himself, and envies Turnus’ abilities, as the magpie envies the nightingale’s singing. For the *Supplementum* example, see Rogerson, ‘Reevaluating Turnus’, pp. 131-135.

part of the praise predicted for Aeneas' progeny by his loving mother Venus. In any case, the poem concludes with a panegyric, which also confects intimacy between poet and patron, recalling the address to those famous mythological friends Nisus and Euryalus: 'Sic tua in aeterno virtus memorabitur aevo,/ sic fugiet nullo nomen ab ore tuum' (ll. 75-76) ('Thus your virtue will be remembered in an eternal age,/ thus your name will escape no mouth').

II. *The Status of Elegy*

The second major preoccupation in this collection, which is associated with even more creative types of allusion, is the debate over the status of elegy, especially in relation to epic. We can see how this also works to support the pleas for patronage seen above by considering the poem 'Ad Laelium' (XII), which advances these pleas by alluding also to defences of minor genres by Ovid and Martial.²⁵ Here, Vegio is again aggrandising himself and his situation, but there is a more generically-motivated purpose too:

Noli humiles nostras, Laeli, adcusare Camenas:
convenit auctori nostra elegia suo.
At certe grandes capiunt mea vota coturnos,
et mallem tragicis magna referre modis;
et faciam, si quando sinent placida otia; nec me
defecisse animis viderit ulla dies.
Gloria magna mihi est longos superare labores:
haec sola e cunctis gloria magna mihi est.

Don't accuse our humble Muses, Laelius:
Our elegy is fitting to its author.
Yet certainly my desires take on grand buskins,
And I would have preferred to tell great things in tragic modes;
And I might do, when peaceful leisure lets me;
Nor will any day see me having lost heart.
A great glory it is to me to overcome long sufferings:
This, out of all, is my only great glory.

Vegio's speaker is again cast as Aeneas, and although it is hyperbolic, the allusion on line 7 is faithful to *Aeneid* 3.368, in which Virgil's hero asks Helenus, the priest of Phoebus: 'By what course might I overcome great suffering?' The classicising of the speaker's situation might, as we have already seen,

²⁵ Lopomo, pp. 191-192.

have demonstrated an ability to praise rulers and cause them to resemble the ancients, but here ‘great things’ and ‘tragic modes’ (with even the word ‘coturnos’ gesturing to the tragedy of the Carthage movement of the *Aeneid*, which Venus signifies by wearing the buskins of the tragedienne) are, albeit temporarily, renounced in favour of elegies. Their elegiac distich form, furthermore, enacts this.²⁶ The speaker addresses Laelius and tells him not to despise the present elegiac poem: its author is in a difficult situation, and it is only fitting that all he can manage, despite his earlier grand determinations, desires or perhaps even promises (‘vota’), are works in minor genres. When he is more comfortable and not beset by trials, he will don the tragic buskins, like he said he would, and sing of serious subjects (or, in the phrasing of Eclogue 4.1, ‘paulo maiora’). This conceit had classical precedents. Ovid’s *Amores* opens with the poet claiming to have embarked on an epic poem of wars and violence, in the appropriate meter, before Cupid stole a poetic foot away, thus making the poem elegiac.²⁷ In Martial 1.107, we have an even closer model, as Lucius tells the lazy poet to write something great, to which the latter replies that he would if only some Maecenas gave him the same leisure granted to Horace and Virgil.²⁸ In Vegio’s hands, however, the *topos* is too insistently reiterated for us to believe it to be only a *topos*. Villa Pompeiana, as we have already seen and will see many times again, is not Vegio’s ideal writing retreat. Notwithstanding this, his stoicism in the face of ‘longos [...] labores’ is ‘magna’ in other sense, and his determination towards major genres remains, as long as ‘peaceful leisure’ permits; if only some powerful and magnanimous individual patronised him, the epics (which, as the poems surveyed above affirmed, can grant fame and immortality on such individuals) would flow freely from his pen.

An equally canny use of Virgilian allusion in this context of elegiac defences appears in ‘Ad Bartholomeum Capram’ (XX),²⁹ dedicated, in an act of conspicuous name-dropping, to the eminent bishop of Milan. The poem opens with Capra’s surprise at Vegio’s downwards turn to the elegiac, which Vegio describes as ‘unarmed’ or ‘helpless’ (‘carmen inerme’), presumably to sharply contrast with the ‘arma virumque’ of the epic *Aeneid*, to which Vegio also refers in the elegy ‘Ad Lucidum

²⁶ There are, after all, many moments which thematically might be considered elegiac in the epic *Aeneid*, but despite Vegio’s utilisation of such moments (for example, the complaints of Dido, or the Nisus and Euryalus episode), it is the shorter poetic form which truly makes the elegy ‘minor’.

²⁷ Ovid, *Amores* 1.1.1-1.1.4: ‘arma gravi numero violentaque bella parabam/ edere, materia conveniente modis./par erat inferior versus, risisse Cupido/ dicitur atque unum surripuisse pedem.’ See Ovid, *Heroides and Amores*, edited and translated by Grant Showerman (London: William Heinemann, 1914).

²⁸ ‘Saepe mihi dicis, Luci carissime Iuli,/”scribe aliquid magnum: desidiosus homo es”./otia da nobis, sed qualia fecerat olim/Maecenas Flacco Vergilioque suo:/condere victuras temptem per saecula curas/et nomen flammis eripuisse meum./in steriles nolunt campos iuga ferre iuveni:/pingue solum lassat, sed iuvat ipse labor’ (‘Often you tell me, dearest Lucius Iulius,/ “Write something great, you lazy man”./ Give me leisure, but the kind that Maecenas once/ Gave to his Horace and his Virgil:/ Then I’d try to found works which would survive the centuries/ And snatch my name from the flames./ Oxen don’t want to bear their yokes into barren fields:/ A fat soil tires, but the work itself is beneficial.’). Cf. Martial 8.55: ‘ergo ego Vergilius, si munera Maecenatis/des mihi? Vergilius non ero, Marsus ero’ (‘Will I, therefore, be Virgil, if you give me the gifts of Maecenas? I won’t be Virgil, I’ll be Marsus.’).

²⁹ Lopomo, pp. 210-212.

Gonzagum' (XXVI) in order to promise that if another Augustus esteems poets, there will be another Maro singing of arms and the man.³⁰ Vegio alludes, in line 14 of the poem to Capra, and again in a faithful way, to Eclogue 5.76-79 and the connection it makes between nourished cicadas and the audience's lasting name, honours and glories. The implication is that if the singers are fed, the songs will continue, and the speaker explicitly states as much: 'tot referam quae sunt totum celebrata per orbem [...] tot narrem pugnas caelesti Aeneide dignas' ('I will recount so many things which are celebrated throughout the whole world [...] I would tell of so many fights befitting the celestial *Aeneid*'). This last phrase subtly reminds the reader of the fact which always remained somewhere in the background to Vegio's patronage pleas, as something against which their claims could be judged: Vegio's reputation as the author of the *Supplementum* to this Virgilian epic. He was already best known as 'alter Maro' due to his epic verse. The composition of elegies and the dramatized renunciation of epic therefore demonstrated the ability to work in another genre, and allowed claims of epic credentials to be advanced in a wittier and more oblique manner, with the added benefit of emphasising the dire conditions which, so the poet alleged, had driven him to write paltry elegies in the first place.

By writing such minor verses as well as epyllia, Vegio might well have been seeking to demonstrate a Virgilian virtuosity. The spokes of the *rota Virgilii* are commonly said to be pastoral, bucolic and epic, each with their own conventions and sense of decorum. We have seen Vegio composing epics, and now we see him writing elegies, which Virgil had in a sense written as vignettes within his epics, notably in the forms of the laments of Dido, Euryalus' mother, and Juturna. The rural subject matter also gestures towards that other genre, pastoral. Yet Vegio does not follow these in the order commonly expected or meant by those who speak of the Virgilian *rota*. The explanation for this (as David Scott Wilson-Okamura notes, following Edmond Faral) is that the aspiration to imitate Virgil might not always have taken the form of graduating through these genres in succession; the aim was to be able to write in any register, with the *rota* providing not a *cursus*, but a generic checklist, for an aspiring poet.³¹ By extension, the sense of variety conveyed by this idea not of scheduled progression but of diverse talents centrifugally directed, could even justify the composition of short poems such as elegies (and, as we will see later in this study, epitaphs and epigrams) as an equally Virgilian ambition. Indeed, in the next chapter we will see that Virgil was believed in the *quattrocento* to have written, alongside the *Eclogues*, *Georgics* and *Aeneid*, such minor, and even trifling, works. The medieval scribal tradition transmitted under his name a collection of such shorter poems, including the mock-epic the *Gnat*, the series of fifteen trifling epigrams and parodies known as the *Catalepton*, and the *Moretum*, a rustic vignette depicting a farmer making pesto. These verses only

³⁰ Lopomo, pp. 232-239, l. 46.

³¹ Wilson-Okamura, pp. 90-91; Edmond Faral, *Les Arts Poétiques du XIIIe et du XIVe Siècle: Recherches et Documents Sur la Technique Littéraire du Moyen Age* (Paris: Champion, 1924), pp. 86-89.

became collectively known as the *Appendix Virgiliana* in 1572, when Joseph Scaliger curated an edition of them, yet copies of individual or clustered poems among them were produced from the classical period onwards and included alongside copies of Virgil's three major works. A catalogue from the library of Murbach in southern Alsace records that most of the poems were collected together in the middle of the ninth century, and it is evident that Vegio and his humanist contemporaries, working from such Carolingian manuscripts centuries later in the belief that they were ancient, were likewise familiar with the poems, despite the otherwise fragmentary nature of their transmission to the *quattrocento* as a complete collection.³² We will see in the next chapter Vegio's familiarity with the epigrams and the *Gnat*. It is worth considering also, in this chapter's upcoming discussion of Vegio's *Rusticanalia*, that the *Moretum*, despite not being alluded to precisely, may have provided a different kind of model for Vegio in its mock-serious and semi-grotesque depiction of rustic life.

Returning to the elegy, we can now discuss the fact that Vegio, as well as justifying the elegiac form, wrote love elegies. The first example, which showcases the generic hybridity of Vegio's allusive practices within the form, is 'Ardizo Carrariensis Se A Candida Negligi Conqueritur Ad Bossum' (V). Ardizzone da Carrara was a *condottiere*, and Vegio's verse concerns the mercenary's love for 'Candida'.³³ Luigi Bossi, as Lopomo notices, was the son of the ducal councillor to the Visconti, Antonio Bossi, and so the milieu to which Vegio is addressing his poetry is still very much the same. We find in this poem an allusion to *Georgics* 1.139-140 (which speaks of how 'men found how to snare game in toils, to cheat with bird-lime, and to circle great glades with hounds') employed as a suggestion for how Ardizzone might distract himself from his lovesickness: 'Unless it helps to circle dense hills with hounds, and through the grove to drive out trembling wild beasts' (ll. 19-20). We also find epic, as well as pastoral, employed in the elegy, when Vegio (ll. 23-24) uses Virgil's description of Venus pouring 'gentle repose through the limbs of Ascanius' (*Aeneid* 1.691-692) in its new context of Ardizzone managing to rest, so long as the image of Candida does not insinuate itself into his sleep. Martial allusions feature, too, such as line 75's 'fiducia cessit', which combines the amorous scene of Vulcan responding to Venus' caresses as she asks him to forge Aeneas' shield in *Aeneid* 8.395 ('Where, goddess, has fled your faith in me?'), and Turnus' enduring resolve after Aeneas' ships transform into sea nymphs (*Aeneid* 9.126) and after Aeneas emerges, awe-inspiring and terrible, with his shield (10.276). The significance of this clustered allusion, however, is to link the bedroom with the battlefield, as the conquering *condottiere* Ardizzone is conquered by love. Epic is used in the service of elegy, as it was, most notably, by Ovid and Propertius in their use of the 'militia amoris'

³² On all this, see Scott McGill, 'The Appendix Vergiliana', in Charles Martindale and F. Mac Góráin (eds.), *The Cambridge Companion to Virgil* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019), pp. 63-76 (pp. 63-65); and Michael D. Reeve, 'The Textual Tradition of the *Appendix Vergiliana*', *Maia* 28.3 (1976), pp. 233-54.

³³ Lopomo, pp. 269-285.

theme which featured heavily in elegy. Sometimes the allusion's significance harmonises with that of its model (that is, an epic image remains epic within an elegiac context), and sometimes the effect is one of contrast and admonition (in other words, it produces the ironic effect already built into the 'militia amoris' theme itself; it is metaphorically true that love resembles war, and that lovers resemble warriors, but these comparisons are so dissimilar in other respects as to make them inevitably ludic, even if only slightly).³⁴ Furthermore, Vegio's generic splicing involves importing not only epic, but also pastoral and elegy, into his own elegiac verses. Vegio's composition of the love elegy, or lover's complaint, might also, when addressed to a potential patron, have been a means of simulating intimate, trusting friendship between poet and addressee. Again, this is a technique designed to make the plea for patronage more effective.

We see a similar generic experimentation in the use of epic found in the allusions Vegio employs in his elegy 'Angela ad Marrasium' (III),³⁵ which was written in response to Giovanni Marrasio's *Angelinetum*, the first poetic collection since antiquity to truly revive the form of the elegy. Since Marrasio wrote so much about being in love with Angelina, Vegio, perhaps imitating Ovid's technique in the *Heroides*, imagined her writing a reply. In Vegio's poem, and perhaps in a Virgilianising treatment of a Dantean arrangement from the *Vita Nuova*,³⁶ Angelina recalls seeing Marrasio (or Marrasio's speaker) fainting and on the point of death near Siena's Fonte Gaia. The only Virgilian reminiscence in this moment is 'ossa tremor' in line 10, which obliquely recalls the 'per ossa cucurrit' in the Vulcan-Venus scene mentioned above, but more closely resembles the shuddering response of the Greeks in Sinon's tale, when it is announced that a sacrifice is required to ensure a safe return journey home (*Aeneid* 2.121), as well as the Trojans' reaction to Phoebus possessing the Sibyl (6.55) and the fearful Latins in the face of the charging Aeneas (12.448). Vegio's employment of this image is faithful to what Virgil describes, yet Vegio uses it to describe the shudder that ran through Angelina's bones upon seeing the poet fainting by the fountain. When their origins are remembered, Vegio's allusions here have a grotesquely hyperbolic or melodramatic quality, making Angelina's sorrow seem almost intolerably palpable, as the prospect of her beloved's death evokes, for example, the terrifying image of the Sibyl acting as the mortal conduit for a god.

³⁴ As Paul Murgatroyd phrases it ("‘Militia amoris’ and the Roman Elegists", *Latomus* 34 (1975), pp. 59-79): 'It may seem somewhat puzzling that two occupations, which at first sight appear to be diametrically opposed, should be compared to one another so frequently. However, a closer examination shows that the similarity between the two is in fact extensive and that to explain the origins of militia amoris we need suppose nothing more than a realization of the inherent affinities between certain amatory and military situations, based on observation of the behaviour of lovers' (p. 59). See also Leslie Cahoon, 'The Bed as Battlefield: Erotic Conquest and Military Metaphor in Ovid's *Amores*', *Transactions of the American Philological Association* 118 (1988), pp. 293-307.

³⁵ Lopomo, pp. 260-264; Marrasio, *Angelinetum*, pp. 202-205.

³⁶ On such medieval influences on Marrasio and other early *quattrocento* poets, see Christoph Pieper, 'Medievalisms in Latin Love Poetry of the Early Italian Quattrocento', pp. 45-66 in Alicia C. Montoya *et al.* (eds.), *Early Modern Medievalisms: The Interplay between Scholarly Reflection and Artistic Production* (Leiden: Brill, 2010).

Another poem shows some different effects obtainable from these kinds of classical exempla and faithful but generically diverse allusions. ‘In Corvinum’ (II) is a consolation to a man whose wife is unfaithful.³⁷ The first phrase which might be a Virgilian allusion would be a faithful one, but its application to a domestic issue is, like the overall subject of the poem,³⁸ almost epigrammatic. The ‘certatum fortiter’ in line 15 echoes Latinus’ comment about the impossibility of defeating the Trojans in *Aeneid* 11.312, when he says ‘toto certatum est corpore regni’, ‘with our realm’s whole body we have wrestled’. In other words, ‘we’ve done all we can; our current predicament can’t be helped’. Applied to a cuckolded husband, it is difficult not to find something comic in its callousness. Still, defeating the Trojans and dealing with a wife’s infidelity are very different issues. The same matter-of-factness is seen in the use of classical precedents: in line 27-30, Vegio reminds Corvinus that Menelaus and Agamemnon were both cheated on by their wives (Helen and Clytemnestra), proving that the same fate can befall even great men, the rulers of great nations. Less flattering is the impression of the ubiquity of infidelity created by Vegio’s statements that Aeneas and Alexander the Great were illegitimate, that Ulysses was not Laertes’ son, and that Julius Caesar and Augustus had to cope with polluted marriages, the first because of a wife, the second because of a daughter (ll. 33-34). The wealth of examples, while potentially encouraging (‘it happens to even the best of us’), surely has an equal potential to cheapen Corvinus’ very personal and painful predicament, and if this is indeed what is going on, it augments the epigrammatic tone of the poem. A more reassuring point comes towards the end, in line 65, when Corvinus is instructed ‘curam hanc de pectore pone’, a clear echo of the Sibyl’s prophecy to Aeneas in *Aeneid* 6. 83-85, when she instructs him ‘mitte hanc de pectore curam’, as the sons of Dardanus would indeed reach the land of Lavinium and therefore need not worry. If Aeneas could put care from his heart and reach the land which would become Rome, then Corvinus is surely able to stop worrying about his unfaithful wife. Again, a faithful allusion, but its repositioning creates a jarring effect between the stylistic levels of the original and new contexts. A mediating source, Virgilian through its Dantean parallels and sharing similarities with Vegio’s poem in its litany of examples of female infidelity as well as its name, might be Boccaccio’s *Corbaccio* (*The Crow*, versus Vegio’s ‘Crow-like’). In this work, the deceased husband of a widow appears in a dream to a man who is in love with her, and warns him of her shortcomings and those of women in general.³⁹ If this source identification is correct, then the tone of Vegio’s poem might be similarly comforting, if entertainingly so, since Boccaccio declared that he intended his work to be a consolation to those who read it. Vegio’s poem concludes, summarising what we have drawn from the evidence it assembles for its case: ‘Don’t be so downcast, Corvinus; don’t, good man, lament that your wife is a whore’.

³⁷ Lopomo, pp. 249-259.

³⁸ See Ovid, *Ars Amatoria* 1.269-342; Juvenal 6, Beccadelli, *Hermaphroditus* 1.6.

³⁹ Giovanni Boccaccio, *The Corbaccio*, trans. and ed. by Anthony K. Cassell (Philadelphia, PA.: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1975).

In all of the examples above, Vegio alludes to Virgil in ways which import epic material into contexts which are generically more modest, in order to simultaneously advance his case for patronage which would relieve him from his current situation, and, related to this, demonstrate his poetic ability to work in, and indeed innovate and experiment with, different forms. Many allusions are faithful, whereas some, including especially vivid epic images, seem overblown when used in elegies. Genre, as we have seen and will see again, is a deciding factor in what allusions signify, or to use an earlier metaphor, what tone of voice they speak with in their new context. This is also true, paradoxically, of the hybrid genres Vegio produced in these years, since they highlight generic combination and disjuncture especially starkly. The capacity to write works in such different genres, ranging from a continuation of the *Aeneid*, through other classicising short epics and poems praising patrons, to love elegies and verses which conclude with lines such as that parting injunction to Corvinus, shows a versatility which would have been attractive to potential patrons. Another effect of Vegio's demonstration of such skills is that he thereby showed his adherence to the *rota Virgilii*: in the eyes of the potential patron's erudite entourage, he would have looked like a serious poet, and this would have lent extra weight to his applications to positions.

Rusticanalia

I. Grotesque Hyperbole

We have already glimpsed some of Vegio's dissatisfaction with living at Villa Pompeiana. Another strong expression of it came in the 1423 *Pompeiana*, when Vegio introduces his low subject matter in the highest epic style:

nunc dura cano suspiria, surgunt
Nunc gemitus, atque ampla meae fastidia vitae,
Nunc crudos moveo agricolas, rabidumque furorem,
Atque avidas in furta manus, magnosque ululatus.

Now heavy sighs I sing, now, with a groan,
Rise the abundant loathings of my life,
Now I present rough farmers, raving fury,
Now thefts by greedy hands, and howlings great.

'Ad Laelium' (V) offers the most blatant instance of this different 'contrapositional' kind of allusion, in which a Virgilian moment is used in a manner which highlights the disjuncture between its original and new contexts:

Qui canere arma virosque et splendida facta solebam,

nunc viles nugas, rura virosque cano.⁴⁰

I, who used to sing illustrious deeds and arms and men,
Now sing base trifles, farms and men.

This passage, in addition to exemplifying the allusion of ‘contraposition’, continues several trends we have been exploring. We again see the bathetic descent from epic, the justification of minor poetry by reference to the poet’s current living conditions, and the hint, here unstated but nonetheless discernible behind the sighing tone, that a patron would be able, in their own interests, to ameliorate these conditions.

Other kinds of allusion are at work in these poems, of course, and more faithful uses of Virgil will be considered, but before moving onto this, it is instructive to set the literary and contextual scene in more detail. The first point to note is that Virgil’s *Eclogues* and *Georgics* (and, as noted earlier, possibly the pseudo-Virgilian *Moretum*), provide the main models for many of these poems, above all because of their rural settings. The overall picture Vergil presents in the sequence is, as it was in the *Pompeiana* written from the same place almost a decade earlier, a negative one. To ‘Laelius’ he writes ‘Among hard rustics, sweetest Laelius, / I live’ (ll. 1-2 of ‘Ad Laelium’ (IV)).⁴¹ The poem goes on to describe how these ‘rustics’ profane all that is holy, and despise the laws and faith of gods and men. An especially memorable instance of this (from the poem ‘In Rusticos’ (XX)) relates how, on festal or religious days, rustics prefer to worship at tavern tables rather than a church altar, and alludes to Aeneas’ *pietas* in his first speech to Evander about ‘the holy oracles of heaven’ in *Aeneid* 8.131 in order to make the expected contrast: ‘You cultivate the inn, not the holy oracles of heaven’ (l. 3).⁴² Allusions of this kind are not faithful, but irreverent.

It must be considered that there was indeed great experimentation in the poetry of the *quattrocento*, and a vogue for writing in what might be called ‘anti-genres’, but the consistency evident between these poems and the *Pompeiana*, and the relentlessness and variety of these negative portrayals across the sequence, suggests also that the sentiments were sincere, despite their conventionality. That many patronage-directed poems and elegies seen so far highlight the squalor of his situation might support this hypothesis too. To resume the role of the *Eclogues* and *Georgics* in all this, in ‘Conquestus in Bacchum et Cererem’ (I) the speaker claims to be living in a ‘Golden Age’, albeit a very frugal one, where Phoebus and the divine sisters also live, and yet at the same time he complains to Bacchus and

⁴⁰ Lopomo, pp. 177. Poem VII. ‘Ad Catonem Iureconsultum’ closes with the same lines (p. 1005).

⁴¹ Lopomo, pp. 174-175.

⁴² Lopomo, p. 391.

Ceres for having abandoned him, lending irony to the former assertion.⁴³ Perhaps there is some truth in the idea that only poetry was left to him, but if so, it was as a refuge from his surroundings (as it is in the *Pompeiana*, where he recites Virgil in order to comfortably get to sleep at night),⁴⁴ not a flourishing well of inspiration around which the Muses naturally gathered. More clearly, ‘Ad Nicolaum Strozam’ (XXV) depicts the same Apollo as dishevelled, and the *locus amoenus* as a chaotic region which has been invaded by fauns and satyrs.⁴⁵ The fact that the Strozzi were stunningly wealthy would lend more force to Vegio’s expression of exigency here. Less mythologically, Vegio depicts the rural inhabitants and farmers in a wholly negative manner, and ‘In Rusticos’ (XVI) condemns their irreligious rites and improprieties, even going so far as to warn them that they will pay after death for the sins they committed in life (ll. 35-37).⁴⁶

The most faithful Virgilian allusions enumerate these sins in turn. ‘In Rusticos’ (XIII) addresses the ‘causa malorum’ (l.3), which is identified as the pernicious influence of the parents’ habits on those of their children.⁴⁷ ‘All of you are the unique cause of these evils,/ All of you the foundation of such vice’ (ll. 3-4). The allusion is to Turnus in *Aeneid* 11.361, the cause of all Latium’s woes, and although the phrase is short, it does import a clear range of connotations into the new context. Virgil’s pastoral poetry had acknowledged epic themes such as the cost of war, but Vegio’s transposition of epic into this more minor generic key seems intentionally discordant, with the allusion to Turnus dominating its new setting given the character’s well-known role as the antagonist of Virgil’s equally well-known epic. Like some of the earlier examples, it might seem hyperbolic when taken from epic and placed here, but it is nonetheless faithful to its original sense. One of the particular vices denounced by the speaker is theft. In the earlier *Pompeiana*, the tale of how grain was stolen during one night by a rural band is recounted, and Vegio illustrates further instances here. ‘In Baccham Rusticam’ (V) he opens by saying that the ‘improba’ (excessive, greedy, wicked) ‘Baccha the Rustic’, not contented by snatching the produce of the fields, steals the speaker’s sacks of grain, too.⁴⁸ In the midst of this sentence occurs the phrase ‘ne quid inausum’, recalling Virgil’s description of Cacus’ thieving exploits and crimes in *Aeneid* 8.205, when, ‘that nothing [of crime] was unattempted’, he drives four bulls and heifers from their stalls, and hauls them into his cave. Again, the epic allusion seems excessive, but it fits the subject matter completely.

⁴³ Lopomo, pp. 346-349.

⁴⁴ Again, see the 1613 edition.

⁴⁵ Lopomo, pp. 226-231.

⁴⁶ Lopomo, pp. 382-386.

⁴⁷ Lopomo, pp. 375-376.

⁴⁸ Lopomo, pp. 361-362.

Another striking instance of faithful, hyperbolic allusion can be seen in how Vegio depicts the rustics' inclination to violence. 'In Rusticos' (XVIII) consistently contrasts the order of the city with the sedition and carnage rampant in the countryside. When he writes that

Rustica sunt omnis foedera causa mali.
Idcirco primos ad bella instruxit agrestes
Qui cecinit Rutuli, Trois et arma viri.⁴⁹

Rustic agreements, compacts, of all ills are the cause.
Hence he who sang of the Rutuli, Troy and the arms
Of the man, made the farmers the first to leave fields for wars.

Vegio alludes to the sequence of events in which Allecto excites Ascanius' hounds to hunt, culminating in Ascanius' shooting of Silvia's stag, and the rural Latins' furious retaliatory uprising against the Trojans (*Aeneid* 7.475-539). The fidelity and hyperbole remain here, yet Virgil is also being used perversely or unfaithfully as an authority for Vegio's own sentiments, in order to state what he sees as a general truth about rustic behaviour.

Such hyperbole approaches the grotesque in the poem 'In Rusticos' (XXIV),⁵⁰ which compares rustics' conduct in the countryside and in the city and likens it to the behaviour of dogs who bark wildly yet are calm and well-behaved in the presence of their masters. Virgil's 'rabie fera corda tument', describing the inspired Sybil's heart swelling with wild frenzy (*Aeneid* 6.49), becomes 'bili concita corda tument' in Vegio's image of a rustic heart swelling with bile. The awesome epic image transposed to a still threatening but contemporary context which makes a remark on society is effective and faithful, but must have a comic intention because of the same discrepancy between the stylistic levels of the model and alluding texts. We will see exaggerated examples of this kind of allusion in some of the epigrams examined in the next chapter.

II. *Contrapositional Allusion*

The other main kind of allusion observable here is the 'contrapositional' allusion seen at the beginning of this chapter subsection, in which a model is evoked only in order to highlight the distance between its image and connotations and the new image and connotations it is employed to

⁴⁹ Lopomo, p. 389.

⁵⁰ Lopomo, p. 395.

describe. The richest poem in the collection for this sort of allusion is ‘In Rusticos’ (II),⁵¹ which contrasts the antique Golden Age to the present times. Vegio uses the model of *Georgics* 1.118-149 with its common resources, its lack of borders, its earth freely yielding its produce, before Jove ruled that men should have to work for all these gifts and hunt their food, build ships, name stars and create the arts. Vegio relates how the age of the virtuous ‘primi [...] parentes’ (a reference to the Biblical Adam and Eve but here expressed classically on line 3) has degenerated in the hands of contemporary farmers and country people, and instead of peace and concord, there is theft and blasphemy. We have seen this before, but instead of alluding to Cacus or Mars, he uses ideal scenes of original bliss and virtue as a foil for the vices he condemns. Likewise, recalling *Georgics* 2.458-459 (‘O happy husbandmen, too happy if they came to know their blessings!’), Vegio summarises: ‘O fortunate ones whom that age received, progenitors beneath a happy star!’ Yet the problem is that the rustics have forgotten all this, and the exclamation comes: ‘Yet if only you knew, all of you farmers, how blessed is your lot! Surely, none is more blessed!’ (ll. 43-44). Then the usual criticisms follow about how they know neither the laws of gods nor men, nor peace, nor love.⁵² Altogether, then, Vegio’s allusive practice here consists of making faithful use of Virgilian moments relating to the now-past Golden Age, turning less relevant moments so that they reinforce this image, and doing all this in order to contrast the resultant vision of how things should be with an opposed picture of how they actually are.⁵³ It is allusive ‘contraposition’ illustrated most clearly and fully. It furthermore embodies a more general moralised opposition between town and country seen throughout the pre-modern period, and explored especially widely by ancient Roman poets with whose works Vegio was familiar.⁵⁴

A final poem shows, like ‘In Corvinum’ above, an epigrammatic tendency, and combines the infidelity explored in that poem with the country-city dichotomy explored by ‘In Rusticos’ (XXIV). ‘In Textilem Rusticam’ (IX) tells of a country woman who, it is suggested, would prefer an urban lover.⁵⁵ Her manners are urban, however rustic she is, and when she laughs, her gown laughs (whether at the neckline or lower down is not specified) together with her.⁵⁶ This flirtatiousness leads the

⁵¹ Lopomo, pp. 350-357.

⁵² ‘In Rusticos’ VI also criticises the rustics’ love of (to use Hamlet’s phrase) ‘country matters’ (Lopomo, pp. 363-366).

⁵³ In this moment, too, Vegio makes no optimistic reference to the hope of an imminent revival of this Golden Age, such as we see in Virgil’s *Eclogue IV* (*Virgil in Two Volumes*, vol. 1, parallel text with translation by H. Rushton Fairclough (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1950), pp. 28-33). Both Virgilian visions, one of irrecoverable loss and one as a model for future renovation, were expressed throughout the post-classical period; here, Vegio uses the first for ironic contrast, and places little hope in the second.

⁵⁴ Brian Vickers, ‘Leisure and idleness in the Renaissance: the ambivalence of otium’, *Renaissance Studies* Vol. 4, No. 1 (MARCH 1990), pp. 1-37.

⁵⁵ Lopomo, p. 369.

⁵⁶ Echoes of Ovid, *Ars Amatoria*, might favour the neckline hypothesis (3.307-310: ‘Pars umeri tamen ima tui, pars summa lacerti/ nuda sit, a laeva conspicienda manu [...] hoc ubi vidi, oscula ferre umero, qua patet usque, libet’ (‘Let the part of your left lower shoulder and upper arm be naked, to be noticed [...] when I see this, I want to kiss as much of your shoulder as can be seen’). The idea of the gown flowing open might recall a

speaker to conclude: 'Go now from your unworthy chosen husband./ There'll be another, worthier man in the city!' This is an idea seen in Dioneo's response to the tale in Boccaccio's *Decameron* 10.10. Lopomo points to a source in Martial for Vegio's verse, but only for the name of its subject, which in Martial 7.29 and 8.63 is male, 'Thestylus', a beautiful boy admired throughout the city and adored as much as Virgil's Alexis by poets, their patrons and readers. The significance here, then, in the absence of any narrative similarity, would seem to be to suggest or signpost the epigram form. The more relevant source is Virgilian, since in Eclogue 2.10-11 and 43-44 Thestylis is a country girl (or, as Servius has it, 'mulier[is]') who grinds garlic and thyme. Servius' commentary makes clear that it is simply 'nomen rusticae mulieris', and this is how Vegio uses it, as becomes clear in the other allusion he makes, to Eclogue 3.84, in which Virgil writes 'Pollio loves my Muse', 'quamvis est rustica' ('rustic though she is'). In Vegio's poem, this is transformed into 'Sunt tibi civiles, quamvis sis rustica, mores,/Textilis' ('You have civil customs, Textilis, rustic though you are'); the point is the contrast, absent in Virgil, between the obviously rustic Textilis (the name clearly derived more phonetically from Thestylis) and her urban pretensions. Again, the allusions are contrapositional, evoking a Virgilian pastoral purity in order to accentuate its corruption.

In summary, across all of these poems Vegio employs Virgilian allusions faithfully, as, by turns, hyperbolically epic and at times grotesque expressions of the moral depravity of the rustic population, and illustrations of virtues which contrast starkly with their vices. There is an anti-pastoral theme here, with epigrammatic tendencies of which we will see more examples in the next chapter.

Antoniad

I. Introduction

A more detailed contextual framing is required to introduce Vegio's *Antoniad*. As noted above, when Vegio finally gained major patronage a few years after writing his elegies, it was not from a prince, but from the Pope. Yet while Vegio was writing the verses discussed above, Eugenius IV was negotiating his position, and that of his Papacy, within the conciliar disputes of the 1430s over issues ranging from the insertion of 'Filioque' into the Nicene Creed, to the union of the Western and Eastern Churches of Christendom in the face of the increasing and threatening power of the Ottomans. The Council of Basel convoked in 1431 adopted an anti-Papal stance, and stubbornly insisted on convening the council somewhere away from Rome to avoid Papal and wider Italian interference. Eugenius in turn refused to ratify all the decrees coming from Basel, in an attempt to preserve Papal

proximate Ovidian passage (3.301-2: 'tunicisque fluentibus auras/ accipit' ('catches the breeze with flowing robes')).

power, a strategy which eventually, in the 1440s, won out, after numerous developments which saw the splitting of the Council, and even the election, by one of its branches, of an anti-pope in opposition to Eugenius.⁵⁷

Yet these events came later. In the first days of June 1434 a revolt in Rome, spurred by the invasion of the Papal States by Filippo Maria Visconti (via his *condottiere* Piccinino, and motivated by retaliation for earlier Papal support for Venice and Florence against Milan), led to Eugenius escaping the city in secret on a boat down the Tiber. From here he moved from city to city, but was based mostly in Florence, where in March 1436, after the completion of Brunelleschi's cupola, he consecrated the Duomo, making an appropriate gift of a golden rose to the cathedral of Santa Maria del Fiore which provided the subject of a motet produced for the occasion, 'Nuper rosarum flores', by the Franco-Flemish composer Guillaume du Fay.⁵⁸ It was later in this year, when the Pope was settled in Bologna, that Vegio enters the story.

Fojas and Hankins trace how, having been seeking Papal patronage from Pavia in April 1436 (as we know from independent sources), Vegio was recommended to Eugenius in a letter dated 4th July 1436, by his friend and (lesser or intermediate) patron in the Visconti court, Giuseppe Brivio. After apologising for his own absence (the result of Visconti wishes for him to remain in Milan), Brivio describes a work which Vegio has begun about the life of the early desert father Saint Antony Abbot. It therefore seems likely, given the date of Brivio's reference to the *Antoniad*, that Vegio completed the work before heading to Bologna where Eugenius was based. However, because he was initially unsuccessful in gaining the patronage he sought (he left Pavia in March and by the time Brivio wrote the letter in July Eugenius had still not heard about the work), he later dated it, perhaps after some final revisions, to March 1437. By this time, he had been appointed by Eugenius as Papal Abbreviator, and could leave the intermediate patronage of Cardinal Ludovico Trevisan and dedicate the work to his new patron, the Pope.⁵⁹

Saint Antony Abbot first appears in the fourth-century Greek *Life* written by Athanasius of Alexandria and translated into Latin by Evagrius shortly afterwards as the *Vita Antonii*. This work recounts the tale of how Antony was tested through repeated assaults by demons, managing to resist them all in addition to performing various miracles. This tale is that which later appears in the account

⁵⁷ Piccolomini, *Europe*, pp. 241, 262 (also note 739), 263; also, Luca Boschetto, *Società e cultura a Firenze al tempo del Concilio: Eugenio IV tra curiali, mercanti e umanisti (1434–1443)* (Rome: Edizioni di storia e letteratura, 2012), *passim*.

⁵⁸ Boschetto, pp. ix-x; Charles W. Warren, 'Brunelleschi's Dome and Dufay's Motet', in *The Musical Quarterly* Vol. 59, No. 1 (January 1973), pp. 92-105 (p. 92).

⁵⁹ For this argument see Abigail Fojas and James Hankins, 'A Checklist of Manuscripts and Early Editions containing Maffeo Vegio's *Astyanax* (1430) and *Antonias* (1436-1437). (With a note on the date of the *Antonias*)', in *Scriptorium*, Tome 58 n°2, 2004, pp. 265-273 (pp. 267-268). For more on Vegio and Brivio, see Agostino Sottili, A., 'Zur Biographie Giuseppe Brivios und Maffeo Vegios', *Mittelateinisches Jahrbuch* 4 (1967), pp. 219-42.

of the saint given in Jacobus de Voragine's *Golden Legend*.⁶⁰ Inspired by the success of Athanasius' narrative, Saint Jerome wrote his Latin *Vita Pauli* (written 376-7), telling of how Antony, believing himself the first desert father and founder of monasticism, had a revelation that Saint Paul (not to be confused with Saint Paul of Tarsus) was in fact his predecessor in this regard, and set out to visit him. This sequence of events was retold much later in the *Golden Legend*'s account of Saint Paul the Hermit,⁶¹ but for our purposes it is important as the main source for Vegio's *Antoniad*, which, as Putnam notes, in its third and fourth books, as well as the latter half of its second, is substantially a dactylic hexameter versification of Jerome's prose. Evagrius' translation does also play a role, however, and Vegio's second book draws on chapters five to thirteen of this work.⁶²

Yet the work also exhibits Virgilian as well as Patristic elements. The dedication to Eugenius, before noting his endurance in the face of many adversities, and his skilful steerage of the 'foundering bark' of the Church away from hostile seas, promises that the *Antoniad* will not present the 'ficta [...] veterum mendacia vatum' (l. 5). This expresses the conventional contrast, current among Christian writers at this time and earlier, between pagan poetic (and, given 'vatum', religious) lies and real religious truth, even if, as we will see a little later, this contrast was not always so stable. Indeed, Vegio's poem tells a Christian story, yet does so in very Virgilian ways, and one of these Virgilian allusions even appears in the moment immediately preceding the mention of the 'foundering bark', as 'te nunc laudibus ornem' recalls the speech by Drances (*Aeneid* 11.125) seen earlier in the elegy to Marcolini. It might be a formulaic use of Virgil, but it was one which Vegio always used faithfully in this context of addressing a patron. Overall, this poem, like the others seen in this chapter, shows Vegio recombining and experimenting with genres; in this case, those genres are the classical epic and the late-antique hagiography.

II. *Emulating Epic*

Other classical patterns and formulae (including Virgilian ones) work to set an epic tone. The opening of Book 1 contains lists of Muses whom Vegio will not call upon (from the 'tribe of Pegasus' to false 'labels for the Muse', and even to Phoebus himself), and subjects he will not treat (the 'baleful wars of kings, or false Jupiter of old, or the elusive throng of gods, life's fleeting follies and prideful parades') (1.1-6). While this paves the way towards his poetic invocations of Christ and Antony (1.6-14), it does follow a rhetorical pattern inherited from classical rhetoric. Later, we find Virgilian descriptions being used to describe the dawn, as in 3.9-10 ('Et nondum roseis provecta quadrigis/

⁶⁰ Jacobus de Voragine, *The Golden Legend: Readings on the Saints*, translated by William Granger Ryan and introduced by Eamon Duffy (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1993), pp. 93-96.

⁶¹ *Golden Legend*, pp. 84-85.

⁶² Putnam, introduction to Vegio's *Short Epics*, p. xli.

linquebat solitum Tithoni Aurora cubile'), which is constructed from a pair of Virgilian lines. The first is 'roseis Aurora quadrigis' (*Aeneid* 6.535), the line-positions of which are preserved in Vegio's placing of 'roseis' and 'quadrigis'. The second is 'Tithoni croceum linquens Aurora cubile' (from *Georgics* 1.447 and *Aeneid* 4.585 and 9.460, all identical), in which line positions are also kept in 'Aurora cubile', but alongside greater flexibility in 'Tithoni' and the forms of the verb 'linquere'. Vegio also uses Virgil when the sun sets in 4.132, as the final two words of 'Tunc, ubi clara sequens tenebras Aurora fugavit' recall those of *Aeneid* 3.521's 'iamque rubescebat stellis Aurora fugatis'.

This classicism pertains to geographical regions as well as the passage of time: when God describes Christ's redemption of mankind 'de faucibus Orci', Vegio's vision of Hell is modelled on Virgil's image of the 'jaws of Orcus/Hell' in *Aeneid* 6.273. Looking again a little more generally within the range of infernal imagery used here, Satan's speech to his Hellish cohort is modelled on the addresses of Allecto and Megaera to a similar council of chthonic monsters in Claudian's *In Rufinum* 1.45-65 and 86-115, and the description of Hell resembles a passage from another Claudian text, *De Raptu Proserpinae* 1.32-116.⁶³ As Putnam points out, however, the idea of an oration by Satan is an innovation by Vegio which we only see again later in Italian writers of the later *quattro-* and *cinquecento*,⁶⁴ and which finds its most striking form in the seventeenth century in Milton's *Paradise Lost*. The effect of all of these faithful if Christianised allusions made by Vegio, of course, is to evoke an epic atmosphere within which Antony's life has a cosmic significance and is the focus for debates in Heaven and Hell.⁶⁵

III. Analogues for Antony

More specific Virgilian allusions are seen to perform an equally ambitious function when viewed in accumulation. To begin, again more generally, we can notice that God summoning the angels to his council describes them as a Greek or Trojan leader might describe his troops, as a 'fortunate squadron' and 'loyal contingent' (1.56-57). This sets up a language of military endeavour in which the issue is Antony, already a resolute defender of his Christian faith, and his ignorance of Paul's status as the first desert hermit. When Antony reaches Paul's cave and asks for admittance, he appeals to Paul's 'pietas' and says that the elder hermit knows who he is, the reason for his journey, and whence he was sent ('quis missus ab oris') (3.48-50). These are phrases which recall the opening of the *Aeneid*, and the pious, dutiful man who came from foreign shores. 'Ab oris', in fact, is repeated in 3.102 when

⁶³ Vegio's infernal scene is in *Antoniad* 2.1-40. For the classical precedents, see *Claudian in Two Volumes*, translated by Maurice Platnauer (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1922).

⁶⁴ Putnam, introduction, p. lviii.

⁶⁵ The image of an infernal council might also, though this is conjecture, be a satirical attack on the Council of Basel, especially given the *Antoniad*'s dedication to Eugenius.

both saints, talking in Paul's cave, are likened to soldiers (3.103-105). The difference between Vegio's text and Virgil's, of course, is that the combat here is spiritual: the conversation concerns the relics 'of paganism's curse' (3.99-100: 'nefandae religionis'). The conflict we referred to earlier is present in the firmly Christian content, but not in its classically-alluding form. Yet this idea of conflict is sometimes contested explicitly too, rather than allusively or suggestively: later in the poem, when Antony has a vision of Paul's soul ascending to God, the ascension is compared with Romulus or Remus victoriously mounting the Capitoline, clearly linking together Christian and pagan triumph (4.66-72).

Susan Weingarten suggests that in Vegio's main source, Jerome's *Vita Pauli*, Antony's reaching of Paul's threshold (in Vegio 3.60-61) is modelled on *Aeneid* 2.650 (Anchises refusing to leave Troy, as Aeneas stands pleading) and 6.672 (Aeneas reaching Anchises in Elysium). Through these moments, Antony becomes Aeneas, Paul becomes his revered father Anchises, and Paul's cave as a place for holy meditation becomes the Virgilian realm of the blessed.⁶⁶ In Vegio, this particular moment is Virgilian to a less pronounced degree, but as we have seen, Vegio does associate Antony with Aeneas. Further examples make this even clearer. When God sends Gabriel to Antony, a reader familiar with Virgil cannot help but be reminded of Jupiter's dispatch of Mercury to Aeneas; textually, the two moments are quite different because of how Vegio condenses his narration in 1.137-150 to less than a quarter of the length of the Virgilian scene in *Aeneid* 4.222-278. At the conclusion, however, Vegio's 'tenues [...] auras' (1.150) recalls the way Virgil closes his account with Mercury's vanishing into 'tenuem [...] auram' (4.278). In both cases, the purpose of the celestial message is to rebuke its recipient: Aeneas must leave his error of remaining with Dido, and Antony must learn the error of his belief in himself as the first desert father.

Antony even, at times, speaks like Aeneas, such as when he bids farewell to Paul after he has the vision of his heavenly ascent and says: 'Salve, o venerande, Deoque/ vive valeaque pater' (4.78-79). This recalls Aeneas' farewell to the dead Pallas in *Aeneid* 11.97-98 with its 'salve [...] vale'. Again, the allusion is faithful, and depicts Antony as another Aeneas, an effect reinforced by the use of 'pater', which reprises the earlier, complementary association made between Paul and Anchises. Antony's piety is shortly after this shown in his adoption of a palm-leaf cloak in imitation of Paul's habit, an act described as 'pignus amoris' (4.129), most likely alluding to Aeneas' gifting to Acestes, in *Aeneid* 5. 538, of a graven bowl once belonging to Anchises. The parallel with Dido from 5.572 might also be operative here, but since Vegio's other allusions express an analogy between Antony and Aeneas, the most memorable Virgilian origin of the phrase would be Aeneas' gift-giving rather than Dido's. As a final example, when Antony returns to his home and friends at the end of the poem,

⁶⁶ Weingarten, pp. 38-39.

Vegio says that he ‘domum sociosque revisit’ (4.133), which is strikingly similar to Virgil’s account of Aeneas returning to his ships and comrades in *Aeneid* 6.899 after his descent into the Underworld: ‘ad navis sociosque revisit’. The fact that some of the Virgilian allusions we have seen function to represent Antony’s encounter with Paul in ways which recall Aeneas’ adventures in Avernus demonstrate that this allusive *leitmotif* runs throughout Vegio’s entire poem.

A couple of more complex examples can close this analysis. The first shows that the Antony-Aeneas connection in the *Antoniad* is also reinforced by examples which act as sullen grounds against which Antony’s virtue glitters. The mention of Mark Antony’s love for Cleopatra in 3.83, for instance, not only adds depth to the Egyptian setting, but, more importantly, provides a negative example of a licentious Antony which Saint Antony is emphatically not.⁶⁷ Furthermore, the Antony-Cleopatra liaison is mentioned in the Actium scene in Virgil’s *Aeneid* 8.685-688, in which they – and their Egyptian gods – are vanquished by Aeneas’ alleged descendant, Augustus, so that the link created between Saint Antony and Aeneas by the allusions already seen is thereby reinforced from the opposite direction, by contrasting him with an enemy of the Roman imperial line. The second, more complex example concerns the simile of the dream-like state which grips Antony after he learns of Paul’s death (4.81-84). Putnam notices that this resembles the ‘Ac velut in somnis’ simile in *Aeneid* 12.906-913 (908) describing Turnus.⁶⁸ The effect, then, to move from identification to significance, is that Antony, as well as resembling Aeneas in the ways we have just seen, also resembles Aeneas’ opponent, and in the *Antoniad* this moment immediately follows the allusion to Aeneas mourning Pallas, who, after all, had been killed by Turnus.

Yet the above two allusions, which seem opposed when their narrative origins are so simply summarised, harmonise when those origins and deviations are attended to more closely as distinct moments. The first, Aeneas to Pallas, is profoundly solemn and moving as Aeneas says all he can in response to a tragically early death which cannot be undone, and the second creates a similar sense of sorrowful suspension and helplessness, depicting as though in slow-motion the process of becoming aware of and confronting an unalterable fact, in this case Turnus faltering as the ‘dea dira negat successum’ and, standing isolated, he gazes at the Rutulians, the town, and Aeneas’ threatening lance, and can find no way of escape (12.913-918). When Vegio alludes to the latter instance, however, he removes the sense of torpor; in Antony’s metaphorical dream, it is possible to become still at times, but movement is much more prevalent, whether active or passive, moving or being moved, and this is why it is used to describe Antony’s running towards Paul’s cave to verify his vision and carry out the funeral. The effect created in Vegio’s poem is that Antony mourns like Aeneas, and then, faced with

⁶⁷ Augoustakis makes this point, together with its Dido and Cyclopean associations, in ‘Epic Re-Fashioning’, where he also notes some of the allusions explored in more detail by Putnam.

⁶⁸ Putnam, introduction, pp. xlv-xlv.

the fact of Paul's death and almost succumbing like Turnus to a trance-like state, nonetheless manages to press on through this state, reach the cave, perform the final rites and bury the saint. Perhaps this use of an episode focused on Turnus is in an oblique way related to the mixture of blame and sympathy towards him which we noted in the *Supplementum*; just as we saw in the previous chapter, such ambivalences are consequences of Vegio's incorporation of so many Virgilian moments into his work. We have just seen the use of contrast in this allusion (Antony, despite being in a similarly-described psychological situation, not following Turnus' example), but another point which could support the sympathy suggestion is Vegio's use here of 'videmur' ('we seem'), a very Virgilian touch which, as Putnam observes, brings the reader into Turnus' mindset.⁶⁹ The overwhelming conclusion arising from the numerous examples discussed above is that Vegio's allusions to Virgil in the *Antoniad* work to classicise the narrative in even its background details, while in the foreground presenting Saint Antony in Aenean terms. Just as Aeneas is the hero of the *Aeneid*, Antony is the hero of the *Antoniad*.

IV. Wider Discussions Arising from Vegio's Christian Classicism

It must be asked why Vegio chose this hagiographical tale as a subject, given the overwhelmingly pagan inspirations of his previous works.⁷⁰ Putnam notes the popularity of monasticism and even artistic depictions of Saint Antony at this time, but suggests that the particular significance in Vegio's case lies in its importance in Saint Augustine's account of his own conversion. In the *Confessions*, Augustine remembers how Ponticianus had visited his house and noticed a copy of Saint Paul of Tarsus' *Epistles* lying on a table. Augustine's guest then began to tell him about something which had happened when he and two friends had been in Trier on imperial business and had discovered in the house of a Christian a *Life* of Antony (possibly Evagrius' translation). One of Ponticianus' companions, reading the book, immediately decided to follow Antony's ascetic commitment. After Ponticianus leaves Augustine's house, the future saint cannot stop thinking about the tale, and excoriates himself for postponing his conversion; it was time for his earlier prayer 'give me chastity and continence, but not yet' to be answered. The famous moment in the Milan garden follows, in which, tearful and in spiritual torment, he hears the neighbouring child singing 'tolle lege, tolle lege' and, interpreting it as a divine injunction to follow Antony's example (who had converted when he happened to walk into a church in time to hear Christ's command, in Matthew's Gospel, that believers sell their belongings and follow Him), picks up and reads the *Epistles* of Paul, which fall open in his hands to a passage telling him to give up the lusts, riots and drunken parties, and put on Christ.

⁶⁹ Putnam, introduction, pp. xlv-xlvi.

⁷⁰ See Dossena on 'L'Epica Agiografica: L'Antoniade', pp. 45-48 in Corvi (ed.), *Studi su Maffeo Vegio*; also Consonni, 'Un umanista agiografo'.

Antony, in other words, occupies a vital position behind the conversion of Augustine from his sinful youth spent in theft, lust, pagan spectacle and the both polymorphous and perverse errors of Manichaeism, back to the true Christianity in which his mother Monica had first instructed him when he was a child.

Eugenius IV was an Augustinian hermit, and so Vegio might have written about Antony to appeal to his new patron, but it is also possible that a more personal motive was present, as his parents named one of his sisters after Monica, Augustine's remains rested in Pavia,⁷¹ a significant part of his life had been spent in Milan, and his conversion had shaped the religious insights of another figure known and almost certainly admired by Vegio: Petrarch. The most-quoted part of Petrarch's account of his ascent of Mount Ventoux is the moment when he opens the *Confessions* and reads that while men explore and wonder at the marvels of the world, they neglect themselves, and this revelation is succeeded by Petrarch's reflection on his similarities not only to Augustine, but, tracing this back, to Antony too.⁷² Vegio's own devotion to the cults of Augustine and, even more, the saint's sanctified mother Monica, is well attested and will be seen later, so perhaps this is the earliest evidence of his devotion to them and an additional motivation for his choice of subject.⁷³ It should be stressed that the status of this conversion sequence as a literary trope, through Augustine and Petrarch, does nothing to diminish the possibility that these accounts and Vegio's use of them are more than 'rhetorical': conventionality and sincerity are not mutually exclusive, especially in milieu such as these which were both highly literate and sincerely pious. Furthermore, Petrarch had noted in the same letter that the concept of the preeminent importance of the human soul over earthly things is one he could have gained even from pagan philosophers rather than Christians.⁷⁴

This matter of the combination of piety and literariness widens the contextual frame, putting into perspective Vegio's place within it. The *Antoniad* was the first Christian epic of the Renaissance, and in general knowledge the first by far: Sannazaro's *De partu virginis* came almost a century later, Vida's *Christiad* almost a decade after that, and Milton's *Paradise Lost* yet another century after that.⁷⁵ Greene, focusing on that brief section of the *Antoniad* concerning the descent of Gabriel from God's presence in Heaven to Antony, examines some attitudes to this mixture of pagan and Christian,

⁷¹ For these details see Brinton, pp. 11-12.

⁷² Petrarch, letter to Dionisio da Borgo San Sepolcro, 26th April 1336, in Fordham University's Internet Medieval Sourcebook (ed. by Paul Halsall) [Internet History Sourcebooks Project \(fordham.edu\)](https://www.fordham.edu/InternetHistory/Sourcebooks/Project/fordham.edu) [accessed 19/09/2021].

⁷³ For this entire paragraph, see pp. xxxviii-xliv of Putnam's 'Introduction' to *Short Epics*; Buckley, 'Maffeo Vegio', p. 1357; Augustine's *Confessions* (the edition used here was the Henry Chadwick translation (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), pp. 142-153); Robin Lane Fox, *Augustine: Conversions and Confessions* (London: Penguin, 2016) is useful on Augustine's relationship to contemporary religious and philosophical ideas; see Piccolomini, *Europe*, p. 262, note 736 for Eugenius IV as a former Augustinian canon.

⁷⁴ Petrarch, letter to Dionisio da Borgo San Sepolcro.

⁷⁵ There were intervening examples, but even the first of these was written a decade after Vegio's: Girolamo delle Valli's *Jesuida* (1446) and Battista Spagnoli (Mantuan)'s *Parthenice Mariana* (1481).

judging that the classical was generally not emphasised in this period and context because of the iconographical palette it presented which contested that of Christianity. He nevertheless observes that Vegio's poem, however early in comparison with other exemplary works by Sannazaro and Milton, marks a transition towards a greater emphasis on both these elements together. Greene suggests that Vegio's use of 'divus' for 'angel' (which he says imparts a Virgilian flavour to the poem), was permissible not only because of the fact that the Greek 'angelos' denotes the 'messenger' role which Gabriel clearly plays here, but because writers such as Paul of Tarsus, Pseudo-Dionysius and Augustine had partially defended such pagan poetic devices as reflecting some theological truth.⁷⁶ Looking at Augustine (and Virgilian reception) in more detail, we can note the saint's ambivalence to Virgil. He renounced the poet's pagan fictions and lamented that he had ever wept at the tale of Dido, yet in this very account he modelled himself on Aeneas struggling to bring himself to abandon, for holy reasons, something dearly loved.⁷⁷ Jerome also, the author of the *Vita Pauli* (and many other works, including the Vulgate), seems to have found his attachment to pagan literature difficult to loosen, even after his famous vision in which God chastised him for being a Ciceronian and not a Christian.⁷⁸ Altogether, then, though the polemic existed, and the pagans were seen as flawed in several matters of belief and conduct, in practice pagan literature would always be integral to the composition of literature as a whole, even if that literature happened to be religious.

The *quattrocento* inherited the works and thoughts of these early Christian writers, but Vegio and his colleagues were not only trained in and compelled to utilise the pagan classics, but actively wanted to revive and imitate them. The melding of belief systems, however informed by allegorical interpretations, could happen even in a place of worship, as the contemporaneous mosaic designs in Siena Cathedral attest. The Sienese Piccolomini, having assumed the Pontificate as Pius II in 1458, later used his given name in order to make the point that he was no longer Aeneas, but Pius, using Virgilian language in the highest Christian setting to present himself as a Christian 'pius Aeneas' who had renounced his earlier, more worldly ways, including his pro-conciliar position.⁷⁹

To return to the immediate context, in Eugenius IV's Curia in particular, being well-versed in classical learning was seen as essential to the advancement of Christian studies and action.⁸⁰ This could even account for Vegio's subsequent full commitment to religious writing, causing him to see that his classicising skills could and should serve this purpose, as had those of the great model,

⁷⁶ Thomas M. Greene, *The Descent from Heaven: A Study in Epic Continuity* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1970), pp. 110-112.

⁷⁷ Augustine, *Confessions*, pp. 15-17.

⁷⁸ See, for example, Julijana Visočnik, 'Latin Classics in the Letters of Saint Jerome', *Keria: Studia Latina Et Graeca* 4 (2) (2002), pp. 147-55.

⁷⁹ See *Reject Aeneas, Accept Pius: Selected Letters of Aeneas Sylvius Piccolomini (Pope Pius II)*, translated by Thomas M. Izbicki, Gerald Christianson, and Philip Krey (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2006). A letter in this collection from 1442 mentions Vegio, whom Piccolomini describes as a 'mature man both in sense and years [...] he can be trusted to act for me'.

⁸⁰ Boschetto, pp. 514-15.

Augustine; if this is true, the *Antoniad* is the first evidence of, and perhaps an experiment in, this practice, before the religious side of Vegio's works became more dominant. In the next chapter, we will see that even in some of his epigrams, the Christian was used as much as the classical in an ironic manner, suggesting that this particular Papal milieu, more than any personal surge in piety, was the reason for such allusive practices; the *Antoniad* had, after all, been dedicated to the Pope. The conflict, in other words, between Athens and Rome on the one side and Jerusalem on the other, is worth considering, but did not prove a practical obstacle to the combination of pagan forms and Christian content, and the artistic achievements resulting from such combination. On the contrary, and in this particular cultural setting and moment, in which the Curia was gradually finding political stability and becoming a hub for classicising intellectuals, it seems that such a combination was even encouraged.

Conclusions

The poems by Vegio considered in this chapter exhibit diverse allusive practices serving the common aim of gaining patronage. *The Elegies* show Vegio's use of faithful epic allusions emphasising the power of poets and poetry to praise and immortalise the powerful. Simultaneously, as elegies, they demonstrate Vegio's ability to compose and plea for patronage in this genre too, while defending its value using arguments from ancient elegy. Such virtuosity from the author of the epic *Supplementum* would only be further evidenced in the future. Vegio's generic splicing is also evidenced throughout these works: whether he is injecting epic into elegy, or giving hagiography an epic framing, Vegio clearly practised these genres in a unique way. They also seem to be unacknowledged forerunners of trends which were resumed in the following two centuries: Vegio's promises of epics about contemporaries were realised in Italian Neo-Latin poems of the 1450s to 1470s, and his Christian epicism found analogues in more celebrated works by several poets including Mantuan, Sannazaro and Milton, all of whom additionally worked in the pastoral genre, albeit not in the ways that Vegio did.

Perhaps most importantly, though, even the elegy debates and exercises, together with the anti-pastoral *Rusticanalia*, work on a wider scale in the same way as the more faithful allusions geared towards epic. However generically pyrotechnic, they all emphasise the poet's current dire situation, which patronage would help relieve, thereby facilitating the composition of such greater, praising verses. The practical function of both is patronage: the virtuosic 'alter Maro' capable of writing in every genre hoped to be hired by, and promised to praise, an 'alter Augustus'. In the *Rusticanalia* the fidelity of allusion sometimes reaches hyperbolically grotesque levels which amplify the vices of the rural inhabitants of the land where Vegio is staying, and the use of contrapositional allusions which

evoke virtue and ideal scenes effectively and sometimes amusingly highlight the rustic vices described alongside and in opposition to them. Again, this contributed to a patronage plea in a similar way to that already outlined, conveying in ever more varied, indirect and creative ways that the poet was, at the time of writing, in an unenviable situation, and that a little financial help and support from someone influential who could get him out of such a situation might not go amiss. The attempts to simulate intimate friendship between poet and patron, jokily comforting them for lost loves, or giving them fulsome praise, merely made this appeal a little smoother.⁸¹

Vegio's employment of the *topos* of the poor poet working in squalid conditions raises questions over the historical accuracy of this claim, but as Houghton notes in a different context, 'conventionality of expression is by no means incompatible with sincerity of belief'.⁸² The function of the theme in the poetry is the same. This observation is instructive also when turned to Vegio's alleged Augustinian conversion – and its literary *Nachleben* in Petrarch – which we saw at work behind the *Antoniad*. Allusively, in this poem we continue to see faithful uses of Virgil, and even though their transposition from an original pagan context might make their full fidelity questionable, their resituation in a Christian setting is doubtless faithful in another sense. That the importance of this point exceeds the pun is clear from what we saw of how the pagan and Christian were being combined at this time (as, indeed, they had been combined in late antiquity, despite their scruples and polemics, by Patristic authors). The consequence is fidelity and devotion to both Virgil and Christ, as Vegio maintains epic formulae and dignity in order to depict Saint Antony Abbot as a Christianised Aeneas-like figure within a setting which uses Virgilian phrases to describe phenomena ranging from the vanishing into thin air of a Heaven-sent messenger, to the rising of the sun. This poem shows us that the wider cultural project to which Vegio and his colleagues were devoted sought not only to recreate the world of antiquity by presenting contemporaries from poets to *condottieri* to princes in a classicising light, but also to surpass pagan antiquity by recreating it in a Christian guise, and to embellish Christianity with the beauties and elegance recovered from paganism. We will consider Vegio's later, more religious works in chapter four. These further demonstrate his devotion, in particular to Augustine and Monica.⁸³ This later period also sees a decline in his commitment to such an equal marriage of classical and Christian elements as we see here, though the union itself is still by no means absent. When discussing this, we will continue to see suggestions of the idea, outlined above, that such pious emphases in his work were due as much to his official position and milieu as they were to private motivations.

⁸¹ Such poet-patron relations have been examined in the age of print by Richard McCabe, in *'Ungainefull Arte': Poetry, Patronage and Print in the Early Modern Era* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016).

⁸² L.B.T. Houghton, 'Virgil and the Idea of a Renaissance', in *Virgil and Renaissance Culture*, p. 221.

⁸³ Until then, and for an overview of the subject, see Buckley, 'Maffeo Vegio'.

As this chapter ends, however, we see Vegio, having finally gained patronage from a major figure (the Pope no less, to whom he was able to dedicate the *Antoniad*), working as an abbreviator in the Curia. In the following year, 1438, the Council of Basel was to move to Ferrara as a result of one of Eugenius' Papal bulls, leaving some members behind who, though they were to be officially dismissed from the Council and excommunicated, not long afterwards elected Amadeus VIII Duke of Savoy as the anti-pope Felix V. During this time, conciliar business was debated in the Council of Ferrara, in the presence of around seven hundred members of the Greek Church who had finally been persuaded to attend, including Emperor John VIII Palaeologus, the Patriarch of Constantinople Joseph II, and representatives of the Patriarchal Sees of Antioch, Alexandria and Jerusalem.⁸⁴ Between 1438 and 1439, because of plague and Cosimo 'Il Vecchio' de' Medici's agreement to finance the Council in return for future repayment, the Council was moved to Florence. In this city it acquired its fame as one of the most influential and culturally transformative events of the *quattrocento* and the entire Renaissance. Alongside the influx of scholars among the clerics gathered from across Europe, the Greek Church brought its own expertise and ideas, together with copies of ancient Greek texts which had only been preserved in the Byzantine Empire and which now, together with lectures on Greek literature delivered by some of the Byzantine delegates such as Gemistus Plethon, had an explosive effect on the Greek scholarship which had been slowly been accumulating in Italy since the beginning of the century.⁸⁵ Vegio's interest in and knowledge of Greek is debatable, but it was of interest to other scholars in 1430s and 1440s Florence with whom Vegio was associated. These included such eminent thinkers and public figures as Leonardo Bruni, Carlo Marsuppini, Poggio Bracciolini, Ambrogio Traversari and Cyriac of Ancona, as well as Gemistus Plethon and Cosimo the Elder. Throughout this time he was still writing poetry and arranging some of his work from the earlier 1430s into new collections for new audiences. The next chapter will examine these collections, of his distichs and epigrams, together with the rather different, and certainly less than faithful, ways in which they show him responding to and reusing Virgil's writings.

⁸⁴ Piccolomini, *Europe*, pp. 241, 262 (also note 739), 263; 'Council of Ferrara-Florence' in *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (<https://www.britannica.com/event/Council-of-Ferrara-Florence>) [accessed 09/03/2019]. For the events of the period more generally, see also Piccolomini/Pius II, *Commentaries: Vols. I-III* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2004-2018), or (with a focus on the councils) Emily O'Brien, *The 'Commentaries' of Pope Pius II (1458-1464) and the Crisis of the Fifteenth-Century Papacy* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2015), pp. 115-119.

⁸⁵ 'George Gemistus Plethon', in *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (<https://www.britannica.com/biography/George-Gemistus-Plethon>) [accessed 09/03/2019].

Chapter Three –

Nugae on the Block: Poetic Trifles, Polemics and Self-fashioning in Vegio's Distichs and Epigrams

Bald heads forgetful of their sins,
Old, learned, respectable bald heads
Edit and annotate the lines
That young men, tossing on their beds,
Rhymed out in love's despair
To flatter beauty's ignorant ear.

All shuffle there; all cough in ink;
All wear the carpet with their shoes;
All think what other people think;
All know the man their neighbor knows.
Lord, what would they say
Did their Catullus walk that way?

W.B. Yeats, 'The Scholars' (1919)

Introduction

In 1438, following years of personal, political and ecclesiastical tribulations, Pope Eugenius IV finally succeeded in convening the Council of Florence.¹ Vegio, as part of the papal Curia, was among those accompanying him to the city, and Vegio's privileged position was likewise the culmination of years of work. The sorts of poems he had composed during the 1420s and 1430s, geared towards gaining patronage, were no longer required. He had already gained a prestigious post. Yet those years had been valuable: his poems as well as his academic expertise from his years in Pavia had enabled him to develop his skills, contacts and reputation, and now, in Florence, he found himself elevated to a stellar milieu of classically-obsessed scholars and writers. It was at this time that he rearranged a selection of his earlier short verses, wrote some new ones, and dedicated the resulting collections to two eminent Florentines.² His epigrams he dedicated to the then Chancellor and official historian of Florence, Leonardo Bruni; his earlier distichs he dedicated to Bruni's successor as Chancellor, Carlo

¹ This Council sought to settle theological questions, elements of church governance, and the unification of the Western Roman Church with the Greek Orthodox one; as a side effect, it managed to catalyse the revival of Greek learning in Western Europe. See Boschetto.

² As Vegio says in his opening distich to Marsuppini: the poems were composed 'temporibus variis' (Lopomo, p. 440).

Marsuppini. These verses show a continuation of Vegio's virtuosic and experimental engagement with Virgil's writings, but also exhibit a hitherto unseen, and consistently playful, approach to them in epigrammatic contexts which revived and adapted the classical epigram form. Furthermore, a selection of the manuscripts in which Vegio's verses survive demonstrate that this approach was substantially due to the influence of both Vegio's longstanding contacts, and the new personalities he encountered in Florence.

This chapter provides the first examination of these collections of short poems in relation to the history of Virgilian reception, literary networks and debates over poetic practice and experimentation in the *quattrocento*. These contexts are essential to an understanding of the functions of Vegio's Virgilian allusions in these poems, and viewing the poems in relation to their cultural milieu enables the reconstruction of a fierce polemic over the status and legitimacy of light verse which raged across literary circles in central and northern Italy from the 1420s to the mid-century. In this polemic, Virgil was both treated frivolously, and – as the putative author of such trifles, or *nugae*, as the *Gnat* – claimed as a witness and justification for this kind of poetic frivolity. One further consequence of this perception was that the composition of such frivolous works was regarded as another spoke on the *rota Virgilii*, the vocational wheel describing the path all poets should follow in order to emulate that great master of Latin verse. Most crucially, and despite their apparent lack of seriousness, these verses were presented by ancient and modern poets as essential exercises for developing a poet's craft. Since Vegio, as we have already seen, was a poet who had been following this Virgilian poetic career path until this point and demonstrating his virtuosity across genres, the composition of such trifling verses in this sense entailed a similar element of self-fashioning, a means of further asserting his status as the new arrival on the literary scene, even as the new, modern Virgil. This chapter therefore provides an insight into the final aspect of Vegio's poetic development, and as such is the continuation, culmination, and indeed conclusion, of the study of Vegio's poetic career which has been pursued so far across this study. Vegio's practices and arguments in these poems additionally touch upon central concepts in the early *quattrocento* debates over poetic decorum, the moral limits of literary imagination, virtuosity across genres, and even what being a classicising poet entailed in this period. This is because the sorts of trifling poetry which Vegio and several of his contemporaries composed raised serious artistic and ethical questions. For which kinds of modern works, by modern poets, could the great ancient Virgil be invoked as a precedent? If a poet wrote ludic or indecent verses, was it possible to plead imaginative freedom and the need to develop poetic skills through experimentation in diverse genres? Where did poetry's moral limits lie? Could an obscene page ever be produced by someone who led a stainless life?

Despite the significance of Vegio's distichs and epigrams, they have been surprisingly ignored by modern scholarship.³ The sole philologically rigorous critical edition, with apparatus, was produced only recently, in 2012, by Lopomo, and this can be supplemented, as it will be here, by further intertextual notes, as well as used to greater interpretative effect to contribute to the discussion of how Vegio responded to Virgil, not only in these poems, but across his entire *corpus*.⁴ This discussion also resituates his distichs and epigrams within contemporary literary developments, innovations, debates, polemics and networks. These networks included figures such as Marrasio and Beccadelli, as well as Vegio's dedicatees Marsuppini and Bruni, who are universally acknowledged to be outstandingly significant in the literary history of this period.

Methodology and Structure

Methodologically, the relations and contributions of these poems (composed between 1438 and 1443) to such wider contemporary and scholarly debates will emerge, as ever in this study, through analyses of their responses to Virgilian texts using the approach to allusion utilised thus far.⁵ Here, however, such interpretations will more than ever also inform – and be informed by – the ways in which Vegio's contemporaries were responding to Virgil. Key to the reconstruction of this network of contemporaries will be manuscript evidence, as attention to the provenance, dating, and contents of textual witnesses enables us to supplement the comparative-textual work on allusion, and view in greater clarity the significances, or even (to reprise an earlier metaphor) the tone of voice, inherent in Vegio's responses to Virgilian and contemporary works.

³ Raffaele and Brinton quoted and discussed a handful of them, but since then (excepting Lopomo), the only treatments (and those only cursory) have been by Elisabeth Klecker, *Dichtung über Dichtung: Homer und Vergil in lateinischen Gedichten italienischer Humanisten des 15. und 16. Jahrhunderts* (Vienna: Austrian Academy of Sciences Press, 1994), pp. 189-199, and James Hankins, 'The Latin Poetry of Leonardo Bruni', in *Humanistica Lovaniensia*, Volume 39, edited by Gilbert Tournoy (Louvain: Leuven University Press, 1990), pp. 1-39 (pp. 11-13).

⁴ See Lopomo. This edition also, naturally, has assimilated previous scholarship such as Picci's and Caretta's. In terms of textual methodology, the forms of the poems analysed here will be from Lopomo's critical edition, and her footnotes identifying allusions will at times be utilised. Additionally, however, allusions not detected by her will also be examined, and these in turn will be situated in the context of dialogues between Vegio and contemporaries such as Giovanni Marrasio and Antonio Beccadelli, since we know these figures corresponded with each other, reading and even sometimes explicitly responding to each other's work. Lopomo does explore this network, together with its interest in 'la difesa di una poetica "minore"' (Lopomo, pp. 405-407, 717-728; Anna Cox Brinton had explored the network too (pp. 4-5, 30, 49), as well as quoting a handful of Vegio's epigrams), but allusions will be advanced here which are not noted in her edition, and this network will also be traced in rather more detail, primarily through the study of correspondence and manuscripts, their contents and origins. Naturally, therefore, many of the interpretations of the poems given here will be different to previous ones; in such cases the reader is directed to the references given to her edition in order to compare her ideas with those offered here.

⁵ For the dating of the poems, see Lopomo, pp. 405-406.

The analysis will begin with the earlier distichs to Marsuppini which introduce the conception and importance of *nugae* and Virgil's putative authorship of them. From here, the attention will move to Vegio's experiments with the genre in the form of the funerary epitaph and, finally (and generically related) the epigram. Along the way, the polemical force of the verses' applications of Virgil will be interpreted alongside Vegio's responses to the stances of his contemporaries on both sides of the debate, from Beccadelli's outrageous assertion of poetic licence in his *Hermaphrodite*, to the sober and disapproving remarks of Bruni, to whom Vegio's epigrams were dedicated and addressed. As with the reconstruction of Vegio's network, the contents and provenance of manuscripts in which these poems are preserved will be central to the analysis. The collections will therefore be seen to deliver insights not only into how Vegio responded to Virgil, but also into the differing conceptions of Virgil between Vegio's time and our own, the importance of this neglected facet of Virgilian reception to the debates of Vegio and his contemporaries over poetic practice, Vegio's own eminent significance and position within the literary networks in the early *quattrocento*, and the value of material-textual studies.

The final objective of this chapter is to demonstrate the striking fact that these verses of Vegio's, and their relations to such polemical issues, are essential to a more accurate – and, in scholarly terms, original – understanding of Vegio's literary and allusive practices across his entire *corpus*. This discussion will return us to the *Supplementum*, as the treatments of Virgil found in the short poems analysed here are diametrically opposed to those which modern scholarship (already contested earlier in this study) has claimed to identify in Vegio's epic Virgilian sequel. The uses of allusion, for generic reasons, are completely different: instead of the faithful epic uses of Virgil seen in Vegio's epyllia, we find that his distichs and epigrams extend the allusive playfulness (and fondness for Martial) seen in some of his elegies, and show a ludic, frivolous, paradoxically principled, and hitherto ignored response to the antique poet.

Distichs

Since it reflects the chronology of compositions, especially in relation to the works of Vegio's contemporaries and associates, it makes most sense to begin with the distichs, before moving to the epigrams. The following distich, from the collection dedicated to Marsuppini, provides an illustrative opening example. It introduces the theme of poetic *nugae* around which the present discussion centres, asserting the belief that poetic trifles are equally as capable as epics of showing their author's skill:

X. OVIDIUS DE PULICE, VERGILIUS DE CULICE

Et Pulicem Naso, Culicem Maro scripsit et ipse,
et pretium nugis praestat uterque suis.⁶

Naso also wrote the *Flea*, and Maro himself also the *Gnat*,
And each shows his worth in his trifles.

The main allusion here is to Martial 8.55.17-20, which relates how Virgil at a banquet was once poured wine, at which point he wrote ‘arms and the man’, even though he had lately written the *Gnat*, a ‘trifle’ of a work which nonetheless, like Ovid’s *Flea*, revealed the genius and skill of its author.⁷ The poem’s argument is therefore twofold: *nugae* are playful and apparently frivolous pieces of verse, but their significance was that they showcased another side of poetic talent. Virgil, because Vegio and his contemporaries believed he had written the *Gnat*, along with the *Priapea*, the *Barmaid*, and other *nugae*, trifles, is here regarded as a true virtuoso who could write not only the pastoral, bucolic and epic (the canonical works for which we also know him), but also light, witty poetry.

This assertion of the intrinsic worth of Virgilian *nugae* is of fundamental importance, and was a frequently expressed and heavily loaded *topos* in this period among the writers with whom Vegio was in contact. Equally essential, however, is the idea that such trifles were poetic exercises which enabled poets to prepare for grander, epic compositions. We see this in a comment by Marsuppini in which he asserts that the pseudo-Homeric *Battle of the Frogs and Mice*, itself a trifle, ultimately enabled Homer to write his epics. This remark appears in one of the earliest manuscripts in which Vegio’s distich appears, Bodleian Rawlinson A. 402, which contains: (i) Vegio’s distichs to Marsuppini, alongside (ii) Marsuppini’s praising distichs to Vegio, (iii) Marsuppini’s translation of the *Battle of the Frogs and Mice* (addressed to Giovanni Marrasio, the Siena-based poet who revived the Latin love elegy), and (iv) Marsuppini’s aforementioned comment.⁸ The key concept is that *nugae* are opportunities for the aspiring epic poet to ‘workshop’ conceits, tropes or devices on a smaller scale. Marsuppini had made this point earlier, writing to Marrasio in 1429 about the pseudo-Homeric trifle which he had recently translated. In his preamble, he notes that Plutarch doubted Homer’s authorship, because it seemed inappropriate that the author of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* should be associated with such a slight poem. Marsuppini, however, argues that if Virgil wrote trifles such as the *Gnat*, the *Barmaid*

⁶ Lopomo, p. 449.

⁷ Also the pseudo-Ovidian *Nut Tree* (see Vegio’s “IX. Ovidius De Nuce”, in Lopomo, p. 448: ‘Me ludunt pueri; lusit me carmine Naso./ Me lege, nam nucleum culliolumque bonum’); Martial, *Epigrams*, selected and translated with an introduction and notes by Gideon Nisbet (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 142-145 (144-145): ‘Excidit attonito pinguis Galatea poetae / Thestylis et rubras messibus usta genas; / protinus Italiam concepit et “arma virumque”, / qui modo vix Culicem fleverat ore nudi’.

⁸ Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS. Rawl. A. 402.

and other *nugae*, just to exercise his talent, why should Homer before him not have done the same? Then we find him expressing the idea we have already seen: that these exercises prepared these poets for the epics they wrote later.⁹ Significantly, the verse quotations which Marsuppini employs here about being aware of ‘how great a thing it is to speak of these matters/With words and to confer this dignity on humble things’, and of how a *work* may be ‘modest in scope, but not the *glory*’, are both themselves Virgilian, from *Georgics* books 3 and 4.¹⁰ Marsuppini is therefore in a sense co-opting Virgil in order to support and speak for his case, thereby creating a closed-circuit-like conception of Virgil as the author of this work, phrased in Virgilian idioms and consequently graced by Virgilian authority. Virgil, then, even in this handful of texts, is being used, and in multiple ways, as both an authority, and a source of raw material, for poetic playfulness.

We see all of this in the copy of these documents (and Marrasio’s response) recorded later in the early-to-mid-fifteenth-century Rawlinson manuscript.¹¹ Other manuscripts containing Vegio’s works, and housed now in Florence and Rome, also show typical early- to mid-*quattrocento* humanistic decoration, cementing the sense of how lively a topic this was in this period, both within the city of these works’ composition, and the city of St. Peter where Vegio, along with the rest of the Curia, repaired to in 1443.¹² The significant point is that the selection of works in the Laurenziana and Bodleian manuscripts demonstrates that these works of Vegio’s were part of a larger network concerned with producing the same sorts of light verse, both as explicit justifications of the practice as useful for poets, as we have seen, and as more occasional or socially-directed jokes aimed at personally-familiar figures. Such works, furthermore, were not only being composed at this time, but copied and read alongside each other, indicating that they were perceived as being related.

Broadening our view of this network and its concerns, we find in Florence Biblioteca Nazionale MS. Naz II. VIII. 129, in addition to the works we have already seen exchanged between Marsuppini and Marrasio, a direct connection between Marrasio and Vegio. As we saw in the previous chapter, Marrasio’s collection of elegies, the *Angelinetum*, provoked an answering response from Vegio which addressed the poet from the point of view of Angelina, Marrasio’s speaker’s beloved. In this manuscript, we see Marrasio’s elegies, along with Vegio’s own elegiac intervention. We also see works by and about Cicero, Demosthenes, Apuleius, Jerome, Bruni, Bracciolini, Guarino Veronese and Filelfo, with these texts and individuals further reflecting the fact that the volume, if not a mid-

⁹ In Virgil’s case the ‘fields and horrid wars’, a phrase which itself recalls an epitaph believed to be by Virgil, of which we see so many recollections earlier in Vegio’s collection, suggesting that it provided a model for *quattrocento* poets to imitate. E.g. distichs II-V (Lopomo, pp. 441-444) show Vegio imitating epitaphs to Virgil.

¹⁰ 3.289-90 and 4.6; quoted in Marrasio, *Angelinetum*, pp. 52-59 (pp. 54-57).

¹¹ A.C. de la Mare’s suggestion of dating (handwritten note, Bodleian Library).

¹² E.g. Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, MS. Plut. 34.53, f. 1r and Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, MS. Vat. lat. 3601, f. 2r.

quattrocento copy of these texts, could have been written in the Florence of the 1430s or early ‘40s.¹³ The same milieu is witnessed by the impressive volume Naz. II IX. 148, which contains the works of ‘Leonardus Aretinus’, i.e. Bruni. It also contains the works by Marsuppini and Vegio we saw elsewhere, as well as Vegio’s *Supplementum*, together with epigrams, and miscellaneous items from Poggio and others.¹⁴ Attention to shelving, rather than contents, also helps us: in that other Florentine library, the Laurenziana, the works we have seen by Vegio, Marrasio, Marsuppini and others whom we will see shortly, including Beccadelli, are not only copied, but shelved together. Even if this shelving might not reflect that of the mid-*quattrocento*, it does show that by the middle of the following century when these shelfmarks were allocated, there was still a sense of the works’ generic relatedness.

The most vital contact, however, is witnessed by another manuscript, Magliabecchia. VII. 1095, which records, alongside works which show the same connections we have seen accumulating, the epigrams written to Marrasio by the most influential figure in the *nugae* debate: Beccadelli. The latter was best known for a work he wrote in 1426 called the *Hermaphrodite*, a collection of obscene poems which became notorious in literary circles and in fact caused the debate over *nugae* to explode in the first place.¹⁵ If we turn to a variety of other sources, including other poems but also letters, we can see that Beccadelli knew Vegio when he was still teaching in Pavia in the 1420s, that correspondence survives in which Vegio defended Beccadelli’s right to compose such verse, and that in this correspondence Vegio used Virgil as a witness for this defence. Beccadelli had availed himself of this reasoning as well, citing the example of the learned poets of old, foremost among whom stood Virgil, ‘who, it is clear, composed trifles/ and, it is evident, lived modest lives,/ even if their pages were full of obscene jokes’.¹⁶ This collection, surely not unexpectedly, caused a sensation, and polemics raged into the next decade over the propriety and justifiability of the sort of poetry it contained. Vegio’s future patron Eugenius IV prohibited the book for obscenity in 1431, and copies of it were burned in

¹³ E.g. MS. Naz. II. IX. 15 shows much overlap with this, as it also contains the Marsuppini-Marrasio and Vegio-Marrasio works, together with Bruni’s Xenophon and Aristotle, and a 1441 letter [from Scalamonti] to the merchant and archaeologist Cyriac of Ancona, who was also in correspondence with figures including Eugenius and Bruni, and who came to Florence for the Council in the late 1430s. See Cyriac of Ancona, *Life and Early Travels*, pp. viii-ix, xx (n. 15). Marsuppini.

¹⁴ Another source: the possibly later Magliabecchi VII. 601 contains more of Vegio’s works in addition to those related to Marsuppini and Marrasio, such as Vegio’s *Rusticanalia*, and the epigrams to Bruni, to which we will turn shortly.

¹⁵ Holt Parker, introduction to Antonio Beccadelli, *The Hermaphrodite*, translated and edited by Holt Parker (Cambridge, MA.: Harvard University Press, 2010), p. ix. Also, as Lopomo notes (69-70), Vegio knew Beccadelli himself in Pavia in the 1420s and early 1430s.

¹⁶ Though in a later open letter of 1431 defending the work against the Pavese linguist and friar Antonio da Rho, he cited not only Virgil, but also Catullus, Martial and Juvenal (Beccadelli to da Rho, quoted in Beccadelli, *The Hermaphrodite*, pp. 154-163 (pp. 156-159); also Beccadelli, *The Hermaphrodite*, ll. 1.1.5-8 (ll. 6-7): ‘Hac quoque parte sequor doctos veteresque poetas,/quos etiam lusus composuisse liquet,/quos et perspicuum est vitam vixisse pudicam,/si fuit obsceni plena tabella ioci’).

Italian town squares.¹⁷ It might be surprising to learn that Vegio was one of Beccadelli's defenders, given the later favour shown to him by Eugenius, but there were other and more direct factors, personal, professional and devotional, which made Vegio seem an attractive addition to the Curia.¹⁸

The fact remains that in 1432 Vegio defended the *Hermaphrodite* to Andrea of Pisa, pointing out that Ovid, Propertius, Sappho, Tibullus, Callimachus and Catullus all sang of 'flames [of love] and jokes', and that Virgil, that 'glory of poets', also wrote of 'light [...] jests', even though, like many poets (and as Beccadelli had said), he had not experienced many of the things about which he had written.¹⁹

Vegio also recycled some of these lines, since they appear in one of his elegies.²⁰ Admittedly, this defence did not impress everyone, mainly because Beccadelli's depictions of sodomy were seen as a leap too far beyond Christian morals; in the same year, 1432, Porcellio Pandoni (one of the participants in the ecclesiastical disputes surrounding the Pope) wrote to Vegio praising him as a worthy poet while excoriating Beccadelli's obscenity and mocking his reliance on the usual Virgilian justification for *nugae*. Pandoni writes of Beccadelli: 'He will say: "But that's how the poets of old played around./Even Vergil once played around in the Priapea!/ Why shouldn't Panormita [Beccadelli] be compared to Vergil?"'²¹ Another letter from Pandoni to Vegio, entitled 'for chaste boys and girls', again discussed Virgil's reputation for jokes but noted that such jokes could (and should) also be clean.²² Vegio's friend Pier Candido Decembrio in the Visconti court in Milan, and Poggio Bracciolini (at that time in Rome) also took Beccadelli to task for how ridiculous it seemed to call on Virgil as a model for what he had written. Sacco and Valla attacked him as well. Despite this opposition, Beccadelli equally had supporters in the Visconti court, the *topos* remained current and contentious, and the period in which this controversy raged saw a great revival of interest in writing such poetic trifles.²³ Beccadelli himself was also part of the same network of correspondence around Marrasio briefly outlined above: in March 1430, Marrasio sent a letter to Beccadelli in Padua which attests to an already firm friendship, and which mentions that he is sending some verses to Vegio,

¹⁷ Ugo Rozzo, "Italian Literature on the Index", in Gigliola Fragnito (ed.), *Church, Censorship and Culture in Early Modern Italy*, translated by Adrian Belton (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001), pp. 194-222 (p. 194).

¹⁸ I.e. recommendations by friends such as Giuseppe Brivio, the composition of classicising religious works such as the 1436-7 *Antoniad*, and Vegio's skills as a lawyer and administrator. It should also be emphasised that he went nowhere near as far into obscenity as Beccadelli had; the *Hermaphrodite* sparked debate and raised questions of principle which Vegio defended, but he was certainly not about to write a Beccadellian sequel.

¹⁹ Vegio to Andrea of Pisa, quoted in Beccadelli, *The Hermaphrodite*, pp. 168-171 (pp. 168-169).

²⁰ To Cambio Zambeccari: Vegio, poem from his book of *Elegies* (Lopomo, pp. 286-290). This poem also contains arguments which we will see later, such as: 'Virgil wrote of sheep but was not a shepherd', and 'learned poets sing of many things which they've not seen'.

²¹ Pandoni to Vegio, quoted in Beccadelli, *The Hermaphrodite*, pp. 178-185: 'Dicet: "Sic quondam prisci lusere poetae, inque Priapeis luserat ante Maro./Cur non Virgilio liceat conferre Panormum?/Hosque olim vates Attica Musa docet'. There was an irony in Pandoni's stance here, given that he was regularly accused of sodomy, including by Filelfo.

²² Pandoni to Vegio, "To chaste boys and girls", quoted in Beccadelli, *The Hermaphrodite*, pp. 186-187.

²³ Parker's introduction to Beccadelli, *The Hermaphrodite*, pp. xiii-xvi, outlines the whole controversy.

which, when returned, he intends to send to Beccadelli so that they can both help him polish them. In the same letter, Marrasio also reports that Marsuppini has just sent him the translation of the *Battle of the Frogs and Mice* which we saw near the very beginning of this discussion.²⁴

In short, composing this kind of poetry seemed to run the risk of violating Christian morality and decent poetic practice. It raised controversial questions about how classical literary authority should be used, whether certain pagan poetic forms should be practiced by Christian poets, and whether such a decent, chaste poet could, let alone should, ever write an obscene verse. By extension, it questioned the limits of poetic imagination, and how far from personal experience it should be allowed to stray, even if only for the purpose of imitating the conventions of a classical poetic genre. As we have seen, these questions were asked in a lively polemic around the issue in several key Italian centres, from Pavia to Padua to Milan to Florence to Rome. The *nugae* were on the block, and several writers were perfectly willing, in the interests of decorum and decency, to let the axe fall on them. In this context, Vegio, as well as defending accused practitioners such as Beccadelli, turned his hand, in solidarity, to crafting such verses himself.

With this context *in situ*, we can return to the distichs and examine how they engage in this polemic by using Virgilian materials in playful ways within a minor poetic form. They also offer examples of epigrammatic verses, addressing or commenting on figures (however veiled behind pseudonyms) known to Vegio and his peers, and additionally reflect the origin of the epigram form: the funerary inscription. Such explicitly epitaphic verses as the following two therefore show where Vegio's distichs converge with his epigrams, and here, again, he offers us a virtuoso range of approaches to Virgil, in a poem which jokes about the name of a deceased friend:

XLIV. IN SALVIUM

Salvi, quem saluum semper salvere iubebam,
nunc salve aeternum, care, cinisque vale.²⁵

O Salvius, you whom, when well, I always told to 'fare well',
Fare well now eternally, dear, and, ashes, farewell.

The central, arresting allusion here is to a plangent moment, *Aeneid* 11. 96-98: 'nos alias hinc ad lacrimas eadem horrida belli / fata vocant: salve aeternum mihi, maxime Palla, / aeternumque vale',

²⁴ Marrasio to Beccadelli, in Marrasio, *Angelinetum*, pp. 206-209.

²⁵ Lopomo, p. 484.

the words of Aeneas to the fallen Pallas: ‘The grim fate of war summons me from here to other tears: hail to you eternally, greatest Pallas, and eternally farewell’. A similar moment is found also in Statius’ *Silvae* 3. 3, 208-209 (‘Salve supremum, senior mitissime patrum,/supremumque vale’: ‘Hail for the last time, gentlest of aged fathers, and for the last time farewell’), but the sentiment in the formulaic phrase is similar enough, even though the Virgilian moment is the more strikingly pathos-filled and memorable, to a great extent because of Pallas’ youth.²⁶ Metrically speaking, and in terms of theme (elegiac distichs could otherwise equally denote lightheartedness as grief), it is also reminiscent of the earlier poem Catullus CI, a funerary valediction to his deceased brother (‘accipe fraterno multum manantia fletu,/atque in perpetuum, frater, ave atque vale!’).²⁷ Vegio, however, while alive to the tragic potential of the Virgilian passage (he had used it as a model for Antony’s words to the departed Paul in the *Antoniad*), here employs it in order to make a pun on the name of the distich’s recipient, Salvius.²⁸ ‘Salvi’, ‘salvum’, ‘salvere’ all relate to the verb to be well or healthy, and of course Salvius here is far from well! The second line’s ‘salve’ continues this, meaning ‘hail’ or ‘go well’, but as ever, this can also mean ‘farewell’ or ‘goodbye’, just like ‘vale’, or, in Italian, ‘ciao’. This conforms to both pagan and Christian views, expressing both ‘goodbye from the world’ and ‘go, be well in the afterlife’, as well as the belief that this valediction will later become, or prepare the way for, a post-mortem greeting. The most significant observation, however, is the freedom with which Vegio is working with such a moving passage from Virgil, resituating it in a lighter (in the sense of witty; it is, of course, simultaneously darkly mournful) context. This frivolity is enhanced through a use of polyptoton, which excises any Virgilian pathos by replacing it with a verbal arrangement which

²⁶ Both allusions noted by Lopomo, *ibid.*

²⁷ Catullus, *The Complete Poems, with Parallel Latin Text*, translated with introduction and notes by Guy Lee (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), ll. 9-10 (pp. 138-141). See also the equivalence in status Vegio draws between Virgil and Catullus in his distich ‘XI. VERGILIUS, CATULLUS’ in Lopomo, p. 450: ‘Mantua Vergilium, iactat Verona Catullum,/ et clara est gnatis utraque terra suis.’ (Mantua Virgil Verona Catullus boasts,/And both lands are famous for their sons’). Vegio can use serious Catullan lines for irreverent purposes, but also seems to equate even the stereotype of Catullus as the poet of love affairs and attacks on societal rivals as a poetic equal to Virgil. Likewise, the fourth epigram to Bruni, ‘IV. IN VERGILIUM ET OVIDIUM’ (Lopomo, pp. 773-775), depicts Virgil as just as much a poet of love as Ovid, suggesting again a Virgilian licence for virtuosity:

Nasonem Sulmo tibi dat, si quaeris amores;
proelia si quaeris, Mantua Vergilium.
Proelia si pariter, pariter si quaeris amores,
sufficietque unus haec tibi Vergilius

Sulmo gives to you Ovid, if you seek love affairs;
If you seek conflicts, Mantua gives Virgil.
If equally conflicts, and equally if love affairs you seek,
Virgil, alone, will provide these for you.

²⁸ Vegio, *Antoniad* 4.78-79, in provisional critical edition and parallel text translation found in *Short Epics*, pp. 130-165, with introduction and notes on pp. xxxvi-xlvi, lvi-lviii.

is so consciously and visibly conceited as to be undeniably ludic. Its address to a contemporary, in combination with the aforementioned traits, also causes this poem to closely approach the epigrammatic. To reiterate, this is not to say that sorrow or plangency is absent, as the speaker is sorry to lose his friend, but the point of the poem is the highlighting of the irony between the addressee's name and his fate, and when, in Virgil, Aeneas addresses Pallas, there is no similar conceit. It is Vegio's witty innovation which transforms it into a trifle, however bittersweet.

We have another poem which is likewise written in a bittersweet funerary tone, takes the form of a direct address to an individual, and shows a liberal reworking of sober Virgilian material. Yet it demonstrates an additional playfulness through the fact that it does not address a human:

XIII. IN LICONEM CANEM

Cerbareo quondam latratu tecta replebas,
nunc, Lico, si qua colis, Cerbarea antra colis.²⁹

Time was, you used to fill the house with your hell-houndish barking;
Now, Lico, if you're anywhere, you dwell in the hell-hound's cave.

Here again, we have a complete redeployment of Virgil's epic machinery to a witty, if again harsh and regret-filled, use. The Virgilian allusions are from *Aeneid* 6.417-418 for Cerberus baying from his cave, yet also from 7.502 as the wounded hind shot by Ascanius wanders through the house, filling it with its agonised complaints.³⁰ The force of the poem comes in its second, final, punch-line, which completes the link with the three-headed hound of hell, but above all sighs (even if through fond tears) with the speaker's relief that finally they no longer have to put up with the dog's barking. It could even be paraphrased as: 'You know, Lico, you always were a yappy little so-and-so; well now you're yapping somewhere else where we can't hear you.'

We have seen, then, even in this handful of verses to Marsuppini, that Vegio's uses of Virgil as a historical precedent for playful poetry (as he had written, among other *nugae*, the *Gnat*) as well as a source of raw material for it, especially in Vegio's epigram-like distichs, are well-attested. We have also seen that such modes of responding to Virgil were topics of literary and moral controversy as well as fashionable among members of learned communities, whose manifold ambitions included the

²⁹ Lopomo, p. 588.

³⁰ Ibid: 6. 417-418 for 'These realms huge Cerberus makes ring with his triple-throated baying, his monstrous bulk crouching in the cavern opposite' ('Cerberus haec ingens latratu regna trifauci/personat, adverso recubans immanis in antro'); 7. 502 for the hind which 'like a suppliant filled all the house with his complaints' ('atque imploranti similis tectum omne replebat').

modern revival of the barbed exchanges, problematic subject matter and nugatory genres they found in the classical epigrams of poets such as Martial and Catullus.

Epigrams

Moving to the contemporaneous epigrams Vegio addressed to Bruni, we can see similar trends. Whereas Marsuppini had justified the composition of *nugae*, however, Bruni was suspicious of them. Like Beccadelli's detractors, Bruni had written a well-circulated letter criticising 'mere versifiers', and it is likely that Vegio knew about it.³¹ Yet, as James Hankins has noted, Bruni himself had written trifling works in his youth (before, as Decembrio, put it, he had married, settled down and become that elder but boring statesman, the Florentine Chancellor). Vegio may well have heard rumours of Bruni's fun-loving younger days from older figures in Florence in the 1430s and 1440s. He certainly refers to them in a later epigram to Bruni, where he speaks of Bruni's own hypocritical tongue as having, once upon a time, had honey on it as well.³² With this in mind, we can turn to the very first, provocative epigram Vegio addresses to Bruni:

I.

Accipe nugarum munus, Leonarde, mearum,
nec tibi sint nugae munera vana meae.
Pondus inest nugis. Age, nostras perlege nugas!
Perlege, si qua latent seria, si qua placent.
Tu decus es Graiae pariter linguaeque Latinae;
despice ne nostros attamen ipse iocos.
Condere magna soles, fateor, neque parva solemus
nos quoque; parva tamen nos aliquando iuvant:
non semper magnus bella exercebat Achilles;
increpuit resonam saepius ille lyram.³³

Accept the gift, Leonardo, of my trifles,
May my trifles not be empty gifts to you.

³¹ Hankins, 'Latin Poetry', pp. 11-13. Hankins proposes that Vegio's poem was composed in 1430, 'after Vegio joined the papal chancery and may have been written in response to Bruni's cutting remarks about "mere versifiers" who lacked poetic inspiration. The remarks are contained in his well-known Ep. VI.1 of 1429 (ed. Mehus, II, 36-40) to the Sicilian poet G. Marrasio, a letter already widely circulated even before Bruni published the first version of his collected letters in the later 1430s'. Hankins' article discusses not only Bruni's condemnation of light verse, but also his own earlier efforts to compose it.

³² Hankins, 'Latin Poetry', p. 12.

³³ Lopomo, pp. 765-768.

Weight inheres in trifles. Go on, read through our trifles!
Read through them, and see if any serious things lie hidden, if any please.
You are equally the ornament of the Greek and Latin tongues;
But even so, do not despise our jests.
I appreciate that usually you deal with grand matters, and we ourselves, likewise,
Don't deal with small ones; even so, small matters sometimes delight us:
The great Achilles did not always occupy himself with wars;
Often, he twanged the resounding lyre.

The message could hardly be clearer. The repetition here of 'nugas' and its forms, and the tone of 'Go on, read through our trifles!/Read through them' are tauntingly insistent, reminding Bruni of the sorts of verses he had composed in his youth, but now criticised. Vegio, despite (or, more probably, precisely because of) Bruni's distaste for light verse in this later period of his life, included in the collection dedicated to him exactly the same sorts of irreverent verses as we saw him addressing to Marsuppini.

In this epigram, furthermore, can be observed many of the now characteristic features of Vegio's reception of Virgil, only concentrated together in a notably dense intertextual passage. This intertextual density is itself, as we have seen, a feature of Vegio's practice, as is the fondness for polyptotic arrangements which foreground the conceitedness of the language and make the words seem to ridicule themselves. Yet its other characteristics comprise several which we have also noticed accumulating through our earlier examples. Its very opening word strongly recalls Martial 14.185: 'Accipe facundi Culicem, studiose, Maronis,/ ne nucibus positis arma virumque legas' ('Accept, studious reader, the *Gnat* of eloquent Maro,/ No need to read 'arms and the man' when you put away your nuts').³⁴ This precise allusion is impressively economical yet carries great weight: not only is Virgil's authorship of the *Gnat* referenced, but so is Martial's own light verse, and the tradition of poetic gift-giving of which this poem in particular is a part (also attested in a poem such as Martial 4.10.4: 'nugas [...] meas'). All are relevant here in a dedicatory poem beginning a collection of *nugae*. Vegio also follows Martial in incorporating a miniature but resonant fragment of Virgil's own works in his gifting verse; 'condere' might not quite be as unmistakable as 'arma virumque', but forms of 'condere' play vital roles at the beginning and end of the *Aeneid*, referring to 'planting' (in Fagles' inspired translation) both the city of Rome and the sword plunged into Turnus (1.5, 12.950).³⁵ The effect of employing such a distinctive word is to aggrandise Bruni's own 'magna', great things such as his history of the Florentine people, or his position as Chancellor, or his translations of Greek

³⁴ Martial, *Epigrams*, ed. by Nisbet, pp. 238-239.

³⁵ Virgil, *The Aeneid*, translated by Robert Fagles, 12.1109 (p. 386).

philosophical texts. Opposed to this kind of greatness is the idea of there being weight in trifles, which might derive from Horace (*Epistles* 1.19.41-42), though Vegio uses it in an opposite sense to the one it carries there.³⁶ Combining the grandiosity and the humility of both, and serving as another argument for *nugae*, is Vegio's reference to *Iliad* 9.223-239, the exemplum of Achilles playing the lyre when he was not fighting. When Agamemnon's envoys find Achilles playing and singing about heroes of old, with Patroclus beside him, they do not stop him, but instead wait patiently for the song to end.³⁷

Having seen how live an issue *nugae* presented to Vegio's contemporaries, from Marsuppini's defence to Bruni's disapproval, we can note that Marrasio, in the concluding dedication of his *Angelinetum*, offered his own 'trifles' to Bruni (9.17: 'Ergo vale, et nugas, postquam limaveris, edam'), and received a favourable response which praised him as a great poet.³⁸ Yet around the same time as this correspondence took place, Bruni wrote his well-circulated letter criticising 'mere versifiers'. With reference to this, we have already noted the taunting tone of this poem by Vegio, but it is especially striking to notice that Vegio, in a similar spirit, uses exactly the same phrases in a later epigram in the collection addressed to Bruni, about how 'the learned poets sing of many things which they've not seen;/ Of what their right hand knows not, they have told', as he uses in that letter of 1432 defending Beccadelli to Andrea of Pisa, which was described earlier.³⁹ There might even be an echo here of Matthew 6:3 ('Te autem faciente eleemosynam, nesciat sinistra tua quid faciat dextera tua': 'But when you give alms, let your left hand not know what your right hand does'), but the piously learned (and especially Vegio's Curial) contexts suggest that such an echo could only have been playful rather than constitutive of consistent parallels: it must be imagined that the right hand, which in Matthew gives to the needy, here seems to be interpreting that act rather liberally, whereas the left hand, conventionally less noble, is nowhere to be seen.⁴⁰ Revered Biblical texts as well as the pagan classics, therefore, are being adapted by Vegio and set to less serious work. This fact merely augments the sense, expressed through Vegio's introductory epigram and the repeated iterations of its message throughout the collection, that such irreverent adaptation and composition was important as a poetic exercise, as it was a more playful, varied and witty, though still in its own way demanding, way of showing off eloquence and erudition to friends and superiors, and therefore gaining patronage and renown.

³⁶ Horace, *Satires, Epistles and Ars Poetica*, edited and translated by H. Rushton Fairclough (Cambridge, MA.: Harvard University Press, 1961), pp. 384-385.

³⁷ Though this moment might also allude to the non-martial years of Achilles' life, as told in Statius' *Achilleid*.

³⁸ Marrasio, *Angelinetum*, pp. 22-25 (pp. 24-25), 40-49.

³⁹ Vegio's letter to Andrea of Pisa, quoted in *The Hermaphrodite* (ll. 17-20 (pp. 168-169)): 'Multa canunt docti, quae non fecere, poetae,/ quae sua non novit dextera, multa canunt./ Verum illud sapere est et dignum laude perenni./ Quae non viderunt lumina, Musa videt'; these lines are repeated in Vegio's epigram to Bruni "CIL. AD LEONARDUM ARRETINUM" (Lopomo, pp. 909-911).

⁴⁰ From Jerome's Vulgate.

On a broader scale, and as we have also glimpsed, this debate reflects the literary experimentation happening in this period, and the concomitant discussion of what it meant to be a poet. Learned poets committed to a revival of classical eloquence, after all, had to write within classical generic frameworks in order to present themselves as worthy heirs of the ancients. For Vegio in particular, given that virtuosity across genres from the epic to the nugatory was one of the characteristics for which Virgil was praised, it was in a sense necessary for him, an ambitious poet, to also write in each of these genres. In turn, this requirement to compose in such genres meant that poets had to write about things they had never experienced, otherwise certain sorts of poetry simply could not be written. This was the fact underlying the opposition to the biographical fallacy made by Vegio and his contemporaries, as well as their classical predecessors. For example, Vegio and his erudite peers had never worked as shepherds, yet had to imagine they had in order to compose pastorals. In the same way, to compose truly classicising epigrams, poets such as Beccadelli had to imagine more exciting if morally questionable activities which they had never experienced. Much of the raw material for these poems therefore came from their wide reading, and in the hyper-literate learned culture of this period, especially within Eugenius' Curia, the jokes they shared derived from adaptations of not only pagan, but also Christian, materials. It seems as though an equal piquancy could be found in repurposing sober religious texts – or Virgilian epic – as more risqué pagan classics (as long as heinous sins such as sodomy were excluded: as we have seen, this was a major cause for the *animus* against Beccadelli's verses). From different positions on the moral continuum, the classical and the Christian could each be summoned to feature in these new playful works. This, furthermore, had the consequence of adapting such classical genres: by irreverently alluding to moments of pagan epic alongside Christian ethics in these classicising epigrams, Vegio reminds the reader of such generic frameworks by virtue of his poems' divergence from them, while also reshaping the parameters of genre by virtue of the fact that this divergence occurred within a recognisable, epigrammatic, form. The classical epigram, therefore, in the spirit of Virgilian playfulness, could be made to echo the words of the Gospel.

The final poem in the collection, a valediction to Bruni, features a Virgilian referent, Eclogue IV, in which the classical and Christian seem to be combined, and suggests that Vegio will renounce *nugae* forever. On closer inspection, however, it is Vegio's most ironic and provocative trifle of all:

LI. AD LEONARDUM ARRETINUM

Pergebam tennes ludens elegosque canebam,
cum Phoebus tristi constitit ore mihi,
atque inquit: "Nostris non te suscepimus antris,
ut caneres viles res humilesque iocos!

Te maiora vocant; gravibus te accinge coturnis:
magna refer magnis facta sonanda modis!
Quae referas dictabo tibi, numquamque vocatus
ipse abero; nugas tu modo mitte leves!”
Ille haec; accipio, iam iam sua iussa sequorque;
iam mitto et nugas; iam, Leonarde, vale.⁴¹

Playfully I persisted with thin elegies and went on singing them,
When Phoebus confronted me, and from a sad mouth,
Said: “We didn’t nurture you in our cavern so that
You might sing of base matters and low jokes!
Greater things call you; get ready to wear your tragic buskins:
Recall great deeds to be sounded in great modes!
I will dictate to you what you might report, and never, having been summoned,
Will I be absent from you; just look you send these light trifles away!”
Thus he; I accept that, now, and now I follow his orders;
And now I send these trifles away; farewell now, Leonardo.

The primary Virgilian allusion conveying the (often Christianised) sense of poetic and spiritual renovation (perhaps along the lines of 1 Corinthians 13:11), is to the ‘Messianic’ Eclogue IV, which signals a movement to loftier things, ‘maiora canamus’.⁴² Yet this shift in register is also found in the pseudo-Virgilian *Gnat*: ‘Hereafter our Muse will speak to you in deeper tones’, with the song being inspired by Phoebus.⁴³ Serious and ludic intertexts are mingled. Even the poem’s structure resembles the opening of the *Gnat*, which, albeit in entirely different words, repeatedly admits to having played, ‘lusimus’, or trifled, so that the *Gnat*’s song might humorously harmonise with epic. The speaker then states that whoever is ready to blame their jokes and Muse, will be held lighter in name and weight than even the eponymous insect. The significances in Vegio’s case are clear. He repeats the admission of trifling and so makes a final proclamation of the Virgilian licence for the practice. His previous epigrammatic experiments with epic imagery and tags are shown to have been as trifling as the other poems, given the *Gnat*’s subsequent account of the Underworld (which is of course part of a playful work). Given these elements, the shift to a higher register with Phoebus at the poet’s side, intensified with the more august echo of Eclogue IV, are thrown into an ambiguous and ironic light. Altogether, Vegio ends the collection in the most consummately classicising, playful way possible, and there is a

⁴¹ Lopomo, pp. 995-996.

⁴² 1 Corinthians 13:11: ‘Cum essem parvulus, loquebar ut parvulus, sapiebam ut parvulus, cogitabam ut parvulus. Quando autem factus sum vir, evacuavi quae erant parvuli’ (in the *King James Version*: ‘When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things’). From Jerome’s Vulgate.

⁴³ ‘Lusimus, Octavi [...] et recinente lyra fautor’ (*Virgil in Two Volumes*: Vol. II, pp. 370-403 (pp. 370-373)).

final attack on those who blame poets for writing trifles. Vegio, even in renouncing the *nugae* he had written inspired by Virgil, is more Virgilian than ever, and even, in fact, more Virgilian than his main model itself, the pseudo-Virgilian *Gnat*.⁴⁴ And to crown it all, there is the same teasing tone we saw earlier: he is indeed dismissing, sending away, these trifles, but he is sending them away to the disapproving Bruni!

Conclusions

To reflect on the conclusions so far, before turning to the implications they have for interpretations of Vegio's *Supplementum*, it can be seen that Vegio's uses of Virgil in these poems is often, to use Greene's term, 'heuristic', with allusions being repurposed generically or used in a different, less reverent, spirit. The motivations for this type of employment were the contemporary vogue for poetic trifles, *nugae*, and the justification that Virgil himself was believed to have written them. Taking a wider view of implications, this research therefore reminds us of the differences between the image and reception of Virgil between Vegio's time and our own, as he was seen, then, as the author of texts, such as the *Gnat*, which constituted the *Appendix Vergiliana*, as uncodified as this body of works was in this period, as well as the serious works for which we know him.⁴⁵ Also, given the popularity of Virgil as the putative author of such trifles, and consequent deployment as a source of authority and material for the composition of *nugae* in the *quattrocento*, this study highlights the nature of this polemic as a neglected facet of Virgilian reception and recovers its importance to the works composed by Vegio and his contemporaries. Following directly from this, we have been able to substantially re-establish – and perhaps more than in previous chapters due to the fame Vegio had acquired by this time – Vegio's position, importance and eminence within literary networks in the early *quattrocento*, as well as details of those networks themselves, not least their members and their sense of what was witty and – however briefly – in vogue. Another, and easily neglected, part of this sense of humour seems to have been a willingness, within the papal court, to play with both classical wit and religious references, and such combination will be explored further in the following chapter when considering Vegio's devotional and philosophical writings. Many of these insights, to highlight a methodological aspect, have been enabled not only by excavations of the intertextual structures of Vegio's poems, but by an attention to the materiality of several of their witnesses, not to mention the correspondence and manuscripts containing the writings of his contemporaries. This material focus facilitates not only the dating of sources and the ascertaining of their provenance, but also the

⁴⁴ As we now know it to be.

⁴⁵ Uncodified probably due to them being regarded as genuine Virgilian compositions.

identification of what readers noticed, found exciting, thought fashionable, and considered to be worth copying – and, illuminatingly, copying together, in the same volume – at certain periods of history. Vegio, therefore, in writing such playful verses, was integrating himself into fashionable literary circles. He did this by gently and stylishly teasing eminent figures within them, such as Bruni, while demonstrating his virtuosity and status as the modern Virgil through his ability to imitate and innovate classical generic frameworks.

Growing out of all these factors and turning to the implications they have on our reading of Vegio's *Supplementum*, we might remember that, as we saw in the first chapter, this poem is almost always understood by modern scholars to be a moralistic work drawing on allegory and epideictic (praise and blame) rhetoric, which – according to the same scholars who argue this – was the near-universal mode of reading the *Aeneid* in the Renaissance.⁴⁶ The works we have seen here show a very different and far less serious mode of engagement with the same texts, in the same period, by the same writer. This is even seen blatantly in the final example to be discussed here, an epigram in which Vegio alludes to the drownings of Palinurus and Aeneas:

XXXII. IN LAELIUM

Obrutus in mediis, Laeli, est tibi servus in undis:
obrutus in mediis et Palinurus aquis.
At bonus Aeneas Palinurum questus amare est,
tuque bonus servum questus es ipse tuum.
Nunc tu, ut morte suum simili fuit ille secutus,
ne similique tuum morte sequere cave.⁴⁷

A servant of yours, Laelius, was overwhelmed in the midst of waves:
Also overwhelmed in the midst of waters was Palinurus.
Yet good Aeneas lamented bitterly Palinurus,
And you, good as you yourself are, lamented your servant.
Now you, as that one followed his man to a similar death,
So that you don't follow your man to a similar death, beware.

In Virgil's epic, Palinurus is Aeneas' helmsman who is thrown overboard and drowned by Sleep (*Aeneid* 5. 833-871). Aeneas subsequently sees Palinurus in the Underworld, where he hears his story

⁴⁶ We have already discussed at length this idea proposed by, most notably, Brinton and Kallendorf.

⁴⁷ Lopomo, pp. 817-818.

and promises to bury him (6. 337-381). It is from this passage that Vegio lifts ‘mediis [...] in undis’ (6. 339), though an earlier phrase, describing Palinurus not remembering his way amid the waves, resembles it: ‘viae media Palinurus in unda’ (*Aeneid* 3. 201-202: ‘Ipse diem noctemque negat discernere caelo, / nec meminisse viae media Palinurus in unda’), and ‘undis’ occurs also in 5. 868. Vegio’s allusion therefore revives all of these, as well as, most probably, the Ovidian reworkings in the *Remedia Amoris* (577-578: ‘Quid faciam? Media navem Palinurus in unda / deserit: ignotas cogor inire vias’) and *Tristia* (5. 6, 7: ‘fluctibus in mediis navem, Palinure, relinquis?’). Yet another Ovidian passage, from the *Metamorphoses*, is even more important, and it describes Aeneas’ apotheosis in the river Numicius. This is what inspires the conclusion of Vegio’s *Supplementum*, in which Aeneas, though still unburied (a victim to Dido’s earlier curse that he remain so), is washed clean of his mortal part by Venus, thereby becoming deified.⁴⁸ This is what Vegio is referring to when he says that Aeneas ‘followed his man to a similar death’, since he died in the midst of waves, just as Palinurus did.

The wit comes from the ironic connection between these two elements, and is founded on several other passages from the *Aeneid* describing Aeneas as ‘bonus’, since these often refer to his piety, often shown through his burial of the dead (6. 232, when he makes a funeral mound for Misenus; 11. 106 shows him as ‘bonus Aeneas’ when he agrees to let Latins bury their dead). Along with ‘pius Aeneas’, this is also used in other situations such as when he resolves to follow the gods’ commands after being confronted by Dido (6. 393), or when he speaks words of comfort and prepares to make a ritual sacrifice (5. 770), or when he seeks the Sybil (6. 9). In every one of these cases, the phrases occupy the same line positions as ‘bonus Aeneas’ does here, and are often preceded by the jolting conjunction ‘At’, thus signposting the allusion even more clearly. The emphasis is on his virtue. The irony is not only that this virtue and *pietas*, manifested so often in his performance of burial rites, sees him left unburied himself. It would be reasonable for Vegio to advise Laelius to avoid this fate. The real irony is that it is precisely Aeneas’ virtue and *pietas* which sees him thus unburied, ‘drowned’, because this is part of the process by which he is deified, and this fate is also exactly what Vegio is warning Laelius to avoid. Should Laelius really, then, imitate good Aeneas? A virtuous life seems to bring mixed blessings. When viewed alongside how Vegio deals with this moment of deification in the Numicius in his *Supplementum*, in which it is treated solemnly and has even been read as part of that epideictic trajectory which saw Aeneas’ conduct as a model for morality and was allegedly the universal mode of interpreting the *Aeneid* in the early *quattrocento*, this is a shocking way of reworking the same Virgilian (and Ovidian) material.⁴⁹ Again, however, just as the genre of the

⁴⁸ Ibid.: *Metamorphoses* 14. 596-608.

⁴⁹ Vegio, *Supplementum*, in Vegio, *Short Epics*, ll. 622-629 (pp. 38-41).

Supplementum legitimated that earlier interpretation, the genre and expectations of the fashionable epigram legitimate the repurposing we see here.

Altogether, then, and to state the most significant conclusion, such allusive employments speak not only of the richness and complexity of Vegio's engagement with Virgil, but also – and more importantly on a broader scale – the richness and complexity with which Virgil was viewed, interpreted and utilised in this period of pioneering poetic activity based on imitations and adaptations of the classics. This should go without saying, but despite extensive studies of Virgilian reception in the Renaissance,⁵⁰ the focus tends to be on the epic, a fact which reinforces the emphasis on the moralistic and epideictic interpretations referred to above. The result is that such detailed analyses of Virgilian allusions in non-epic verses, which in the Renaissance were not interpreted so seriously, are still rare, and have never been attempted using Vegio's poetry. The experimental nature of the sorts of poetic activity examined here also, as we have seen, raised questions about what poetry – and poets – could or even should be. As Vegio and his contemporaries composed classicising epigrams, they justified their appetite for *nugae* by citing classical generic decorum, while simultaneously adapting the epigram genre by incorporating Christian elements just as playfully as pagan ones, and pushing the limits of subject matter beyond those sanctioned by Christian morality or the concept of poetry as unremittingly serious. These syncretic, ironic and ludic elements of early *quattrocento* culture would repay further research, as would the currency of an equally playful conception of Virgil. This chapter is therefore a culmination of the discussions pursued in this study so far, which have traced how Vegio's responses to Virgil varied across his verses as he experimented and made a name for himself as a poet. Vegio's poetic productions before his arrival in Florence already spanned genres from the epic to the pastoral to the elegy, and each of these genres shaped the character of his Virgilian allusions. The same was true of his *nugae*, yet these, following as they did Vegio's earlier generic exercises, and given their perceived value as exercises for a poet's talent which even Virgil had practised, added even greater weight to the voices of contemporaries, such as those of Francesco Filelfo and Lorenzo Valla, who proclaimed Vegio to be 'Alter Maro', another Virgil.⁵¹ Finally, then, and to make an attempt at a suitably epigrammatic (if not entirely nugatory) concluding statement, all this evidence shows us that Vegio, by writing trifles, *nugae*, was not only defending the value of light verse when its composition and existence were being criticised and threatened, but also fashioning and asserting his own status, within the milieu engaged in this polemic, as, in poetic terms and as the title of this chapter has it, the 'new guy' on the block.

⁵⁰ These have been footnoted throughout this study; the most extensive modern treatments of the topic are by David Scott Wilson-Okamura and Craig Kallendorf.

⁵¹ See Brinton, pp. 4-5, 30, 49.

Chapter Four –

‘Endowed with every virtue’? Vegio’s philosophical, religious, educational and scholarly Virgils

Not only a description of places, persons and things, but also a psychological document of the first importance dealing with a life crisis which, in various degrees of intensity, we all experience somewhere between the ages of thirty-five and forty-five.¹

– W.H. Auden in 1961, on Johann Wolfgang von Goethe’s *Italian Journey*, published 1816-1817.

Introduction

Vegio arrived in Rome in 1443. He was still a member of the Papal Curia, and would soon be made a canon of St. Peter’s. Between this time and his death in 1458, he composed treatises on education and devotion, dialogues about the nature and causes of human misery and happiness, hagiographies, hymns, and a survey of the early Christian archaeological remains of St. Peter’s Basilica. None of these works, unlike almost all his earlier ones seen so far in this study, were modelled on pagan poetry in an attempt to imitate its forms. None, indeed, are even poetic, excepting his hymns. He no longer, it seems, wanted to be ‘alter Maro’, working in every Virgilian poetic form. Perhaps he had satisfied himself that he had already earned this title, or perhaps he underwent some sort of religious conversion which turned him away from such pagan enterprises. The arguments concerning this latter possibility will be discussed shortly, but the most important observation to make initially about Vegio’s later works is that despite being written in genres never practised by Virgil, they use Virgil no less than his earlier, poetic writings had, even if they do respond to Virgil in different ways. These ways were motivated by the requirements of the different genres Vegio wrote in later in his life, and the multiple cultures of learning of which he was an inheritor. Through these works, we see Virgil used as a model of style, an illustrator of vices and virtues, a vehicle for discussions of philosophical and ethical questions, a moral sage, and an encyclopaedic source of historical and natural knowledge. By the end of the chapter, Vegio’s utilisation of these varied interpretations will be seen to have shown the syncretism of the erudite culture of which he was a part, which combined the antique and the medieval, the classical and the Christian, and which selected and synthesised ideas and texts from all eras. On the broad scale of current historiographical debate, such reflections help even further to contest the kinds of clear-cut conceptions of division between the medieval and the Renaissance which still persist. Yet these works do not deal only with overarching themes; they also offer more personal insights into Vegio. Even when the works deal with similarly historical questions, we discover, especially in his archaeological study *De rebus*, not only a sense of how Vegio personally

¹ W.H. Auden on Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, quoted in Edward Mendelson, *Early Auden, Later Auden: A Critical Biography* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2017), p. 600.

regarded the panorama of history up to his own lifetime, but also his ideas about his own place within it. It is, to use Auden's description of Goethe's *Italian Journey*, 'Not only a description of places, persons and things, but also a psychological document'. And, as we will see, Vegio's understanding drew as much upon the Christian Augustine as upon the pagan Virgil. Such a comparative investigation of Virgilian allusions across Vegio's later works has never been attempted, still less in relation to his *corpus* in its entirety, or the context of Curial learning in which he wrote.² Overall, this chapter moves us into the later, and rather different, phase of Vegio's life, when he had ceased to compose secular poetry and turned his talents instead to works with religious emphases. The chapter also, however, advances discussions pursued so far in this study, by demonstrating how genre continued to shape the nature of Vegio's later allusions to Virgil, and by showing how these allusions can transform and enrich our understanding of Vegio's life, works, and cultural moment.

The mention of Augustine brings us to the important question of the conversion hypothesis mentioned above. In his later works, Vegio writes about more personal and autobiographical topics than his conception of history. Even so, and perhaps indicating the influence of the *Confessions* (possibly via the mediation of that other great admirer of Augustine, Petrarch), Augustine plays a significant part in Vegio's thought. Much of the supporting evidence for the idea of Vegio's conversion accordingly derives from the increased emphasis he places in the works of these years on the importance of Augustine and Monica as his personal spiritual guides. He even dedicated a chapel in the church of Sant'Agostino in Rome to St. Monica, a chapel in which he himself was later buried. Yet these same works show evidence which suggests that there was no stark break from pagan poetry into Christian devotion. His *De educatione*, for example, tells us that his devotion to Monica and her son predated such acts of piety: he had praised Monica in a work presented to Eugenius IV (himself an Augustinian monk) in 1441, near the end of their time in Florence,³ and this devotion in the first place was the result of the emphasis on these saints which Vegio's early religious education had instilled in him. Likewise, the concept of Augustinian conversion is a *topos*, and though this does not preclude the possibility of its being genuine, that contingency should always remain at least on the edge of the critical table. And even if it was genuine, it should also be borne in mind that Augustine's own account of conversion presents the event as a very hesitant and gradual process. The seeds of faith had been planted in Augustine while he was a child by his mother, but in his youth he strayed and languished (in pagan poetry and rhetoric, as well as sin and Manichaeism), and only after this returned, flowering with fervour, to the true religion.⁴ Why might Vegio's conversion, even if that is

² Though not all his later works will be considered, only most of them: Vegio's hagiographies and hymns will be excluded from this study due to their comparative irrelevance, as they seem to me to contain either insufficient amounts of Virgilian material or none at all.

³ Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana's Vat. lat. 3601.

⁴ As we have seen above, both from Augustine's *Confessions* themselves and Lane Fox's analysis of them. For a summary of the Augustinian influences on Vegio, see Buckley, 'Maffeo Vegio'.

what it was, have been very different? In many respects, leaving out Augustine's sin and heterodoxy, while remembering Vegio's studies, university teaching post and poetic compositions, the movement is not unlike Vegio's own. There are other details, seen in earlier chapters, which suggest it might be misleading in Vegio's case to present this pagan-Christian movement in such sudden and dichotomous terms. Vegio composed the hagiographic *Antoniad* before the Curial move to Rome, some of his Florentine epigrams utilised Biblical echoes, and the Curia itself at this time seems to have practised, and at times delighted in, such syncretic learning. The opposition between pagan and Christian was not so clear-cut.⁵

Indeed, the later prose works composed by Vegio examined in this chapter, suggest that their utilisations of Virgil's writings depended more upon genre, and, connected to this, Vegio's professional position, rather than any less historically verifiable factor such as religious conversion. Professionally, Vegio was by this time a secure member of the Curia, and, soon afterwards, became a canon of St. Peter's Basilica. He had new religious responsibilities which were enacted in his writings, and which determined both the kinds of compositions he produced, and the ways in which these compositions incorporated Virgilian allusions. The emphasis on the generic factor has been consistent across this study so far, in its analysis of Vegio's classicising poetry, but the ways in which genre determines allusive response in the later prose works examined here are very different to those seen previously.

Vegio's Roman works, generically, were more typical of 'humanistic' production in the *quattrocento* than his earlier epigrams and epyllia. A far greater number of parallels for Vegio's treatises and dialogues can be found among the writings of his contemporaries, whereas the Neo-Latin epigram form, despite its origins in *quattrocento* epigraphic research and the subsequent vogue it enjoyed, reached its height of popularity only in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, much like the religious epic pioneered by Vegio's *Antoniad*. Likewise, the humanistic hagiography underwent a boom in production in the *quattrocento* due to the desire among the learned to write lives of the saints which were elegant enough to be valued and believed by their erudite peers (including in the Curia, in which Vegio worked when he wrote his lives of, among others, Celestine V, Bernardine of Siena, and Monica) rather than dismissed, along with other legends of marvels and miracles written in barbarously-composed narratives, as mere old wives' tales.⁶ There are a couple of exceptions to this characterisation that Vegio's later works were more typical of contemporary literary production, however: Vegio's early poems attempting to gain patronage were naturally a staple genre (even if he did sometimes work it into the recently-revived elegy form), and his final Roman work, *De rebus*, was very much a novel one.

⁵ Alan Cameron, *The Last Pagans of Rome* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), p. 10 and elsewhere.

⁶ Smith and O'Connor, pp. 128-132.

Furthermore, the works exhibit a far greater combination of classical and Christian sources than Vegio's earlier ones, and these are geared towards the purpose, common to all the later genres in which he worked, of religious edification. Vegio's philosophical dialogue *Disceptatio inter Solem, Terram et Aurum* and *Palinurus*, in spite of its Lucianic inspiration and structure, is informed by a Christian morality and motivation. His treatises on education and on perseverance in devotion – even more obviously genres far removed from any we have so far discussed – use Virgilian moments as illustrations of ethics. Across these and Vegio's later writings, we see stylistic, moralistic, allegorical and antiquarian uses of Virgil. In addition to these, we find responses to Virgil as a man and as an *auctor*, as well as strong indications of how Vegio saw history – with Virgil and himself within it – operating on nothing less than a cosmic scale.

We will begin by examining stylistic uses of Virgil, instances in which Vegio uses a Virgilian phrase or passage in order to either express more elegantly a point he is already making, or to embellish or amplify a description. The examples will be drawn from Vegio's *De quattuor hominis novissimis*, *Disceptatio inter Solem, Terram et Aurum*, and *De perseverantia*. From here, we will move onto examples which show Vegio practising this stylistic employment of Virgil for a philosophical or moral purpose, using his *Palinurus* as the focus for its reworking of Virgilian figures, imagery and phrases in the context of a dialogue about human misery and happiness, in this life and the next. Afterwards, more purely and explicitly moralistic uses of Virgil will be examined, ranging from Vegio's citation of Virgilian moments as moral exempla demonstrating virtuous (and vicious) conduct, to his overall conception of Virgil as both a moral sage, and a source of knowledge about ethics, etymologies, history and natural philosophy. The works discussed here will be *De educatione* and *De perseverantia*. Finally, we will conclude by exploring Vegio's final work, *De rebus*, which through and in addition to its Virgilian allusions expresses Vegio's conception of history and the relations between the classical pagan past and the Christian era in a way which serves to bring together everything, and indeed every Virgil, we will have seen up to this point. The progression here, with the exception of the positioning of *De rebus* at the end of the chapter, will not be chronological, but the justification for this is that the movement from stylistic to moral seems the most efficient way of discussing material which in large part straddles these divisions. These divisions, furthermore, are apposite since they reflect taxonomies to be found in the commentaries on Virgil which shaped Vegio's responses. The trajectory of the chapter will therefore highlight how such Virgilian moments, seen from the discussion of *Palinurus* onwards, served as both ornamental and useful, and by the end of the chapter, it will be seen that such a range of responses to Virgil was enabled, and in some cases necessitated, by Vegio's vast, varied and syncretic frame of intellectual and cultural reference, his professional position as a canon, his rhetorical training, and the requirements of the genres in which he wrote.

Stylistic Employments of Virgil

To begin with stylistic uses of Virgil, we can see that even in his later works, the poet was being used to provide elegant summaries or expressions of points Vegio was making. In the *De quattuor hominis novissimis morte, iudicio, inferno et paradiso meditationes*, meditations on the Christian Four Last Things, composed in the 1450s, we find allusions to *Aeneid* 6.625 and 627, in which the Sybil describes the punishments suffered by the souls of the damned: ‘Non sibi si centum linguae sint oraque centum,/ Omnia poenarum percurrere nomina possem’ (‘Not if I had a hundred tongues and a hundred mouths, could I run through all the names of their punishments’).⁷ Vegio is describing the Christian Hell here, and although Virgil’s pagan analogue is similar enough in its essential details, it is still worth noting that Vegio (following Dante’s earlier practice) uses a phrase from this analogue to describe it. The status of this allusion as stylistic rather than the authoritative uses of Virgil which we will see shortly is demonstrated through what Vegio says just before he deploys this phrase, which is that the tales of Ixion, Tityus, the Furies and the other features of the Virgilian Underworld are ‘fabulas poetarum’: false fables by pagan poets who crafted fictions, which, despite their oblique or unconscious share in Christian truth, must necessarily be given a secondary place to the teachings of the true faith. This mode of reading of course runs counter to, or rather, as we will see, alongside, such allegoresis. A similar use of Virgil as embellishment is seen in the *De perseverantia religionis*, a treatise on steadfastness in devotion which Vegio wrote in 1448 and dedicated to his sisters. In this work, we find, slightly altered (Virgil’s ‘Nunc’ becomes Vegio’s ‘Cum’), *Eclogues* 3.57: ‘Cum frondent sylvae, cum formosissimus annus’ (‘when the forests are green, when the year is most beautiful’).⁸ Vegio uses this in a description of spring which comes in a review of the seasons. A little earlier in this same work, Vegio quotes *Georgics* 1.108-110 with the same aim of ornamenting his descriptions, in this case of the irrigation of fields which precedes the periods of sowing, growing and harvesting.⁹

In all of these examples, Virgil is being mined for eloquent locutions, not wisdom or truth, and in this respect these responses are similar to some we have already seen in Vegio’s poetry, where the significance is the evocation of an image and its associations. In this sense they can be characterised as faithful allusions, which furthermore could be accounted for by Vegio’s intimate familiarity with them. The situations in which they are used reminded Vegio of similar Virgilian moments, and so those moments were incorporated. In such cases, where only a word or two is changed with little significant alteration in meaning, either the new grammatical context, or else Vegio’s slight

⁷ Vegio, *De quattuor hominis novissimis*, in *Maxima Bibliotheca*, p. 750.

⁸ Vegio, *De perseverantia*, in *Maxima Bibliotheca*, p. 739.

⁹ Vegio, *De perseverantia*, in *Maxima Bibliotheca*, p. 733.

misremembering of the original verses, is likely to be the reason why. Style, however, remains the principal purpose.

Yet sometimes in the prose works we see such locutions used instead for both style and moral suggestions; the moments from *De perseverantia* just witnessed demonstrate the former, whereas this exhibits both: ‘non alius quam qui adverso vix flumine lembum/remigiis subigit, si braccia forte relaxat,/ atque illum in praeceps prono rapit alveus amni’ (‘not unlike one whose oars can barely hold his boat against the current, if by chance he relaxes his arms and the channel with its torrent sweeps him headlong away’). This near-quotation from *Georgics* 1.201-203 (in which Virgil writes ‘aliter’ for Vegio’s ‘alius’, and ‘remisit’ for ‘relaxat’) is used stylistically by Vegio to make the point that in religion, constant effort, indeed *perseverantia*, is required, otherwise you will be swept away, like the careless rower, by sin. As he writes a little later, at the close of the chapter, ‘Indeed, just as it is more difficult, in the matter of virtues, to attempt to pursue something not habitual, than to lack it because of laziness, so it is harder to recover that which through negligence is lost, than to acquire that which one has not yet experienced having’ (‘Sicut enim in virtutibus difficilior est aliquid non habitum conando assequi, quam desidia carere, ita gravius est recuperare quod per negligentiam amittitur, quam adipisci quod nondum quis habuisse cognoscitur’).¹⁰ The rower slackens his arms ‘per negligentiam’, loses the position he struggled to maintain, and is carried off by the current. The person of faith must be steadfast if they are to overcome the waves of the world and reach their desired destination. Virgil is used here, just as he was in the earlier examples, as a source of more stylish phrasings of points Vegio was making anyway. The difference with this last example is that Vegio also connects the eloquent Virgilian phrase to an ethical significance, which he uses for the morally didactic purpose central to his treatise. The faithful allusion is charged with the additional significance and force of a moral maxim, and Virgil appears as an *auctor* for both style and substance. This moves us towards the consideration of additional examples of such moralistic employments.

From Virgilian Style to Substance

The rowing connection in the previous instance brings us to the next work to be discussed, Vegio’s *Palinurus, sive de felicitate et miseria*, which he finished in 1445 and dedicated to Gerardo Landriani, who was Vegio’s local bishop when he resided near Milan, and who in 1421 discovered the Cicero manuscript containing the *Brutus*, *Orator* and *De Oratore*.¹¹ The *Palinurus* is a philosophical dialogue between Aeneas’ pilot Palinurus, recently arrived in the Underworld, and the boatman Charon, as he

¹⁰ Vegio, *De perseverantia*, in *Maxima Bibliotheca*, p. 704.

¹¹ Vegio had praised Landriani in verse for this discovery at the time, telling of how the bishop rescued this book from the obscure and hideous shadows of neglect, and presented it, naked and mangled as it was, to the light of the world; see Lopomo, pp. 1008-1009. On this, see Caretta.

ferries the recently-deceased Trojan across the Styx. As Marsh has noted, there are many models at work here in addition to the Virgilian, the most notable being the ancient Greek writer Lucian (to be discussed shortly) and Vegio's Curial colleague Leon Battista Alberti, who had written works such as *The Deceased*, in which a similar Palinurus-Charon conversation (and characterisation) features, and which contains similar ideas about the punishments of tyrants and the necessity, for mortals who wish to be truly happy, of despising worldly things and the vicissitudes of fortune in favour of learning and virtue.¹²

This latter idea is central to Vegio's work, and might be inspired also by Innocent III's 1195 treatise on the same subject (perhaps via Bernardino of Siena, whom Vegio in his youth had heard preaching, and who often quoted Innocent III), which in its central tenets is very similar to Vegio's.¹³ Likewise, the manuscript Vat. lat. 5133, which contains *Palinurus*, follows the concluding 'explicit' with a couplet – highlighted by the symbolised injunction 'Nota!' – from the first book of Henry of Settimello's elegies (c. 1190). This couplet runs: 'Quem semel horrendum maculis infamia nigrat/ ad bene tergendum multa laborat aqua' ('The horrendous one whom ill repute once blackens with stains,/ Much water toils at properly cleansing'),¹⁴ a bleak reflection of the fraught nature of the pursuit of virtue, as well as a playful link to the watery setting of Vegio's dialogue. Settimello was also the author of *De diversitate fortunae et philosophiae consolatione*, the title alone of which suggests the tradition in which Vegio was working with this composition. These are just two indications among many which show Vegio, and his contemporaries and early readers, engaging with earlier medieval as well as classical texts. This in turn offers a salutary reminder that the period often categorised as the Renaissance remained in dialogue with post-classical traditions, and that Vegio's conception of history was not tripartite (classical-dark/middle age-rebirth) in the Petrarchan sense. We will see more of this syncretism, and of Vegio's understanding of history, shortly.

Keith Sidwell, in his discussion of not only the Albertian but also and predominantly the Lucianic influences on Vegio's compositions, concludes that Vegio was 'experimenting with the fantasy dialogue, wherein characters from myth, history, or the realm of personification could be brought together to express general truths about life. He was working, too, with a more rhetorical scheme, the paradoxical encomium' (the form which would reach its apogee in Erasmus' 1509 *Moriae Encomium*, the *Praise of Folly*), drawing on Lucianic models, such as the *Dialogi Mortuorum*. The dialogue form, especially given its syncretism of pagan and Christian elements, might also owe something to Petrarch's *Secretum*, but Sidwell's observation is of greater technical utility to us here. This is because Vegio's employments of the desirable rhetorical qualities found in Lucian – *copia*, *varietas*,

¹² Marsh, pp. 67-71, citing earlier critical observations.

¹³ This treatise, *De miseria humanae conditionis*, was written when Innocent III was still the cardinal Lotario Dei Segni. See Michele Maccarrone (ed.), *Lotharii cardinalis (Innocentii III) De miseria humane conditionis* (Lugano: in aedibus Thesauri mundi, 1955).

¹⁴ Vat. lat. 5133, f. 26r.

ornatus, plus a combination of the serious and the comic, the morally useful and the entertaining – was also noted later by Andreas Cratander, the editor of a 1518 Basel compilation of works by Vegio and Lucian. Additionally, and closer to Vegio's own time, his dialogues were characterised as 'lucianeschi' by his biographer Vespasiano da Bisticci.¹⁵ This idea of experimentation strikes to the heart of what Vegio is also doing in this dialogue with Virgil; we can see the affinities between this way of using Virgilian characters in new narratives and the mode of adaptation seen in the *Supplementum*, and of course Vegio did the same with other mythological figures in his epyllia. In a sense, then, this is stylistic imitation, as we can see in details such as the description of Charon's 'cruda viridisque senectus', which, as Robinson notes, is directly from *Aeneid* 6.304.¹⁶ Yet Vegio adds the detail of Charon attributing this 'hard and green old age' to his job as ferryman; the Virgilian description of Charon's haleness brings a vivid image into Vegio's text, but Vegio's own invention makes the phrase more lively because of its function as a means of developing Charon's character and even setting him up as the calm interlocutor with years of experience and wisdom. This, given the dialogue's didactic drive, which we have noted, is an important adaptation.

Yet other adaptations should be considered with reference to the basic Virgilian features of Vegio's text, because they might also have provided models for Vegio. The main model is book six of the *Aeneid*, but Lucian's *Catapylus* had been a burlesque of this, set around Charon's ferry. Additionally, Lucian's *Charon*, naturally, is another possible source, and Alberti was perhaps following all three when he wrote his work on the same theme. In the case of 'cruda viridisque senectus', seen above, it is obvious that Vegio's source is Virgil himself, and so we can adopt this immediately as an allusion, using the criteria used so far throughout this study. For more general potential allusions which do not take the form of such phrases, however, we might see them as deriving from other sources, or mediations of Virgil. If they do not appear in Virgil, they will not be treated as Virgilian allusions, but it should perhaps be said here, for the sake of completeness, that, as Sidwell suggests, Vegio might be using Lucian's *Catapylus* for some of his Underworld scenery and references to its punishments,¹⁷ and Lucian's *Charon* too. The latter point holds even if *Charon*, as Franchinus Gaforius, the probable editor of Guillelmus Signer's 1497 Milanese selection of Vegio's works, noted, bears only a slight relationship to Vegio's dialogue.¹⁸

Nonetheless, in describing the Underworld, Charon and Palinurus, Vegio would primarily have been thinking of the original Virgilian passages featuring them: Palinurus drowns in *Aeneid* 5.833-71, and is encountered in the Underworld before his burial by Aeneas in 6.337-383. By the time Vegio's dialogue begins, Palinurus has been buried by Aeneas, and is able to continue his journey to his

¹⁵ On all this, see Keith Sidwell, *Lucian of Samosata in the Italian Quattrocento* (Doctoral thesis, University of Cambridge, 1975), pp. 216-231.

¹⁶ Robinson, p. 85.

¹⁷ Sidwell, p. 225.

¹⁸ Sidwell, pp. 223-224.

resting place in the Underworld, and Charon, remembering the events described in the *Aeneid*, knows exactly who he is. Overall, what Vegio's employment of these fictional events and settings in this form of dialogue tells us is that he was using them as raw narrative material, whether on the macro level of character and event or the micro level of phrase, image and description, for a project which sought to explore philosophical topics and suggest solutions to problems they raised in the manner in which, in the *quattrocento*, Lucian's works, read as moral guides, were also believed to do.¹⁹ In other words, the form, rather than the content, was Lucianic. Even if Christianised (as Robinson notes, Vegio's Elysium and Hades by the end of the dialogue are essentially Heaven and Hell),²⁰ the content was irrevocably Virgilian.

These sorts of Virgilian provenance can be seen in manuscripts of the dialogue, such as Vat. lat. 5133.²¹ Here, naturally, we find Vegio's text (and in ff. 18v-19r we see that Vegio has Palinurus describe his drowning, drawing on the Virgilian event), yet we also find the attentive *quattrocento* scribe's (and perhaps early readers') responses to it, which highlight other passages which likewise use Virgilian material. On folio 4r, for example, we find an insightful marginal note which reproduces *Aeneid* 1.91-96, the famous moment when Aeneas despairs in the storm and calls blessed those who died beneath the walls of Troy rather than suffering as he and the other fugitive Trojans currently are. This is written alongside the passage in which Vegio has Palinurus comment on this moment, remembering the storm and how he had marvelled that even Aeneas, 'ducem meum, cuius summa constantia et [...] fortitudo ubique decantatur' ('my captain, whose eminent steadfastness and fortitude are rehearsed everywhere'), in that moment seemed to lose hope and courage: 'Vidi ego tunc contremmentem graviter atque ingentem' ('I myself then saw him gravely and greatly trembling'). Then, as both Virgil and Vegio's Palinurus relate, Aeneas raised his hands to heaven and cried that he wished he had fallen with those at Troy (in Vegio: 'extentisque ad caelum manibus "beatos longe inclamantem eos quibus ad Troiam oppetere contigisset"').²²

This is certainly another vision of Virgil's hero: the event is Virgilian, but Vegio's Palinurus gives an interpretation of it which is far from stereotypically heroic, and which, as we will see, contrasts with the vision of Aeneas as the model of the perfect human being which we can see in Vegio's treatises, especially *De perseverantia*, when we return to it shortly. Perhaps this moment shows the influence of what Richard Thomas has identified as the tendency of Servius' commentary to debate and judge (even if ultimately to defend) the character of Aeneas, as it does with reference to other moments

¹⁹ Marsh, p. 85.

²⁰ Robinson, p. 85.

²¹ Rome, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Vat. lat. 5133.

²² Virgil's version (*Aeneid* 1.92-96): 'extemplo Aeneae solvuntur frigore membra;/ingemit et duplicis tendens ad sidera palmas/ talia voce refert: "O terque quaterque beati,/ quis ante ora partum Troiae sub moenibus altis/ contigit oppetere!"

featuring Palinurus.²³ But these claims are valid only from the perspective of identifying discursive horizons and seeing what it was possible to think in this period; in response to Palinurus' account, Vegio has Charon offer a solution to such despair, based on constancy and other virtues, which an annotator, perhaps the same scribe as earlier, or perhaps someone different, has bracketed and manicured on f. 24v. In other words, Vegio is still presenting the virtues Aeneas ordinarily embodies as praiseworthy, and the overall philosophy is Stoic, emphasising constancy and resilience. The problem is that mortals, even the most celebrated, powerful and apparently fortunate in worldly terms, fail and suffer misery, and the world itself is inconstant. Aeneas, in this view, could even appear as a tragic figure, eminent and virtuous yet ultimately a victim of worldly vicissitudes. All these reflections demonstrate the ultimate importance of cultivating learning and virtue in preparation for the next world. By the time they reach the far shore, Charon (aided, doubtless, by the chorus of wails provided by the tormented souls enduring their punishments, which are heard by Palinurus before he disembarks) has managed to convince his passenger of this conclusion.

To bring our own discussion of this work to its conclusion, this dialogue shows Vegio building on and adapting Virgilian material such as the tale of Palinurus and the setting and characters of the Virgilian Underworld, together with more precise allusions from these passages and elsewhere in the *Aeneid*. These must qualify as stylistic or imitative uses of Virgil, the sorts of recycling and adaptation which we observed in Vegio's epyllia. Yet these allusions are also, as we have seen, set within a Lucianic form and therefore given over to other purposes, to explore the nature of virtue and vice in an inconstant world, and to suggest modes of conduct which might minimise the misery humans suffer in life, while maximising their happiness. This focus might also be a reflection of the literary and philosophical tradition which produced works such as Petrarch's *De remediis utriusque fortunae*. Vegio's text sees Virgil reworked and set within a frame which makes his poetry create a new drama, in the basic sense of a dialogic scene, and also, more importantly, speak to ethical questions. Virgil here is regarded as the virtuous pagan who shared some dim knowledge of Christian truth, as we noted when looking at the *De quattuor hominis*, and as Robinson suggested when he made his point about Vegio's Elysium and Hades being equated with Heaven and Hell.²⁴ Partly because of this, his works could be adapted to such morally earnest purposes as we have seen in Vegio's *Palinurus*.

²³ See Richard F. Thomas, *Virgil and the Augustan Reception*, p. 106. It could be noted that other commentary traditions seem irrelevant to Vegio's responses to Palinurus: Fulgentius and Silvestris, for example, regard him as an allegory for 'wandering sight'. These allegorists' interpretation of Charon as Time, necessary for the accrual of wisdom, is more consonant with Vegio's characterisation of the ferryman as a moral guide, but the impact of this interpretation on Vegio's work is debatable, given the other possible influences already mentioned.

²⁴ This conception of Virgil is most famously found in Dante's *Commedia*, where he is placed in Limbo and appointed as the character-Dante's guide through Hell and Purgatory.

Virgil as Authority, Moral Sage and Cultural Historian

The next examples we will consider demonstrate Vegio going further in this interpretative direction, not merely working Virgilian material into such moralistic schemes, but actively reading and citing Virgilian passages, in and of themselves, as illustrations, guides and exempla of morality (and often its contrary, vice), as well as of etymology, history and natural philosophy. Some of these take forms which at first sight appear to be merely stylistic, but which in their new context are seen to have moral drives, too, such as the allusion to *Aeneid* 9.246-251 which we find in *De educatione*, the treatise on the intellectual and moral training of children which Vegio composed in 1444. In this case we see that Aletes' claim that the gods have given the Trojans such brave youths in Nisus and Euryalus, because of their willingness to undertake their perilous mission behind enemy lines, expresses the truth that the prize they are to receive (in terms of honour) comes from the gods. Through making themselves outstanding in such virtue, they achieve the divine gifts of contentment and praise. This, Vegio writes, is the 'vis et gratia virtutis', the 'power and grace of virtue', as 'recte expressit Vergilianus [sic]'. Furthermore, if such exempla are heeded, not only adolescents, but others too, will enjoy tranquillity and blessedness.²⁵ Virgil is thereby used to embellish the point Vegio is already making in this passage of his treatise, but he is also used as an authority for it, with his poetic moment serving as an exemplum to which we should pay attention.

Vegio, naturally, uses Aeneas as a model for moral emulation. When Vegio writes in *De educatione* that the bearing of a man should (and in contrast to the stooping image of vice putatively provided by Julian the Apostate) be upright and proper, and his gaze upon the world benevolent, so that he 'may be judged by all those to be deserving of the happy honours breathed upon him', he incorporates Virgil's description, from *Aeneid* 1.591, of Venus' endowment of Aeneas with divine beauty. Virgil's 'laetos oculis adflarat honores', becomes, in Vegio's words (and with the acknowledgement 'quod a poeta dictum est'), 'laetos illis afflatos esse honores merito ab omnibus iudicari possit'.²⁶ Again, the Virgilian phrase elegantly expresses what Vegio is already saying, but it elevates the mode of conduct described to epic and divine status, and Aeneas is used as a model for emulation. Aeneas fulfils this role in many other places, as for example when Vegio refers to the moment when he tells Anchises to get on his shoulders in *Aeneid* 2.707-708, a clear example of *pietas* to parents. Yet Aeneas is not the only Virgilian figure to demonstrate this virtue: Vegio also refers to Euryalus' request that if he dies on his mission, the Trojan leaders will look after his mother (*Aeneid* 9.280-292) and the actions of an enemy of the Trojans, Lausus, as he rushes into Aeneas' path to defend his wounded father Mezentius (*Aeneid* 10.794-802). Connected to this is the duty of parents to their children. Early in the treatise, when Vegio is speaking of the paramount importance of the practical, moral example of parents in the education of children, he cites Evander's handing-over of his son Pallas into Aeneas' care, so that the

²⁵ Vegio, *De educatione*, in Fanning and Sullivan, *Maphei Vegii*, p. 129.

²⁶ Vegio, *De educatione*, p. 184.

boy might learn, practically, about the realities of war (*Aeneid* 8.515-517). These examples are not based around phrases; they are signposts to moments in Virgil's writings in which virtues are exemplified by characters. Vegio is not changing the narrative events, but he is setting them within a didactic treatise, and an associated, genre-determined interpretative framework, in which Virgilian passages are interpreted as illustrations of virtue or vice. Like the numerous other classical and Christian authorities cited by Vegio in *De educatione*, and following a centuries-long interpretative tradition, Virgil here speaks as a moral guide.

Returning to the 1448 *De perseverantia*, we similarly find Aenean exempla. We again see Aeneas' virtue when Vegio quotes *Aeneid* 6.687-688, Anchises' first words to his son when the latter arrives in the Underworld, and his *pietas* had overcome the hard road there ('venisti tandem, tuaque expectata parenti/vicit iter durum pietas?').²⁷ Again, as we saw earlier when discussing the image of the rower in this work, Vegio is using Virgilian moments to support the overall argument of his treatise, which is to remain steadfast and not give in to weakness on the path to blessedness. Immediately after he quotes Anchises' words, Vegio turns to that other scene we have encountered: the storm. He focuses instead, however (unlike Vegio's Palinurus), on Aeneas' fortitude, when, in Vegio's words, Virgil's hero 'at length, with heavier and more venerable words, exhorting his comrades, moves them thus' with the speech from *Aeneid* 1.198-207, beginning 'O socii', remembering the perils they all had endured up to that point, and filling them with hope that they would, in time, reach Latium, 'sedes ubi fata quietas/ostendunt', 'where the fates show the restful seat'. The relevance of this to Vegio's injunctions to remain strong, preserve faith, and live in hope, is patent. In both these examples, Virgil is seen as such a source of moral wisdom that Vegio writes 'Virgilius docuit': 'Virgil taught'.

Such uses and interpretations of Virgil reach their apogee in those instances which have been noted already by critics, and which show Vegio referring to scenes such as the storm, and indeed the entire narrative trajectory of the *Aeneid*, as an allegory of human life, a legacy of Fulgentius' much earlier but still influential interpretation. In *De educatione*, Vegio had written that poetry is a mysterious veil for wisdom, and that Aeneas is a 'virum omni virtute praeditum', a man endowed with every virtue.²⁸ In *De perseverantia*, as Brinton and Kallendorf have noted, Vegio explicitly makes this interpretative move, writing that if Scylla represents the evils of the world, Troy life, and Latium heaven, Aeneas' oration could have been written by the Apostle Paul.²⁹ After this, we get another Virgilian passage making the same points we saw previously about strength and resilience, as Vegio quotes the Sybil's words to Aeneas in *Aeneid* 6.95-97, in which she urges him not to 'give in to evil, but to advance more boldly against it than Fortune allows' ('tu ne cede malis, sed contra audentior ito,/quam tua te

²⁷ Vegio, *De perseverantia*, in *Maxima Bibliotheca*, pp. 696-7.

²⁸ Vegio, *De educatione*, pp. 86-90.

²⁹ Vegio, *De perseverantia*, in *Maxima Bibliotheca*, pp. 696-7; Brinton, p. 28, reprised as we have seen by Kallendorf.

Fortuna sinet'). Then the allegory follows, 'dulcibus figmentorum velamentis, uti Poetarum moris est' ('through the sweet veils of fictions, as is the custom of Poets'), relating how the *Aeneid* shows man's progress through life, through myriad trials. The ultimate purpose of this allegory is that Virgil might show 'ut quanta esset perseverantiae virtus miro artificio' ('with wondrous artifice, how great is the virtue of perseverance'). Along the way, of course, there are vice figures, such as the passionate (not the prudent, in her admirable role as Queen of Carthage) Dido, and also Turnus, 'that is, the devil' ('id est diabolum'). Virgil is, more than ever, the moral sage, introduced via the allegorical commentary traditions of Fulgentius, Silvestris and others.

Such responses to Virgil's text and characters are so different to those we have seen earlier in this thesis as to be unrecognisable. The sympathy with the victimhood of Turnus shown in the *Supplementum*, and – by allusive association – of both Turnus and Dido in Vegio's other epyllia, is entirely at odds with the narrowly moralistic interpretation observed here in the treatises. Similarly, when we read in *De educatione* an advocacy and aggrandisement of agriculture and the rural life,³⁰ we are struck by the completeness of the contrast between this and the vicious image of such a life found in Vegio's earlier, anti-rustic poems. Amid myriad conjectures which might account for such discrepancies, the only one which does not depend upon psychological guesswork is that they were motivated by different rhetorical and generic needs. In other words, the same Virgilian instance was turned to different kinds of work depending on the purpose the composition was intended to serve. Across the post-classical period, this had also been the standard way of working, as Virgil's poetry was cited, adapted and routed through various interpretative filters, across multifarious texts, in order to produce specific aesthetic effects, support particular arguments, and advance a Christian ethos bolstered by classical authority. Vegio, like the well-trained rhetorician he was, could marshal one Virgilian quotation to support the argument at hand, only to later use the exact same quotation to support the contrary position.

The central and determining importance of genre in how this rhetorical practice was played out can be seen in how Vegio responds to the figure of Virgil himself across different works. In his epigrams he uses Virgil as a justification and source for playful poetic compositions, yet in his treatise *De educatione*, in line with the ideas we have already seen expressed in that work, he rejects the attribution of such frivolous compositions to such a virtuous poet, partly 'propter grandiorelem eleavtioresque [...] spiritum' ('on account of [his] grander and more elevated spirit').³¹ And he even uses Martial, that master of epigrammatic verse, as evidence for this view of a more sober Virgil, since in Martial 5.5, Martial mentions Catullus and Marsus as his models, but sets Virgil (or at least the *Aeneid*) apart, literally on a different shelf.³² As we saw in the previous chapter, in other poems –

³⁰ Vegio, *De educatione*, pp. 112-113; cited in Horkan, p. 148.

³¹ Vegio, *De educatione*, pp. 86-87; cited in Horkan, pp. 152-153.

³² Vegio, *De educatione*, pp. 88-89; Horkan, p. 153.

and poems which Vegio knew well, and even alluded to – Martial presents Virgil as the author of very frivolous works indeed. Again, genre is determining factor: in the earlier poems, including his verse letters defending Beccadelli, the nature of the form, especially in the epigrams, required a liberal and witty response to the classics, or, phrased differently, the *apologia* for such compositions required classical *auctoritas*; in a work about moral education, however, it is understandable, whatever his personal views and how they might have in any case altered as he aged, that Vegio would gloss over these complicating or subversive elements of the Virgilian tradition. This is why, in the same discussion, he also recommends that children not read certain verses by Horace or Catullus.

Still, it initially seems difficult to attribute Vegio's engagements with Virgil in his treatises to the requirements of genre alone. These compositions do, after all, appear to express sincerely held positions, and contain personal details. Some of them are dedicated to his siblings, feature accounts of his childhood, and speak of his newfound, intense devotion to Augustine and Monica.³³ Yet perhaps this was nonetheless all grist to the generic mill: for the purposes of edification, which was after all a greater good, especially to a pious man such as Vegio (who furthermore had to uphold the decorum of his official position as a canon of St. Peter's), it was justifiable to employ every piece of material possible, even if it had to be reshaped or reinterpreted to perform its new function. Many of the Virgilian allusions we have seen here are stylistic, and might have occurred to Vegio spontaneously as he was describing a situation which they economically and elegantly summarised. And many of the uses of Virgil as a source for moral exempla seem to function equally smoothly, such as the instances of Aeneas' *pietas* or determination. Yet it must also be borne in mind that *De educatione* in particular employs numerous other classical and Christian sources which are used in exactly the same way, and when we reach the allegoresis in *De perseverantia*, such an allegorical interpretation allows the Virgilian text to support the argument of the treatise too effectively for Vegio to have not employed this mode of reading, despite never having used Virgil in this manner previously, except for, unsurprisingly, in his other didactic work, *De educatione*. To reiterate the point made earlier, Vegio was alluding to Virgil like a rhetorician, even if a sincerely pious one. The need to bolster ideas with ancient authority was ubiquitous in the pre-modern period, and especially in the *quattrocento* among intellectuals such as Vegio who were part of that hyper-literate milieu which was attempting to imitate the classical. Vegio's use of an allegorical interpretation of the *Aeneid* is, obliquely, an instance of this too, as it draws on a late-antique and medieval tradition which was always used as a means of making the pagan poets whose works were essential to the mastery of Latin style but whose works also contained elements which unsurprisingly diverged from Christian doctrine, conformable to the new faith. It also enabled such pagan works to be used as sources of Christian edification which,

³³ Vegio's *Dialogues Veritatis et Philalethis* (1444, and not discussed here; it is another Lucianic dialogue; for further analysis, see Sidwell) is addressed to his brother, and his *De perseverantia* to his sisters. For a summary of Vegio's Augustinian devotion, see Buckley, 'Maffeo Vegio'.

additionally, gained strength from this illusion that they were supported by antique *auctoritas*. It is no wonder that it was a common approach to the classics in the Renaissance too, even if, as Vegio's works alone demonstrate, it was far from the only approach.

There are other moments in *De educatione* which show Virgil mined instead for scholarly, encyclopaedic knowledge, even if these are then made to serve in moral arguments. When Vegio writes about bees reproducing not by sex but by parthenogenesis, an idea found in *Georgics* 4.199-201, Vegio uses it as a natural-philosophical exemplum of lives led productively and virtuously in chastity.³⁴ He uses this Virgilian description of bees to embellish Terra's claims to pre-eminence in his *Disceptatio inter Solem, Terram et Aurum*, in which each thing competes through orations judged by the Creator.³⁵ Likewise, when he argues that infants should be fed with their mothers' milk, and not given to 'extraneis [...] praesertim abiectis aut impudicis feminis' ('other [...] and above all base and shameless women') for this nourishment,³⁶ he cites 'Hyrcaenaeque admorunt ubera tigres' from *Aeneid* 4.367 as evidence that the qualities of milk have effects on the natures and characters of infants which last into adulthood. At first sight, Dido's harsh words to Aeneas stating that his perceived callousness could only be attributable to his being suckled by the teats of Hyrcanean tigresses, surely never found a more unlooked-for application; in fact, though, the logic is consistent between Virgil's work and Vegio's.

More generally, ancient history and custom, seen in the etymological examples, is of abiding interest to Vegio: he quotes Virgil's words in and around *Aeneid* 1.282 about Roman imperial pre-eminence and attributes it to the military exercise of Roman youth; he again quotes the line ('Romanos, rerum dominos, gentemque togatam', 'Romans, lords of all things, the togaed race') when describing Augustus' purported insistence that togas be worn for the sake of propriety, decorum, dignity and modesty.³⁷ Vegio's purpose is in part moral, as he emphasises when he praises Hadrian's modest dress and says that men should dress in the clothing established for them by custom, just as women should, using Ascanius (who is insulted in *Aeneid* 9.616 by being told he dresses, like all Trojans, effeminately) as an example to avoid.³⁸ But Vegio's interest in Virgil's writing here is also in the details it can offer about the past and its modes of living; in the commentary tradition, such focuses might be termed 'historical' or 'antiquarian', but it might equally be said that Vegio, working with this tradition, is here reading Virgil as a cultural historian. Virgil is still in these instances a moral sage, but his role is more that of a human being whose works, read critically, can serve as evidence for how the world is and was. We see such encyclopaedic uses of not only Virgil but also texts and

³⁴ Vegio, *De educatione*, p. 169.

³⁵ *Disceptatio inter Solem, Terram et Aurum*, in *Maxima Bibliotheca*, p. 778.

³⁶ Vegio, *De educatione*, p. 20.

³⁷ Vegio, *De educatione*, p. 108.

³⁸ Vegio, *De educatione*, pp. 108, 197-199.

remains, not allied with any such morally didactic drive yet still informed by a moral vision, even if a different and more subtle one, in Vegio's *De rebus*.

Virgils and History in Vegio's De rebus antiquis

The treatise, Vegio's last work, was completed in 1458, and emerges substantially from his position as a canon of St. Peter's Basilica. Vegio had spent the entirety of this part of his life, from 1443 onwards, in Rome, with the exception of a brief time in Fabriano and in Florence during 1450-51 (a consequence of a Roman plague).³⁹ Other details could fill out this historical picture, from Vegio's putative authorship of the inscriptions on the bronze doors for St. Peter's made by Filarete at the instigation of Eugenius IV,⁴⁰ to his verifiably-authored obituary remarks on that Pope and his successor Nicholas V which appear in *De rebus*.⁴¹ The immediate context for the treatise *De Rebus*, however, was the recent move of the Papacy from the Lateran to St. Peter's, and the recent plans of Nicholas V for a rebuilding of the basilica.⁴² Vegio was something of an expert on archaeology, being consulted or sent off as an onsite supervisor by the Pope when areas of the building were undergoing work or demolition in order to ensure that important antiquities, such as tombs and inscriptions, were not inadvertently destroyed as they were unearthed. In addition, he himself undertook personal research into these remains on his own initiative or spur-of-the-moment inclination, with the latter urge leading him to discover the late-fourth-century tomb of Sextus Claudius Petronius Probus, among other things.⁴³ As Smith and O'Connor note in the commentary framing their edition of this text, the work is above all, and as its title says, a remembrance rather than a history.⁴⁴ This means that it is a record of the past of a still-living building, in which Vegio worked daily and with which he was intimately familiar. It is also, they suggest, given the prospect of a comprehensive modification of its structure, an attempt to ensure that the history of the building and the traces which successive generations had left upon it in the form of architectural features and artefacts would not be forgotten by posterity. The building was, after all, the most important in Western Christianity, founded on the remains of the saint, Peter, to whom Christ had given the keys, and on whom he said he would build his church. It had also gained greater status with the recent return of the Papacy to Rome, and, more

³⁹ Vignati, p. 28.

⁴⁰ Smith and O'Connor, p. 160.

⁴¹ Vegio, in Smith and O'Connor, pp. 209-211; for more on Vegio's position in the Curia at this time, see Smith and O'Connor, pp. 19-21.

⁴² See Smith and O'Connor, pp. 22-23 on this context of Papal tribulations, relocation and rebuilding into the 1450s; also Chiara di Fruscia and Massimo Miglio, 'Percezione e trasformazione di San Pietro nel Quattrocento', pp. 123-136 in Giovanni Morello (ed.), *La basilica di San Pietro: Fortuna e immagine* (Rome: Gangemi editore, 2012), pp. 124-127 (p. 125).

⁴³ Smith and O'Connor, pp. 66-68, 73-74; Vegio in Smith and O'Connor, pp. 191-193.

⁴⁴ Smith and O'Connor, pp. 112-113. This edition of the text is the one used here; the earlier editions comprise that found in *Acta Sanctorum Junii, Tomus VII* (Antwerp: Robyns, 1717), pp. 57-85, and the critical edition which constituted the doctoral thesis of Della Schiava.

recently still, the transference of the Curia to St. Peter's from the Lateran. Additionally, and perhaps most essentially, the need to strive for such preservation was a part of the vow Vegio had taken when he became a canon of that church, and it is obvious that he took the promise seriously. In more immediate terms, and with the same preserving purposes, Vegio probably hoped that the treatise would reshape the perceptions of the basilica held by his contemporaries, enabling them to see, as though with new eyes, its layers of history, just as he himself had, as they looked at it, read about it, and walked within it.⁴⁵ There is an echo here of Petrarch's perception of the Roman landscape as a historical palimpsest, as expressed in his letter to Giovanni Colonna,⁴⁶ but with the difference that Vegio was concerned with more recent history as well as the antiquity (pagan and Christian) which had concerned Petrarch. In Vegio we see continuity rather than rupture, even if Petrarch had used this rupture as a launch pad for renovation.

Part of Vegio's earnestness in this reconstructive task takes the form of historical rigour. Vegio worked in a milieu which saw developments in historical method. Flavio Biondo was a member of the Curia too, and his interests in archeology, together with those of Cyriac of Ancona, whom we encountered earlier, were obvious influences on Vegio. Yet, as Smith and O'Connor note, there were other precedents for Vegio's approach to sifting sources and showing a commitment to weighing up the evidence and reaching the truth which can be seen to have earlier precedents, in the work of Cusanus, as well as well as contemporaries, among whom we must also count Piccolomini, who would become Pope Pius II later in the year of Vegio's death.⁴⁷ This method was in clear contrast to the medieval books of *mirabilia*, marvels, which at the time of its composition were the closest analogues to Vegio's *De rebus*, and which recorded events which Vegio is quite frank in disbelieving and scorning as fables which only the ignorant and credulous could take seriously. His treatise, accordingly, and like the humanistic hagiographies to which we have already referred, combined such critical thought with classicising style.⁴⁸

An example of this style can be seen in the cluster of highly suggestive Virgilian allusions Vegio makes in the work, allusions which on closer inspection, and especially in combination with other allusions and passages, demonstrate Virgil being used as a historical source, while introducing a new moral significance. These significances, in fact, are bound together in an indissoluble nexus. In the first book of *De rebus*, Vegio, describing St. Peter's and its hundred marble columns ('centum marmoreis nobilibusque sublimis columnis') erected there by Constantine in his gratitude to God for

⁴⁵ All argued by Smith and O'Connor, pp. 104-107, 111-112.

⁴⁶ *Familiares* 6.2, in Francesco Petrarca, *Rerum Familiarum Libri*, edited and translated by Aldo S. Bernardo as *Letters on Familiar Matters 1* (New York: Italica Press, 2005), pp. 290-295 (pp. 291-294).

⁴⁷ For the work's status as something other than a history, see Smith and O'Connor, pp. 13-16; for this contextualisation of historical method with Cusanus, Piccolomini *et al.*, see the same work, p. 42; for Vegio's comments on his historical method, see this edition, pp. 128-132.

⁴⁸ Smith and O'Connor, pp. 43-45.

the gifts he had bestowed on the emperor,⁴⁹ alludes to *Aeneid* 7.170-171: ‘Tectum augustum, ingens, centum sublime columnis, / urbe fuit summa, Laurentis regia Pici’ (‘Vast and august, towering with a hundred columns, the house was the summit of the city, once the palace of Laurentian Picus’).⁵⁰ In Virgil, the passage continues: ‘horrendum silvis et religione parentum’ (‘awesome with its grove and the sanctity of the fathers’). Vegio, in depicting the architecture of the key site of Christian sacred ritual, councils and power, alludes to the ancient, pagan site of royal power, councils, sacrality and ritual, the palace of Latinus,⁵¹ to which the Trojans arrive as fugitives, yet also a people returning to their ancestral home, of which, in time, they will assume command at the conclusion of the war in Latium. A pagan model, treated not only as a means of elegant phrasing but as a historical fact drawn from Virgil’s works, is used here symbolically as a prefiguration of the supreme site and edifice of Christianity. There are echoes here, of course, of how we saw Vegio taking (and often combining) such moralistic and antiquarian approaches earlier, especially in *De educatione*.

Nonetheless, the ideas just offered that Vegio is reading Virgil both historically and symbolically perhaps require further elaboration and support. Vegio uses the sorts of encyclopaedic reading we have already seen with the aim of reaching historical fact through Virgil’s writings. As Smith and O’Connor suggest, he might have been referring to *Georgics* 1.498 or Servius’ commentary on it when he says, in connection to a doubt about which pagan divinity was worshipped in a certain temple, ‘I did, however, read somewhere that this deity was Vesta’, whom Servius says was the deity of the Fatherland.⁵² Yet Vegio also makes allusions which have a greater resemblance to his allusion to Latinus’ palace, for example when he alludes to the Virgilian moment in which Evander leads Aeneas to his home, having shown him around the area, equally potent as a site of pagan ritual and religious ceremony, which would become the centre of Rome. Evander’s tale of the history of the site, from the descent of Saturn and the beginning of the Golden Age to the present, concludes as they reach his home. Along the way, they have passed the Capitol, the Tarpeian Rock, and the Asylum of Romulus (part of the sequence 8.337-361), and the passage to which Vegio alludes concludes the journey, as ‘Talibus inter se dictis ad tecta subibant/pauperis Evandri, passimque armenta videbant/Romanoque Foro et lautis mugire Carinis’ (‘With such words passing between them, they approached the house of poor Evander, and all around saw cattle lowing in the Roman Forum and elegant Carinae’).⁵³

Here again we see Vegio gesturing towards the early, or rather proto-, history of Rome, together with its piety, humility and integrity, in order to provide a symbolic analogue (and moral model) to the Christian Rome of the present. There is also an echo of Petrarch’s letter to Colonna, referred to

⁴⁹ Vegio in Smith and O’Connor, p. 134.

⁵⁰ Noted but not analysed by Della Schiava, ‘Il *De rebus antiquis*’, pp. 150-51.

⁵¹ See whole passage in Virgil, *Aeneid*, to 7.170-194.

⁵² Smith and O’Connor edition, p. 179.

⁵³ Vegio in Smith and O’Connor, p. 150; Virgil, *Aeneid* 8.359-60.

earlier, which contains a similar account of a journey through ancient sites. The fact that Vegio alludes to both Latinus' palace, a splendid centre of governmental and regal power, and Evander's humble house, together with the religious commitments and conduct of their owners, has the effect of evoking both secular and sacred virtue. The positions of these buildings (especially Evander's) on the ground on which Rome would rise, even more clearly suggests the analogue Vegio intended to draw between them and the Basilica of St. Peter's, the magnificent yet still-virtuous centre of Christian faith and authority in the world. The world itself, in this view, is a theatre of cosmic apposition, in which events can serve as prefigurations of other events.

As Stinger has noted, and Smith and O'Connor have elaborated (though without using the foregoing, Virgilian examples as part of their arguments), this process of apposition and figuration has a divine drive, which can be seen elsewhere in the treatise and which reflects Vegio's view of history. Indeed, even his (by modern standards) more historically rigorous moves can be seen to have moral inflections and significances, as the events of the past are read as signs of divine approbation, displeasure and, ultimately, across the vastness of time, justice. History is providential. For example, Vegio's enquiry into the site of Peter's crucifixion, while showing an impressive historical method in its comparison of written sources and references to Roman topography, reaches the symbolic conclusion that Peter's crucifixion took place on Montorio, between two points then believed to be the tombs of Romulus and Remus, the founders of ancient Rome. A key event in Christianity, and *the* key event in the history of the Church, the martyrdom of its founding saint, is literally placed centre-stage in a drama which also enacts the city's pagan past.⁵⁴ Furthermore, the basilica dedicated to, and built on the relics of, that saint, was raised on Nero's circus, thereby symbolising the triumph of Christianity over pagan depravity. As Vegio states, the *naumachiae* of the emperor's circus are supplanted by the *naumachiae* of Peter, the fisherman, against the sins of the world.⁵⁵

The passage of which this is a part is a barrage of contrasts between pagan iniquity and Christian probity, and is an example of Vegio's use of epideixis which – just as a supporting comment for an argument made in the first chapter of this thesis – makes his *Supplementum* seem utterly unworthy of 'epideictic' classification.⁵⁶ To summarise, God's judgement is to be seen in all these events: in their early history (from the predecessors of the Romans Latinus and Evander, through the proto-Roman Aeneas, and all the way to celebrated figures such as Cincinnatus), the Romans were virtuous, but they fell into vice and as a consequence suffered a fall, from which arose a more virtuous Christianity.⁵⁷ Along the way, God allowed pagan temples, such as those to Mars Ultor or Jove on the Capitoline, to fall into ruin, becoming dens of sins such as prostitution, or being toppled by lightning.

⁵⁴ Stinger, pp. 179-183 (p. 183).

⁵⁵ Stinger, p. 180; Vegio in Smith and O'Connor, pp. 137-153 (142-143).

⁵⁶ Observed by Smith and O'Connor, pp. 40-42.

⁵⁷ Vegio in Smith and O'Connor, pp. 147-148.

As Vegio describes this process, he quotes Luke 1:51-53: ‘He hath shewed strength with his arm; he hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts. He hath put down the mighty from their seats, and exalted them of low degree. He hath filled the hungry with good things; and the rich he hath sent empty away.’⁵⁸ It might be noted that this passage shows striking similarities with Anchises’ words to Aeneas in *Aeneid* 6.851-853, when he tells his son, called in this moment, for the first time, ‘Roman’, that the duties, indeed arts, of the Romans, are to ‘spare the defeated, break the proud in war’.⁵⁹ The authentic Roman and Christian virtues, in other words, are the same, but where the Romans failed in living by them, the Christians succeeded. As Smith and O’Connor have shown, Vegio was not the first to make this argument; it can be found in several medieval authorities all the way up to Biondo.⁶⁰ Even the titles of Biondo’s most famous works, *Roma instaurata* and *Roma triumphans*, suggest this very *quattrocento* idea of a Christian renovation and sublimation of the classical past, and his *Decades (historiarum ab inclinatione Romanorum imperii)* show evidence not only of historical rigour, but of a deep interest in the post-classical past. Yet this view of history as a continuum of events guided and judged by God, running from the rise of a just Rome, through its sinful decadence and into the triumph of Christianity, is not only humanistic: it is also pre-humanistic, post-classical, and ultimately – especially in its providentialism – Augustinian.⁶¹

Virgil, then, is used here as a historical source, but it is history itself which carries moral significances, not Virgil’s poetry. Yet *De rebus* also shows, in its Virgilian allusions, a concern with style, too, and elsewhere in the treatise we see that Vegio maintained his sense of classical eloquence. He comments on whether inscriptions are written skilfully or not, noticing Virgilian hexameters on the tomb of Probus and on an aqueduct, while refusing to reproduce other inscriptions if he judges their Latin style to be poor.⁶² In Vegio’s works, especially those written in this final period of his life, we have seen that religion held a great importance. It led him to explore religious questions in dialogues, to advocate the best methods for instructing children in a religious manner, to advise readers on how best to stay on the straight path of devotion and faith. It even governed his view of history, which was modelled on Augustine’s perception of the divine hand shaping every event. Yet even in these works, not only do we find numerous classical sources, but also, as Smith and O’Connor write with reference to *De rebus*, ‘a certain expectation of Vergilian elegance in the way the faith presents itself’.⁶³ It is as though Christianity deserves only the best, classical style, an idea expressed in Vegio’s lifetime through the popularity and laudation of Lactantius (another proponent of

⁵⁸ In the *King James Version* (anachronistic, but chosen for its euphony of phrasing).

⁵⁹ In the phrasing of Fagles’ translation, 6.981-984.

⁶⁰ Smith and O’Connor, pp. 40-42.

⁶¹ Smith and O’Connor, p. 54; the idea underpins books I-V of Augustine’s *City of God*.

⁶² Smith and O’Connor, pp. 73-74.

⁶³ Smith and O’Connor, p. 73.

providential history) among the learned.⁶⁴ Perhaps, also, given the extensive uses we have seen Vegio making of Virgil's writings, Virgil's eloquent style signified to Vegio a virtuous *Romanitas* which could be equated, with obvious qualifications, with a virtuous *Christianitas*. With all this in mind, we can see that the stylistic uses of Virgil, seen for example in Vegio's modelling of the description of St. Peter's on that of the palace of Latinus, are inseparable from the function of such allusive connections as demonstrations of prefiguration, and, also, in this sense, moral exempla drawn from the divinely-governed realm of history, itself a text written by God but susceptible of human interpretation.

The Auden quotation which served as the epigraph to this chapter can suggestively describe *De rebus*: the work is indeed 'not only a description of places, persons and things, but also a psychological document of the first importance'. We saw that Vegio was saturated with the works of his beloved Virgil since his youth, and alluded to them throughout his life, but it is only here, in his final work, that we see how his commitment to Virgil as a stylist and as a man might have fitted into a more comprehensive and coherent perception of the world and its history. Paradoxically, perhaps, given the relative paucity of its Virgilian allusions in comparison with some of Vegio's earlier works, *De rebus* seems to offer us our best chance of an insight into how Vegio saw the writer. In *De educatione* and *De perseverantia* the uses of Virgil are so frequent, and accompanied by such strident moralistic glosses, that they seem almost opportunistic, used simply because they gave extra weight to arguments and initiatives which Vegio, given his composition of these treatises, his personal faith and official religious position, regarded as morally urgent. This, it was suggested earlier, is the only likely reason he would have used an allegorical mode of interpretation in these works, a mode of interpretation which his verses seem to disregard (and, when their usages of Virgil are analysed, to contest), and which the historical method of *De rebus* suggests he would have scorned. This again returns us to the influence of genre. Having said this, the moral treatises do show that such allegorical responses to Virgil were current in Vegio's time, and that Vegio thought they might be effective as ways to lend his own moral precepts greater authority in the eyes of his readers. In terms of the taxonomy of allusion which we have referred to in previous chapters, we could describe these uses of Virgil as a moral and intellectual sage, as well as a historical figure, as faithful, but only in a mediated sense: Vegio remains true, at least within the generic requirements of these works, to certain late-antique and medieval conceptions of Virgil. Vegio's stylistic repurposings of Virgil's writings are of course faithful in a similar way; in none of these examples are attempts made to set complicating or contesting allusive models alongside the Virgilian ones. The modes of interpretation we have seen may

⁶⁴ As succinct evidence of this, see the mid-*quattrocento* manuscript of Lactantius produced in Ferrara or Rome, together with the accompanying modern scholarly notes (<http://www.textmanuscripts.com/medieval/lactantius-opificio-dei-60724>) [accessed 01/05/2021]. The latter highlight the vigour of Patristic studies in 1450s Rome under Nicholas V's sponsorship, the perception (phrased earlier by Leonardo Bruni in his 1424 *De studiis et literis*) that Lactantius was the most elegant of Christian writers, and the notions of divine justice shaping history found in Lactantius' *De opificio dei* and *De ira dei*, as well as in his *Institutiones divinae*.

be different, but they all treat Virgil and his writings as things worthy of attention, emulation and respect, and are faithful even when, as in the *Palinurus*, they use Virgilian allusions as runways which extend the original Virgilian moments and narratives and facilitate new flights of philosophical and moral exploration.

Conclusions

This chapter's most striking insight is that Vegio's varied responses to Virgil across his Roman works are informed by classical, medieval and *quattrocento* texts, as well as both antiquarian and moralistic (among other) interpretations of those texts, and, on a cosmic scale, secularly scholarly and providentially Augustinian conceptions of history. The fact that these phenomena, in the mid-*quattrocento*, were so intermingled, seriously contests those generalisations, still stubbornly persistent in scholarship as well as the popular imagination, which present a stark rupture between the medieval period of piety and commentaries and the 'humanistic' Renaissance of secularism and original, immaculate classical texts. The intellectual culture of this period, in other words, was syncretic, and saw itself, above all, as the latest stage in a continuum encompassing the classical and the Christian.⁶⁵ This conclusion, based as it is on Vegio's use of non-Virgilian as well as Virgilian influences, including commentary traditions informing his responses to the poet, has emerged as a by-product of our primary investigation into Vegio's responses to Virgil.

We have seen that the works by Vegio considered in this chapter show a range of different interpretations and deployments of Virgil, from the stylish and ornamental to more moralistic usages which combined the classical and the Christian. We saw Virgilian characters used in new narrative situations, Virgilian moments employed as exempla illustrating virtues and vices, and his poetry perused as an encyclopaedic reference work recording natural phenomena or historical details. In the midst of this, we found the *Aeneid* read as a Fulgentian allegory of the progress of the good man through life's tribulations, and Aeneas as the perfect example of a human being capable of avoiding the perils of vice and enduring the twists of Fortune on his way to post-mortem bliss. Finally, we considered how Vegio's final work uses Virgil in a combination of these ways (themselves reflections of the focuses of earlier commentaries), regarding him as a source of knowledge about the earliest history of Rome, a history which in turn could be interpreted figurally, in a cosmic and divinely-determined narrative. Virgil, in this context, appears also as the writer whose sublime style provided the most decorously elevated model for Christian authors, whose faith merited nothing less than the

⁶⁵ Charles Trinkaus surveyed this phenomenon in his 1970 *In Our Image and Likeness: Humanity and Divinity in Italian Humanist Thought* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1995 ed.), but countless examples can still further enrich the picture it presents.

best Latin. Across these works, we therefore see Virgil speaking as a stylistic model, a philosopher, a moral sage (or even preacher), a moral allegorist, an encyclopaedist, a historical witness, and a mortal player in a divine drama of sin and sanctity. Recalling also the uses to which Vegio put Virgil's writings in his previous works, considered in the preceding chapters of this study, we can add to this list Virgil the epic poet, Virgil the writer of rustic life, Virgil the playful author of trifles, and Virgil the model for poetic imitation, across a range of genres. And there may well be more. Viewed together, these make the strongest possible case for the characterisation of Virgil, as Vegio regards him, as, like Aeneas in *De educatione*, albeit not in quite the manner in which the phrase is used in that work, 'omni virtute praeditus', 'endowed with every virtue'.

Though changes in Vegio's personal life and an increased turn to his faith around 1443 might be posited as underlying reasons for his decision to subsequently turn his hand to different kinds of compositions from those he wrote in his youth, it can be seen that no such 'life crisis' or rearrangement of priorities can provide a unifying rationale for how he uses Virgil in such compositions. This is because his uses of Virgil in these later works are still so remarkably diverse, and must be accounted for instead by reference to the requirements of different literary genres and the official religious position Vegio held when he wrote in them. Both of these, informing each other, led Vegio to use Virgil's poetry as an arsenal of rhetorical exempla which could be turned to the defence of any argument. The likelihood of these arguments themselves being important to Vegio is not at all diminished by this rhetorical practice. As historians, we might be unable ever to ascertain Vegio's more privately personal motivations, but the insights into these to which we do have access suggest that his piety had been strong throughout his life, even if in his younger days he had written classicising poetry which again, because of generic needs, used Virgil rather differently.

Still, this chapter has shown that every now and then we get glimpses or suggestions of Vegio's other, more specific views and motivations, and in the case of *De rebus*, we can see several of those which appear to have remained the most constant, and we see something of Vegio as a man. The work reads as a labour of love, showing his Augustinian piety and view of history, as well as his enduring fascination and obsession with classical style, and with the whole of antiquity, classical and Christian. As Smith and O'Connor emphasise, he wrote the work for many reasons.⁶⁶ It was above all a remembrance, an act of memory, an effort by Vegio to preserve, as a loyal, faithful canon of the basilica, its traces of its past in the face of the prospect of a rebuild which would see the structure, with all its artefacts, despoised by countless generations, dismantled. Vegio also wrote the work as a man who had been with the Curia since the 1430s, and who had seen the serious and manifold difficulties endured by the Papacy in its period of exile. *De rebus*, then, was also an assertion of the legitimacy of the Papal return to Rome, and its return, from its previous base in the Lateran, to St.

⁶⁶ For the rest of this paragraph, see Smith and O'Connor, pp. 104-107, 111-112.

Peter's. Perhaps this new sense of incipient triumph was a motivation for his decision to write these works; it was suggested earlier that his position as a canon of St. Peter's demanded a higher level of decorum than had his mere presence in the Curia, but these wider factors can only have strengthened this sense of duty. And yet Vegio was hesitant about going too far with this triumphalist line: we have seen that a key theme of the work is that sin (not least negligence and hubris) is punished, and in the downfall of the ancient Romans there was almost certainly a warning for popes who were too greedy for secular glory, and who, forgetful or ignorant of their position as the inheritors of a vast historical legacy, and a momentous weight of historical responsibility, were content not only to let it all fall away, but to actively, and callously, replace it with a desire for grand monuments to their own greatness. In 1505, when he ordered Bramante to begin the demolition of the building, thereby introducing the need for its current appellation as 'Old St. Peter's', Pope Julius II did exactly this.

A motivation which has not been emphasised, however, and demands to be emphasised in this study of his engagement with Virgil, relates to Vegio in his capacity as an intellectual who had devoted much of his life to understanding, imitating and renovating antiquity. In his younger days growing up in northern Italy, he had praised the rediscovery of a manuscript of Cicero's works; approaching his death, he himself was in the eternal city itself, Rome, recovering and translating neglected ancient inscriptions and viewing archaeological remains with one eye on Virgil's descriptions of that settlement's earliest moments. Vegio had, since his youth, felt an affinity with not only the ancient world, especially that of the ancient Romans and especially with their poetry, but also with the tradition of later learning and scholarship on which he drew, however creatively and critically, as he composed all his works. This collection of writings and remains constituted, as it still does to those who cultivate it, a shared body of knowledge, and, in an effective sense, a virtual community between the dead and the living, the past and the present. The works Vegio composed, like the responses to Virgil we find in them, show a great variety; indeed, that is why they are such a fruitful source for examining the breadth of Virgilian reception in the Renaissance. The syncretic nature of *quattrocento* classical reception, and the syntheses of Virgilian materials with post-classical ones shown in Vegio's later works, makes him an even more eminent case-study for this phenomenon. His commitment to the continuing and vital importance of Virgil, and, more broadly, of the classics, is what informed all his works, and there seemed to be no need for Virgil to take a back seat if those works happened to be above all else religious. And this is because Vegio, while acknowledging natural discrepancies in doctrine and ethics, saw no need to reject the classical in favour of the Christian. In the Augustinian terms we have seen, both occupied positions on a great transhistorical continuum, and in the way in which Vegio understood their relationship in this context, both coexisted with God's favour.

Later in the year in which he composed his final work, 1458, Vegio died in Rome, and was buried there, in the chapel he had commissioned and dedicated to Santa Monica, in the church of Sant'Agostino. His works, as the next two chapters will explore, lived after him.

Chapter Five –

‘Copia, varietate, et elegantia’: Legacies of Vegio and his Virgils

Dici posse videatur, Mapheum vel solum et unicum, si omnes libri latini (quod abominor) perissent, satis superque esse sua copia, varietate, et elegantia (sicuti tota constanter Grecia de suo Luciano praedicat) ad linguam latinam excitandum instaurandum, atque consummandum.¹

(It seems able to be said of Maffeo, alone or uniquely, that if all Latin books – God forbid – should have perished, with his abundance, variety and elegance (as the whole of Greece constantly proclaims of its Lucian) he would be enough, and beyond enough, to stimulate, restore and complete the Latin language)

– Andreas Cratander (1518)

Il Vegio scrisse molto; forse troppo.²

(Vegio wrote much; perhaps too much.)

– D. Bruno Vignati (1959)

Introduction

Andreas Cratander, in the introduction to his 1518 Basel compilation of Vegio’s *Disceptatio inter solem, terram et aurum* and *Palinurus* together with Lucian’s *Charon*, evokes the range, qualities and remarkability of Vegio’s writings which we have seen throughout this study. More importantly for this chapter’s focus on how Vegio’s works were subsequently received, however, he also attests to the fact that these features were noted by Vegio’s readers into the sixteenth century. Cratander has in mind Vegio’s dialogues, but we’ve seen that Vegio’s works are far more diverse than even these suggest, further lending support to his assertion that if only they, of all Latin literature, survived, they would be able to stimulate a Renaissance all on their own.

This chapter will examine the various roles played by Vegio and his Virgilian reworkings in this period from Vegio’s death in 1458 up until 1600, across Europe and through multiple media. The abiding concern will be to assess the extent to which Vegio’s ways of reading and adapting Virgil were preserved, or else neglected or adapted. We will see that later readers’ responses to Vegio were just as varied as Vegio’s responses to Virgil, for reasons ranging from continuing interpretative traditions augmented and adapted by newer ones, visual depictions, philosophical and political

¹ Vegio, *De felicitate et miseria* (Basel: Cratander, 1518), in Cambridge University Library MS. F151.d.3.1, quoted by Sidwell, pp. 216-231 (especially pp. 228-9, 224).

² Vignati, p. 32.

developments, and different receiving cultures and locations. Later readers sometimes interpreted Vegio's works faithfully, and sometimes they regarded them in quite different ways. His stylistic, moralistic and antiquarian Virgils survived, but in sometimes surprising textual (and geographical) places. Even Vegio himself was remembered variously, as a writer and an intellectual. Around Milan and his native town of Lodi, local pride in his works was especially fervent, and across the continent he continued to be praised as an 'Alter Maro' by some, while others judged his Latin style to be distinctly sub-classical. He was by turns regarded as a devotional author, a classicising one, or both, and these perceptions demonstrate that Vegio and his works straddle divides of discipline and historical periodisation. Observable in all these instances of reception, however, is the 'abundance, variety and elegance' of Vegio's Virgils themselves, which made them so adaptable, as well as popular to an extent which has never been appreciated except in the case of the *Supplementum*. There were multiple simultaneous Vegios just as much as (even to Vegio himself) there were multiple simultaneous Virgils. On a wider scale, then, this chapter speaks of the nature of Virgilian reception from Vegio's lifetime into the sixteenth century, especially when considering the *Supplementum*, which was across this period copied, translated, printed, illustrated, read and commented on together with Virgil's poems. As we consider what Vegio meant to subsequent readers, we will also gain insights into what Virgil meant to them.

Methodology and Structure

Vignati's comment above, writing of Vegio's works in the mid-twentieth century from the perspective of rather different standards (to either Vegio's or our own) of what constituted literary quality, relates to the enthusiastic reception history of Vegio's works less directly than Cratander's. It does this by obliquely raising the point that the study of Vegian reception, even more than the study of Vegio's works themselves, requires more space than the present chapter can devote to it. Most of Vegio's writings were copied, printed and reprinted in several editions across Europe from their time of composition to 1600 (and in fact, though with waning interest, beyond this point, to the early eighteenth century). This chapter therefore will address this issue through a sample of evidence relating to whether Vegio's responses to classical and especially Virgilian texts were echoed by later readers' responses to his works. The approaches to the sources analysed here will be material-textual as well as comparative-textual, with modes of reading being tied up with who was reading these works, whereabouts, and when. These facts together will then suggest answers to the question of why they were reading Vegio in specific ways. Given that the sources considered here are often compilations of works which must be examined as such, this chapter offers codex-sized snapshots into how certain of Vegio's Virgils were read at certain times, by certain people, in certain places. This is the rationale informing the subheadings in this chapter, which evoke albums of such snapshots, as

though the material considered within the subsections were gathered on journeys taken through specific regions in specific years, for example: ‘*Central and Northern Italy, 1475 – 1521*’. This naturally means that clusters of Vegio’s works will be considered together, resulting, across the chapter, in some overlap between, or repeated instances of, the ways of reading exhibited by these snapshots. The same overlaps and disjunctures will be seen in the chronological order in which the sources are discussed. Always, the primary site of interest will be the initial moment of copying or production, or else the later moments of compilation or binding and annotation. This is regardless of whether this reproduction was targeted at local, national or international readerships, or whether the compilation and annotation was carried out by one individual or several; these questions are two among many arising from the materials cursorily considered here which must be explored in more forensic detail elsewhere. Our main concern is with taxonomic approaches to Vegio’s Virgils, and we will see that some of these approaches seen so far, ranging from the stylistic to the pedagogical to the moralistic, were adopted by Vegio’s readers in a manner true to how Vegio had followed them in his uses of Virgil, whereas others were introduced, omitted or recombined. Also, although there was much local pride in Vegio, there is nonetheless a similar diversity between the locations of this reception, as they span the whole of Europe. More than any of the preceding chapters, therefore, this one will suggest uncharted territories to be explored in the future, as well as filling in details of several, widely dispersed locations on the scholarly map. More than anything else, the chapter will unquestionably assert a wider significance and influence of Vegio’s works on late-fifteenth and sixteenth-century culture than has so far been acknowledged by scholarship.

The discussion will begin with Italian materials, surveying the fate of Vegio’s legal works, dialogues, rustic and epitaphic epigrams, *Astyanax*, *Supplementum* and reputation as a devotional author, through the 1470s to 1520s. As may be imagined, the readings of Vegio’s Virgils across this range of texts spans the stylistic and the moralistic, yet the sources also tell us much about how Vegio himself was remembered as a figure in local and wider literary history. The discussion will then turn to the Low Countries in the same period, in which the stylistic and moralistic, along with the pedagogical, were attended to simultaneously in Vegio’s works, which were often reproduced alongside both ethical treatises and classicising treatments of devotional subjects. Stepping firmly into the sixteenth century, the place of Vegio’s moral works will be considered, especially the new valences they acquired in the age of Reformation with its violent religious controversies. We will then return to Cratander’s 1518 Basel edition, seen at the beginning of this chapter, and its emphases on Vegio’s stylistic and imitative reworkings of Virgil, before looking at a mid-century edition of *De educatione*, produced in the same city, which also asserts this interpretation of Vegio’s allusive practices. The final section, dealing with the mid-to-late century, will cross back over many of the regions discussed, as well as some new ones, and be framed primarily around brief treatments of other vernacular translations of the *Supplementum* (German, Spanish, Italian, French and English). This last section will conclude in England with

Thomas Twyne and Edmund Spenser and their responses to the *Supplementum*, before the final chapter looks in forensic detail at Gavin Douglas' translation of the *Supplementum*, which had informed these later English responses, and which is still the outstanding instance of Vegio's works surviving into the sixteenth century. Vegio's most famous yet also first substantial composition will thereby close the circle of writings we have followed across this study, returning us to the more familiar while enabling us, by a pair of contrasts, to see the unexpected variations in the reception of this work from 1428 to 1600, as well as its place and status amid the swathe of other Vegian works copied, printed, reprinted, compiled, read and annotated from Vegio's own day to the end of the sixteenth century.

Central and Northern Italy, 1475 – 1521

The first work to be considered is deliberately marginal in more than one sense. A borderline case chronologically, it is a manuscript compilation which might have been produced at any point from 1450 (and therefore within Vegio's lifetime) and 1475. Its decoration suggests the influence of an illuminator active in Milan in the second quarter of the *quattrocento*, suggesting a similar Northern Italian provenance, and it offers one perspective on how Vegio himself was regarded in relation to his contemporaries in this particular, later, Northern Italian context. The manuscript is also marginal in the sense that the only work by Vegio it contains is his *Disceptatio inter solem, terram et aurum*, which has not been discussed earlier due to its lack of Virgilian elements. It might be asked, given these factors, why it is discussed here at all, and the answer is that its contents and how they position Vegio personally and generically suggest several themes which will be pursued in this subsection as well as the chapter as a whole.

Firstly, it contains a work entitled *De vita et moribus philosophorum*, once attributed to the English scholastic logician and philosopher Walter Burley, but now assigned to the even more prolific author 'Anonymous'. Vegio's *Disceptatio* follows this, and itself is followed by Bruni's Latin translations of select orations from the *Iliad*.³ Here, therefore, we find a Vegian philosophical dialogue in which the Sun, Earth and Gold attempt to prove their worth through orations to God, framed by, on the one side, a medieval study of the lives and customs of the philosophers, and, on the other, a series of examples of Greek classical eloquence carried over into Latin by one of Vegio's associates (and, remembering his epigrams, dedicatees) in Florence. The initial inference must be that Vegio's work is copied in such a way that foregrounds its philosophical, moral and stylistic qualities. Yet in critical terms, there are metaphorical significances to this framing too, of which we will see further instances as this

³ New Haven, CT, Yale University, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library Marston MS 91 *De vita et moribus philosophorum*, Dating follows entry at <https://brbl-dl.library.yale.edu/vufind/Record/3885807> [accessed 23/03/2020].

chapter progresses. He was regarded as fitting equally well in the company of medieval writers, such as pseudo-Walter Burley, as that of contemporaries, such as Bruni; he sits between medieval and Renaissance, scholastic and humanistic, traditions; and he straddles and partakes in both ethical and stylistic approaches to the classical past. Or, to put it another and more accurate way, the collection demonstrates that there was no clear moment of Renaissance after which the works of writers such as Burley became obsolete while Bruni's rose in value; even to describe this culture as 'hybrid' would rely too much on the assumptions of subsequent periodisations. Nonetheless, this last pair of approaches to the classical past, stylistic and ethical, will be leitmotifs throughout this chapter.

We see both qualities when we turn to the reception of Vegian works which engage with Virgil. In 1475 in Cagli, one of Vegio's most classicising imitations, his *Astyanax*, was printed by Robertus de Fano and Bernardino de Bergamo. It bears the title *De morte Astyanactis opus iocundum et miserabile*, thus advertising the qualities of pleasant style and pathos-filled, affecting subject matter which were evidently prized by the target readership of the edition, and which, as we saw in the first chapter, were characteristics of Vegio's conception of Virgilian epic. In the copy of this edition now in the British Library there are manicules and annotations beside several passages.⁴ There is the word 'comparatio' beside 'Non secus ac quando lupus...', and a note 'Id factum est, quae fata volunt' beside a series of closely grouped lines.⁵ The highlighting of the simile through the word 'comparatio' shows that the text was studied as a model for stylistic and rhetorical imitation. The comment 'That is done, which the Fates desire', and the fact that it is written beside the moment when Ulysses is compared to a wolf and Andromacha warns him not to be overmighty in his victory and to instead show mercy, is far more striking because it draws attention to a moment in which we have seen Vegio carefully reworking Virgilian material in order to express an ethos of compassion in the context of the narrative's exploration of post-war *realpolitik*. The reader of this copy of the Cagli edition notes exactly these moments, which advise placing hopes on the gods' favour and not trusting to momentary prosperity, since victories can soon turn to defeats ('Verum agite [...] cessit');⁶ and observe that since Fate turns men on its wheel, victors should be humble rather than tyrannical, knowing that their position is ever unstable ('Fata rotant [...] sortem').⁷ To this extent, Vegio's stylistic, pathetic and moralistic Virgils in the *Astyanax* survived and were read faithfully in the late-fifteenth and early-sixteenth centuries. The annotations in this copy are limited, yet this very rarity shows how important such moments were to the reluctant annotator, as well as gesturing to broad trends in reading such works from a stylistic or rhetorical, as well as an ethical, perspective. Vegio's

⁴ Vegio, *Mafei Veggii Laudensis poetae celeberrimi de morte Astyanactis opus iocundum et miserabile* (Cagli: Robertus de Fano and Bernadino de Bergamo, 1475), British Library General Reference Collection IB.32502.

⁵ *Astyanax*, ll. 150, 207-215 in I Tatti edition.

⁶ *Astyanax*, ll. 207-209 in I Tatti edition.

⁷ *Astyanax*, ll. 212-215 in I Tatti edition.

Astyanax, as the Cagli edition's description implied, provided imitations of classical rhetorical forms and moments of affecting pathos, as well as nuggets of ethical instruction.

A concern with style is emphasised more in the edition of the *Astyanax* printed by Girolamo Soncino in Fano in 1505, alongside a Latin epitome of the *Iliad* by an anonymous author but popularly attributed to Pindar the Theban. The edition also includes 'certain epigrams'.⁸ These all, naturally, suggest an interest in post-Homeric digests and imitations of the Trojan War narrative (and in the case of the epigrams, perhaps classicising verse more generally). Yet the connection to such works goes beyond the volume's contents, as the editor, Lorenzo Astemio (c.1440-1508), was celebrated for his own classicising talents, and even published one of his collections of fables, the *Hecatomythium Secundum*, in the same city in the same year. Continuing interest in such works is also attested by the reprinting of this edition in 1515, edited instead by Franciscus Polyardus.⁹ Again we see Vegio's work being regarded and reproduced within the category of accomplished imitations of classical material, and again, there is a Northern Italian provenance.

Heading even further north to Venice, we find too many sources to discuss here. Vegio's *Supplementum* was first printed in the city in 1471 by Adam de Ambergau, and other editions (and commentaries) were subsequently produced both in Venice and elsewhere.¹⁰ Looking at lesser-studied Venetian sources, we find, through a series of editions, Vegio's verses (unattributed) alongside those of the poets he imitated. For instance, in Bonetus Locatellus' 1491 Venice edition of the works of Tibullus, Catullus and Propertius, Vegio's epitaphic distich on Tibullus concludes the collection of that classical elegist's verses.¹¹ The same is true of the later Venetian editions of this work produced by Simone Bevilacqua in 1493,¹² and Johannes Tacuinus de Tridino in 1500.¹³ The distich, numbered 'XIV' in the collection addressed to Marsuppini,¹⁴ reads: 'Sub teneris annis tenerorum scriptor amorum/ decedens, dura hac ecce Tibullus humo' ('In tender years the writer of tender love affairs,/Behold Tibullus, deserting this hard ground'). Although this verse is not attributed to Vegio, it

⁸ Vegio et alii, *Pyndari Bellvm Troianvm ex Homero: Maphaei Veggii Astyanax. Epigrammata qvaedam* (Fano: Girolamo Soncino, 1505), New Haven CT, Yale University, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library Gfh91 t475f.

⁹ Vegio et alii, *Pyndarvs De bello Troiano: Astyanax Maphæi Laudensis, Epigranmata quædam diuersorum autorū* (Fano: Girolamo Soncino, 1515), New Haven CT, Yale University, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library Gfh91 T515.

¹⁰ For a survey of these, the checklist produced by Virginia Brown and Craig Kallendorf ('Maffeo Vegio's Book XIII to Virgil's *Aeneid*: A Checklist of Manuscripts', *Scriptorium* 44 (1990), pp. 107-126) is the most useful starting point.

¹¹ *Tibullus Catullus & Propertius cu[m] commento* (Venice: Bonetus Locatellus, 1491), Cambridge University Library Inc.3.B.3.85 [1643].

¹² *Tibullus Catullus & / Prop[er]tius cu[m] comento* (Venice: Simon Bevilacqua, 1493), Cambridge University Library Inc.3.B.3.121 [1751].

¹³ *Tibullus: cum commentariis Cyllæni Veronesis. : Catullus cum commentariis Parthenii Veronensis & Palladii patauini. / Emendationes Catullianæ per Hieronymum Auancium Veronensem & eiusdem in Priapeias castigationes. / Propertius cum commentariis Phylippi Beroaldi. / Annotationes in Propertium [...]* (Venice: Johannes Tacuinus, 1500), Cambridge University Library Inc.3.B.3.122 [4481].

¹⁴ Lopomo, p. 453.

does show its subsequent role in commenting on the works of ancient elegists in a manner judged eloquent and sufficiently imitative enough to be included in hefty, commented-on editions of their complete works. It also demonstrates that Vegio's distichs were being read at this time, and speaks implicitly of late-fifteenth and early-sixteenth opinions of Vegio's style, both in terms of quality and characteristics: on its own terms, features of this verse recalled those of Tibullus, with Vegio's reputation not needing to be asserted.

In another region of Northern Italy, however, Vegio's name was very much remembered and asserted, and Guillaume le Signerre's 1497 Milanese edition of Vegio's selected works emphasises local connections which relate to not only the region around Milan and Pavia where Vegio lived, studied and worked in his early life, but even his nearby birthplace, Lodi.¹⁵ All of these, of course, are just south of Bergamo, and, a little more distantly, west of Venice. The region is also north-west of Cagli and Fano, yet these are closer to Florence, lying across the Italian peninsula to the west, another important site of Vegio's literary production. Such geographical distributions suggest how Vegio's works were transmitted especially well across areas in proximity to where he had lived. Pursuing this idea further, Signerre's 1497 imprint was edited by Franchinus Gaforius, a music theorist and composer whose own works, such as the 1496 *Practica Musice*, were also printed by Signerre in Milan,¹⁶ where he was, furthermore, the music master of the cathedral. During the 1480s, when he held this position, he made the acquaintance of the French composer of polyphonic vocal music Josquin des Prez, at that time working in Milan, with whom he collaborated.¹⁷ These connections are important as we turn to the Signerre edition of Vegio's works, as Gaforius was, like Vegio, a native of Lodi, and Josquin set one of Vegio's poems found in the 1497 edition, 'Huc me sydereo', to music as a motet (Josquin was not the only Renaissance composer to make this verse a motet, and another of Vegio's devotional verses, his office to Saint Monica, was set to music too).¹⁸ There was therefore a local interest in Vegio's verses, both religious and secular, and a commitment to preserving them, which not only intensified over time and culminated in a 1613 Lodi edition, but before this time, and even before the sixteenth century began, had wider consequences for their international reception.

The other contents of Signerre's edition are even more important, and take us directly to how Vegio's Virgils were received in the period. It contains Vegio's *Disceptatio*, *Philalethes*, *Palinurus* and *Astyanax*, each preceded by a letter from Gaforius to Jacopo Antiquario, a secretary to the duke of

¹⁵ Vegio, *Maffei Vegii ... Disceptatio Inter Terram. Solem: & Aurū* (Milan: Guillaume le Signerre, 1497), British Library General Reference Collection IB. 26885; Sidwell, *Lucian of Samosata in the Italian Quattrocento*, pp. 223-224.

¹⁶ Gaforius, *Practica Musice F. Gafori Laudensis* (Milan: Guillaume le Signerre, 1496), British Library Music Collections K.1.g.3.

¹⁷ David Fallows, 'Josquin and Milan', in *Plainsong and Medieval Music* 5 (1) (April 1996), pp. 69-80.

¹⁸ In the sixteenth century, Adrian Willaert composed music for 'Huc me sydereo', as well as for Aeneas' speech 'O socii' from *Aeneid* 1.198. This suggests the continued relevance of this Virgilian dramatization of fortitude which Vegio had also found so stimulating as a source for imitation and adaptation.

Milan Gian Galeazzo Sforza. These letters explicitly note and praise Vegio's employments of Virgilian material, with Gaforius' introduction to the *Palinurus* describing Vegio as fashioning a work which was a kind of new body out of the smallest Virgilian limb ('ex brevissimo Vergilij membro arreptum et [...] unum opus quasi corpus suis membris distinctum conformant'). This recalls Cratander's remark quoted at the beginning of this chapter, and, needless to say, highlights Vegio's stylistic uses of Virgil in this work as explicitly as possible. Yet further demonstrations of this late *quattrocento* perception continue, even if they draw on perceptions from Vegio's contemporaries: there is also in this edition a poem 'Caesaris Sacchi Laudensis' (by Catone Sacco, perhaps, though he was actually born in nearby Pavia) which imagines Virgil welcoming Vegio into Elysium ('Vergilius alloquitur Maffaeum vegium venientem in campos elysios') and opens:

What delays held you back? At last, greatest poet,
You arrive: what shade is more welcome to these places?
Not despising and in pride did you attempt the *Aeneid*,
If what's said of you is true: that act was real love.
I rejoice that our figures of speech
Can so often be seen in you: that's not a trifling work of the mind.¹⁹

The theme and tone are maintained at the end of the poem: 'Approach, I beg; don't hesitate; through long ages,/ Nobody better understood our [genius/natural quality]' ('Ne dubites accede precor post saecula longa/Nemo magis nostrum calluit ingenium'). This extraordinary verse, imagining as it does Vegio's spiritual afterlife, offers the most explicit evidence imaginable for one way in which he and his works went on to be regarded in the terrestrial world. Furthermore, through its allusion ('tandem [...] venisti') to Anchises' words to Aeneas in *Aeneid* 6.687, it further praises Vegio (and his *pietas*) by positioning him in a quasi-filial relationship to Virgil. There are also, alongside this poem, epitaphs for Vegio by Marsuppini and others, including Lancinus Curtius, who writes: 'Look to the thankful judgement of your citizens' ('gratam respice civium tuorum/ mentem'), acknowledging this local pride in Vegio's achievements and memory on the part of his countrymen around Lodi and Milan. There is another trace of this (beyond the fact of the edition's being printed, and Gaforius' editorial involvement in it) in the fact that some of Vegio's other works – his *Pompeiana*, *Convivium deorum*, *Ad salvatorem nostrum* – have been copied in a careful hand into the back of the volume.

These manuscript additions might be drawn from later printed volumes, similar to each other in contents (both containing the *Convivium deorum* as well as *Epigrammata in rusticos*), produced in

¹⁹ ('Quae tantae tenuere morae? Tandem optime vates/ Venisti: grata iis quae magis umbra locis?/ Non tu despiciens tentasti aeneida fastu/ Si tibi quid gestum est: verus amor fuerat./ Gaudeo quod nostras dicendi saepe figuras/ In te contuimur: non leve mentis opus').

1521 in Milan by Iohannes de Castilana,²⁰ and (looking to north-west Italy) Turin by Franciscus de Sylva.²¹ This again attests to local pride, but the contents of the Milanese edition offer additional insights. This edition contains also the poems *Pompeiana*, *Ad Salvatorem* and *Huc me sydereo*, alongside various works by Bartholomaeus Philippinus including a praising poem to Vegio, which in turn is set alongside similar laudations by ‘Ioannis Iacobi Comati’ and Gaforius. The latter is referred to in a verse to the edition itself: ‘O little book, who made thee so shining?/ Learned Gaforius. Who from the shadows/ Recently seized thee?’ (‘Quis te tam nitidum libelle fecit?/Doctus Gaforius: Quis e tenebris/ Te nuper rapuit?’). There then follows a list of qualities and concepts which are resonant yet can be translated into English in multiple ways as ‘witty things’, ‘elegance’, ‘virtue’, ‘the Muses’, ‘jokes’, ‘pleasantness/charm’ (‘Sales: venustas: virtus: Pierides: Ioci: Leporis’). These identify qualities praised in Vegio’s writings, while compiling and publicising them and asserting the status of contemporary figures from Lodi such as Gaforius, who have rescued such valuable compositions from obscurity. The overwhelming conclusion from these codices for the question of how Vegio’s responses to Virgil were received in this later period, is that they were viewed as consummate emulations which were delightfully eloquent and so close to the original classical texts that, even if the poem expressing this was composed earlier, it was possible, as its reprinting implies, to imagine Virgil welcoming Vegio warmly into the Elysian fields as a respected poet. Again, and despite the reference to ‘virtus’ above, style is unquestionably paramount. Vegio’s works had come to be regarded as classics.

At the same time, however (and showing the synchronicity of varied responses referred to above), Vegio was remembered as the devotional and moral author we saw in the previous chapter, and the kinds of compilation we saw in the first codex discussed in this subsection, in which Vegio is set beside medieval authors, shows his continuing reputation as a religious thinker into the sixteenth century. In 1502 in Venice, Albertinus Vercellensis printed his *Little Work of Many Good Things* (*Opusculum multarum bonarum rerum*), containing Vegio’s praise of Monica, but also the meditations, soliloquies and handbook attributed to Augustine, a letter and sermon on the Lord’s Passion attributed to Bernard of Clairvaux, a sermon attributed to Peter Damian, Anselm’s meditations, poems by Pius II (Vegio’s friend Piccolomini), and a work on the spiritual life of Vincent Ferrer.²² The copy of this work in the Beinecke bears annotations, which – it has been suggested – may have been made by a nun, and the copy of Petrus de Quarenghiis Bergomensem’s 1516 Venetian

²⁰ Vegio, *Quae in hoc opere continentur. M. Vegii ... Pompeana. Epigrammata in rusticos. Conuiuium Deorum* (Milan: Iohannes de Castilana, 1521), British Library General Reference Collection 11405.g.12.

²¹ Vegio, *Epigrammata in rusticos; Convivium deorum* (Turin: Franciscus de Sylva, 1521), Bibliothèque nationale de France, Italian books before 1601; 4.12.

²² Vegio et alii, *Opusculum multarum bonarum rerum* (Venice: Albertinus Vercellensis, 1502), New Haven CT, Yale University, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library Rosenthal 97.

reprint of the work, now in Oxford, was once owned by the novices of Saint Dominic in Bologna,²³ suggesting a similar religious use into the sixteenth century. Annotation is also present in a copy of a work with almost identical contents printed by Guy Marchant in Paris in 1500 and now in Cambridge.²⁴ Here, the annotation is less consistent and only corrects errata and notes Scriptural parallels, except for the erasure of the word ‘Pape’ on the title page, explicable if the book, as its late-fifteenth or early-sixteenth-century binding (blind tooled calf over wooden boards, with the binder Garrett Godfrey’s griffin sigil) suggests, was present in England during the 1530s-40s. At this time or afterwards, it was housed in Peterborough Cathedral Library, and its annotation and small size indicate devotional usage. Cambridge also houses a copy of an earlier and fuller version of the compilation printed in Brescia (another place close to Lodi and Milan) by Angelus Britannicus in 1498 which likewise contains Vegio’s praise of Monica,²⁵ and, like the Peterborough volume, seems ideally sized for private devotional use. Vegio’s work here, however, is preceded by an introduction, in which it is noted that Biondo, in his *Italia Illustrata*, had called Vegio ‘virum doctissimum atque optimum sub Martino quinto pontifici maxi [sic]’ as well as remembering his building of the tomb to Monica in Sant’Agostino after the translation of her remains from Ostia.

The early Italian transmission of Vegio’s reputation (and some of his writings) as an ecclesiastical and devotional figure, and a stimulus for Christian piety, is therefore an element of his legacy which should not be forgotten amid that legacy’s more classicising and stylistic concerns. He was remembered as a ‘virum doctissimum’, both as a religious figure and as a poetic successor to Virgil, and we have seen ample evidence of these characteristics across this ‘album’. The following one, focusing on the Low Countries, will show that in the same period, if in a different location, these same threads were woven more tightly together, further contributing to the sense, referred to earlier, of Vegio straddling such divides.

The Low Countries, 1487 – 1510

In Deventer, and, looking not far away into Germany, Cologne, from 1470 until 1487, Vegio’s dialogue *Philalethes* was reprinted multiple times, as it continued to be into the sixteenth century in Krakow in 1512,²⁶ and Vienna in 1516.²⁷ These early Netherlandish and German editions, such as that

²³ Vegio *et alii*, *Opusculum multarum bonarum reru[m]* (Venice: Petrum de Quarengiis Bergomensem, 1516), Bodleian Library Vet. F1 f.390.

²⁴ Vegio *et alii*, *Meditationes* (Paris: Guy Marchant, 1500), Cambridge University Library Peterborough.E.6.46.

²⁵ Vegio, Augustine *et alii*, *Meditationes diui Augustini episcopi hypponensis Soliloquia eiusdem Manuale eiusdem Castigatissime* (Brescia: Angelus Britannicus, 1498), Cambridge University Library Inc.6.B.23.8 [4039].

²⁶ John Flood, *Poets Laureate in the Holy Roman Empire: A Bio-bibliographical Handbook* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2006), p. 34.

²⁷ Vegio, [*Philalethes*.] *M. V. ... Dialogus ... mores, vitam hominū certe perversam complectens, cui nomen Philalethes* (Vienna: Ioannes Singrenius, 1516), British Library General Reference Collection 8405.e.23.

printed in Cologne in 1473 by Johann Schilling, the printer who had produced the ‘Flores Sancti Augustini’ (itself an indication of the interests of his target readership), compile this text of Vegio’s alongside titles which, while not necessarily generically similar, do address similar philosophical topics. Schilling’s edition compiles the *Philalethes* with Vegio’s *Palinurus* (or *De felicitate et miseria*), Isidore of Seville on spiritual consolation, pseudo-Jerome (i.e. Maximus Taurinensis) on consoling the ill, Bartolomeo Facio to Alfonso of Aragon concerning happiness in life, Seneca’s remedies for dealing with fortune, Valla’s work on free will, Poggio’s treatise against avarice, and Buonaccorso da Montemagno’s debate concerning nobility.²⁸ Vegio’s dialogues, or at least these two, were therefore read alongside ancient, late-antique and medieval works dealing with moral philosophy, as well as contributions to these issues produced by Vegio’s contemporaries. Some of them may have been read as guides to style, but the more immediate concern was undoubtedly ethical guidance through Christian philosophy.

The 1487 edition of the *Palinurus* printed by Jacobus de Breda in Deventer shows a similar ethical concern, which we have seen was present in Vegio work to begin with, but suggests that this ethical guidance was delivered in a pedagogical context alongside, and indeed via, attention to grammar and stylistic elements. The first half of the copy of the work now in Cambridge is heavily annotated in a studious fashion, clarifying phrasing in interlinear glosses (such as ‘facta’ written above ‘quae’), filling in the spaces left by the typesetters with the abbreviated names of the interlocutors (‘P’ for *Palinurus*, ‘Ch’ for *Charon*), and making comments which occupy much of the margins.²⁹ These additions suggest that the copy was used in an educational context, probably a school, grounded in the study of grammar and stylistic imitation. We can see similar traces of readerly practices in a copy of Breda’s 1491 edition of the *Antoniad* or *Bita* [sic] *divi Antonii* (a title suggestively evoking a more conventional hagiography, a saint’s ‘Vita’ or ‘Life’) now in the British Library,³⁰ which has obvious clarifications: ‘hic’ has the rather pedantic ‘in hoc libro’; the ‘populis’, it is made clear, is ‘eugeni’; ‘muse’ is made more specific through the note ‘Calliope, dea poetarum’, and ‘Centauris’, the reader wanted to remind themselves, ‘est monstrum’. All this again demonstrates a pedagogical use, and the same is true of the consistent annotations in a copy of this edition currently in Cambridge.³¹ Given the context of Deventer, such a classroom setting is not unlikely, bearing in mind the combination of educational and religious ideals being propounded in Deventer at this time, and known as the ‘modern devotion’ or ‘devotio moderna’. According to this ethos, an erudite understanding of texts would help

²⁸ Vegio *et alii, Dialogi decem variorum auctorum* (Cologne: Johann Schilling, 1473), Cambridge University Library Inc.3.A.4.8 [501].

²⁹ Vegio, *Maphei vegij laude[n]sis de foelicitate & miseria Incipit foelicit[er]* (Deventer: Jacobus de Breda, 1487), Cambridge University Library Inc.5.E.4.2 [2928].

³⁰ Vegio, *Bita* [sic] *diui Anthonii Ad sāctissimū dñm Eugeniū papā quartū* (Deventer: Jacobus de Breda, 1491), British Library General Reference Collection IA. 47845.

³¹ Vegio, *Bita* [sic] *diui Antonii Ad sa[n]ctissimu[m] d[omi]n[u]m Eugeniu[m] papa[m] quartu[m]* (Deventer: Jacobus de Breda, 1491), Cambridge University Library Inc.5.E.4.4 [3014].

students scale the rungs of the ladder towards moral improvement and wisdom. Additionally, we have already seen how Vegio's *Palinurus* was regarded as Lucianic, and that Lucian's works were believed to offer both style and moral substance. A 1497 Milanese impression, by Ulrich Scincenzeler, misattributes the *Palinurus* to Lucian himself, and compiles it works by with recent Lucianic imitators including Alberti.³² Considering other Vegian works printed specifically in the Low Countries at this time introduces evidence to bolster this suggestion about how they were used. Hankins has noted that most editions of the *Antoniad* were printed in Northern Europe,³³ and especially Deventer, implying that they were used as imitative models in proto-Erasmian classrooms. And in fact, if we look at Richard Paffraet's 1491 Deventer edition of the *Antoniad*, or rather the *Vita divi Antonij*, we are confronted on the title page by a full-page woodcut showing a magister sitting in his chair holding a textbook, while school-pupils sit in a semicircle around him making notes.³⁴ That the *Antoniad* was printed with a pedagogical use in mind could not be more clearly announced. The Cambridge copy is a compilation of several printed texts,³⁵ including the 'Letter of Prester John' on the rites and customs of the Indians, Pius II's praise of letters and commendation to Ladislav King of Hungary and Bohemia, Paul's epistles (making up the greatest proportion of the compilation), a work on the Four Last Things (a topic on which, as we have seen, Vegio wrote too), and colloquies featuring Christ. Many of these are from Breda's press and are dated 1491, showing a local and sharply contemporary interest in texts demonstrating and stimulating both piety and eloquence, with the latter represented strikingly by the colloquies and Piccolomini's laudation of literature.

And given what we have seen of Vegio's classicising, and specifically Virgilianising, practices in the composition of the *Palinurus* and *Antoniad*, studying them for these qualities as much as their moral content seems legitimate. Yet the reception of these qualities *together*, in Deventer in particular, is nonetheless noteworthy as a distinctive phenomenon, especially in comparison with how these qualities were, relatively speaking, more separated in contemporary Italian responses to Vegio. And whereas the phenomenon of Christian devotion bound with classicising style was only hinted at in the examples from the previously-discussed compilation, it is even more apparent in Theodoricus de Borne's 1510 edition of the *Vita divi Antonij*.³⁶ In addition to Vegio's work, there is Rodolphus

³² Lucian, Vegio *et alii*, *Clarissimi Luciani philosophi ac oratoris de ueris narrationibus* (Milan: Ulrich Scincenzeler, 1497), Cambridge University Library Inc.4.B.7.20 [4476].

³³ James Hankins, 'Humanism and music in Italy', in Anna Maria Busse Berger and Jesse Rodin (eds.), *The Cambridge History of Fifteenth-Century Music* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), pp. 231-262 <https://www.cambridge.org/core/books/cambridge-history-of-fifteenthcentury-music/humanism/90C605F98CDA5AF6A37E3BF2E56313FE/core-reader> [accessed 23/03/2020]; Abigail Fojas and James Hankins, 'A Checklist of Manuscripts and Early Editions'.

³⁴ Vegio, *Vita diui Antonij ad sanctissimu[m] d[omi]n[u]m Eugenium papa[m] quartu[m]* (Deventer: Richard Paffraet, 1490), Cambridge University Library Inc.5.E.4.3 [2459].

³⁵ The 1490 edition can be seen in a less alloyed form in Vegio, *Vita diui Antonij ad sanctissimū dñm Eugenium papā quartū* (Deventer: Richard Paffraet, 1490), British Library General Reference Collection IA. 47636.

³⁶ Vegio, *Vita diui Anthonij ad sanctissimu[m] dominu[m] Eugenium papa[m] quartu[m]* (Deventer: Theodoricus de Borne, 1510), Cambridge University Library Inc.5.E.7.2 [3009].

Agricolus' poems in praise of Saint Anne, some short devotional verses set in the time of Herod and his massacre of the innocents, a 'small, most elegant work about the Lord's Passion in heroic, Virgilian style' (the 1446 *Jesuida* of the Paduan writer Girolamo delle Valli), and a Life of Saint Roch. The themes, in addition to being hagiographical, are dramatic and grand, with the description of the *Jesuida* alone suggesting the sorts of classicising, and specifically epic and Virgilian, qualities it was perceived as sharing with Vegio's poem. Contributing to this sense of intended grandeur, all of the works are prefaced and concluded by simple, incompletely inked woodcut illustrations showing a scene from their narratives. We have seen this combination of pious content and pagan ornament in earlier Deventer editions, and Breda's 1497 edition of the *Antoniad* included a dialogue concerning the birth of Christ, composed by a sometime schoolmaster of the city, Sanderus Hegius.³⁷ This last detail in itself, of course, supports the pedagogical uses to which we have seen similar Deventer works being put, as does the heaviness of annotation in the Cambridge copy of de Borne's 1510 edition. These works, produced by several printers over several decades, and clearly used by students, attest to the popularity of this combination of classical eloquence and Christian morality in Deventer across the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. Equally insightful is the fact that these seams of ore were reached through prolonged grammatical drilling in proto-Erasman classrooms.

Overall, these two Virgilianising works of Vegio's, the *Palinurus* and *Antoniad*, were read for the stylistic and moralistic features which were identified earlier in the works themselves. These modes of reading continued in the Low Countries, and were often highlighted through the works' reprinting and compilation alongside other models of classical style and devotional intensity. At times, the fact that these qualities were so prized resulted in them being tightly woven together in works which aimed, like Vegio's *Antoniad*, at the genre of what might be termed 'Christian epic', and such works were printed alongside Vegio's Virgilianising treatment of the life of Saint Antony. A new mode of reading not suggested by the Vegian works considered here is the pedagogical, and so the readings of these works as illustrations of grammar as much as style and moral substance is a departure from Vegio's original allusive practices, yet it can be suspected that the ways by which this led onto the grander aims of education as envisaged by the *devotio moderna* might have pleased Vegio.

Paris, 1511 – 1521

³⁷ Vegio, *Vita divi Antonii ad sanctissimum dominum Eugenium papam quartum* (Deventer: Jacobus de Breda, 1497), reproduction of original in Koninklijke Bibliotheek, Nationale bibliotheek van Nederland http://solo.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/primo-explore/fulldisplay?docid=oxfaleph021706472&context=L&vid=SOLO&lang=en_US&search_scope=LSCOP_ALL&adaptor=Local%20Search%20Engine&tab=local&query=any,contains,vegio%20VITA%20ANTONII,AND&mode=advanced&offset=0 [accessed 23/03/2020].

In Paris in the early sixteenth century we see the moralistic readings of Vegio's works made even more explicit through readers' responses. Religious and pedagogical readings are present too, but it is the ethical messages which are taken to extremes, both in these years and, importantly, the turbulent years of religious controversy and persecution which followed.

The 1511 edition of *De perseverantia religionis* produced in Paris by Berthold Rembolt and Jean Waterloes shows these features: its title introduces Vegio as having been a datary under Martin V, as well as his fame as an orator, poet and secular and religious intellectual.³⁸ This is noted by Ioannes Trithemius too when he describes Vegio as 'vir in divinis scripturis studiosus & egregie doctus: atque in saecularibus litteris eruditissimus orator poeta celeberrima'. Trithemius also notes Vegio's cultivation of devotion to Monica, with the translation of her remains, the construction of the chapel, and his own burial there. Vegio's reputation as a secular writer is therefore preserved, while his religious commitments are emphasised. Vegio's *De perseverantia*, in this Cambridge copy, is bound in a collection of theological texts, alongside Jerome, Josephus, Chrysostom, a 1585 Bremen religious controversy and many martyrdom woodcuts showing rackings and boilings alive. Suggestions can be made now about the more particular relations between these texts, which were compiled together gradually over the course of the century, but readerly reproductions of Vegio's phrases, most of them gathered in the first fifteen folia of Vegio's work, make it clear: 'Porro illi facies serena et tranquilla: vultus plenus auctoritatis: oculi non vagi aut deiecti: sed stabiles et cum gratia elevati' and 'iuvat sub iugum ire, accipite captivum'.³⁹ The advice to bear a face that is calm and full of authority, and let your eyes not be wandering and downcast, but upright and lifted with grace, echoes Vegio's improvement upon Julian the Apostate's conduct which we saw earlier when analysing the treatise *De educatione*. Yet the following note, 'it helps to go beneath the yoke, accept the state of the captive' transform its tone into: 'put on a brave face full of conviction, look them in the eye, stay resolute, even if you're heading to the fire.' Whenever these passages were quoted or highlighted, and whether by Catholics or Protestants, the necessarily later decision to compile Vegio's treatise amidst others endorsing martyrdom demonstrates that *De perseverantia*'s advocacy of steadfastness in devotion acquired an especial polemical and spiritual resonance in the era of religious persecution which came later in the century.

The same printers, in the same year, also published Vegio's *De educatione*,⁴⁰ together with *Philalethes*. The annotation here is less dramatic, attesting instead to a pedagogical function, with

³⁸ Vegio, *Maph[a]ei Vegij Laude[n]sis diuinaru[m] scripturaru[m] cu[m] primis peritissimi, oratoris ite[m] & poet[a]e celeberrimi Martini pap[a]e quinti datarij de perseuera[n]tia religionis libri septe[m] : elega[n]tia no[n] minus q[uam] sententi[a]e grauitate redolentes* (Paris: Berthold Rembolt and Jean Waterloes, 1511), Cambridge University Library F151.d.1.40.

³⁹ On ff. 6^r and 2^r, respectively.

⁴⁰ E.g. Vegio, *Maphei Vegii ... De educatione libero[rum] et eorum claris moribus libri sex : Elegantia no[n] minus [qui] sententie grauitate redolentes. ... Dyalogus veritatis insu[per] adiungit eiusde[m] Maphei vegij &*

exempla drawn from Vegio about how it is better to accustom oneself to reading the best authors early on, while avoiding perniciously jocund material.⁴¹ There is, likewise, ‘nota’ written beside a passage describing how study brings honours.⁴² So far, these modes of reading are consistently directed to moral edification, yet the 1511 Rembolt edition of the *Disceptatio* emphasises other elements, naming Vegio as ‘in his own day the prince of orators’ and his work as ‘elegantissima simul et iocundissima disputatio’, foregrounding stylistic qualities too. These must be remembered alongside the advertisement of Vegio found in the other 1511 Parisian publications we have seen so far: these similarly claim elegance, yet also gravity, seriousness, weight (‘gravitas’) of sentence or opinion.

A few years later, the popularity of these Vegian works was still seen in Paris, with other printers, such as Gilles de Gourmont with his 1514 edition of *De educatione* with marginal commentary, tapping into the target market.⁴³ Yet by this time, its influence can be seen to span Germany as well as France: in 1515 in Tübingen, the work was published by Thomas Anselmi under the name of Filelfo, and concludes the Filelfo-attributed work with a ‘hecatostica’ ‘de filii institutione’ genuinely by Filelfo, before following it with his letters.⁴⁴ The association between Vegio’s work and that of his classicising contemporaries is suggested by this misattribution. Then, however, turning the pages of the Cambridge copy of this work, we find a surprise, because it has been compiled with a 1521 text produced in Wittenberg concerning the ‘decisions, so far, in its view, of the Parisian theology faculty over Luther’s doctrine’, as well as an ‘Apology for Luther against the Parisian decree’. Naturally, this returns us to Paris, as well as the theme of religious integrity and controversy. Were these works merely contemporary and urgent news, and does this explain why they were bound together; or was the compilation due, rather, to an awareness of the need for education to have religious foundations, so that young morals would not later be corrupted by unorthodoxy or heresy? As before, these ideas, fusing the moral with the pedagogical, were present *in nuce* in Vegio’s treatises originally, but the transformative events of the sixteenth century saw them gain a new, dynamic significance as they were applied to more contemporary, and violently divisive, religious concerns.

Basel, 1518 - 1541

Perceptions of what constituted successful stylistic imitation of Virgil varied across the continent. As we will witness in the next chapter, Gavin Douglas judged Vegio’s Latin to be a poor emulation of

Philalithis ad Eustachiu[m] fratre[m] (Paris: Berthold Rembolt and Jean Waterloes, 1511), Cambridge University Library M*.5.34(D).

⁴¹ On f. 17^v.

⁴² On f. 23^v.

⁴³ Vegio, *De liberorum educatione aurei Libri sex nouiter recogniti* (Paris: Gilles de Gourmont, 1514).

⁴⁴ Vegio, *Francisci Philelfi ... de educatione liberorum, clarisq[ue] eorum moribus opus saluberrimum : in quo omnis bene beateq[ue] uiuendi disciplina, omne bene dicendi genus ... comperiuntur* (Tübingen: Thomas Anselmi, 1515), Cambridge University Library Norton.c.44.

Virgil's, but to Cratander, as we have seen, it seemed so consummate that, if required, it could revive the production of all literature in that language. Cratander's 1518 Basel edition did not reprint the *Supplementum*, but his comments, like all comments referring to Vegio from 1428 to even our own day, are informed by an awareness of Vegio's authorship of that work. Also, the *Palinurus* in Cratander's edition was patently Virgilian, and this fact, even aside from the status of Virgil as a model for all Latin style, makes clear the importance of these sources to the history of how Vegio's reworkings of Virgil were received. We have already seen how Cratander, like some of the earlier Netherlandish editors and printers, also saw Vegio as a new Lucian, and that his stylistic accomplishments, as Lucian's were believed to be, were allied with a virtuous spirit: Vegio was, in his lifetime, the prince of orators, but he was also capable 'animi refocillandi',⁴⁵ of revivifyng the mind and the soul. His works were ethically useful, as well as models for how to skilfully imitate.

Later in the century, in 1541, Robert Winter published his Basel edition of the *De educatione*. The major proportion of the copy in the British Library is devoted to Vitruvius Roscius' *De docendi studendique modo, ac de claris puerorum moribus libellus plane aureus*, a title which highlights both these works' thorough and sustained focus on educating children.⁴⁶ This concern is reflected by the other contents of the codex by Vergerio, Ianius Amysius and others. There is no annotation here on Vegio's work, but Roscius' bears a few highlights on the most edifying ways that students may spend leisure time (namely, and along Senecan lines, in other forms of study).⁴⁷ Yet despite this relentless focus on pedagogy and character building, there is, alongside Vegio's work, a brief biography which comprehensively details his life and works,⁴⁸ and this, surprisingly, offers insights which return us to the question of style, especially in the *Supplementum*, and the extent to which that work succeeded in imitating Virgil. We find the view that Vegio wrote 'not as one who did not know Virgil's work to be complete, but, against the opinion of the vulgar, that he might exercise his talent in poetry, to which his temperament tended' ('Non qui ignoraret, Maronis opus perfectum esse [...] sed contra vulgi opinionem [...] ut ingenium in poeticis, ad quae natura ferebatur, exerceret'). As we have seen far earlier in the justifications of Vegio and others for poets' composition of light verse, here we find even the sequel to the *Aeneid* treated in a similar way, perhaps informed by the details in the life of Vegio found in the *Maxima Bibliotheca Patrum* (the wording of which is similar).⁴⁹ In Basel in 1541, then, Vegio's *Supplementum* was read, even in a compilation of pedagogical works, not as an ethical treatise wrapped in a sugared casing of verse, but a pure imitation of Virgilian style, for its own sake.

⁴⁵ Vegio, *De felicitate et miseria* (Basel: Cratander, 1518); Sidwell, pp. 228-9, 224.

⁴⁶ Vegio, Vitruvius Roscius et alii, *De docendi studendique modo, ac de claris puerorum moribus Libellus ... Cui adjecimus ... alios ejusdem argumenti libellos aliquot. nunc primum ... editos* (Basel: 1541), British Library General Reference Collection C.108.aa.11.

⁴⁷ *De docendi*, p. 91.

⁴⁸ *De docendi*, p. 440.

⁴⁹ 'Carminum quidem librum de ultimis Aeneae gestis et obitu, quem tertium decimum Aeneidos nuncupavit, non quasi imperfectum esse opus Maronis putaret, sed ut in Poeticis ingenium ad quae ferebatur, exerceret' (*Maxima Bibliotheca Patrum* 26.632).

As we will see, this is quite different to the views of Ascensius and Douglas, and is worth remembering for when we discuss Twyne. As a final note on this edition, its biography of Vegio and his writings is on the whole remarkably comprehensive, far superior to several modern accounts and only really equalled by the expertise on him to be found in the 1497 Milanese edition, which after all was boosted by the knowledge of Vegio's countrymen and the motivation of their local pride.

Germany, Spain, Italy, France, Switzerland, England, 1555 – 1590

Vegio's virtual presence across Europe is of course a feature of this entire chapter, but in this subsection it will be seen even more starkly. This final 'album' is the most miscellaneous of all, like a collection of snapshots taken in haste as this study's endpoint of 1600 was swiftly approaching, while compositions proliferated and printing presses churned out more editions than ever before.

Turning to Germany, and returning the conversation ever more insistently to the fate of Vegio's *Supplementum*, we can examine David Zopffeln's 1559 Frankfurt edition of this work, which was appended, as usual, to the *Aeneid*, and translated together with it into German by Thomas Murner.⁵⁰ The most pertinent remarks here, sharing features we will see in Douglas' translation and the Strasbourg woodcuts accompanying one of the editions informing it, are that the illustrations to the Frankfurt edition, introducing each book, are lavish and depict multiple scenes from the narrative. The illustration introducing 'Das Buch Maphei' presents the canopied feast enjoyed by Aeneas, Lavinia, Ascanius and Latinus, as well as the coffin holding Turnus' remains, with which we are already familiar and which seems to have become a visual convention by this time. The headings dividing each book of the epic, however, tell us more about the moments which were attended to in the period, and shows that there was an approximate 4:5 ratio of attention to the grief felt for the fate of Turnus, and the victory of Aeneas which gives the *Supplementum* its sense of conclusiveness. These details can be remembered for the following chapter, which introduces the idea that a similar division of concerns might have prevailed in Douglas' translation, as well as Vegio's original text.

Turning swiftly to Spain, we can note that only a few years before Murner's translation, a Castilian one was produced in Toledo in 1555 by Gregorio Hernández de Velasco, in an edition also containing the *Aeneid* and Eclogues 1 and 4. This vernacularisation with parallel Latin text was a development from several Latin imprints of the work produced in Spain from 1513 (the Zaragoza edition) onwards, and itself went through three editions as the century went on, culminating in the 1574 imprint also made in Toledo. The edition by Hernández, as noted by Julián Solana Pujalte, almost the only scholar

⁵⁰ Vegio and Thomas Murner (translator), *Vergilii Maronis dreyzehen Bücher [the thirteenth being by Mapheus Vegius, Laudensis] von dem tewren Helden Enea, ... von newem widerumb ubersehen, mit fleiss corrigiert, und schönen Figuren geziert* (Frankfurt: David Zopffeln, 1559), British Library General Reference Collection 1067.e.27.

of the reception of Vegio's work in Spain, was decisive in the dissemination of Vegio's reputation as the supplementer of Virgil in the Hispanic literary world. Another factor, however, was the literary quality of Vegio's work itself. Additionally, Spain responded to Vegio's other works, from the classicising to the devotional, and from the better-known to the most obscure, as Pujalte's tracing of these works in Spanish libraries attests. Pujalte's identification of a translation of Vegio's *Palinurus*, made by Juan Ginés de Sepúlveda in Córdoba around the mid-century, also contributes to the sense that the union of style and ethical advice was as much a characteristic of how Vegio was read in Spain as elsewhere. That the manuscript containing this translation also contains Sepúlveda's translation of a homily by John Chrysostom, and that around the same time, 1554, Vegio's salutation to Monica was printed in Alcalá by Juan de Brocar, in an edition entitled *Meditationes atque alia quamplurima tum divi Augustini tum aliorum sanctorum opuscula*, cements such associations in Spain between Vegio and devotional literature.⁵¹ In Spain, then, both the stylistic and the moralistic ways of reading Vegio lived on.

We see rather less of the stylistic, but a rather different and more diffused, reception of Vegio's *Supplementum* in Bologna in 1491. This is admittedly far out of chronology, but, as a vernacular response, is relevant to the other texts examined here. It also, by its Italian provenance, returns us to material from Vegio's country of birth. The edition was printed by Ugo di Rugerii, and contains no textual divisions at all separating the *Aeneid* narrative from either the following events related by Vegio, or the historical developments which succeeded even these.⁵² The work, in fact, is a very approximate verse summary, attributed to Comino de' Morcini, of everything from the Fall of Troy to the state of contemporary Italian provinces, interspersed with invocations to the Virgin Mary and genealogies of Italian rulers governing at the time of its production. It only really shows Vegio's influence in a vague sense, with the *Supplementum* acting as a stimulus for further continuations of Virgil's epic; it might even be aligned more closely with earlier, medieval traditions of assimilating such classical narratives to contemporary realities. Still, the survival of such modes of reading, which we will see combined with minute attentiveness to Vegio's actual work in translations such as Douglas', is important to note, as it offers a reminder that they were present in Italy as well as the more romance-influenced northern areas of the continent.

Resuming the chronological progression, we move to the 1580s and to a location elsewhere in Italy, namely the city where Vegio had spent the last years of his life, and where his final work, rather than

⁵¹ For all this, see Julián Solana Pujalte, 'Quelques notes sur le presence de Maffeo Vegio en Espagne', in J. F. Alcina et alii (eds.), *Acta Conventus Neo-Latini Bariensis. Proceedings of the Ninth International Congress of Neo-Latin Studies* (Tempe, Arizona: 1998), pp. 549-556.

⁵² Comino de' Morcini (attributed), drawing on Virgil and Vegio, *Incomincia il libro de lo famoso eccellente poeta Virgilio mantoano chiamato lo eneida vulgare: nel quale si narrano li gran facti per lui descripti apresso la morte de Cesaro imperatore cū la morte de tutti li gran principi e signori homini di gran fama liquali ali di nostri sono stati in italia* (Bologna: Ugo di Rugerii, 1491), British Library General Reference Collection IA.28818.

his first, was having an influence too. Vegio's *De rebus*, as we saw in the last chapter, continued to be read into the early sixteenth century, but by 1582 it had inspired a new verbal description, and by 1590 an engraved plan, of the basilica which Vegio's work had taken as its subject. These studies of St. Peter's, by Tiberio Alfarano, acknowledged their debt to Vegio, even if only in footnotes, and Alfarano also wrote a supplement to the *De rebus* and the description of the basilica written by Petrus Mallius in the twelfth century which had influenced Vegio, and the title of this supplement made these connections explicit. Vegio's work on the basilica was therefore remembered into the late sixteenth century, and proved influential, yet later works inspired by it, such as Alfarano's, were purely historical and lacked the personal and meditative qualities which were so much a part of Vegio's treatment.⁵³ Since much of Vegio's perspective encompassed his Augustinian understanding of history, and Virgil within it as a figure within the providential unfolding of time, something of Vegio's character, worldview and responses to Virgil were lost here. Only the more rigorous historical elements of his work were remembered.

From the mid- to late-century in France, the *Supplementum* was transmitted through numerous editions. In Lyon in 1566 a printing of Virgil (including the minor poems with which he was associated) and Vegio, caliming fidelity to the best manuscripts, was produced,⁵⁴ and just over a decade later (a period which naturally saw various editions and commentaries continue to accrete around them) these works were translated into French by 'P. de Mouchault' and printed as parallel texts in Paris by Claude Micard.⁵⁵ The edition is dedicated to 'Monsieur de Mesgrigny', whose character is described in Aenean terms, with the translation hailed as befitting the 'belles vertus de son gentil esprit'.⁵⁶ This naturally suggests that the primary mode of reading which informs the translation and presentation of the work, as we saw was the case in France earlier in the century, was a moralistic one. Perhaps supporting this, but also ambiguous as it might hint at its potential to deliver aesthetic pleasure, partly through the completion of a Virgilian narrative believed to be incomplete, is the description of Vegio's work itself as 'ce supplement pour l'esprit contenter'.⁵⁷ The translation is not annotated by hand, with the exception of underlinings of printed annotation from the first four books of the *Aeneid* and a few passages of the *Georgics*. The *Supplementum* itself bears no annotation. In terms of translation practice, the impulse tends towards accessibility, simplifying details and omitting Vegio's more erudite – and indeed classicising – elements such as his reference to Aeneas being called 'indigites' after his death, to whom his Julian descendants make offerings in temples. In

⁵³ All Smith and O'Connell, pp. 6, 112, 231- 233.

⁵⁴ Virgil and Vegio, *Opera / ad vetustissimorum ac castigatissimorum exemplarium fidem... emendata* (Lyon: 1566), Cambridge University Library Syn 8.56.140.

⁵⁵ Virgil, Vegio and P. de Mouchault (translator), *Les Œuvres de Publie Virgile Maron* (Paris: Claude Micard, 1577), British Library General Reference Collection 238.I.34.

⁵⁶ *Les Œuvres*, p. 417.

⁵⁷ *Le Trezieme livre de l'Encide [by M. Vegius], traduit de Latin en François, & mis Latin François par P. de Mouchault*, occupies pp. 418-437 of British Library General Reference Collection 238.I.34.

Mouchault's version, this becomes 'et met Enee en la troupe des dieux'. This can be contrasted with Douglas' tendency to both preserve such archaic terms (and, indeed, the straightforward meaning of Vegio's Latin) while also explaining them to less-learned readers. The aim in the French translation is comparatively more moralistic than pedagogical, suggesting that, to eminent French nobles such as Mesgrigny, the concern was to make Vegio's work speak in a more straightforward language and so enable his Aeneas to become a more easily imitable model of virtuous conduct. This approach, it seems, was popular, as an updated edition, with other works and translations by eminent names such as Clément Marot and Joachim du Bellay, was printed by Micard in 1588.⁵⁸

By contrast, the 1573 Zurich edition of Virgil's *Opera*, concluded by Vegio's *Supplementum* and commented on by Melancthon and others,⁵⁹ demonstrates the more rhetorical and classicising readings we already have seen prevailing in Italian contexts. It even appears, remembering the edition of *Astyanax* analysed near the beginning of this chapter, that a certain combination of these remained constant and even spread beyond the Alps and further north into the continent. Printed annotations on this edition of the *Supplementum* draw attention to rhetorical features, focused on either pathos for Turnus and Daunus or praise of Aeneas, or else philosophical commonplaces such as the inconstancy of fate and its influence on humanity. Masses of annotation of the final book of the *Aeneid* suggests similar concerns, which are exactly those of the annotator of the *Astyanax* discussed earlier. In addition, there is a manuscript underlining of '& clara Aeneas supereminet omnes/ Virtute excellens', a sign of clear if very limited engagement with this reading of the work as an illustration of morality through the figure of Aeneas. Earlier visual traditions are maintained through an illustration showing Turnus in his coffin and Aeneas and Lavinia's wedding banquet.⁶⁰ A very similar edition from 1563, the printed annotations of which suggest it was either a model for the 1573 version or else shared a common textual ancestor with it, contains all of Virgil's extant works, including several from what would become the *Appendix Vergiliana*, features the same sort of illustration, foregrounding the banquet while situating Turnus' coffin and the populations of Latium in the background.⁶¹ The melding of stylistic and moral readings here, centred around the rhetorical expressions of lamentation and praise, therefore survived, from the time in which the 1475 Cagli edition of the *Astyanax* was annotated, into the later sixteenth century, having been amplified throughout the intervening period via translations and visual depictions, as well as certain features of commentaries.

⁵⁸ Virgil, Vegio *et alii*, *Les œuvres de P. Virgile Maron ... Traduites de Latin en François: les Bucoliques & Géorgiques par Cl. M. (C. Marot) [and R. le Blanc]. Les douze livres de l'Énéide par L. des Masures: avec un treizième livre adiousté par Mapheus ... traduits par P. D. Mouchault* (Paris: Claude Micard, 1588), British Library General Reference Collection 11352.a.15; for more details about this translation, see Fragonard, pp. 79-88.

⁵⁹ Virgil, Vegio, Philip Melancthon, *Opera / P. Melancthonis & aliorum... virorum scholijs... illustrata... denuo[ue] ad fidem castigassimorum exemplarium* (Zurich: 1573), Cambridge University Library Rel.d.57.5.

⁶⁰ *Opera* (Zurich: 1573), Cambridge University Library Rel.d.57.5, p. 480.

⁶¹ Virgil, Vegio, Melancthon *et alii*, *Poemata, quae extant omnia* (Zurich: 1563), Cambridge University Library X.11.76.

Stylistic features of Vegio's imitation of Virgil in the *Supplementum* are explicitly remarked on by the physician Thomas Twyne, whose English translation of the work, again appearing as a conclusion to the *Aeneid* (substantially translated by Thomas Phaer and continued by Twyne), was printed in London in 1573.⁶² Twyne describes Vegio as a 'happie imitatur' of Virgil's style, yet he also – uniting two beliefs which we have often seen opposed in the reception history of the *Supplementum* – believed that Virgil's work had been left unfinished, and so required a completion:

the same Auctour judged *Virgils* conceit not to be perfected in the former xii. I have not done it upon occasion of any dreame as *Gawin Dowglas* did it into the Scottish, but mooved with the worthines of the worke, and the neerenes of the argument, verse and stile unto *Virgil*, wherein as I Judge, the writer hath declared himself an happie imitatur.

To Twyne, therefore, Vegio's sequel was not the needless appendage which some early modern readers (including, as we will see shortly, Ascensius and Douglas, whose translation was first printed in London in 1553) had believed it to be. Susanna Braund, in the best treatment of the relations between these texts, suggests another reason why Twyne might have thought this way, arguing that, partly due to his position as an actual continuator of Phaer's translation and – as part of this – an imitator of his style, Twyne felt an affinity with Vegio's relationship to Virgil's epic, and likewise expressed a combination of subordination as an emulator, and ambition as a completer.⁶³ This might account more clearly for the combination of stylistic and moral concerns exhibited in this edition; Twyne speaks of the 'worthines of the worke, and the neerenes of the argument, verse and stile unto *Virgil*', yet he also included printed marginalia emphasising Aeneas' virtue and Turnus' and the Rutulians' deserved defeat. Nevertheless, there is pathos too: even in his brief summary of the narrative, Twyne writes that Daunus 'most pitifully lamenteth the rashnesse and haplesse successe of his sunne, as also the destruction of his citie Ardea', and other predictable instances could be cited which attest to the same impulses. A less predictable example comes when Twyne develops the troubling congruence between the kite '[w]ith furie' swooping down to attack Aeneas' metaphorical brood of chicks and the actual Fury Jupiter summons from the Underworld to signify to Turnus that his fate has been decided. By translating in this way, Twyne complicates – in a manner which we saw Vegio hinting at originally in his poem – the virtuous character of the divine and the will of fate, even when it deals with the Trojans.⁶⁴

⁶² Virgil, Vegio, Thomas Phaer and Thomas Twyne, *The whole .xii. bookes of the Aeneidos of Virgill / Whereof the first .ix. and part of the tenth, were conuerted into English meeter by Thomas Phaer Esquire, and the residue supplied, and the whole worke together newly set forth, by Thomas Twyne Gentleman* (London: Wyllyam How, for Abraham Veale, 1573), Cambridge University Library Peterborough.P.2.19.

⁶³ Susanna Braund, 'Thomas Twyne's Appropriation of Thomas Phaer's *Aeneidos*: 'Worke unperfyt' Perfected?', *Translation and Literature*, Volume 27 Issue 3 (2018), pp. 287-305.

⁶⁴ Twyne, ll. 110-112.

Twyne's translation was a landmark in English reception of Virgil, and became the classic and most widely known form of the *Aeneid* in England, being consulted by innumerable readers and writers. One of these was Edmund Spenser,⁶⁵ and suggestions have since been made that Vegio's *Supplementum*, probably via Twyne's translation, shaped the ending of the final canto of the first book of Spenser's monumental *The Faerie Queene* (1590 – 1609). The suggestion, first made by John Watkins, has been developed by Lars-Håkan Svensson into an argument which touches on wider Virgilian reception in Spenser's time, by remarking on the differing moral statuses of the multiple characters whom Spenser seems to model on Aeneas.⁶⁶ Spenser's *Faerie Queene* in this view draws on, adapts and combines aspects of the European literary tradition from the classical epic to the medieval romance to the more recent 'epic romance' of the Italians Ariosto and Tasso. In turn, this accounts for the wealth of divergent interpretations of Aeneas' moral character – and Virgilian reception as a whole – which were current by the late sixteenth century and found their way into Spenser's text. As we have seen at length, Vegio's *Supplementum* spoke to, and was subsequently made to speak to, this debate concerning Aeneas, which itself was tied up with the question of whether Virgil's epic required completion in order to justify his killing of Turnus, and if so, what form that completion should take. As Svensson has noted, the most obvious way in which Spenser utilises Vegio's *Supplementum* and its response to this issue is to use Vegio's episode of the marriage between Aeneas and Lavinia as a model for his marriage of Redcrosse and Una at the close of his first book.⁶⁷ Both have the effect of bringing the narrative to a conclusion.

Alice Waters, against this counter-consideration and agreeing with the identification of influence (and tracing its closeness to the translation of Vegio's passage found in the 1584 edition of Twyne's work), but not with that influence's putative effect, advances an alternative argument. Might Spenser not, rather, have been reworking the *Supplementum* 'in order to raise suspicions about the project of perfecting Virgil's poem' and disrupt 'the possibility of closure, completion or perfection'? Waters' wider argument posits an opposition between the control asserted by Twyne as a translator (and Vegio as an imitative continuator) over another poet's work, and the defensive independence asserted by Spenser as a poet.⁶⁸ Such issues require more discussion space than is available here,⁶⁹ but they do speak to different attitudes concerning imitation, supplementation, completion and translation which

⁶⁵ A fact noted by Braund, quoting Sheldon Brammall and Steven Lally.

⁶⁶ John Watkins, *The Specter of Dido: Spenser and Virgilian Epic* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995) pp. 90-112 (especially p. 196).

⁶⁷ Svensson, pp. 431-432.

⁶⁸ Alice Waters, 'Literary Constellations: Collaboration and the Production of Early Modern Books', unpublished doctoral dissertation (Boston College, 2014), pp. 67, 94.

⁶⁹ Especially since they also speak to questions of Spenser's debt to the authorial model of the *rota Vergilii*, his conception of epic conclusiveness, and whether he deliberately acknowledges his models (Virgilian and Vegian) while surpassing them. See David Scott Wilson-Okamura, 'Virgil', in Andrew Escobedo (ed.), *Edmund Spenser in Context* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), pp. 217-224.

have been touched on throughout this study. The more modest questions of this section of that study can be answered more briefly: Spenser uses Vegio in a stylistic sense as a formal model for his marriage of Redcrosse and Una, and this additionally entails an employment of Vegio's romance-influenced Virgil. Indeed, an effect of this is that the first book of Spenser's poem is the most satisfactorily concluded of all.

Spenser's romance-epic received almost every distinct aspect of Virgilian reception which there had been up to its time of composition. These were drawn from Virgil himself, the subsequent traditions which had mediated his work, and Vegio's *Supplementum*, which itself had adapted several of these mediating readings. Consequently, in the *Faerie Queene* it is difficult to tell where exactly Spenser is getting his allusions from, or even which interpretative tradition is which. They are too fully synthesised into a different kind of work, and only informed suggestion is possible. The analyses of the sources examined in this chapter represent an attempt, nonetheless, to achieve answers to this kind of question, by demonstrating which Vegian works, and by extension which responses to Virgil, were being read in distinct locations at distinct times, as well as how they were being read.

Conclusions

The attempt made in this chapter to trace influences has allowed us to see various uses to which Vegio's writings were turned, and how such uses could be faithful to or divergent from the original writings themselves. Variety, spotlighted in 1518 by Cratander in the quotation heading this chapter, is the most striking quality of the material seen here, in genre, subject matter, application and geographical distribution. Some modes of reading Virgil which had made it into Vegio's works went on to shape editions, commentaries, translations and illustrations in the following century. The uses of Vegio as a mediator for Virgil as a stylistic model and ethical sage were probably the most impactful. Yet in several areas, and in parallel with these moralistic and stylistic drives, Vegio's pathetic Virgils, drawn from the concerns of the *Aeneid* itself, survived as well, in set-pieces of rhetorical skill and philosophical insight into the nature of humanity under the oscillating whims of fate. We saw instances of these readings melded together in such dispersed locations as Cagli in 1475, and Zurich in 1573. Between these points, they converged in Deventer, where the pedagogical impulse persisted too and Vegio's works were used as classroom aids for teaching grammar, the veil through which wisdom could be glimpsed. Broadly speaking, the *Astyanax* and *Supplementum* were key focuses for stylistic attention, whereas the *Palinurus* and *Antoniad* were seen as devotional works which simultaneously delivered classicising eloquence, and were compiled with other works which seemed to embody the same characteristics. We saw the *Supplementum* made more accessible for eminent French noblemen and incorporated silently and loosely into an Italian popular history running from ancient times to the modern day. The *Supplementum*, in short, had a vast popularity, going through

several editions and being commented-on, illustrated and translated by others, but critical views still varied about how well it had imitated Virgil and why Vegio had felt the need to write it in the first place.

More generally, Vegio himself was variously regarded and remembered. Of course he was seen as a Virgilian imitator; his associates Brivio and da Rho spoke how reading him felt like reading, even meeting, Virgil himself, and the sixteenth-century philologist Julius Caesar Scaliger wrote that if Vegio had removed the word ‘revomentes’ from his *Supplementum*, that work could have been authentically Virgilian.⁷⁰ In addition to this status as ‘Alter Maro’, however, Vegio was remembered as an imitator of Lucian, a humanist intellectual, a cultural historian, and a devotional writer who had worked in the papal Curia. His treatise on keeping steadfast in faith was read seriously as a galvanising moral guide amid the religious persecution of the sixteenth century, and, on a lighter note, his hymns were made into motets and were sung rather than read. His memory thereby survived in music, as well as in texts and images. His works on education were used across the continent, just as sincerely as his classicising works had been praised in local pride by fellow intellectuals from Lodi in the 1497 Milan edition. He had been a new Virgil, but one who had also built a chapel to Augustine’s mother Monica and requested to be buried there himself.

There is much more, but ‘variety’ must be called upon again to excuse the lack of further elaboration. Given the approach of this chapter, which has been essentially that of taking selective if representative samples of evidence, the conclusions offered here account for specific works, in specific places, at specific times, rather than offering anything more universal. But this approach, even if it could be later augmented by additional samples, is the only way that historical study can be carried out if it is to remain true to historical realities, and the study of Virgilian reception in the Renaissance has already suffered from overly narrow generalisations which do not reflect the diversity seen across the material analysed throughout this study. The hypothetical universality of every mode of reading exhibited by one particular source is contested by a mode of reading exhibited by another equally particular one. Likewise, some characteristics of Vegio’s responses to Virgil remained the same as they were transmitted, whereas others were changed, being either proclaimed at the one extreme, or forgotten at the other. Some were simplified and read in a narrow manner, aligning Vegio’s works with only one of their modes of reading Virgil, and others were enriched through combination with other modes, materials and interpretations. We have seen many cases of the former, and the finest cases of the latter might be Spenser and, as we will soon see, Douglas. The larger point is that Vegio’s Virgils, whatever their different fortunes and varying subsequent adaptations and employments, unquestionably survived, due to their own inherent diversity, the continued use of commentaries and

⁷⁰ Whittington, pp. 233-234.

approaches which had shaped Vegio's responses in the first place, and the idiosyncratic needs, pedagogical, moral, religious, political or literary, of later readers and writers.

This chapter has therefore offered insights into these receptions, as well as showing how they spanned not only different media, but also conceptual divides such as that between the secular and the religious, the humanistically classicising and the medieval. It has sketched out, and in many cases brought to an Anglophone readership, the reception of Vegio's works (and their Virgilianisms) across Europe up to the end of the sixteenth century. Through all this, it has become ever clearer that Virgil's works as well as Vegio's continued to signify and be used in multiple applications in this period, attesting to their creative vitality. Yet despite these insights, many regions on the scholarly map remain obscure, and this study would not have been truly exploratory had it not been intended to open new paths and suggest directions for future exploration. We will discuss these directions further in the main conclusions of this study. For now, it can be observed that each specific textual response to Vegio should be analysed in more detail, using a similar pan-European approach in combination with close textual-comparative work in order to account for subsequent adaptations of Vegio's work. The following and final chapter will do exactly this, taking as its subject Gavin Douglas' 1513 translation of the *Supplementum* into Scots. This case study of the only well-known response to any of Vegio's works will demonstrate the power of the proposed methodology to transform existing critical accounts and fill in yet more areas of the scholarly map.

Chapter Six –

Paris to Edinburgh, via Strasbourg, 1501 – 1513, or ‘To translait his buke’: What Gavin Douglas really did to Vegio’s *Supplementum*

Et penitus toto divisos orbe Britannos
(And the Britons, from the world entirely sundered)

– Virgil, *Eclogues* 1.66

Introduction

This chapter has two functions. Firstly, it is a demonstration of the methodological approach advocated at the close of the previous chapter, combining forensic textual comparisons with attention to pan-European sources to deliver newly historicized and transformative readings of a text. This text is the 1513 translation of Vegio’s *Supplementum* into Scots produced by the Provost of St. Giles in Edinburgh (and later bishop of Dunkeld) Gavin Douglas. Despite being a part of his *Eneados*, a celebrated translation of the entire *Aeneid* well known to scholarship, Douglas’ Scots *Supplementum* has not received the critical attention it deserves. It has never been comprehensively compared with Vegio’s Latin text or the sources and traditions which acted as mediators between Virgil and Vegio on the one side and Douglas on the other.¹ Chief among these sources were the Ascensian edition of

¹ The texts used here will be the editions of Douglas’ translation printed in Gordon Kendal (ed.), *The Aeneid* (1513), two volumes (London: Modern Humanities Research Association, 2011), which is based on the Elphinstone manuscript (see Vol. 1, p. xxxix), and David F. C. Coldwell (ed.), *The Aeneid, Translated into Scottish Verse by Gavin Douglas. Edited, with notes and glossary, by David F. C. Coldwell* (Edinburgh: Blackwood for the Scottish Text Society, 1957-1964), 4 Vols, especially Vol. 1, pp. 96-97), which is based on the Cambridge manuscript (Virgil and Gavin Douglas, Cambridge Trinity College MS O.3.12. The Kendal edition has aroused criticism, due to its inconsistent modernisation of language and its reliance on Small’s unreliable 1874 edition of Douglas’ poem. Currently the Scottish Text Society is working on a more rigorous critical edition of Douglas’ translation, to be the second volume to Priscilla Bawcutt and Ian C. Cunningham’s *Eneados: Gavin Douglas’s Translation of Virgil’s Aeneid. Volume I: Introduction and Commentary* (Woodbridge: Boydell and Brewer, 2020). In the present absence of this second volume, however, Coldwell’s and Kendal’s editions must be used despite such cautionary remarks. The primary principles (stated by Bawcutt on pp. 54-55 of the first volume of the new edition) that Coldwell’s dating of the Lyon edition of Virgil was incorrect (1507 rather than the correct and too-late-for-Douglas 1517), and that the Cambridge MS is the most reliable witness, have been taken into account. I am also indebted to Nicola Royan for other reservations about current editions, as well as for feedback on this study more generally, which began as a Warwick MA dissertation supervised by Paul Botley. My debt to Royan is gratefully acknowledged, however ineptly I have acted on the learned advice I was so generously given. All mistakes, as ever, are mine. The Vegio and Virgil texts (and Ascensius commentaries and Brant-Grüniger woodcuts) are now, thanks to Bawcutt, more securely identifiable, and will be those from the 1501 Paris and the 1502 Strasbourg editions. There is scholarly disagreement over which text was the main one used by Douglas, but the approach here will follow Bawcutt’s argument that whichever edition it was, he would have seen multiple editions anyway, certainly the 1501 Paris edition by Ascensius and probably the others mentioned here (Priscilla Bawcutt, *Gavin Douglas: A Critical Study* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1976), pp. 95-102 (especially pp. 98-102)). In tandem with Bawcutt’s and Cunningham’s recent, revisionary volume, the notes made by Coldwell have been invaluable, as

Vegio's poem, and the medieval poetic traditions of the British Isles, seen most markedly in Douglas' uses of Chaucer. The comprehensiveness of Douglas' engagement with Continental as well as British sources, and with the intimate engagement with Virgil attested by those sources themselves, was the motivation for this chapter's ironic choice of epigraph. The epigraph's Virgilian provenance, when encountered in a study of Douglas' British reception of not only Virgil, but also and above all the 'Alter Maro' Vegio, only intensifies (if only in historical hindsight) that irony.²

Priscilla Bawcutt analysed some passages of Douglas' translation in her 1976 *Gavin Douglas: A Critical Study*, but subsequent scholars have tended to return to her selections, ignoring the rest of the poem.³ The result of this scholarly neglect is that a convincing and contextualised account of the formal, rhetorical and generic influences, practices, concerns and purposes of Douglas' translation has never been produced. Such an account is what this chapter attempts, through a demonstration that Douglas' emphases and innovations are informed by varied sources, as well as late-medieval translation practices which synthesised such sources, utilised rhetorical *abbreviatio* and *amplificatio*, and encompassed commentarial functions. Yet alongside these, Douglas' translation displays a Virgilianism characteristic of classicising, 'humanist' poetics. Altogether, Douglas' translation holds these influences in dialectical suspension, and the argument of this chapter, echoing that of C. S. Lewis' 1932 'What Chaucer really did to *Il Filostrato*', is that his translation filters the *Supplementum* through such interrelated interpretative practices common to his literary culture and social milieu.⁴ In short, to use Lewis' now contested term, Douglas 'medievalizes' (we might say 'naturalizes') Vegio's poem. The structure of the analysis is also inspired by Lewis' work, though more so by Christopher Baswell's, and is divided according to the interpretative modes Douglas inherited (the pedagogical, romance, pathetic and moralistic), and which we have pursued so far in this study.⁵

The second function of the chapter is to serve as another 'album' (*Paris to Edinburgh, via Strasbourg, 1501 – 1513*), sitting chronologically and thematically in the midst of the previous chapter's materials. This album will trace the moral and pedagogical concerns found in early-sixteenth-century Parisian printed editions of Vegio's works from France to Scotland through a focus on Douglas' translation and the influences of his other sources. Significantly, Douglas' translation exemplifies the various modes of reading Vegio's Virgils which we saw ranged across Europe in the materials examined previously, demonstrating even more strikingly that they survived into the early sixteenth

has Kendal's edition, however problematic, both for its annotation and slight modernisation of Douglas' Middle Scots, which has been utilised here. The main Vegio texts referred to, however, will be those of 1501 and 1502.

² Even if technically 'Britannia' denoted England rather than Scotland in the pre-modern period.

³ Bawcutt, *Gavin Douglas*, pp. 148-149 (p. 148). See also pp. 104-105 on Vegio more generally. Bawcutt's work, as well as that of David Coldwell (especially Vol. 1, pp. 256-262) and Gordon Kendal, is nonetheless essential reading for any student of Douglas. Without the critical notes in Coldwell's and Kendal's editions of the *Eneados*, many details in the following could easily have been overlooked.

⁴ C. S. Lewis, 'What Chaucer Really Did to *Il Filostrato*', reprinted in Walter Hooper (ed.), *Selected Literary Essays by C. S. Lewis* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), pp. 27-44.

⁵ See Baswell's taxonomy.

century. The difference here is that instead of being approached in the survey-like manner of that chapter, they will be analysed in great depth through the case study of Douglas' text. This forensic approach will not only transform the critical conversation about how Vegio's most famous work was being read in Europe at this time, but also offer a means by which future analyses of the responses to Vegio seen earlier may be performed. Applied to Douglas, this approach shows that the controversial conception of Virgil as a poet of pathos, embodied in Vegio's text, continued to be current in the early sixteenth century. The approach additionally demonstrates how accumulated post-classical receptions, including Chaucer's, shaped how Virgil was interpreted, reworked and utilised from the late medieval into the early modern period. Finally, the conclusion uses this examination of the mechanisms of Douglas' translation to reassess recent arguments concerning its motivations.

I. The Pedagogical: Archaisms, Character Connections, and Subjectivity

We will begin with the pedagogical mode. The first and most obvious way that Douglas employs this way of reading – focused on explaining textual and wider narrative details to the reader, and occasionally also informing them about facts of antique and natural history, etymologies, or archaic terminology – is through his presentation. Vegio's text is not split into chapters, but Douglas divides his translation in this way, preceding each chapter with a couplet summarising the events to be described, just as he had in his translation of Virgil. This recalls the traditions of manuscript and early printed commentary and annotation on Vegio which draw attention to specific narrative moments, and noteworthy features of style or lexical choice.⁶ This division and highlighting all help to guide the reader through the text, an especially important consideration, given Douglas' stated aims to have the text used by school pupils and active, ruling members of the nobility.

In his lexical choices, too, Douglas makes Vegio's text more accessible, by simplifying archaic or unfamiliar terms. In this respect, and in line with medieval translation theory and practice, he partly

⁶ E.g. Maffeo Vegio, *Supplementum*, in Virgil, Maffeo Vegio, Jodocus Badius Ascensius et al, *Opera cum variorum commentariis* (Paris: Ascensius, 1500-1501) UB Freiburg, Ink. 4. D 7672 [GW M49979] [Sack 3643], accessed via University of Freiburg Digital Collections http://dl.ub.uni-freiburg.de/diglit/vergilius1500?sid=5be1da38524f2adf20469b74cb80dcfc&ui_lang=eng [accessed 01/05/2021], f. ccclxxxiii^r, with abbreviations silently expanded, modern punctuation marks substituted for colons, proper nouns and line beginnings capitalised. The same editorial process has been adopted for all subsequent quotations from this edition (henceforward '*Opera*') and that of 1502. Original editions have been preferred to later ones, as Douglas was likely to have had access to the former, the texts of which often differ slightly but significantly from those of modern scholarly editions of Vegio. See also Bawcutt, *Gavin Douglas*, pp. 102-107, and Baswell, p. 277. Likewise, an awareness of Douglas' usual translating practice, as evidenced in the *Eneados*, is essential to identifying what actually is an extension or modification to Vegio's text. Usually, Douglas translates one Latin line into a Scots couplet, so only expansions substantially exceeding this doubling have been regarded as significant (see Kendal, 'Translation as Creative Retelling: Constituents, Patterning and Shift in Gavin Douglas' *Eneados*' (University of St Andrews PhD Thesis, 2008); Bawcutt, *Gavin Douglas*, pp. 110-127).

acts as a commentator as well as a translator.⁷ He also seems to be following the commentary provided by the 1501 Jodocus Badius Ascensius edition of Vegio's text from which we know he was working. For example, he describes the 'penates' as 'the gods domestical',⁸ explains that 'Indigetes' is 'as meikle to say/ As "god indweller"',⁹ transforms Vegio's 'Lyei' into 'God Bacchus',¹⁰ and notes that 'Ardea the fowl' is the bird 'wham a "heron" clepe we'.¹¹ 'Mavortem' is given the usual translation 'Mars' in Douglas, yet Ascensius' commentary also provides Douglas with the detail 'idest Martem ipsum principem bellorum', which he phrases 'And eik himself Mars, the great god of arms'.¹² Elsewhere he is more economical, and 'Mavortius' becomes 'marciall',¹³ while 'umbras' become 'ghaists' in the 'camp Elysee'.¹⁴ Some other additions make the Latin clearer even to readers familiar with these classical terms, as when Douglas translates 'ducit equum docta arte Metiscus' as 'Metiscus, the carter,/ As he that in the craft was nocht to lear'.¹⁵ Again, Ascensius' note 'auriga', meaning 'charioteer', was probably consulted here. Sometimes, however, the authorial intervention has unfortunate consequences, such as when a speech includes the lines 'ye Italians/ (That otherwise be clepe Ausonians)'.¹⁶ It is unlikely that the Italians themselves would need this information, even if Douglas' readers might. Later, outside a speech delivered to them, the device is more felicitous: 'all Italy (clepit Ausonia)'.¹⁷ Finally, it is important to mention Douglas' greater focus on Jupiter and his associated symbols, thunder and the eagle. He clarifies 'magnum[que] Tonantem' as 'Great Jupiter, the fearful god of thunder', and identifies 'Iovis unguibus ales' as 'Jove's big fowl, the erne', thereby keeping these images more vivid and alive in the reader's mind.¹⁸ The significance of Jove will be seen when considering the pathetic mode of reading later on.

Douglas uses a similar approach to clarify characters' connections and relations. He explains and slightly expands Vegio's 'Electra Atlantide' as 'Atlas' douchter, the fair wench Electra',¹⁹ clarifies that 'Iasio' is Dardanus' 'ain brother Iasius',²⁰ and says that 'Chorito' is 'the city Corythus in Italy'.²¹ These all follow brief notes by Ascensius, showing that Douglas derived at least some of this pedagogical impulse from the earlier commentator. Sometimes this results in contraction rather than

⁷ Rita Copeland, 'Rhetoric and Vernacular Translation in the Middle Ages', *Studies in the Age of Chaucer*, Vol. 9 (1987), pp. 41-75 (pp. 48-57, 65-66, 74-75).

⁸ Cf. Douglas, in Kendal (ed.), *The Aeneid (1513)*, Vol. 2, XIII. 10. 81; *Opera*, f. cccxcii^r.

⁹ Douglas, XIII. 11. 79-80, cf. *Opera*, f. cccxcii^v.

¹⁰ Douglas, XIII. 2. 21, cf. *Opera*, f. ccclxxxiii^r.

¹¹ Douglas, XIII. 4. 97, cf. *Opera*, f. ccclxxxvi^v.

¹² Douglas, XIII. 2. 33, cf. *Opera*, f. ccclxxxiii^r.

¹³ Douglas, XIII. 1. 3, cf. *Opera*, f. ccclxxxiii^r.

¹⁴ Douglas, XIII. 10. 101, cf. *Opera*, f. cccxcii^r.

¹⁵ *Opera*, f. ccclxxxvi^r, cf. Douglas, XIII. 4. 11-12.

¹⁶ Douglas, XIII. 1. 97-98, cf. *Opera*, f. ccclxxxiii^v.

¹⁷ Douglas, XIII. 6. 147, cf. *Opera*, f. ccclxxxviii^v.

¹⁸ *Opera*, f. ccclxxxiii^r, cf. Douglas, XIII. 2. 28; *Opera*, f. ccclxxxvii^v, cf. Douglas, XIII. 5. 117.

¹⁹ *Opera*, f. cccxcii^r, cf. Douglas, XIII. 9. 82.

²⁰ *Opera*, f. cccxcii^r, cf. Douglas, XIII. 9. 84.

²¹ *Opera*, f. cccxcii^r, cf. Douglas, XIII. 9. 85.

expansion: Ascensius' way of clarifying 'flaventem Cererem' was to note 'panem',²² and Douglas follows, omitting the reference to Ceres and saying simply 'breid'.²³ Some other omissions and rephrasing are his own; since togas were unfamiliar to many among his readership, he described them as 'robes lang [...] or trail syde-gown',²⁴ so that the image would be preserved. He also, unprompted by Ascensius and following perhaps his own concerns as a member of the Scottish nobility, makes the point, where Vegio does not, that 'pulcher Iulus' is 'the young Ascanius fair,/ That was his father's only child and heir'.²⁵ This not only highlights to the reader that Iulus and Ascanius are the same person, but restates his relationship to Aeneas and hints at the significance this holds for the stability of the hereditary rulership of the future Rome (or at least its history of kings and emperors, rather than the Republic), and, by analogy, Douglas' own Scotland. This example therefore lies on the boundary between the pedagogical and the moralistic ways of reading, fulfilling both functions, as we will see in the section devoted to the latter interpretative mode.

The pedagogical moves which Douglas makes can be seen as part of an attempt to clarify not only through factual detail, but also increased visual vividness. We have seen both elements of pedagogy operating here, with the visual represented best by the description of the togas, the identification of Ardea with the heron, and Douglas' statement that Jove's bird is the 'big fowl, the erne'. Rather than Ascensius, the source for this visualisation could be the 1502 woodcuts by Sebastian Brant and Johann Grüninger, which – a controversial hypothesis – Douglas might have seen.²⁶ His interest in illustration has been noted by others, and with reference to other texts, and the importance of contemporary memory theory, working from the idea that images could be impressed on the mind and retained by it more effectively than words, might well explain the position of this method in the pedagogical way of reading.²⁷ When reading Virgilian or Virgil-inspired narratives this was even more significant, as Brant designed the woodcuts for the semi-literate, ensured that they provided both narrative and commentary, and set every scene in contemporary architectural settings, with characters in late-fifteenth and early-sixteenth-century dress. He also defended and elevated this practice of using images, by noting that Aeneas himself in the first and sixth books of the *Aeneid* reads images on temple walls,²⁸ and Douglas, familiar with a similar, Virgilian-inspired scene in Chaucer's *House of Fame*, would doubtless have concurred.²⁹ The woodcuts illustrating the whole *Aeneid* and Vegio's

²² *Opera*, f. cccxc^v.

²³ Douglas, XIII. 9. 22.

²⁴ *Opera*, f. ccclxxviii^r, cf. Douglas, XIII. 6. 18.

²⁵ *Opera*, f. cccxc^r, cf. Douglas, XIII. 8. 41-42.

²⁶ See Virgil, Vegio, et al, *Publij Virgilij Maronis Opera: cum quinque vulgatis commentariis ex politissimisque figuris* (Strasbourg: Brant, 1502), Heid. 370, 319; henceforward '*Publij Virgilij Maronis Opera*'.

²⁷ Baswell, p. 277, 406 n; Edinburgh MS 195 (Virgil, 'Poems of Virgil', c.1460, France) which Douglas may also have seen.

²⁸ Kristi Eastin, 'Visualising Virgil: the Pictorial Agenda(s) of Sebastian Brant', in *Echos du monde classique: Classical news and views*, Vol. 13, no. 1, January 1969 [accessed 07/05/2018], pp. 85-129 (pp. 106-107).

²⁹ Geoffrey Chaucer, *The House of Fame*, pp. 347-373 in Larry D. Benson (ed.), *The Riverside Chaucer*, third edition (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), ll. 119-467.

Supplementum also depict, as Kallendorf has noted,³⁰ multiple scenes in a chronological progression, even within one illustration.³¹ The effect of this is to guide the reader (and viewer) through the narrative, just as Douglas' chapter divisions and summaries, and his additions concerning familial relations and the associations of symbols, also do. Even more directly related to this is the fact that the woodcuts assign name tags to every character and place, similarly making identifications as clear as possible, and performing the same pedagogical function. Even if Douglas did not see the woodcuts, then, their illustrations are witnesses to similarly pedagogical approaches on the continent; Douglas in Scotland was, in this as in so many other instances, part of a wider shared culture of interpretation.

This particular pedagogical method also has another effect, however, which strays into the territory complexly occupied by the romance vision to be considered next. This is the increased focus on subjectivity which is achieved through assigning names to every character, something which Douglas does elsewhere in the *Eneados*, always as early as possible and sometimes when Virgil has not even named them.³² This greater subjectivity and its origins will be discussed in more detail in the next section, but the following example, because it also demonstrates greater vividness and the impulse to explain an aspect of the natural world, seems more suitable to discuss alongside the pedagogical readings we have looked at so far. The example appears in the simile likening the inhabitants of the burning city of Ardea to a colony of ants fleeing the roots of a tree which is about to be felled. Vegio writes:

Ac veluti cum nigra cohors posuere sub alta
Arbore et in fixa radice cubilia longo
Formicae instantes operi, si dura securis
Incumbat versoque infringat culmine³³

Douglas translates this as:

And like as that of emmets the black rout
(That evidently labours and busy be)
Had buildit, under the root of a heich tree,
Intil a cleft their byke and dwelling-steid,
To hide their langsome work and wintry breid:

³⁰ Craig Kallendorf, *Protean Virgil*, pp. 124-125; more generally, see Kallendorf, *Virgil and the Myth of Venice*, pp. 158-162.

³¹ E.g. *Publij Virgilij Maronis Opera*, f. 410^v.

³² For more on this and the other aspects of Douglas' translation practice in his translation of Virgil, see Bawcutt, *Gavin Douglas*, pp. 111-127. Many of Douglas' original emphases between the two texts are similar; Annabel Patterson, *Pastoral and Ideology: Virgil to Valery* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988), pp. 92-106 (especially p. 94).

³³ *Opera*, f. ccclxxxvi^v.

If sae betide they feel the axe smite
Upon the tree's shank, and thereon bite,
Sae that the crop down welts to the ground³⁴

The main addition here is line 70: 'To hide their langsome work and wintry breid'. Again, Ascensius is partly responsible, as the 'sarcinulas' or 'small bundles' which each ant gathers from the assaulted nest surely contain food.³⁵ Yet Douglas extends this focus on why the ants built their nest and what they gathered, by describing how they had intended such stores to see them through the winter. This additional focus, as well as being vividly expressed and memorable, is pedagogical (conveying natural-historical knowledge about the life of ants, with this vividness augmenting its ability to be memorised), and subjective (offering the ants' interior perspective). As we turn to the romance and pathetic modes of reading, these qualities will be even more evident and significant.

To summarise, none of the examples considered here is present in Vegio's text, though a few, as we have seen, seem to have been inspired by Ascensius' notes – and commentarial practices – on the relevant passages. Yet despite such affinities to commentarial and illustrative traditions, they are all original contributions which Douglas brought to his translation. An awareness of these non-Vegian touches enables us to appreciate Douglas' new emphases on explaining unfamiliar terms and outlining connections between characters, in order to guide readers through the text. It enables us also to see that related quality of increased focus on emotion and subjective experience. Overall, the effect of this elucidatory translation practice is a heightening of vividness in certain moments, enabling greater comprehension and imaginative engagement. This identification on the part of Douglas' readership should be borne in mind as this analysis progresses.

II: The Romance Vision: Dynamism, Detail, and Damsels

The romance vision, before it is discussed, must be defined, and Douglas must be situated in relation to it. Baswell, the originator of the term, notes its major features: the role and power of women, the focus on love (only sometimes fulfilled through marriage), and the attempt to accommodate ancient narratives within a contemporary social setting. In the case of the *Roman d'Enéas*, on which he focuses, this setting is Angevin and aristocratic;³⁶ with Douglas, the setting is the courtly life of late-medieval Europe more widely. We may add a focus on the subjective experience of characters,

³⁴ Douglas, XIII. 4. 66-73.

³⁵ 'si cavernula fornicarum eruatur, omnes sarcinulas quas quaeque potest, colligunt', *Opera*, f. ccclxxxvi^v.

³⁶ Baswell, pp. 168-170.

especially but not exclusively women; and, related to the contemporary setting, chivalry, as another familiarising characteristic of the tradition, revolving as it does, however variously, around combat, love, courtesy and social convention amongst the nobility. A nuance must be added here, however: Douglas' translation seems to suggest that his subjectivity is partially imported from one of its origins, Virgil's poetry, where readers of romances, familiar with such an emphasis, noticed it readily. Such romances might themselves therefore provide a more useful definition based on representative texts, for the most part vernacular adaptations of the 'matter of Troy'. Bawcutt has noted that the popularity of these adaptations, though manifested in earlier texts such as Benoît de Saint-Maure's *Roman de Troie* (c. 1165), the anonymous twelfth-century *Roman d'Enéas*, and Guido delle Colonne's *Historia Destructionis Troiae* (completed in 1287) as translated by John Lydgate as the *Troy Book* (1420), enjoyed a resurgence of interest in the fifteenth century, especially in James IV's Scotland. These sorts of texts inspired William Caxton's *Eneydos*, which Douglas vehemently criticised for its disproportionate attention to Dido. Douglas similarly combated the earliest supplements to the Troy legend, by Dictys Cretensis (*Ephemeris Belli Troiani*, fourth century) and Dares Phrygius (*De Excidio Troiae*, fifth or sixth century), which had presented Aeneas as a traitor to his city, a characterisation entirely opposed by the model of virtue which Douglas often seeks to emphasise. He also sought to defend Aeneas from the charge of callously abandoning Dido, an idea which finds its most notable expression in Chaucer's Ovidian *Legend of Dido* and the *House of Fame*.³⁷ These points will be considered later, but the important point here is that Douglas nonetheless inherited elements of this romance tradition, and utilised them alongside other sources in his works, including his translation of the *Supplementum*. Perhaps this text was even more suitable to this treatment; as David Scott Wilson-Okamura notes, one of Vegio's main influences in writing the supplement was the romance idea that narrative conclusiveness was achieved through marriage,³⁸ and as we will see, this scene of marriage and its associated celebrations is a moment into which Douglas imports other romance-related features.

One characteristic of this tradition forms a foundation which most of the others share: familiarisation. This had been a feature of other recent works adapting classical narratives by Lydgate, Gower and Henryson, a fact which highlights how the use of the word 'romance' here encompasses features which are not found exclusively in 'romances'. This is a vital point: the focus here, when 'romance' is referred to, is on loosely shared characteristics rather than strict genre. Such familiarisation is seen most memorably in Douglas' transformation of Vegio's simile of a tortoise ('testudo') struggling on its back and trying to escape the fires of Ardea (the stimulus for the flight of citizens who were

³⁷ Bawcutt, *Gavin Douglas*, pp. 78-85.

³⁸ Wilson-Okamura, *Virgil in the Renaissance*, pp. 230-250.

likened to ants in the simile examined at the end of the previous section),³⁹ into one revolving around a snail. Douglas writes:

Or like as that on the house-side the snail,
Shaking her cappit shell, or then her tail,
Fleeing the burning heat that she doth feel,
A lang time gan do wrestle and to wrele,
Thrusting fast with her feet unto the wall,
And yet her heid with force and strengths all
Frawart the fervent flames fast withdraws;
She scalds, and with mony wricks and throws
Presses for to eschew the fearful heat.⁴⁰

The obvious point is that this alteration familiarises the scene into one which Scottish readers were more likely to encounter. Ascensius' note 'animali quidem imbelli, sed pertinaciter parieti domus incensae adhaerenti' describes the action of this peaceful animal which would nevertheless stick obstinately to the wall of a burning building. Although Ascensius and Douglas probably knew of tortoises and sea turtles, 'testudo' (a roofed or housed animal) could equally be translated as 'snail', making the creature's sticking to the wall a familiarising, Northern European innovation, as is highlighted by Douglas' retention of 'feet'! More interesting is what Douglas does with sounds: Coldwell conjectures that Vegio's 'caput' inspired Douglas' 'cappit', as the meaning suggests rising to a peak, or a head, as well as echoing the sound of the Latin word for this.⁴¹ Additionally, the intertwined alliteration ('shaking', 'shell', 'fleeing', 'feel', 'wrestle', 'wrele', 'fast', 'feet', 'force', 'frawart', 'fervent', 'fast', 'wricks', 'fearful'), while a distinctive feature of Scots poetry anyway, does in this instance produce an enhanced dynamism. Something similar can be seen in the lines in chapter nine, building up to 'His burnished brand bedyt with reid blood',⁴² and Bawcutt has shown that elsewhere in the *Eneados*, Douglas employs alliteration for other lively and exciting moments,⁴³ demonstrating the numerous incidents of this familiarising drive, which is also a feature of the romance.

The previous quotation came from the scene after the banquet celebrating the marriage of Aeneas and Lavinia, in which tales are told of wars and days gone by.⁴⁴ Douglas expands this section, not only through the alliteration, but through the accumulation of vivid detail. For example, weapons are

³⁹ *Opera*, f. ccclxxxvi^r.

⁴⁰ Douglas, XIII. 4. 79-87.

⁴¹ Coldwell, Vol. 1, p. 259.

⁴² Douglas, XIII. 9. 64.

⁴³ Bawcutt, *Gavin Douglas*, pp. 150-159.

⁴⁴ *Opera*, f. cccxci^r.

specified (shield, darts, sword, mace), a horse is described as a ‘startling courser good’, and the supper consists of ‘sae mony dainties seir’.⁴⁵ We have seen this already in pedagogical clarifications and the vivid depictions of scenes, but a concern with particular objects, and a tendency towards plenitude or *amplificatio*, is another distinctive feature of the romance, as well as the aureate tradition of which Douglas was also in receipt. If we compare Vegio’s

Quod saepe solebat,
Dum res Troianae stabant, circumdare collo,
Auratam gemmis circumsaepumque monile,⁴⁶

with Douglas’

And eik the collar of the fine gold bricht,
With precious stanes and with rubies picht
Wham she also about her halse white
Was wont to wear in maist pomp and delight
While that the Trojan welfare stood above,⁴⁷

we can see the amplification of the details of artefacts, specifying the ‘gemmis’ as ‘rubies’ and ‘precious stanes’, and the gold as ‘fine’ and ‘bricht’. As Andromache is recast as a romance noblewoman, her ‘halse [neck] white’ becomes a form of artefact through its relation to its adornments and its simple purity of colour. This recalls the *Roman d’Enéas*’ concern with artisanal objects and technologies, their curiosity and their materials,⁴⁸ suggesting an older romance vision, as well as post-Chaucerian aureate diction and possibly the imitation of classical ekphrasis, finding expression in Douglas’ translation. Amplification of surface detail is also seen elsewhere, continuing this effect of making the narrative more tangible: Vegio’s ‘Latos incendia campos/ enudant’ becomes ‘The large plains shines all of licht,/ And (through thir het scalding flames bricht)/ Stood blout of beasts, and of trees bare’.⁴⁹ Douglas emphasises the barrenness, and says what could be seen by the light of the flames as they char the fields. This effort of imagining himself into the scene enables the reader to do the same thing. The same is true for brighter images. When Vegio writes: ‘si clarus equos spatioso lumine Titan/ laxet et aurato caelum splendore serenat,/ Laetitia exundant et sese hortantur agrestes’,⁵⁰ Douglas greatly expands the three lines into ten, making explicit that ‘bricht Titan’ makes

⁴⁵ Douglas, XIII. 9. 58-59, 63, 47.

⁴⁶ *Opera*, f. cccxc^v.

⁴⁷ Douglas, XIII. 8. 89-93.

⁴⁸ E.g. Anonymous, *Eneas: A Twelfth-Century French Romance*, translated by John A. Yunck (New York: Columbia University Press, 1974), pp. 181-183.

⁴⁹ *Opera*, f. ccclxxxix^r; Douglas, XIII. 6. 225-227.

⁵⁰ *Opera*, f. cccxc^r.

‘the heavens fair, clear and sheen,/ The weather smowt, and firmament serene’, and that the ‘agrestes’ are ‘landward hines [...] baith man and boy’. Overall, ‘the soft season overflows full of joy’.⁵¹ In these instances, and others,⁵² Douglas uses this emphasis of the romance tradition, fused with and ultimately deriving from Virgil’s own subjective emphases, to create more palpable and immersive descriptions, which as well as being more entertaining and capable of holding a reader’s attention, have an implicit subjective touch to them. If we can see the rubies on Andromache’s collar, or the empty fields by the light of the flames which burn them, we are, in a sense, placed in the position of characters in the narrative. Douglas fuses Virgilian and romance tendencies in order to enhance visual vividness and facilitate an understanding of interiority.

Douglas encourages this subjective focus in other ways: when translates ‘confusi umeros atque ora tenebant’ as ‘Their burdens on their shoulders carrying,/ And movit neither foot, tongue, nor mouth’,⁵³ he expands ‘ora’ to encompass the foot as well as translating it as both tongue and mouth, highlighting these organs in order to convey, how stupefied (‘confusi’) the characters are. More than this, however, we, as readers of Douglas’ text rather than Vegio’s, are better able to appreciate this confusion, through an involuntary sympathetic response to these characters’ experience. Douglas makes emotions even more explicit, and combines this with a characteristically romance focus on women, in his treatment of Lavinia. Here, Vegio’s ‘sidereis delecta oculos’ becomes ‘The crystal beams of her een twain –/ That as the bricht twinkling stars shane –/ Somedeal ashamit toward the earth doth hauld’.⁵⁴ The glistening, star-like quality of Lavinia’s eyes in Vegio has been expanded, and Douglas states why she looks down: she is ‘somedel ashmit’. This not only constitutes a semi-ekphrastic description of her eyes, in line with those of Andromache’s collar and neck analysed earlier; it also states, where Virgil and Vegio do not, why she looks down (and, in Virgil, blushes).⁵⁵ She is being self-conscious, performing a conventional expression of modesty which makes her more attractive. This emotional analysis is not of the same magnitude as that found in the *Roman d’Enéas*,⁵⁶ but the explicit statement of interiority following from an external description is still influenced by the romance, and the probability that it is inspired by emphases found in other passages of Virgil only makes Douglas’ surpassing of Vegio’s Virgilian model here even more striking.

⁵¹ Douglas, XIII. 8. 25-34.

⁵² E.g. cf. *Opera*, f. ccclxxxvi^r and Douglas, XIII. 4. 13-14; cf. *Opera*, f. cccxcⁱ and Douglas, XIII. 10. 24-26.

⁵³ *Opera*, f. ccclxxxvi^v; Douglas, XIII. 4. 112-113.

⁵⁴ *Opera*, f. cccxc^t; Douglas, XIII. 8. 55-57.

⁵⁵ Virgil, *The Aeneid*, translated by Robert Fagles, XII. 64-70. See R. O. A. M. Lyne, ‘Lavinia’s Blush: Vergil, “Aeneid” 12.64-70.’ *Greece and Rome* vol. 30, no. 1 (1983), pp. 55-64.

⁵⁶ The text in which ‘for the first time the constituent elements of the romance [...] fall into place and assume a characteristic pattern’, and in which Lavinia’s infatuation with Aeneas and her dilemmas and emotional conflicts in love form a substantial part of the narrative, and enable her to become more of a character than in any other text (John A. Yunck, ‘Introduction’ to Anonymous, *Eneas: A Twelfth-Century French Romance*, p. 1; see also Wilson-Okamura, *Virgil in the Renaissance*, pp. 233-236 and *Eneas*, pp. 214-223).

The clearest manifestation of the romance way of reading Virgil comes in the festive, courtly scenes of the banquet and other marriage celebrations. These channel familiarising, dynamic and subjective drives, and combine them with chivalric and courtly settings and customs known to Douglas and his contemporaries both from romances and the noble lifestyle reflected in, and shaped by, them. This is seen immediately in the woodcuts from the 1502 edition, but the scenes of this banquet, with its contemporary table settings and architectural framing, and the final combat between Aeneas and Turnus, which is set in a jousting or duelling area marked off by wooden barriers, illustrate the concept particularly well (Figs. 5 and 6, respectively).⁵⁷ Again, we can regard these woodcuts as analogues rather than sources for Douglas' translation; Douglas was part of a culture for which the romance provided the most popular literary and ethical models; indeed, it was both the behavioural code of ruling elites, and the pulp fiction for anyone able to hear it, read it, or look at its associated images.⁵⁸ We saw the same phenomenon when discussing the Florentine *cassone* panels near the beginning of this study. Douglas' concern with this tradition is observable through his translation of three of Vegio's lines into eleven of his own, just as the light fades and the banquet is prepared. This is Vegio:

Et iam tarda epulas fugientis tempora lucis
Poscebant; mox regali convivia luxu
Effundunt latosque alta intra tecta paratus.⁵⁹

And this is Douglas:

By this it waxes late toward the nicht,
And fast declining gan the day's licht,
The time requiring (after the auld manner)
To gae to meat and sit to the supper.
Anon the banquet and the mangery
For feast royal according, by and by –
With all abundance pertaining to sic thing,
As weel affeir it in the house of a king –
With alkin manner ordinance was made
Amid the halls heich, lang, and braid,

⁵⁷ Brant-Grüniger, *Publij Virgilij Maronis Opera*, ff. A_04^v, 394^v, 395^v, 406^v, 407^v, 408^v, 410^v.

⁵⁸ Wilson-Okamura, *Virgil in the Renaissance*, p. 230; Nicola McDonald (ed.), *Pulp Fictions of Medieval England: Essays in Popular Romance* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004); Helen Cooper, *The English Romance in Time: Transforming Motifs from Geoffrey of Monmouth to the Death of Shakespeare* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).

⁵⁹ *Opera*, f. cccxc^v.

Apparellit at all device and array.⁶⁰

Douglas emphasises the decorum of the occasion: the practice of banqueting at dusk is ‘after the auld manner’, and this particular banquet is ‘for feast royal according [...] with all abundance pertaining to sic thing,/As weel affeir it in the house of a king’. He stresses that this is in line with the proper protocol and social code of his society. Additionally, he adds a sense of grandeur and plenitude, both in the setting and what is served there: ‘gae to meat’, ‘sit to the supper’, ‘mangery’, ‘feast royal’, ‘all abundance’, ‘alkin manner ordinance’, ‘halls heich, lang, and braid’, ‘all device and array’. Like some earlier passages, this tangibly evokes a courtly atmosphere. A similar effect can be seen in the description of the wedding itself; here, Douglas extends four of Vegio’s lines into twelve, and begins with the phrase ‘Syne (to abridge our matter)’, before inserting details of ‘minstrels and heralds’, ‘joy and mirth, with dancing and deray,/Full merry noise, and sounds of game and play’, ‘playit and sung’, into Vegio’s more solemn and ceremonial scene.⁶¹ In Douglas, these moments are full of action and detail: Vegio mentions servants, but only Douglas says they were ‘at tables making sae glad cheer –/A paradise it was to see and hear’.⁶² ‘Plaudente triumphos’ becomes ‘joy, blitheness, solace and deray,/ Triumph to mak, with mirth, game, and play’.⁶³ Consistently, the scene is amplified, and is more courtly, festive and lively, drawing on rhetorical and romance traditions and, related to these, everyday life.

The style of translation here, as Bawcutt has noted, is freer and fuller than usual,⁶⁴ which suggests the general (and generic) influence of this tradition, but closer textual parallels are also present. When Vegio writes

Consurgunt Phryges, et cithara resonante sequuntur
Ausonii et plausum ingeminant seque agmine toto
Permiscet variantque pedes raptimque feruntur,⁶⁵

Douglas – as we have seen, characteristically – expands it, introducing ‘harps and gitterns’ for ‘cithara’, ‘double brangles and gambates,/ Dances and rounds tracing mony gates,/ Either through other reeling (on their guise)’ before a few more lines state the usual disclaimer about it taking too long to describe everything else (apart from, of course, ‘morrises and sic riots’).⁶⁶ After this, however, Douglas adds the passage:

⁶⁰ Douglas, XIII. 9. 1-11.

⁶¹ Cf. *Opera*, f. cccxc^v and Douglas, XIII. 8. 69-80.

⁶² Cf. *Opera*, f. cccxc^v and Douglas, XIII. 9. 28-30.

⁶³ Cf. *Opera*, f. ccclxxxviii^r and Douglas, XIII. 6. 41-42.

⁶⁴ Bawcutt, *Gavin Douglas*, p. 148.

⁶⁵ *Opera*, f. cccxci^r.

⁶⁶ Douglas, XIII. 9. 105-112.

But for to tellin how with torch-light
They went to chamber, and syne to bed at nicht:
Mine author list nae mention thereof draw.
Nae mair will I, for sic things been knaw;
All are expert, after new marriage,
On the first nicht what should be the surcharge.⁶⁷

This echoes Chaucer's simultaneous suggestiveness and refusal concerning Aeneas and Dido's consummation of their love in the cave in his *Legend of Dido*,⁶⁸ and the erotic use of the word 'subcharge' in Robert Henryson's *Taill of the Uplandis Mous, and the Burges Mous*, and David Lyndsay's *Kitteis Confessioun*.⁶⁹ The playfulness here,⁷⁰ and the use of this earlier literature, combined with the subject matter of marriage as a concluding narrative device, and the focus on the familiar setting of the court and its conventions, demonstrate Douglas' employment of the romance tradition's response to Virgil alongside its other features.

Altogether, several of Douglas' original if conventional modifications of Vegio revolve around intensifying the reader's engagement with the narrative and its characters by making some moments more familiar, forming dynamic descriptions (sometimes through the use of alliteration), increasing the detail with which almost everything is treated, and focusing on motivations and feelings, especially of the defeated Italians and Lavinia. These (even when inspired also by Virgilian emphases), together with the themes of marriage and festivity, playfully related, are legacies of the romance tradition, which, arguably, was reflected in Douglas' actual society. All these features suggest that Douglas was attempting to bring Vegio's text to life for his readers, just as he tried to vernacularize and make relevant the *Aeneid* itself. Indeed, having his audience members imagine themselves in the poem is Douglas' delivery system for advisory messages, as we will see when we turn to the moralistic. The celebratory festive scenes also contribute to this moralistic reading. Together with the increased attention to and sympathy with the feelings of characters, these divergences from Vegio (or, rather, extensions of characteristics which to a more limited extent were present in Vegio's work originally, as well as Virgil's) also participate in the pathos-focused way of reading which will be examined in the next section.

⁶⁷ Douglas, XIII. 9. 113-118.

⁶⁸ Geoffrey Chaucer, *Legend of Dido*, ll. 1227-1228, in *The Riverside Chaucer*.

⁶⁹ See Coldwell, Vol. 1, p. 262.

⁷⁰ Also cf. *Opera*, f. cccxcii^r, Douglas, XIII. 10. 110-112, and Chaucer, *Legend of Good Women*, ll. 1-6, in *The Riverside Chaucer*.

III: The Pathetic: Suffering, Identification, and the Formally Tragic

The pathetic mode of reading emphasises suffering and cost. As can be expected, this is necessarily underpinned by the focuses on subjectivity and sympathy with characters' feelings which we have already observed. Crucially, however, the examples in this section go further, and explicitly amplify elements of death, grief, destruction, hardship and doom (or divine will, or fate). To an extent this is to be expected in an epic narrative which deals with the conclusion and aftermath of war, and so many of Douglas' divergences, while nonetheless devoting more space to these subjects than Vegio does, seem more ordinary and predictable; in other words, they are pathetic in subject-matter alone. Others, such as the mourning speech of Turnus' father Daunus, are more formally tragic, using features of the genre of the tragic lament to create distinctively pathetic moments.⁷¹ After all these have been examined, an investigation into Douglas' sources and wider practice will position him within the broader interpretative tradition, and determine the extent of this pathetic way of reading Vegio and Virgil among his contemporaries.

An illustration of the pathetic reading at its most subtle can be found in these lines, which Douglas inserts between Vegio's scene of the guests sitting down to the banquet and the immediately-following reference to crystal glasses:

where they were servit syne
With alkin dainties, and with meats seir,
That all to reckon prolix were to hear.⁷²

In Vegio's text, there appear neither these lines, nor the 'prolix' list of 'alkin dainties' and 'meats seir' to which Douglas refers.⁷³ Significantly, however, Douglas is here using Chaucerian allusions again, examples of rhetorical 'abbreviatio' in the *Legend of Dido*:

What nedeth yow the feste to describe? [...]
Full was the feste of deyntees and rychesse,
Of instruments, of song, an of gladnesse,
Of many an amorous lokyng and devys

⁷¹ Cf. *Opera*, ff. ccclxxxvii^{r-v}, Douglas, XIII. 5. 27-100. These include Douglas' expansion of 'afflicto' ('sae trist and webegone') and his addition of another formally appropriate question ('Where is thy doughty valour now become?') into Daunus' tragic lament. Chaucerian exclamations of despair also feature, suggesting Douglas' attempt to vernacularize classical lament. There are also pedagogical (Douglas' naming of Amata as 'sister' and 'queen'); romance (chivalric details); and moralistic (Douglas' transformation of the tragic rhetorical question into an adage) modifications. For the tragic lament, see Virgil, *The Aeneid* (Fagles ed.), XI. 34-69, 164-199, XII. 978-1009 (1003-1004), 1018-1025; Barchiesi, *Homeric Effects*, pp. 95-113; Homer, *The Iliad*, translated by Robert Fagles, XXII. 477-515.

⁷² Douglas, XIII. 9. 14-16.

⁷³ *Opera*, f. cccxc^v.

This Eneas is come to paradys
Out of the swolow of helle, and thus in joye
Remembreth hym of his estat in Troye.
To daunsynge chaumberes ful of paramentes,
Of riche beddes, and of ornementes,⁷⁴

And also:

But hereof was so long a sermounynge
It were to long to make rehersynge.⁷⁵

These passages describe the banquet and celebrations in Carthage, where Aeneas is hosted by Dido, and having noted Douglas' treatment of such scenes elsewhere as evidence of his fusion of the romance and Virgilian traditions, we may be inclined to attribute this to the same tendency. There is more to notice here, however: by recalling the Virgilian moment more potently by superimposing Chaucer's retelling of it upon Vegio's own allusion to it in his scene of the Lavinia-Aeneas marriage celebrations, Douglas brings to the mind of anyone familiar with the *Aeneid* the violent ends of such delights. The aim, it could be argued in response to this interpretation, could be sublimation, recalling the episode in Carthage in order to suggest that this time the ending really will be happy, but the weight of sombre textual reminiscences here is too great, especially given the details in Chaucer about Aeneas having come from 'the swolow of helle' to 'paradys', while still remembering 'his estat at Troye'. These elements are exactly how Aeneas feels and thinks in Vegio (and in Douglas' translation); he looks back on hardship and believes, perhaps mistakenly, that his secure, peaceful rest is finally achieved. Chaucer's works were hugely influential and well-known to Douglas and his readers, and so these allusions create a sort of feedback loop, through Virgil and Vegio and back into Douglas' text, carrying with them all the additional distortion, disquiet and potentially pathetic resonances of these earlier works.

Yet this only signifies the risk of future pathos-filled events; Douglas elsewhere changes Vegio's text to give explicit space to suffering and the defeated in the present. He specifies what kind of *dolor* the Rutulians feel: they are 'thrae', or angry or reluctant;⁷⁶ and, perhaps following the funerary moments in *Aeneid* 5.74 and 7.614 to which Vegio alludes, he translates 'cetera pubes/ flens sequitur' as the more detailed, vivid and affecting 'The remnant syne of the hail barnage/ Follows weeping – knight,

⁷⁴ Chaucer, *Legend of Dido*, ll. 1098-1107.

⁷⁵ Chaucer, *Legend of Dido*, ll. 1184-1185; see also Chaucer, *House of Fame*, ll. 377-382.

⁷⁶ Cf. *Opera*, f. ccclxxxiii^r and Douglas, XIII. 1. 50.

swain, man and page'.⁷⁷ He also expands and casts into dramatic speech the scene of the Trojans jeering the defeated Italians: 'incusans acri ore Latinos/ ignavosque vocans' becomes:

And oft with bitter mouth did cryin "Fie!"
And gan accuse the Latin people all:
Oft "faint folks" and "slothful" did them call.⁷⁸

Even for the victors, Douglas devotes more space to the cost of their efforts, when he adds 'And for sae feil dangers and mony effray' into one of Aeneas' speeches.⁷⁹ This all conveys a more palpable picture of suffering which affects various people, from the old to the young, the noble to the humbly born, the victorious to the defeated. Considering that Douglas was translating in the aftermath of a war between England and Scotland,⁸⁰ and the pedagogical functions his translation performs elsewhere, this might suggest an ethical and pragmatic purpose to pathos as a means of acknowledging the cost to both sides in order to begin the peace process.

This sympathetic movement even culminates in identification, notably between Turnus and Aeneas. The most striking instance of this is when Aeneas first sees Lavinia, and, in Vegio,

mirabile dictu,
Ut vidit, primo aspectu stupefactus inhaesit
Et secum Turni casus miseratus acerbos
Qui haud parva spe ductus ovans in proelia tantos
Civisset motus durisque arsisset in armis.⁸¹

In Douglas, this becomes:

Sae excellent that wonder were to say),
At the first blink astonished half wox he,
And musing hovers still on her to see;
And in his mind gan rue the hard mischance
Of Turnus, wham nae little appearance
Sae bauldly movit to deraign bargain,
To raise the weir, and fecht for siccan ane:
For weel (he thocht) the hope of sic a wicht

⁷⁷ *Opera*, f. ccclxxxvi^r; Douglas, XIII. 4. 21-22.

⁷⁸ Cf. *Opera*, f. ccclxxxiii^r and Douglas, XIII. 1. 118-120.

⁷⁹ Cf. *Opera*, f. ccclxxxv^r and Douglas, XIII. 2. 154.

⁸⁰ Robert Cummings, "'To the cart the fift quheill'".

⁸¹ *Opera*, ff. cccxc^{r-v}.

To deeds of arms aucht constrain any knight.⁸²

We can see that Douglas rationalises Turnus' behaviour even more than Vegio does, by noting that Turnus had 'nae little appearance' of Lavinia, whereas Aeneas, seeing her only 'at the first blink', is half 'astonished'. The most obvious addition appears in the final two lines quoted, which (as well as continuing the familiarising element of the romance by making the two men 'knichts', especially appropriately in such a 'romantic', amorous moment) show Aeneas literally sympathising – feeling with – Turnus, and concluding that in his position, he too would have prosecuted the war for the sake of winning Lavinia. In Vegio, these lines are only 'haud parva spe', 'no little hope'; only Douglas makes explicit what that hope is, then extends it to identify Aeneas with Turnus by saying that they share it. The adjectives used to describe these two characters are also often the same. Douglas tends to translate 'pietas' into 'ruth' or some derivative of it, and so when Turnus' body is described as 'the great deid corse, ruthful and woebegone',⁸³ we must associate it with 'ruthful' or 'pius' Aeneas. Yet Douglas also uses 'ruthful' to translate Vegio's 'miserabile'.⁸⁴ Aeneas is virtuous because he pities Turnus, and Turnus is virtuous because he is pitiable. This alignment might even be prompted by Virgil's own pathos. Again, there are Chaucerian echoes from the *Legend of Dido*: 'a routhe and pite for to here', 'so gret a routhe I have it for t'endite'.⁸⁵ Together with uses of 'Alas!' or 'Alack!', these additionally serve as signposts of the pathetic, but the reference to 'routhe'/'ruth' augments the effect of identification.

Douglas also focuses on the suffering of Turnus: Vegio's 'sed nec parvo' is translated as 'nae little thing/ Has it cost some man',⁸⁶ specifying that Turnus has suffered in particular, rather than everyone more generally (as Latinus implies in Vegio, even though the heavens do still punish Turnus). This may be derived from Ascensius' note 'Turno' beside this phrase. Another note by Ascensius, 'in tergum', may partly have inspired Douglas' expansion of Vegio's lines detailing the courage of Turnus' death: into Vegio's text, Douglas introduces the idea that no-one will 'note thee of nae cowardice (in their mind),/ Nor that thou was degenerate, out of kind', 'caught in the back'.⁸⁷ The effect here is to exonerate Turnus and endow him with more of that 'ruth' described above. This exoneration is achieved by dwelling, pathetically, on the death itself, which is elsewhere described, in

⁸² Douglas, XIII. 8. 60-68.

⁸³ Cf. *Opera*, f. ccclxxxv^r and Douglas, XIII. 3. 2.

⁸⁴ Douglas' emphasis on such 'ruth' has also been remarked upon by Eleanor Stewart-Pointing in her University of East Anglia doctoral research into the *Eneados*, as she argues that Douglas' 'rhetoric of pathos', especially in his treatment of the figure of Dido, is an innovation which appears in spite of the interpretative drives of Ascensius' commentary.

⁸⁵ Chaucer, *Legend of Dido*, ll. 1249, 1345.

⁸⁶ Cf. *Opera*, f. ccclxxxix^v and Douglas, XIII. 7. 59-60.

⁸⁷ Cf. *Opera*, f. ccclxxxvi^r and Douglas, XIII. 3. 133-136.

another innovation, as ‘in field discomfist, slain and brocht to ground’.⁸⁸ Douglas also applies the ‘habebit’ part of ‘saltem hoc miserae solamen habebit/ Mortis, ut Aeneae Troiani exceperis ensem’ to Daunus, not Ardea, thus intensifying the emotive force of the moment to the reader and to Turnus’ ‘waeful father’, whose ‘miserae’ is translated as ‘sair smart’.⁸⁹ This focus is manifested in multiple other instances. Where Vegio has ‘funere’, and the huge funeral cortege is what afflicts Latinus’ thoughts, Douglas has ‘For sae excellent deid corse as was slain’, thus, again, making explicit the real causes of grief, and throwing attention onto the image of Turnus’ noble corpse.⁹⁰ Likewise, Daunus beholds not the ‘funera’ of his dear, beloved son, but his ‘corse’.⁹¹

This mourning of Turnus brings us to Daunus’ lament, and also the lament of Latinus. The presence of these and their formal features is clearly different from the material considered so far, in which pathos features as subject-matter; as Barchiesi notes in his discussion of Virgil’s lament of Juturna, which seems to be a key model here, the episode ‘opposes a *norm* – and this very thing [...] renders it visible’. It is separate from the surrounding text (which mostly works towards narrative resolution), a ‘limited space of liberty and tragic reflection’, composed of a ‘mixture of pathetic discourse’, and bursts of recurring interrogatives. Altogether, in the Virgilian case, and in addition to being distinct from the rest of Book XII, these recall the mood of the ‘tragic’ fourth book of Dido.⁹² Much of this usefully holds true for Vegio’s laments as well, except that Vegio’s episodes recall other earlier laments too, thereby concentrating the generic essence contained within the passages. Other features of the genre include the role of the divine in shaping fate, the problematic nature of this fate and how it is effected, and its inexorability.

To again quote Grafton, ‘Vegio knew what he was doing’, and this is especially true with reference to genre when he wrote these speeches.⁹³ Douglas in some ways merely extends his practices: when he adds the line ‘But all for nocht: naething might stin in thee’, he concludes this thread of Latinus’ thought, and states the futility of the events previously described.⁹⁴ The same sense of inexorability comes in Douglas’ addition ‘where remedy was nane’;⁹⁵ in some ways, the speech is moralistic, but working against this is the idea that Turnus’ fate could not be averted. The sense of loss typical of these laments, expressed through the ‘ubi sunt’ *topos*, is also amplified. It can be seen in Douglas’ treatment of Daunus’, and also Latinus’, laments. Vegio’s text of the latter reads:

⁸⁸ Cf. *Opera*, f. ccclxxxvii^r and Douglas, XIII. 5. 8.

⁸⁹ Cf. *Opera*, f. ccclxxxvi^r and Douglas, XIII. 3. 138-140.

⁹⁰ Cf. *Opera*, f. ccclxxxvi^r and Douglas, XIII. 4. 31.

⁹¹ Cf. *Opera*, f. ccclxxxvii^r and Douglas, XIII. 5. 19-20.

⁹² Barchiesi, *Homeric Effects*, pp. 97-101.

⁹³ And there are, consequently, many elements of Daunus’ speech which fit the generic model but which will not be discussed here, since they are not innovations by Douglas.

⁹⁴ Cf. *Opera*, f. ccclxxxv^v and Douglas, XIII. 3. 103-107 (107).

⁹⁵ Cf. *Opera*, f. ccclxxxv^v and Douglas, XIII. 3. 120.

Ubinam generosa iuventae
Gloria et excellens animus? Quo splendidus altae
Frontis honos? Quonam illa decens it frontis imago?⁹⁶

Douglas transforms these three lines into seven, with the anaphoric ‘where’ and ‘whither’ creating a rhetorical movement which extends the ‘recurring interrogatives’ of the tragic lament form, while emphasising Turnus’ aesthetic qualities which have been lost with his death:

Where is the noble renown of thy youth hede?
And where is thine excellent heich courage?
Whither is went thy strength and vassalage?
Where is the stately beauty of thy face?
Where is thy shining figure now? Alas!
Of thy fair visage whither are gane (but weir)
Thy pleasant forehead shapely, and een clear?⁹⁷

The role of the divine in this tragic genre must be explored. Virgil’s Juturna blames Jupiter for granting her an agonising immortality in recompense for raping her, and Vegio’s Daunus demands to know what else the gods have left to inflict on him as his city burns and he mourns over his dead son. Douglas, as we have seen with the pedagogical mode, is fond of clarifying through associations, such as by linking Jupiter with the eagle or with thunder, and this has significant consequences when he translates the simile likening Turnus to a hound gored by a boar (‘spumantis apri quando per viscera dentes/ fulmineos canis excepit’) as ‘when the faemy boar has beat/ (with his thundering awful tusks great)’.⁹⁸ ‘Fulmineos’ here becomes not the alliterative and equally accurate ‘blazing’ or (remembering Douglas’ ‘faemy’ for ‘spumantis’) ‘flaming’, but ‘thundering’, thus aligning the boar with Jupiter *tonans*.⁹⁹ And this is entirely fitting, as Jupiter, in the *Aeneid*, had sent the Dira to Turnus, and in Vegio’s text (and specifically in Daunus’ lament), an eagle swoops down to kill the fawn to which Turnus is also likened.¹⁰⁰ The fact that this trope of being opposed by an unstoppable divine force is characteristic of the tragic lament further confirms the currency of both subject-matter and genre in creating this emphasis on pathos. Barchiesi, still with reference to Juturna, describes the effect well, and the resemblances highlight the usefulness of his insight: the fact that such volatile

⁹⁶ *Opera*, f. ccclxxxv^v-ccclxxxvi^r.

⁹⁷ Douglas, XIII. 3. 122-128.

⁹⁸ *Opera*, f. ccclxxxv^r and Douglas, XIII. 3. 21-22.

⁹⁹ A clear majority of Douglas’ uses of ‘thunder’ and its derivatives are aligned with Jove: see also Douglas, I. 5. 10-12, II. 10. 153-155, IV. 1. 50-51, IV. 5. 61-68, VI. 9. 102-103, 114, 124, 126-130, VII. 3. 77-78, VIII. 6. 95-98, IX. 3. 67-68, IX. 10. 93-95, X. 10. 57, XIII. 2. 28, XIII. 3. 89.

¹⁰⁰ *Opera*, f. ccclxxxvii^v.

(and, in the case of the Dirae, demonic) forces are used by Jupiter is ‘not a direct contradiction of the poem’s theodicy’; nonetheless, ‘the tortured atmosphere of this scene does not allow the principles of synthesis and conciliation, enforced with difficulty on Olympus, to extend to terrestrial events’.¹⁰¹ Douglas, just as much as Vegio, has recognised this Virgilian principle that although order may exist celestially, on earth it is achieved (as it eventually is in the *Aeneid* narrative, including through Vegio’s continuation) only at great cost through struggle, suffering and loss. In the case of the *Aeneid* and narratives based on it, this cost is attended to, and the main (even if necessary) victim is Turnus.

These elements of pathos can be traced elsewhere in Douglas’ work and sources, and an awareness of this could allow us to trace how this way of reading was transmitted to him, and suggest how his work can be situated relative to it. Elsewhere in the *Eneados*, Douglas creatively translates in ways which show similar concerns to those considered in this section. He emphasises the courage of the Italians, noting that they were ‘tofore unbroken and stout of heart’;¹⁰² he makes Turnus more sympathetic by writing that he has a ‘gentle heart,/ Liberal and free’, taking ‘animus’, as Ascensius also does, to apply to Turnus instead of Latinus (an indication of the importance of misreading in these matters).¹⁰³ He summarises the horror of battle, to everyone involved, in the new line ‘Full grievous grew the bargain in all steids’;¹⁰⁴ and he imports the romantic language of complaint in the innovation ‘They rent their hair, with “Harro!” and “Alack!”’ He notes, where Ascensius does (‘cadaver extincte’) but Virgil does not, that Lavinia ‘beside the deid corse stands’ of the recent suicide Amata.¹⁰⁵ Looking at the 1502 Strasbourg edition, we can see that such emphases were present in contemporary editions: of the six woodcuts designed by Johann Grüninger to illustrate the *Supplementum* in Sebastian Brant’s edition, three depict pathos-filled moments. These feature Aeneas standing over the dead Turnus, addressing the Latins, while fires and troops (including a wounded one) are present in the background (Fig. 6);¹⁰⁶ Turnus’ coffin, Latinus weeping, and the news being delivered to Ardea, which burns and flies into the air as a heron (Fig. 7);¹⁰⁷ and Drances and Aeneas talking, while sacrifices are made, mounted troops listen, and corpses are burned beside the river (Fig. 8).¹⁰⁸ The image depicting the wedding banquet echoes in layout that depicting Aeneas and Dido in Carthage (Fig. 9),¹⁰⁹ but this is the only similarity and the later image shows more opulence, so this probably reflects the celebratory side of the narrative. It must be noted that although the proportion of pathos to resolution is half-and-half, the events of the *Supplementum* tend to be more celebratory than its speeches, and since the woodcuts are

¹⁰¹ Barchiesi, *Homeric Effects*, p. 104.

¹⁰² Cf. Coldwell, Vol. 1, 250, and Douglas, XII. 1. 4.

¹⁰³ Cf. Coldwell, Vol. 1, 251, and Douglas, XII. 1. 12.

¹⁰⁴ Cf. Coldwell, Vol. 1, 252, and Douglas, XII. 5. 160.

¹⁰⁵ Cf. Coldwell, Vol. 1, 254, and Douglas, XII. 10. 126.

¹⁰⁶ *Publij Virgilij Maronis Opera*, f. 410^v.

¹⁰⁷ *Publij Virgilij Maronis Opera*, f. 411^v.

¹⁰⁸ *Publij Virgilij Maronis Opera*, f. 413^r.

¹⁰⁹ Cf. *Publij Virgilij Maronis Opera*, ff. 414^v and 151^r.

more capable of representing events, the speeches can only be expressed through images of Latinus weeping, or Turnus' coffin, or Ardea burning.

The sixteenth-century manuscript annotations to this copy of the text, Codex Heidelbergensis 370, 319, offer richer evidence for how such material was interpreted. This was not Douglas' personal copy, but the glosses give an idea of how it was possible in the early sixteenth century to respond to the elements of the text just discussed. The first feature to notice is the abundance of interlinear glosses explaining certain words or phrases. Marginal comments identify orations,¹¹⁰ similes,¹¹¹ key narrative moments (such as the burning of Ardea, or the marriage of Aeneas and Lavinia),¹¹² and potential material for the annotator's commonplace book, indicated by headings such as 'crudelitas mortis'.¹¹³ All this is to be expected, is observable throughout the volume in the notes on the *Aeneid* itself, and, especially in the owner's evident love of orations, suggests a schoolroom style of reading which prioritised explaining phrases, highlighting narrative events, and harvesting useful material, notably for speeches. Yet the luxurious nature of the Heidelberg volume, especially its woodcuts, suggests a wealthier owner and reader, supporting the idea that the annotations were made by someone with a civic position or aspirations with this commonplacing aim in mind. The more distinctive emphases come in the form of an increase in annotation in Book XII, especially from the lament of Juturna (which is highlighted by a marginal note) to the end,¹¹⁴ which may have been partially prompted by an affecting woodcut depicting Juturna weeping alone as she stands outside of, while staring into, the duelling arena in which the combat between Aeneas and Turnus is taking place.¹¹⁵ Douglas, then, was not alone in his emphasis on pathos. Juturna's lament had inspired Vegio's laments, and these all focused on Turnus, who is also depicted in numerous woodcuts preceding the one of Juturna.¹¹⁶ This focus is obviously present in Virgil's text itself (it is, after all, simply the narrative), but to highlight it and depict it in another medium, not least a visual one which rendered it more memorable, would have increased its ability to be influential, and as we have seen in the annotations, it was. Finally, the only other woodcuts in the entire volume featuring coffins and a funeral are those depicting and surrounding the death and burial of Pallas (Fig. 10),¹¹⁷ and in Virgil's text, again, the speeches associated with this moment greatly resemble Vegio's laments of Latinus and Daunus.¹¹⁸ In summary, Douglas' contemporaries, like earlier and later readers, saw the associations between these pathetic moments in Vegio's text and their Virgilian models. Furthermore, they

¹¹⁰ E.g. *Publij Virgilij Maronis Opera*, ff. A_01^r, A_02^v, A_04^r, A_05^r.

¹¹¹ E.g. *Publij Virgilij Maronis Opera*, ff. A_01^v, A_02^r.

¹¹² *Publij Virgilij Maronis Opera*, ff. A_02^r, A_04^r.

¹¹³ *Publij Virgilij Maronis Opera*, f. A_02^v.

¹¹⁴ *Publij Virgilij Maronis Opera*, f. 409^r.

¹¹⁵ *Publij Virgilij Maronis Opera*, f. 408^v.

¹¹⁶ See especially *Publij Virgilij Maronis Opera*, ff. 395^v, 397^r, 401^r, 405^r, 406^v, 407^v.

¹¹⁷ *Publij Virgilij Maronis Opera*, ff. 370^v, 371^r, 372^v.

¹¹⁸ Cf. *Publij Virgilij Maronis Opera*, ff. 370^{r-v}-371^r, and Latinus' and Daunus' laments, here discussed.

expressed them in visual forms which reinforced these connections. Douglas, reading Virgil's pathos within and alongside these later texts (and possibly but not demonstrably images) emphasising it, inherited at least some of this pathetic mode of interpretation.

To conclude this section, we have seen that a focus on the pathetic was characteristic of many of Douglas' innovations in his translation of Vegio's text, and, in some instances, Virgil's as well. This was manifested in subtle textual recollections which destabilised the idea that the narrative would be happily resolved; in word choices and expansions which identified Aeneas and Turnus with each other, thus cutting against any moralistic drive praising the former and blaming the latter; in focuses on corpses, suffering, and undeserved death; and in formally tragic speeches which crystallised other pathetic themes into a memorable literary structure which set them significantly apart from the rest of the text, as passages to be noticed. We have also seen that they were noticed by readers of Vegio and Virgil with whom Douglas was familiar, and that this way of reading was far more prevalent than has been acknowledged. This mode of reading shared in the impulse towards vivid description which we have seen elsewhere in Douglas, and the sympathy and familiarisation which were features of the romance tradition he also drew upon. Indeed, and possibly for reasons of contemporary political expediency which we will see, Douglas' formal (romance) as well as his functional (pedagogical) modes of reading and translating Vegio also work to support the message that pathos is important to effecting peace. Yet it also coexisted with a tradition in which Aeneas' fate was seen as the deserved reward for virtue, and which was expressed in an equally moralistic tone. This might sit uneasily alongside the pathetic reading which stresses the suffering and virtue of the defeated, but the Virgilian idea of social and cosmic order involving cost, and the awareness that morality can encompass many diverse maxims, offer explanations of how they could coexist. Indeed, the pathos in Douglas' adaptations of Vegio is consonant with the *Aeneid*, as well as medieval traditions of reading Virgil and amplifying pathos; the moralistic mode of reading which is complexly related to it will be the subject of the next and final division of this analysis.

IV: The Moralistic: Virtuous Action and its Rewards

The moralistic way of reading is easier to define, encompassing elements which convey moral messages, form happy narrative resolutions, and, linking both of these, demonstrate the rewards to be gained through moral action. We have seen instances of this mode so far. Aeneas, unsurprisingly, is the main model of moral behaviour, as Douglas draws on earlier moral and allegorical commentary traditions,¹¹⁹ while attempting to exculpate Aeneas from the 'traitor' and 'cad' interpretations of

¹¹⁹ See Paul White, *Jodocus Badius Ascensius: Commentary, Commerce, Print* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), pp. 67-68, 91-92, 226, 230-231, 248; Kallendorf, *Virgil and the Myth of Venice*, pp. 61-62.

authors such as Dares, Dictys and Chaucer, so that he appears as the ‘worthy conqueror and king’ rather than the ‘traitor of Troy’.¹²⁰

To momentarily pursue the focus on Turnus, it can be observed that although many of Douglas’ divergences show sympathy for him and participate in the pathetic mode of reading, there are moralistic passages which blame him or use him as an example to avoid. Where Vegio says that it was Turnus’ violence rather than his craving for praise (‘infesti violentia Turni/ tantum opus, haud dubito [...] iuvenilis enim plus laudis amore’) which motivated him to oppose Aeneas,¹²¹ Douglas emphasises both motivations, the ‘wilful violence’ and ‘sae great danger of battle’, ‘young desire of heich renown’ and ‘loyse of prowess’.¹²² Linked to this, Latinus’ speech to Turnus is made more moralistic through the addition of the word ‘blunder’ (inspired by Ascensius’ ‘imprudencia’) to describe Turnus’ decision to fight the Trojans who were commanded by Jupiter, and through the phrase ‘but mine avice’, making explicit that Latinus is delivering a (belated) lesson.¹²³ Such moments, however, are rare; moral messages are usually more commonplace and generally-applicable, such as when Douglas asserts the mutability of Fortune (‘Frac their estate to decay suddenly’) which Vegio only implies. Here, Ascensius’ ‘descendunt reges’ is the probable source,¹²⁴ and the 1502 edition examined in the previous section has a note highlighting this theme too, and warning against succumbing to an excessive lust for power.¹²⁵ Douglas’s expansion on Vegio gives him the opportunity to reiterate the conventional warning against Fortune and its vicissitudes, and sometimes they take a form focusing on the divine: Vegio’s text contains a warning to dread great Jove and fulfil the gods’ commands, but into this Douglas adds his own, moralistic clarification: ‘for their grief weel aucht we to be ware’.¹²⁶

In addition to conveying moral messages, the moralistic tone attempts to bring the narrative to a complete resolution. When Douglas translates ‘origo’ as ‘baith the crop and roots’ of unrest, he makes it clear that all disturbance has been (more than, etymologically-speaking) eradicated.¹²⁷ Vegio’s more hortatory ‘melioribus uti/ discite bellorum auspiciis’ becomes, through Douglas, the happier ‘Remember hereof and learn, in time coming/ With better aspects and happy beginning’.¹²⁸ The moral message to employ better reasons for prosecuting war is retained, but a bright vision of the future is

¹²⁰ Douglas, ‘The After-Text: Direction’, ll. 128-134; see Bawcutt, ‘The “Library” of Gavin Douglas’ in A. J. Aitken, M. P. McDiarmid and D. S. Thomson (eds.), *Bards and Makars: Scottish Language and Literature, Medieval and Renaissance* (Glasgow: University of Glasgow Press, 1977), pp. 107-126 (pp. 115-116).

¹²¹ *Opera*, f. ccclxxxix^r.

¹²² Douglas, XIII. 6. 174-180.

¹²³ Cf. *Opera*, f. ccclxxxv^v and Douglas, XIII. 3. 84-90 (90, 86).

¹²⁴ Cf. *Opera*, f. ccclxxxv^v and Douglas, XIII. 3. 69-74 (73).

¹²⁵ *Publij Virgilij Maronis Opera*, f. A_02^r.

¹²⁶ Cf. *Opera*, f. ccclxxxiii^v and Douglas, XIII. 1. 61-64 (63).

¹²⁷ Cf. *Opera*, f. ccclxxxix^v and Douglas, XIII. 7. 66; this is Chaucerian too, recalling *Troilus and Criseyde*, pp. 473-585 in *The Riverside Chaucer*, 2.348. Also Lydgate’s *Temple of Glas*, 1210; Lydgate’s role in shaping Chaucerianism, and his fifteenth-century reception, account substantially for the aureation seen in Douglas.

¹²⁸ Cf. *Opera*, f. ccclxxxiii^v and Douglas, XIII. 1. 99-100.

added to it. Similarly, Douglas continues the thought expressed in ‘rebus belloque quietem’ into ‘peace and amity,/ Of rest and quiet evermair frae the weir’, stating not only the absence of martial affairs, but numerous synonyms for ‘quietem’.¹²⁹ Where Vegio’s Latinus speaks of ‘munera’, Douglas’ speaks of a ‘belief and traist’ of future peace secured through the marriage of Aeneas and Lavinia.¹³⁰ Finally, the harmony between the Trojans and Italians is emphasised, as Douglas, while retaining Vegio’s meaning, extends it by translating three Latin lines into eight of his own, and adding that they ‘Gan live at ease’, ‘Their minds and breists in amity,/ In firm concord and great tranquillity’.¹³¹ As well as being conclusive, these amplifications draw on standard rhetorical traditions. It would therefore have seemed natural for Douglas to expand in this way, and yet he does not do it everywhere, so there must be principles of selection. Perhaps one of these is tied to the moralistic mode we are exploring here; especially in the context of oral performance (to which Douglas’ poem would have been eminently suited), these repetitions slow down the action, and enable the events and messages to be grasped, if not at the first hearing, then at its second, synonymous iteration.

Aeneas is the key agent in the process of peace-making, and his actions are intended as examples of moral and Christian conduct to be emulated. Fittingly, then, Douglas expands on Vegio in order to emphasise this. ‘The gentle Aeneas reverently’ shows Douglas translating ‘bonus’ into an adjective and adverb emphasising Aeneas’ Christian virtue or ‘ruth’, his love towards man and God.¹³² This is demonstrated in his actions: in Vegio, although Aeneas is likened to a mother hen protecting her brood from a swooping kite, the hen does not ‘rax herself and her courage advance’, or ‘their meat gan scrape’ after the attempted attack.¹³³ This emphasises both bravery, and a determination to provide for his people. Charity is thereby stressed as a key component of Aeneas’ character, as it is in Douglas’ original mention of Aeneas’ ‘knightly large bounty’.¹³⁴ Equally Christian is the *contemptus mundi* which Douglas emphasises in the scene of Aeneas’ apotheosis; in Vegio, this fate is granted to those who ‘gestis praestantibus orbem/ exhorrent’, and in Douglas, it goes to those who live by ‘perpetual lovings, by deeds honourable,/ And doth contemn the wretched world unstable’.¹³⁵ Vegio’s original text had ‘exornent’ for ‘exhorrent’,¹³⁶ effectively the (more pagan) opposite. This textual corruption, however, does testify to the contemporary plausibility of this heavenly bliss as a reward

¹²⁹ Cf. *Opera*, f. ccclxxxiii^v and Douglas, XIII. 1. 48-49.

¹³⁰ Cf. *Opera*, f. ccclxxxviii^v and Douglas, XIII. 6. 153.

¹³¹ Cf. *Opera*, f. cccxcii^r and Douglas, XIII. 10. 125-132.

¹³² Cf. *Opera*, f. cccxc^r and Douglas, XIII. 7. 81.

¹³³ Cf. *Opera*, f. ccclxxxiii^v and Douglas, XIII. 2. 126, 137.

¹³⁴ Cf. *Opera*, f. cccxc^r and Douglas, XIII. 8. 16.

¹³⁵ Cf. *Opera*, f. cccxcii^v and Douglas, XIII. 11. 55-56.

¹³⁶ Vegio, *Supplementum*, l. 619.

for disdaining the earthly, and Douglas' 'unstable' is still an original if conventional touch amplifying this *topos*.¹³⁷

Despite this disdain for worldly things, virtue is presented as something which will result in earthly (as well as heavenly) rewards. We have already seen that the celebratory, festive scenes of the marriage banquet are amplified, but other rewards take similarly aristocratic forms, and present Aeneas' gains in authority, lands and lineage as greater than Vegio presents them. When, in Vegio's text, Aeneas addresses Ascanius, he says:

Nunc te, cum primum aurora rubebit,
Crastina, sublimen Rutulorum ad moenia mittam.¹³⁸

In Douglas, these lines are:

And now, my dearest child, for thy behoof,
To-morn, soon as Aurora waxes reid,
To the city of Laurentum (that royal steid)
I shall thee send, as victor owerhand,
To be maister and to maintain this land.¹³⁹

Douglas emphasises Aeneas' affection and 'ruth' or devotion to his son by calling him 'my dearest child', the 'moenia' become the city itself, Laurentum, a 'royal steid' suggestive more of a centre of power and a 'land' which is both a property and a kingdom, and Ascanius' role as 'maister' is made explicit, bringing the narrative closer to completion and aggrandising the gains which the Trojans will receive as new rulers. The same effect is seen in Douglas' translation of Latinus' claims to have many realms and cities: 'sunt mihi regna, iacent ereptis oppida muris' becomes,¹⁴⁰ despite the reference to ruined battlements, the grander

Realms I have, and cities mony ane,
Full strangly beltit with heich walls of stane;
And some also that I in weir conquest,

¹³⁷ Found also in Douglas, *The Palice of Honour*, pp. 1-134 in *The Shorter Poems of Gavin Douglas*, edited by Priscilla Bawcutt (Edinburgh: The Scottish Text Society, 2003), ll. 165-192, 1981-1982; Robert Henryson, *Orpheus and Eurydice*, pp. 132-153 in *The Poems of Robert Henryson*, edited by Denton Fox (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981), ll. 604-605, 623, 626; Chaucer, *Troilus and Criseyde*, 3. 820; Chaucer, *Boece*, 395-469 in *The Riverside Chaucer*, II. Prosa 1. 107-112, Metrum 1, Prosa 2. 1-57, Metrum 3. 16-23; Douglas, XIII. 5. 48-51, following Vegio.

¹³⁸ *Opera*, f. ccclxxxiiii^r.

¹³⁹ Douglas, XIII. 2. 58-62.

¹⁴⁰ *Opera*, f. cccxc^r.

And their barmkins to ground beat and down cast.¹⁴¹

Aeneas' new lands and cities are thereby amplified, and constitute a greater reward for the virtue he has demonstrated so far. A similar emphasis is seen later, when Douglas applies 'felix' to the city rather than to Aeneas: 'O happy city, and weel fortunate wall,/ With wham sae great relics remain shall'.¹⁴² This lordship is stated a little later on, when Douglas departs from Vegio to add that Aeneas' subjects 'hailly obeyit to his wand', and that he 'at his liking rulit all the land'.¹⁴³ This reference to a 'wand' or sceptre is also introduced elsewhere in moments when Vegio does not mention it as he does here, and despite the fact that Aeneas disavows it!¹⁴⁴ Again, authority and rulership, over a great territory, is the resulting impression.

These rewards, furthermore, will be passed onto Aeneas' heirs, again in a very aristocratic fashion which, like the previous examples, overlap the romance and moralistic modes. The grandest statement of this is when Douglas expands 'generique nepotes/Troianos Italo admixtos in saecula mittat' into

Whilk of kin, succession, and lineage –
By that ilk sovereign band of marriage –
Of Trojan and Italian blood descend
Shall children furth bring till the world's end,
Perpetually to reign in heich empire.¹⁴⁵

Here, the sanctity of marriage, kinship, succession and imperial sovereignty are the main original emphases, and again, the rewards of virtue appear magnificent in scale and duration.¹⁴⁶ All these examples show the extent of this focus, but one of Douglas' misreadings illustrates it more amusingly, when he reads 'partes' as 'patres', resulting in another innovation centring around lineage: 'the fathers of Italy'.¹⁴⁷ A final example takes it to its most extreme form: in Vegio, anyone possessing Aeneas' magnanimity can be elevated and become a star; in Douglas, only those 'of his kin' can receive this fate.¹⁴⁸ Virtue here is the preserve of the aristocracy, Douglas' primary intended audience;¹⁴⁹ this focus therefore intensified his work's moral function by making it immediately relevant.

¹⁴¹ Douglas, XIII. 7. 71-74.

¹⁴² Cf. *Opera*, f. cccxcii^r and Douglas, XIII. 10. 95-96.

¹⁴³ Cf. *Opera*, f. cccxcii^r and Douglas, XIII. 10. 120-124 (123-124).

¹⁴⁴ Cf. *Opera*, f. ccclxxxviii^v and Douglas, XIII. 6. 123-126 (124).

¹⁴⁵ Cf. *Opera*, ff. ccclxxxviii^v-ccclxxxix^r and Douglas, XIII. 6. 155-159.

¹⁴⁶ For these elements, cf. also *Opera*, f. ccclxxxix^v and Douglas, XIII. 7. 69-70; also Bawcutt, *Gavin Douglas*, pp. 80-85.

¹⁴⁷ Cf. *Opera*, f. cccxcii^v and Douglas, XIII. 11. 17.

¹⁴⁸ Cf. *Opera*, f. cccxcii^v and Douglas, XIII. 11. 53.

¹⁴⁹ Douglas, 'The After-Text: Conclusion', ll. 11-12; 'The After-Text: Direction', ll. 36-48, 85-87.

To conclude, we can return to the apotheosis scene, and note that Douglas makes Venus' conversation with Jupiter more vivid and weighty, amplifying 'exultans' into 'all glad and full of joy', describing Olympus as a 'heavenly hald' and Venus as 'richt mild and moy', setting 'baith her arms about' Jupiter's feet and 'embracing them and kissing reverently', while speaking 'with voice express' 'in hie'.¹⁵⁰ All this, at the same time as evoking a peaceful image which, like some earlier examples, effects a narrative resolution, builds up suspense for the culmination of Aeneas' path of virtue. In Vegio, 'super aera duxit,/Immisitque [A]jeneam astris'.¹⁵¹ In Douglas, Venus

bare [his soul] up above the air full heich
Unto the heaven, where ruthful Aeneas
Amid the stars chosen has his place.¹⁵²

Despite having translated 'super aera' as 'above the air' earlier, Douglas here adds the reference to 'heaven', thereby continuing his Christianisation of the poem. He also highlights the reasons for Aeneas' reward, by calling him 'ruthful'. And, most strikingly of all, he introduces the element of choice (in Old Scots 'chosen' or 'taken') in where Aeneas positions himself, whereas in Vegio Venus simply fixes him somewhere. This makes the catasterism more of a personal progress, in which agency is preserved, rather than something performed on the soul by a higher divine force; and again, this fits in with the broader aim of this mode of reading, showing how the decision to practice moral behaviour results in worldly and heavenly bliss, while guiding the reader towards such things.

Throughout the translation, such moral guidance takes the form of exhortations, illustrations of examples, a familiarising approach which accommodates the scene to a contemporary context, and a vivid style of description which similarly makes it more familiar and imaginatively engaging. The morality encouraged is Christian and aristocratic, consisting of duty and love to God and one's people (through charity, conciliation and stable government), the latter of which is to be facilitated through worldly authority, which is valuable as a means to this end, but which should not be pursued for its own sake. Divine anger and Fortune's wheel are continual risks, as other Scottish continuations of classically-inspired works suggest. Henryson's *Testament of Cresseid*, for example, concludes Chaucer's romance-inspired epic 'tragedye' *Troilus and Criseyde* – which ends with Troilus' apotheosis and a moralistic epilogue about the vanity of worldly things, including love – by depicting the sad fate which – in his view – Cresseid's actions deserved.¹⁵³ Douglas' concept of morality is more accommodating, and has more motivations, but the parallel with another supplement to a text is

¹⁵⁰ Cf. *Opera*, f. cccxcii^r and Douglas, XIII. 11. 1-6.

¹⁵¹ *Opera*, f. cccxcii^v.

¹⁵² Douglas, XIII. 11. 73-76.

¹⁵³ Chaucer, *Troilus and Criseyde*, 5. 1800-1869; Robert Henryson, *The Testament of Cresseid*, pp. 111-131 in *The Poems of Robert Henryson*, especially ll. 610-615.

thought-provoking for its similarly moralistic tone. It also compares well with contemporary ideas about the moral purposes of histories (which the *Aeneid*, in some ways, was considered to be), especially as expressed by writers of the *quattrocento* whose works were translated and adapted by sixteenth-century Scots.¹⁵⁴ In all these instances, the ultimate Christian, Stoic aim is to transcend the inconstant, unstable world, an idea expressed repeatedly by Chaucer, too;¹⁵⁵ in the meantime, moralising serves the purpose of dramatising and encouraging the prudent actions which are required in order to survive and prosper within it. Crucially, these prudent actions include pity and pathos for those whom Fortune casts down, and the avoidance of arrogance on the part of those whom Fortune has momentarily elevated. Douglas therefore knits the moralistic together with the pedagogical, romance and pathetic modes of interpretation, in a translation which advances an ethical argument.

Conclusions

The most patent broad-scale conclusion to be drawn from the above is that Vegio's Virgils, and, through and alongside them, Virgil's works themselves, survived and were interpreted in diverse ways in early-sixteenth-century Scotland and wider Northern Europe. To conclude the analysis of their survival in Douglas' translation, we have seen that they were combined with more localised practices of interpretation and translation. Functionally speaking, Douglas translated as he did due to practices common to late medieval translation, as well as the varied modes of interpreting classical and classicising material which were current in early-sixteenth-century Scotland and wider Europe. These modes, which as we saw in the opening chapter were present in Vegio's text itself and in some cases the Virgilian epic which had inspired it, were supplemented in distinct ways by other sources which manifested them, notably Ascensius' Parisian commentary, the works written earlier by romance poets and Chaucer, and – more tenuous as sources for Douglas but still instructive as sources for Europe-wide modes of reading – the Strasbourg woodcuts. These in some respects possessed shared features, such as a tendency towards familiarising the narrative and making it more subjectively-focused, dynamic, vivid and engaging through clarified or amplified descriptions and direct speech, and in other ways competed against each other, presenting Aeneas as a paragon of virtue deserving of victory, while also highlighting virtue in the defeated Italians and focusing attention on their suffering. The impression given by Douglas' text, informed by such concerns, is one of palpable detail, drawing the reader in by making the events more imaginable, especially in a contemporary setting, while explaining archaic terms, guiding them towards ethical behaviour, and forcing them to

¹⁵⁴ For example, Leonardo Bruni's 'et sapientiores et modestiores nos historia efficit'; see Paul Botley, *Latin Translation in the Renaissance: The Theory and Practice of Leonardo Bruni, Giannozzo Manetti, and Desiderius Erasmus* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), p. 41.

¹⁵⁵ Cf. Chaucer, *Troilus and Criseyde*, 5. 1816-1825, 1832, 1835-1841; Boece.

consider everything, from the tragic to the comic, which contributes to eventual peace after devastating conflict.

By considering together all of the innovations Douglas introduces into Vegio's poem, we have discovered that such focuses on subjectivity, emotion, suffering and Christian charity and love, combined with an omnipresent attempt to bring the narrative into as tangible a contact with readers as possible together with moral injunctions, can form an urgent argument. This is that the best ethical code, and the one which will lead to earthly and heavenly rewards, involves feeling pity, not forgetting the suffering which may be inflicted by the vicissitudes of Fortune and the instability of earthly affairs, and attempting to behave virtuously, overcome adversity, attain peace and maintain stable government as a ruler. In all these things, Aeneas is the model, and Douglas in his translation emphasises this more capacious moralistic message, retaining Vegio's silent correction of the hero's fury at the conclusion of the *Aeneid*, and making him conformable to Anchises' advice to 'spare the defeated', even if he does also 'break the proud in war'.¹⁵⁶

This idea that Aeneas' compassion (or as Douglas has it, 'ruth') was a key virtue of heroic historical figures was part of a widespread interpretative practice, seen earlier in Bruni's claim that history inspires wisdom and temperance, as well as later in the century in the 'epic romance' as written by Ariosto. Colin Burrow has argued that the identification of *pietas* and pity developed in semantic shifts and traditions of Virgilian interpretation from classical times, surviving in the *Orlando Furioso*, as much as in the near-contemporary *Eneados*, to present compassion as the 'key chivalric virtue'. Further, this conception of virtue explains some readers' uneasiness over, and need to supplement, the *Aeneid* in the first place.¹⁵⁷ To the extent that the epic needed completion (and not everyone saw such completion as necessary, with some questioning whether it was even Vegio's intention), such a completion had to be morally satisfying. A similar presentation of pity and mercy as virtuous is seen in some of the examples of 'advice to princes' literature being produced in Scotland in particular, and Europe more widely, which tended to be more allusive and general rather than sharply didactic, incorporating diverse views of kingship which reflected an awareness that a ruler could be capable of governing justly or tyrannically.¹⁵⁸ We saw this in the annotations on the copy of Vegio's *Astyanax* earlier, highlighting Andromacha's warnings to Ulysses about not being overmighty in victory. Yet it was present in the *Astyanax* itself too, as well as Vegio's *Supplementum*, not to mention early readers' responses to them. Indeed, the antiquity and wide distribution of this tradition ensured that many

¹⁵⁶ Virgil, *Aeneid*, VI. 981-984, in Fagles' memorably-phrased translation.

¹⁵⁷ Burrow, *Epic Romance*, pp. 52-75 (especially pp. 57-63).

¹⁵⁸ Sally Louise Mapstone, *The Advice to Princes Tradition in Scottish Literature, 1450-1500*, (University of Oxford DPhil Thesis, 1986), pp. 385, 456-463 (especially pp. 462-463). On *clementia* in the earlier tradition, see E.R. Curtius, *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages*, translated by Willard R. Trask, with a new introduction by Colin Burrow (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013 (originally Bollingen, 1953)), p. 535. See also Paul Strohm, *Politique: Languages of Statecraft Between Chaucer and Shakespeare* (Notre Dame, IN.: University of Notre Dame Press, 2005).

across Europe, including Douglas, were familiar with its concerns and their contemporary political relevance. By consulting advisory texts stressing such magnanimous actions, readers would be rendered more capable of emulating them. This perception complicates Burrow's idea of metamorphosis between *pietas* and pity, by suggesting that the *Aeneid* embodied such compassion originally, and that it was not merely a medieval misreading. And crucially, Douglas fuses earlier and more contemporary incarnations of Virgilian pathos, in that he recalls it, as he recalls Virgilian subjectivity or interiority, because of the prominent position it had assumed in the romance. This offers an entirely different perspective to that which prevails on how Virgil and his works were regarded and valued across the premodern period. Kallendorf's claim that Vegio's *Supplementum* (and by extension Douglas' translation and the works of the mediators we have examined who came in between) is an exercise in epideictic rhetoric embodying a 'determination to see morality as black and white' is characteristic of this consensus, yet emerges from this range of evidence even more seriously contested than at the end of the opening chapter of this study. In Chaucer, such ethical concerns are acknowledged, but scholars are reluctant to see them in later and more humanistic texts such as Vegio's poem and Douglas' translation of it.

The conclusions of this chapter have several other scholarly implications. The discussion of pedagogical and romance moments has shown Douglas foregrounding his translator role as a pedagogue and storyteller, an analysis which supports Daniel Pinti's ideas that Douglas translated with a view to fidelity, yet also with the purpose of aggrandising his own role as an *auctor* in an ennobled Scots vernacular.¹⁵⁹ There is, nonetheless, as Pinti also argues, a resemblance in style between Douglas' translation of the rest of the *Eneados* and the *Supplementum*, suggesting a desire to unify them more completely into one text, which would enhance not only its literary quality but also its moral effectiveness. Above all, the present analysis would support Robert Cummings' argument about the translation being influenced by a political context of a recent peace following a destructive war, with the conclusion of two centuries of hostilities between Scotland and England formalised through the Treaty of Perpetual Peace and James IV's negotiation of a marriage to Margaret Tudor (to whom Douglas, around 1513 – 1514, acted as a political advisor).¹⁶⁰ However, it is still doubtful that the translation was *motivated* by this context, as it would not have seemed too unnatural – despite his objections in the Prologue – for Douglas to translate the controversial *Supplementum* if it was printed, illustrated and commented on in the editions he read. Nonetheless, it would have been highly pragmatic for the Scottish nobility among Douglas' intended audience to understand the suffering inflicted and endured in the preceding war, and the dangers of further conflict lurking in the

¹⁵⁹ Daniel J. Pinti, 'Alter Maro, alter Mapheus: Gavin Douglas's Negotiation of Authority in *Eneados* 13', in *Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies* 23, no. 3 (1993), pp. 323–344.

¹⁶⁰ This peace was only broken in the later months of 1513 after Douglas' translation had been completed, and, in a tragic turn, James died fighting the English at Flodden later that year. See Robert Cummings, "To the cart the fift quheill", *passim*.

background, while moving on and working towards peace, amity and a happier future, as Douglas' innovations in his translation suggest. Douglas did, after all, occupy an effective advisory position to the rulers of Scotland, and had attempted, even in ecclesiastic matters such as marriages, to advance measures which reduced conflict between families and enhanced the stability of the realm in this tumultuous period.¹⁶¹ It might also, for the sake of peace in the long term, have seemed beneficial for this lesson to be appreciated by the pupils, all children of aristocratic families, whom Douglas equally intended as his target readers. Yet the interpretative traditions focusing on these themes were older, and Douglas' emphases were by no means uniquely inspired by his immediate political situation. He translated Vegio because to do so made his *Eneados* complete in a way that many contemporary editions of Virgil were complete by virtue of containing the *Supplementum*. How Douglas translated this work, however, spoke to his political moment by combining Vegio's original concerns with widespread interpretative and translational traditions.

This completeness takes other forms, too. One is Douglas' importation of Christianising elements, as A.E.C. Canitz argues.¹⁶² This is seen notably in Ascensius' notes (in which Virgil, while not a Christian, is seen to express values similar to Christian ones),¹⁶³ and in the earlier and even more emphatically Christian romance tradition (however broadly this is conceived here as a taxonomic shorthand), with its increased sympathy for characters and familiarisation of narrative context and detail. Another completing element was the development of the classical scholarship which had made possible Vegio's *Supplementum*, as well as the pedagogical details and the more comprehensive imitation of Virgil, especially through imitations of genres such as the tragic lament, which we have seen were foregrounded by readers, annotators and illustrators, and transmitted to Douglas. In his translation, the effect of the convergence of these influences is to more fully conclude the *Aeneid*'s narrative, fulfilling Vegio's text by augmenting both the straightforwardly-conclusive elements and the moralistic impulses, while devoting more space to earlier narrative events which had occasioned great cost and suffering. These are, originally, Virgilian concerns which Vegio revived and reproduced in adapted form, and the accuracy of the translation throughout the *Eneados* is an indication of how well Douglas knew Virgil (and the traditions of reading and adapting his work which shaped what 'Virgil' meant to sixteenth-century readers) and how capable he consequently was of attending to all these elements when he found them in Vegio. In his Prologue to the *Thirteenth Book*, he objects, perhaps too strongly, and like Ascensius, that Vegio's style is 'nocht to Virgill lyke', and relates that he translated the *Supplementum* only because Vegio came to him in a dream vision and literally beat him into promising to do so. Yet this comment on style does suggest, like the

¹⁶¹ Bawcutt, 'New Light on Gavin Douglas', in A.A. MacDonald, Michael Lynch, Ian B. Cowan (eds.), *The Renaissance in Scotland* (Leiden: Brill, 1994), pp. 95–106 (p. 98).

¹⁶² A. E. C. Canitz, 'The Prologue to the *Eneados*: Gavin Douglas's Directions for Reading', *Studies in Scottish Literature*, Vol. 25, Issue 1 (1990), pp. 1–22 (pp. 20–21).

¹⁶³ White, *Jodocus Badius Ascensius*, p. 248.

analysis here, that in his translation, Douglas tried to improve Vegio's poem by making it more Virgilian. To translate Vegio's book, therefore, would involve preserving the conclusive and problematic elements of the subject matter, while expanding them and making the tone and setting of the entire narrative feel closer to his readers' own experience. To us, noting how this project to make Vegio more authentically Virgilian involved melding the classical with the medieval and the contemporary, Douglas seems to have failed. On his own terms, though, as well as those of many of his more recent influences, it might have seemed successful, given that such familiarisation or naturalization (present in a limited measure even in Vegio's poem) was key to how Virgil was interpreted in this period, especially when carried over into the vernacular. Indeed, the incorporation of earlier interpretations, as well as those of the translator, was an accepted practice in late-medieval translation, which additionally aimed to improve vernacular languages themselves by allowing them to replicate the rhetorical characters of translated texts.¹⁶⁴ Perhaps, to adapt another of his metaphors, this fusing of traditions allowed Douglas to make Vegio's 'fift quheill' a part of Virgil's four-wheeled cart, fitting it onto the monumental, all-encompassing, and morally and pedagogically useful work which it seems his *Eneados* was intended to be.

In closing, we may note that this investigation has highlighted the interpretative benefits to be gained from rigorous textual comparisons and attention to the numerous traditions of reading which feed into, and shape, texts and images. In the broader view of this thesis, Douglas' translation of Vegio's *Supplementum* and this originally comprehensive study of it demonstrate the richness and diverse complexity of accumulated engagement with Vegio into the early sixteenth century. Vegio's imitation and Douglas' translation of it also, naturally, show the richness and complexity of Virgil's *Aeneid* itself, and give a glimpse of why it was the most influential classical text to survive throughout the medieval period and into the Renaissance. We have seen that these various traditions, or modes of interpretation, would continue to be adapted, recombined and refigured in later translations, imitations and representations of Vegian and Virgilian material throughout the sixteenth century and beyond. The methodological argument of this chapter is that the analytical approach used here might be profitably applied to them, too.

¹⁶⁴ Copeland, 'Rhetoric and Vernacular Translation', pp. 48-57, 65-66, 74-75.

Conclusions of the Study

After the sixteenth century had drawn to a close, Vegio's works continued to be reprinted and read, but their popularity gradually waned. A 1613 edition of his works printed in Lodi was a final testament to the sort of local pride we saw in the 1497 Milanese edition, but by the middle of the seventeenth century even the *Supplementum*, his best-known work, ceased to be included in printed editions of the *Aeneid*. As discussed at length in the introduction to this study, late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century scholarship, mostly Italian, constituted the only further attention paid to Vegio's writings. Brinton's work then informed the limited revival of studies seen later in the twentieth century, which inspired this present investigation.

This investigation has moved the conversation in new directions, in the process extending and nuancing what earlier scholarship told us about Vegio's receptions of Virgil. It has shown that Vegio's epyllia exhibited stylistic imitations of Virgil's epic and tragic formulations, with a particular emphasis on 'Virgilian pathos' delivered through rhetorical forms and allusive analogies drawn between characters. This pathos enabled an appreciation of moral complexity consonant with the worldview of Vegio's society, with its ideas – expressed in a range of media – about justice and order. This study has also shown the range of allusive types in Vegio's elegies, spanning the faithful and reverent uses of Virgil which assert the divine inspiration of poets, to the playful – and at times invective – treatments of equally Virgilian material which are no less geared towards gaining patronage. We have seen several instances of devotional subject matter being expressed in Virgilian terms, notably in the Christian epicism of the *Antoniad*. By contrast, and yet at times showing its similarly Curial provenance, Vegio's distichs and epigrams show serious Virgilian moments being set within displays of epigrammatic wit, inspired by a vogue for *nugae* in literary networks across Italy. More than any of Vegio's other writings, these verses – and the polemic surrounding them – spoke directly to what it meant to imitate Virgil's generic virtuosity, and be a classicising poet, in Vegio's lifetime. And Vegio's modes of reading Virgil, as we saw in Vegio's dialogues and treatises, extended to the pedagogical too, as Virgilian moments were employed as illustrations of vices and virtues, allegorical veils for wisdom, evidence of cultural-historical phenomena, and artefacts left by a past governed by Providence.

The most striking characteristic of this evidence is its diversity. Indeed, this diversity of Virgilian receptions in the works of Vegio – and his contemporaries and successors in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries – has been the abiding argument of this study. The importance of genre in these multifarious engagements has been an equally abiding emphasis, and one which, like the very fact of the heterogeneity of Virgilian receptions in this period, has been neglected by critical accounts. The Renaissance perception of Virgil himself has for the most part been incompletely attended to: the focus is overwhelmingly on the epic *Aeneid*, and almost never on the poetic trifles he was then

believed to have authored, which influenced the *nugae* composed and defended by Vegio and his peers. Until now, Vegio's interpretations of Virgil have been seen predominantly as a single, moralistic and epideictic mode of reading which remained constant both across genres and across his literary career. Yet generic and professional contexts were very much at play across Vegio's varied, even contradictory, responses to Virgil, especially in the works composed during and after what has until now been seen as a straightforward conversion or religious turn in the middle of Vegio's career.

This study has contested other divisions aside from the devotional. The periodisations of 'medieval' and 'Renaissance' have been retained here as a critical and historical shorthand for cultural developments which are undeniable even if impossible to anatomise and pinpoint chronologically. Nonetheless, Vegio's position as a figure intellectually straddling the religious and the secular, the post-classical and the early humanist, or any other binary conception of these two eras, shows that the remarkable developments in poetry, art and learning visible in the early *quattrocento* were as much aligned with the Christian culture of more recent centuries as with the more distant cultures of pagan antiquity. Vegio was able to both congratulate Landriani on rescuing Ciceronian works from obscurity *and* see Virgil as part of an Augustinian conception of history which placed the classical period, Vegio's own era, and the intervening centuries on the same continuum of divinely governed time. His epigrams, written in a Curial milieu literate in secular as well as sacred texts, alluded irreverently to Biblical passages as much as Virgilian ones. Such intellectual resituation of Vegio is in turn inextricable from his social resituation and the recovery of his eminent and lauded position within contemporary literary networks, a subject which this research has advanced, but which might be pressed yet further.

This study also resituates the legacy of Vegio beyond his lifetime. The exploration of the extensive influence of his works in the early-modern period, in diverse contexts spanning appreciations of style, employments of his works as pedagogical texts and as motivations to maintain faith in adverse times, and the inspiration his epyllia provided to later epic romances and Christian epics, provides bases for further studies in Renaissance rhetoric, pedagogy, moral philosophy and genre criticism. Again, this further supports the sense that across Europe well into the sixteenth century, medieval intellectual traditions survived and coexisted with the classicising works of Vegio and his colleagues. This is true even within vernacularizations of his most widely-disseminated work, the *Supplementum*, which was reprinted with, and came to shape interpretations of, the *Aeneid* itself: as we saw, medieval insular and contemporary Continental traditions, just as much as Virgil and Vegio, informed Douglas' translation. This study has therefore partially restored to Vegio the status and position he enjoyed in his own time, and contributed to studies of literary traditions, networks, theories and practices, especially the poetic.

Looking to future studies, greater attention to Vegio's lesser-known works, as well as vernacularisations of his *Supplementum* (especially Continental ones), should be near the top of the

list of priorities. Above these, however, the more wide-ranging question of Vegio's engagement with medieval texts and traditions demands a more detailed investigation than the incidental one offered here, as does the influence of his lesser-known works on the European literature of the sixteenth century. Concerning the latter, rather than focusing on specific locales in certain years, the varying reception of Vegio in one place across the entire timespan covered by this study's fifth chapter should be surveyed. The chronology might even be extended back into Vegio's own lifetime. David Rundle has demonstrated the cosmopolitanism inherent in humanist manuscript production across Europe (including Britain) from the beginning of the fifteenth century, and so this reception might also extend beyond Italy.¹ The implications of such newly-attended-to sources not only for studies of Vegio, but for studies of cultural transmission and interaction on a continental scale, might be considerable. An area deliberately excluded by this study, namely codicological research into who owned and annotated specific copies of Vegio's works, and what sorts of intellectual interests and motivations prompted such ownership and annotation, would nuance and extend the conclusions presented here and in each of these future investigations.

On an even broader scale, the methodology used throughout this study, revolving around how the nature of subsequent employments of ancient cultural artefacts (here, Virgil's poetry) can offer information about the worldviews of those who employed them, has greater scholarly potential than any more specific discovery. It is an old method, based on comparative-textual and historical analysis, but it still has limitless further applications, especially if not only texts, but sources in other media, are examined. Its close attention to primary sources, showcased in the first chapter as much as in the final one, is also radical, returning to the original roots in order to reevaluate the subsequent academic accretions which have grown out of and around them. A justification for this claim of the incalculable scholarly potential of comparative and interdisciplinary reception studies, can be found in the quotation from Houghton footnoted on the very first page of this study. The quotation, which expresses how the receptions of the works of just one writer can open endless windows into centuries of cultural history, returns us, for the final time, to Virgil. If it is impossible, as Houghton correctly says, to understand the Renaissance without understanding the position of Virgil's writings within it, then it is equally impossible to understand the Renaissance reception of Virgil's writings without understanding Vegio's role in this reception. Vegio's generic and interpretative virtuosity, modelled on the virtuosity attributed to Virgil, meant that every mode of reading current in the Renaissance found expression in the writings of this 'alter Maro', and his Renaissance contemporaries knew it. The analysis offered here of these receptions, both in themselves and in how they were themselves subsequently received, offers an equally valuable gateway into the world of the Renaissance, with its aesthetic, intellectual, moral and political concerns and tastes. Vegio's *corpus* is not only the ideal

¹ A recent example, chosen from his scholarly lifetime of publications on this topic, is *The Renaissance Reform of the Book and Britain: The English Quattrocento* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019).

case study for the history of how Virgil was read and used in this period, but the necessary one. This research is therefore offered in the hope of spreading greater awareness of, and inspiring greater attention to, this important figure. It is important to note, too, that this investigation has advanced this aim by introducing the majority of Vegio's writings, with the notable exceptions of the *Supplementum*, the other epyllia and the *De rebus*, to an Anglophone audience, not least by providing translations of many verses and quotations which have never appeared in English. Several directions for further research have already been suggested, but the most obvious and important has remained unsaid, namely to translate primary sources and synthesise existing scholarship currently divided by linguistic frontiers, thereby making their insights better known to researchers working in other languages.²

Finally, and most fundamentally, this study has recorded the reverence and inventiveness with which Vegio, like every creative and critical mind of the Renaissance, approached the works of his predecessors and used the cultural artefacts of the past as inspirations for his art and life in the present. The works discussed here, produced in an age which obsessively appreciated that the past, while it contained some things which were lamentable, was nonetheless a treasure-house of wisdom, beauty and inspiration, offer salient and salutary reminders to us that the breath which revivifies both art and the human spirit is the product of not only personal experience in the present, but of time imaginatively spent in the cultural climate of another epoch. This reflection is as important for the citizen, the critic and the historian to bear in mind as it is for the artist. Inasmuch as it demonstrates this fact, this study is a modest memorial to the sensibility, imagination, creativity and dedication of those who worked before us.

² As will be clear by now, studies of Vegio's life have been primarily Italo-phonetic (and only in a handful of exceptions, French, German and Spanish and English). However, Vegio's works hold interest for several fields beyond classical reception, and since English is the modern *lingua franca*, it would be especially impactful for future translation projects, biographies and studies of Vegio to be in English, as the most effective vehicle of introducing a synthesis of the disparate and polyglot scholarship on Vegio's life and works to a wider, if no less scholarly, audience. As Lopomo notes (p. 86), many of Vegio's more neglected works might offer new and decisive elements to our understanding of an already overlooked author, not to mention broader fields. Her thesis opens up such works to a wider audience, and this thesis is offered in a similar spirit of extending this awareness even further. This is additionally important given that Latin skills and knowledge are not as widespread as they were, and that it is only over the last seven years that Neo-Latin has become recognised as a distinct and necessary branch of Renaissance and early modern studies, as Victoria Moul observes, and as the publication dates of handbooks and guides to Neo-Latin literature attest (Introduction to Victoria Moul (ed.), *A Guide to Neo-Latin Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020)).

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Fig. 1



Florence, Biblioteca Riccardiana, MS. Ricc. 492.

Fig. 2



Apollonio di Giovanni, 'Aeneas at Carthage', c. 1450, tempera on panel, 49.7 x 161.9 x 5.4 cm, produced in Florence, now in New Haven, Yale University Art Gallery <https://artgallery.yale.edu/collections/objects/292> [accessed 31/03/2019].

Fig. 3



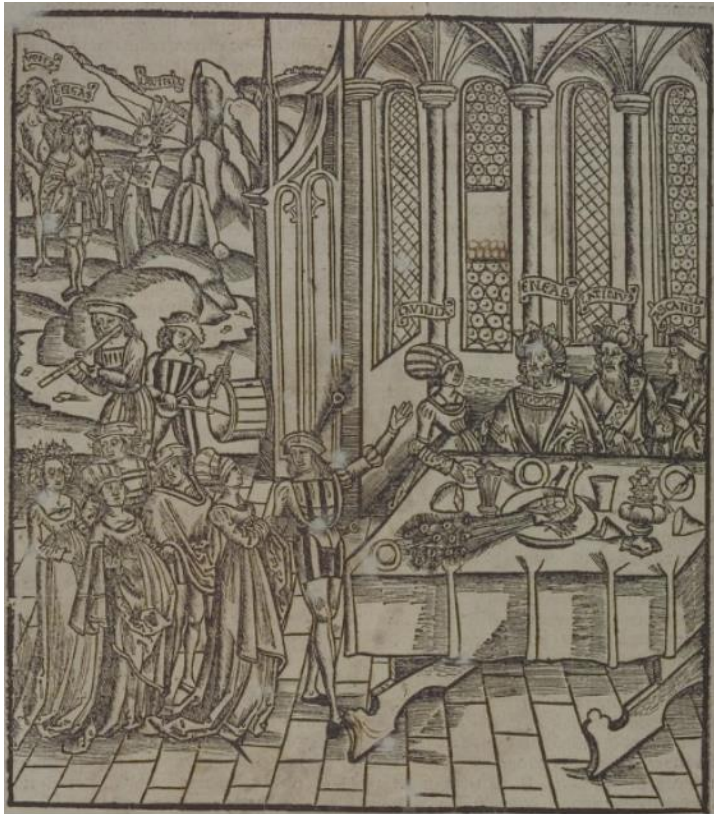
Apollonio di Giovanni, 'Aeneas meets Latinus King of Laurentum, Alliance of Aeneas, Pallas and Evander, Defeat of Turnus, Marriage of Aeneas and Lavinia', c. 1435-1465, [tempera on] panel, 44.2 × 132.2 cm, Florentine, now in Écouen, Musée National de la Renaissance https://art.rmngp.fr/fr/library/artworks/di-giovanni-apollonio_panneau-de-cassone-l-histoire-d-enee_peinture-sur-bois_1460 [accessed 31/03/2019]. Patron unknown.

Fig. 4



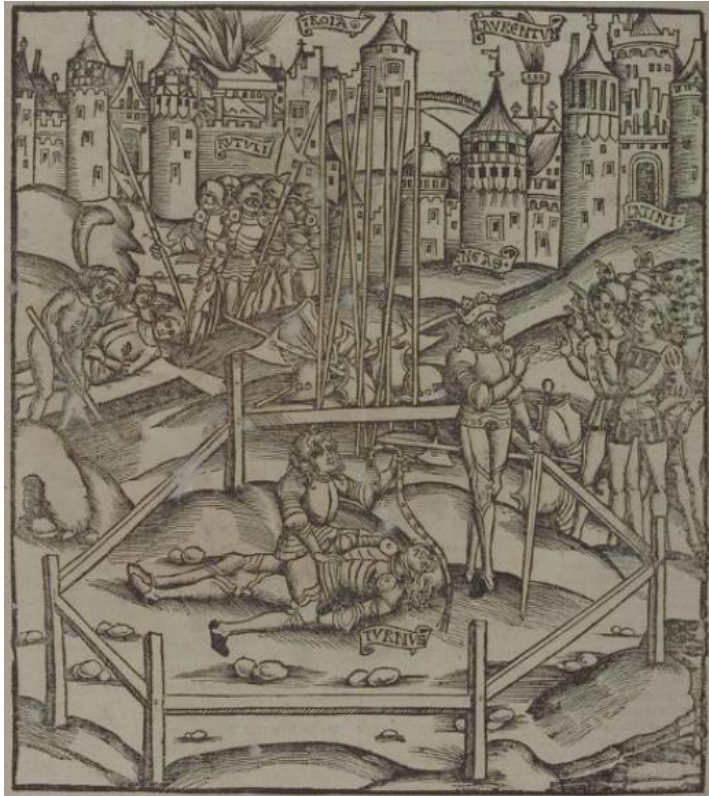
Apollonio di Giovanni, 'The Shipwreck of Aeneas', c. 1450-60, tempera on panel, framed: 50.17 x 164.15 x 6.03 cm, made in Florence, now in New Haven, Yale University Art Gallery <https://artgallery.yale.edu/collections/objects/291> [accessed 31/03/2019].

Fig. 5



Johann Grüninger, woodcut, 1502, ink on paper, 10 x 11cm, in Virgil, Maffeo Vegio, Jodocus Badius Ascensius, Sebastian Brant, Johann Grüninger, et al, *Publij Virgilij Maronis Opera: cum quinque vulgatis commentariis ex politissimisque figuris* (Strasburg: Brant, 1502), accessed via the University of Heidelberg Digital Collections, Sonstige Nr: VD16 V 1332, SWB-PPN: 261432389, Shelfmark Heid. 370, 319 <http://digi.ub.uni-heidelberg.de/diglit/vergil1502/0833/image> [accessed 19/09/2021], f. A_04^v.

Fig. 6



Johann Grüninger, woodcut, 1502, ink on paper, 10 x 11cm, in Virgil, Maffeo Vegio, Jodocus Badius Ascensius, Sebastian Brant, Johann Grüninger, et al, *Publij Virgilij Maronis Opera: cum quinque vulgatis commentariis ex politissimisque figuris* (Strasburg: Brant, 1502), accessed via the University of Heidelberg Digital Collections, Sonstige Nr: VD16 V 1332, SWB-PPN: 261432389, Shelfmark Heid. 370, 319 <http://digi.ub.uni-heidelberg.de/diglit/vergil1502/0833/image> [accessed 19/09/2021], f. 410^v.

Fig. 7



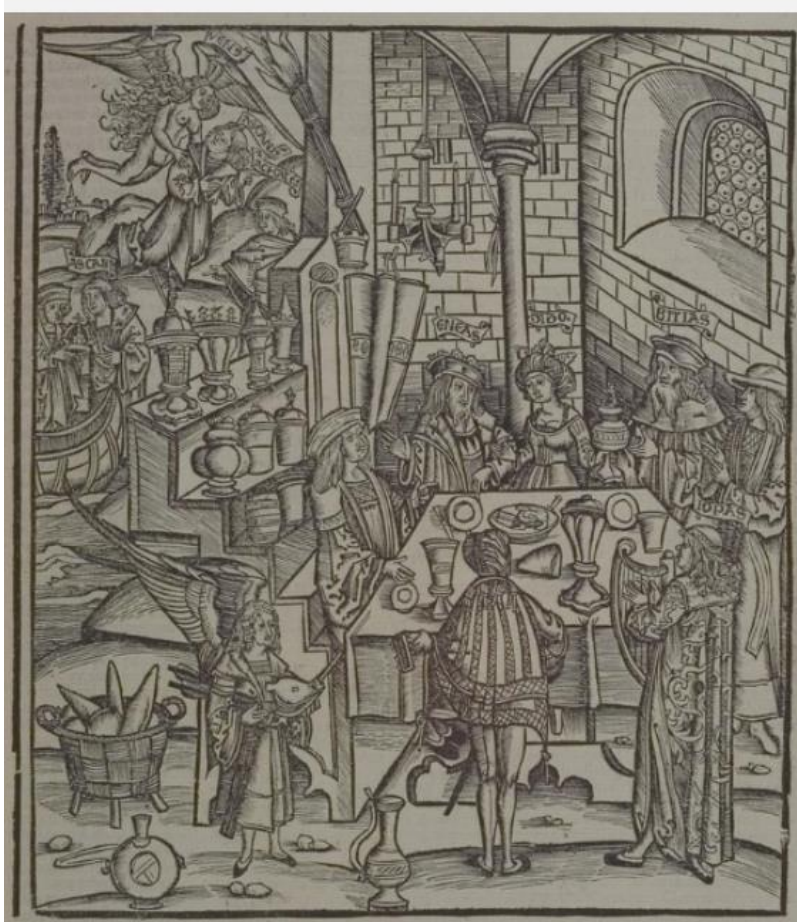
Johann Grüninger, woodcut, 1502, ink on paper, 10 x 11cm, in Virgil, Maffeo Vegio, Jodocus Badius Ascensius, Sebastian Brant, Johann Grüninger, et al, *Publij Virgilij Maronis Opera: cum quinque vulgatis commentariis ex politissimisque figuris* (Strasburg: Brant, 1502), accessed via the University of Heidelberg Digital Collections, Sonstige Nr: VD16 V 1332, SWB-PPN: 261432389, Shelfmark Heid. 370, 319 <http://digi.ub.uni-heidelberg.de/diglit/vergil1502/0833/image> [accessed 19/09/2021], f. A_01^v.

Fig. 8



Johann Grüninger, woodcut, 1502, ink on paper, 10 x 11cm, in Virgil, Maffeo Vegio, Jodocus Badius Ascensius, Sebastian Brant, Johann Grüninger, et al, *Publij Virgilij Maronis Opera: cum quinque vulgatis commentariis ex politissimisque figuris* (Strasburg: Brant, 1502), accessed via the University of Heidelberg Digital Collections, Sonstige Nr: VD16 V 1332, SWB-PPN: 261432389, Shelfmark Heid. 370, 319 <http://digi.ub.uni-heidelberg.de/diglit/vergil1502/0833/image> [accessed 19/09/2021], f. A_03^r.

Fig. 9



Johann Grüninger, woodcut, 1502, ink on paper, 10 x 11cm, in Virgil, Maffeo Vegio, Jodocus Badius Ascensius, Sebastian Brant, Johann Grüninger, et al, *Publij Virgilij Maronis Opera: cum quinque vulgatis commentariis ex politissimisque figuris* (Strasburg: Brant, 1502), accessed via the University of Heidelberg Digital Collections, Sonstige Nr: VD16 V 1332, SWB-PPN: 261432389, Shelfmark Heid. 370, 319 <http://digi.ub.uni-heidelberg.de/diglit/vergil1502/0833/image> [accessed 19/09/2021], f. 151^r.

Fig. 10



Johann Grüninger, woodcut, 1502, ink on paper, 10 x 11cm, in Virgil, Maffeo Vegio, Jodocus Badius Ascensius, Sebastian Brant, Johann Grüninger, et al, *Publij Virgilij Maronis Opera: cum quinque vulgatis commentariis ex politissimisque figuris* (Strasburg: Brant, 1502), accessed via the University of Heidelberg Digital Collections, Sonstige Nr: VD16 V 1332, SWB-PPN: 261432389, Shelfmark Heid. 370, 319 <http://digi.ub.uni-heidelberg.de/diglit/vergil1502/0833/image> [accessed 19/09/2021], f. 371^r.

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