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METRICAL IMITATIO IN THE PROEM TO THE AENEID

CLIFFORD WEBER

A *RMA virumque cano*—the very fame of these words may have helped to obscure the fact that they constitute a metrical sequence (trochee + amphibrach + iamb) that hexameter poets in general were careful to avoid. The present article proposes an explanation for the rarity of this sequence, and for Virgil's willingness to allow it in so conspicuous a place as the beginning of his *magnum opus*.

It is well known that, in elegiac couplets, the first half of a pentameter rarely consists of the same metrical sequence that is found in the second half.¹ Thus, Ovid's notorious *semibovemque virum semivirumque bovem* (*Ars* 2.24²) is exceptional for more reasons than one. This proscription, however, is only a corollary of a more general prohibition against filling the first half of a pentameter with *any* sequence that could also stand in the second half. For example, out of 788 pentameters in the first two books of Ovid's *Amores*,³ in only 22 (2.75%) does the first half contain a sequence that could also stand in the second half. According to Platnauer's statistics,⁴ this frequency is 0.7% in Tibullus 1 and 2, 1.4% in the elegies of Lygdamus, and 3.0% in the remainder of the *Corpus Tibullianum*; 3.7% in Propertius; and 2.5% in Ovid.⁵

¹ See Maurice Platnauer, *Latin Elegiac Verse* (Cambridge 1951) 14–15, where such pentameters are dubbed “reversible.”

² The same work is barely under way before one encounters in 1.18 *saevus uterque puer, natus uterque dea*. The rhetorical resposion of both halves is typical of these reversible pentameters.

³ Not including repetitions of the refrain in *Am.* 1.6.

⁴ Platnauer (above, n. 1) 15.

⁵ There is precedent for this prohibition in Callimachus, in whose pentameters caesurae after the second trochee—and, therefore, iambic words at the end of the first half—are strenuously avoided (Paul Maas, *Greek Metre*, trans. Hugh Lloyd-Jones [Oxford 1962] sect. 95). According to Kirby F. Smith, ed., *The Elegies of Albius Tibullus* (New York 1913) 99, Catullus was “not especially influenced” by the example of Callimachus, and Propertius “never paid any attention” to it. Quite the opposite is true of Propertius, however, in whom the frequency of 3.7% is not significantly higher than the

Among such pentameters, few as they are, the incidence of “reversible” pentameters is in fact quite high: 9 out of 22 (41%) in *Amores* 1 and 2, for example.⁶

But it is not only from the first half of pentameters that metrical sequences fit for the second half were banned; they were also unwelcome in the first two and a half feet of hexameters.⁷ Thus, out of 756 lines in *Aeneid* 1, only 49 (6.5%) begin with a sequence that would be metrically admissible in the second half of a pentameter. Of these 49, moreover, at least 10 would be inadmissible for syntactical or rhetorical reasons, for example, *corda volente deo; in*. Therefore, in only some 39 lines (5.16%) in *Aeneid* 1 do the first two and a half feet consist of words that could also stand in the second half of a pentameter. This is higher, to be sure, than the frequency of such sequences at the beginning of Augustan pentameters, but it is not significantly higher.

In the avoidance of pentametric cadences at the beginning of both pentameters and hexameters we have a particular instance of the ancient poets’ general antipathy toward writing in one meter but suggesting another.⁸ The second half of a pentameter accommodates few metrical sequences. In fact, only five types are enough to include all pentameters ending with a dissyllable in Catullus, Lygdamus, Propertius 1 and 4, Ovid’s *Amores* and *Tristia*, and Rutilius Namatianus.⁹ These five types, therefore, necessarily occurred so often at the end of pentameters that any one of them would have suggested that metrical context in particular. Especially would this have been true of the two commonest types, that is, *iūgĕră | mŭliă | sŏlĭ* and *cŏgŏr | hăbĕrĕ | dĕŏs*, which, taken together, range in frequency from 86% of all pentameters in Propertius 4 to 63% in Ovid’s *Tristia*. Any line beginning with either of these patterns was apt to strike the ear as the cadence of a

percentages in Tibullus et al., or than Ovid’s 2.5%.

⁶ These numbers rise to 10 and 45.5% if the enclisis of *precōr* makes *sit precōr* phonetically one word in *Am.* 1.4.2.

⁷ On this point Wilhelm Meyer is mistaken when he states, “Im Hexameter haben die Lateiner . . . ein jambisches Wort an dieser Stelle [after the second trochee] nie gemieden.” (“Zur Geschichte des griechischen und des lateinischen Hexameters,” *Sitzungsberichte der philosophisch-philologischen und historischen Classe der königlichen bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften zu München* [1884] 1032).

⁸ See L. P. Wilkinson, *Golden Latin Artistry* (Cambridge 1963) 221. The interdiction in Roman comedy against iambs in trochaic lines—and vice versa—is another example of the same antipathy.

⁹ F. Plessis, *Métrique grecque et latine* (Paris 1889) 127.

pentameter; therefore, poets avoided such lines.¹⁰

In the *Aeneid* the pattern *cogor habere deos* is as rare as the preceding discussion would lead one to expect. In Book 1, for example, if it occurred as often at the beginning of lines as it occurs at the end of pentameters in Catullus and Propertius 1, 333 lines (44%) would begin with this pattern. In fact, only 7 (0.9%) do.¹¹ In other poems in hexameters the incidence of this pattern at the beginning of lines is not appreciably different, as the following data demonstrate:

Ennius *Annals*: 6 out of 527 lines (1.1%)¹²

Lucretius 1: 4/1,117 (0.4%)¹³

Catullus 64: 0

Virgil *Eclogues*: 13/821 (1.6%)¹⁴

" *Georgics*: 12/2,188 (0.5%)¹⁵

" *Aeneid* 2: 13/804 (1.6%)¹⁶

¹⁰ When Ovid and Martial quote *arma virumque* in *Tr.* 2.534 and 14.185.2 respectively, it falls in the second half of a pentameter. Martial, quoting the phrase in a couplet, also puts it at the end of a hexameter in 8.55.19. In 1.96 Persius quotes it at the beginning of a hexameter but omits *-que*. Thus, out of four quotations of *arma virumque* in post-Virgilian poets, nowhere does the phrase occur exactly as it is found in the original.

¹¹ *Viz.*, 1, 126, 213 (elision), 245 (*per* is proclitic), 370, 441, and 466. A total of 15 lines begin with the pattern *iugera multa soli*, *viz.*, 14, 65, 94, 161, 164, 208, 268, 338, 354, 413 (enclitic *quis*), 536 (proclitic *in*), 562, 583, 605, and 641. Thus, the same two sequences that account for 86% of all pentameter-endings in Propertius 4 occur in the first two-and-a-half feet of only 3% of the hexameters in *Aeneid* 1. Even when one considers only those 46 lines beginning with one of the five patterns with which, in the elegists cited above, all pentameters end, the relative frequency of *iugera multa soli*, and especially of *cogor habere deos*, is lower in *Aeneid* 1 than in these elegists. In the elegists, on the average, 33% of all pentameters end with *cogor habere deos*, and 44.75% with *iugera multa soli*. In *Aeneid* 1, however, of the 46 hexameters in question, 32.6% begin with *iugera multa soli*, and only 15% with *cogor habere deos*.

¹² *Viz.*, 10, 92, 177, 234, 246, and 410 (Vahlen²). These 6 instances increase to 7 (1.3%) if *indotuetur* in 70 is two words. Fragments in which it cannot be determined whether or not *cogor habere deos* filled the first hemistich have of course not been counted.

¹³ Including line 514, but excluding 627, 684, and 845.

¹⁴ *Viz.*, 1.32, 2.15, 2.18, 2.63, 2.66 (elision), 6.5 (ditto), 6.10, 6.31, 8.30, 8.68 (proclitic *ab*), 8.109 (ditto), 9.15, and 10.5. Also cf. 3.86, 4.38, 6.34, and 10.31, where *et* falls at the end of the first dactyl. The 8 repetitions of the refrain in *Eclogue* 8 have not been counted.

¹⁵ *Viz.*, 2.399, 2.412, 2.501, 3.118, 3.149, 3.419, 3.460, 3.473, 3.497, 4.114, 4.277, and 4.446. Also cf. 1.7, 1.103, 1.434, 3.92, and 3.501.

Virgil <i>Aeneid</i>	3:	5/718 (0.7%) ¹⁷
"	"	4: 7/705 (1.0%) ¹⁸
"	"	5: 6/871 (0.7%) ¹⁹
"	"	6: 6/901 (0.7%) ²⁰
"	"	7: 8/817 (1.0%) ²¹
"	"	8: 5/731 (0.7%) ²²
"	"	9: 6/818 (0.7%) ²³
"	"	10: 3/908 (0.3%) ²⁴
"	"	11: 7/915 (0.8%) ²⁵
"	"	12: 10/952 (1.05%) ²⁶
Ovid <i>Metamorphoses</i>	1:	5/779 (0.6%) ²⁷
Statius <i>Thebaid</i>	1:	14/720 (1.9%) ²⁸
Valerius Flaccus:		56/5,592 (1.0%) ²⁹

Even in the work of so exacting a poet as Virgil, coincidence cannot always be ruled out. In the proem to the *Aeneid*, however—indeed, in the first three words of the poem—the presence of a metrical anomaly elsewhere stringently avoided is not likely to be coincidental. It can safely be assumed that in the proem above all Virgil was at his most

¹⁶ Viz., 44, 87 (proclitic *in*), 181, 271 (quoting Ennius), 293, 334, 369, 498 (proclitic *in*), 541 (ditto), 655 (ditto), 661, 732, and 782.

¹⁷ Viz., 123, 134, 137, 647, and 685. Also cf. 3 and 215.

¹⁸ Viz., 20, 94, 281, 357, 433, 438, and 589. Also cf. 495.

¹⁹ Viz., 102 (elision), 215 (proclitic *in*), 262, 296, 379, and 460. Also cf. 499 and 868.

²⁰ Viz., 122, 165, 191 (proclitic *sub*), 206, 284, and 814 (proclitic *in*). Also cf. 90, 507, 522, and 677.

²¹ Viz., 99 (proclitic *in*), 127, 214, 272 (proclitic *in*), 386, 430 (elision), 566, and 694 (elision and proclitic *in*). Also cf. 327.

²² Viz., 76, 196, 233, 377, and 401 (proclitic *in*).

²³ Viz., 22 (proclitic *in*), 86, 334, 377, 462, and 794. Also cf. 47 and 557.

²⁴ Viz., 63, 221, and 433. Also cf. 242, 614, and 777.

²⁵ Viz., 158, 172, 186, 509, 524, 644 (proclitic *in*), and 747. Also cf. 595 and 709.

²⁶ Viz., 29, 71 (proclitic *in*), 112, 155, 185, 192, 398, 423, 780, and 866. Also cf. 569 and 910.

²⁷ In this text the rarity of *cogor habere deos* is the more remarkable when set against the generally dactylic tenor of Ovid's hexameter. The distribution of this pattern is also interesting: consecutively in lines 248 and 249, in close proximity in 544 and 552, and otherwise only in 283.

²⁸ Including line 440, but excluding 180.

²⁹ This frequency rises to 2% in Books 6–8. My data for Valerius Flaccus are those given in Jacques Perret, "Mots et fins de mots trochaïques dans l'hexamètre latin," *REL* 32 (1954) 184. Otherwise, all statistics are those that Wilhelm Ott has published from time to time, except that I have counted the instances in Ennius myself.

fastidious, if only because ancient literary canons prescribed that proems be written with the utmost care and technical skill. This norm is reflected as early as Pindar's famous comparison in *Olympian* 6 between the beginning of a choral ode and the *τηλαυγὲς πρόσωπον* of a temple. Both poets and architects are to be most concerned with what is heard or seen first, in order to arrest one's attention from the outset. In *Orator* 15.50 Cicero applies the same principle—and the same metaphor—to oratory: *vestibula nimirum honesta aditusque ad causam faciet illustres*. He puts it into practice by beginning exordia with periods of exceptional balance and complexity.³⁰ Virgil does likewise in the proem to the *Aeneid*.³¹ Also, the propensity of readers to focus on beginnings is reflected in the practice, common from at least the fifth century B.C. onwards, to refer to a work by means of the words with which it begins.³² Thus, the particular care lavished on beginnings was also justified pragmatically, by their persistence in the reader's mind. In short, when Virgil decided to open the *Aeneid* with a metrical sequence that elsewhere in the poem is almost completely proscribed, he must have had compelling reasons for doing so. What these reasons may have been is a question that merits discussion.

We may begin with the ἤττων λόγος. In more than one case Roman poets seem deliberately to have chosen for the beginning of poems a word or a phrase that would signal the genre of the work from the outset. For example, Catullus 64 begins with a Greek ethnic adjective in *-iacus*, a feature of neoteric epyllia occurring here for the first time in extant Latin poetry.³³ In *Tityre* at the beginning of the *Eclogues* the

³⁰ See L. Laurand, *Etudes sur le style des discours de Cicéron* 14 (Paris 1936–38) 319–323; Harold C. Gotoff, *Cicero's Elegant Style* (Urbana 1979) 117–118.

³¹ For an appreciation of this “noble period,” as he calls it (110), see R. G. Austin, “*Ille ego qui quondam . . .*,” *CQ* n.s. 18 (1968) 112–113; also Kenneth Quinn, *Virgil's Aeneid: A Critical Description* (London 1968) 42; Viktor Pöschl, *The Art of Vergil: Image and Symbol in the Aeneid*, trans. Gerda Seligson (Ann Arbor 1962) 157–158 (“the proem, on which . . . the poet has clearly lavished his most careful attention”).

³² See E. J. Kenney, “That Incomparable Poem the ‘*Ille ego*?’” *CR* 84 (1970) 290 and the sources cited there. Servius gives an oddly inverted description of this practice at the end of his *praefatio* (editio Harvardiana 5), where he says, “Sciendum praeterea est quod, sicut nunc dicturi thema proponimus, ita veteres incipiebant carmen a titulo carminis sui,” and then cites as examples the first three words of the *Aeneid* and of Lucan's epic, and the opening words of Statius' *Thebaid*.

³³ From the subsequent history of these adjectives it is clear that they were associated with neoteric style in general, and with epyllia in particular. The two examples found in Catullus (viz., *Pelias* and *Iliacus*) occur in poems 64 and 68 respectively. In the *Appendix Vergiliana*, out of 4 different adjectives attested, 2 occur in the neoterizing *Ciris* (lines 65 and 377; the other two are in *Cul.* 338 and *Eleg. Maec.* 45). The works of

reader familiar with Theocritus would recognize a denizen of that Greek poet's world, and hence a clear indication of pastoral poems to follow. At the beginning of the *Monobiblos*, *Cynthia* fits the same mold as Gallus' Lycoris and Tibullus' Delia, women's names that are also epithets of Apollo. Thus, the first word in the *Monobiblos* establishes the genre of this *libellus* as well. Of the epic genre, war and heroes are the quintessential subjects, and Virgil treats them as such in *Eclogue* 6, where, in the context of a Callimachean *recusatio*, *cum canerem reges et proelia* designates the genre of epic poetry. Therefore, whatever other reasons Virgil may have had for beginning the *Aeneid* with *arma virumque cano*, for signaling the genre of his epic he resorted to the same technique that he had earlier employed at the beginning of his book of pastoral poems.

The poet of the *Eclogues* is by no means the only Augustan to have exploited the programmatic, anti-Callimachean connotations of the theme of singing of war and heroes. Indeed, this is the usual significance of the topic in Augustan poetry in general, whether in

Virgil yield 5 examples, of which 3 are found in the *Georgics* (1.228, 3.49, 4.111, all in passages replete with *doctrina*), and only 2 in the entire *Aeneid* (where, beside 24 occurrences of *Iliacus*, there is only *Hadriacus* in 11.405). In addition to *Iliacus* (the common property of elevated poetry in general, as is clear from the *Aeneid*; Horace likewise has *Iliacus* 3 times for only 2 occurrences [*Sat.* 2.7.95, *Epist.* 1.5.1] of other words), there are 7 other Greek ethnics in *-iacus* in books 2 and 3 of Propertius (2.1.54, 2.15.44, 3.9.15, 3.14.14, 3.21.17, 3.22.2, 3.22.12), and most of these occur in Hellenizing contexts. In Ovid, again leaving aside the special case of *Iliacus*, one finds as many different examples (14) in the *Metamorphoses* as in all the rest of the Ovidian corpus combined.

The neoteric aura of these adjectives is also reflected in their corresponding rarity in the analogist language of Augustan elegy. They are missing entirely in Tibullus and in Propertius' *Monobiblos*, and in Ovid's *Amores* they occur only once (2.11.2, where the echo of Catullus 64.1 creates an exception that proves the rule). The plethora of apparent neologisms among these adjectives also marks them as a feature of neoteric style, which was as receptive to neologisms as analogy was restrained (Eduard Norden, ed., *P. Vergilius Maro: Aeneis Buch VI*⁴ [Stuttgart 1957] 176–177). Thus, out of 5 different adjectives in *-iacus* found in Virgil, at least 3 occur for the first time in Latin. In Propertius this ratio is at least 4 out of 8 (these cases are not included among the neologisms discussed by Hermann Tränkle, *Die Sprachkunst des Properz und die Tradition der lateinischen Dichtersprache* [Wiesbaden 1960] 57–60). In Ovid, out of 23 such formations, at least 13 are unprecedented, and 12 are unique. The practice of Catullus' successors thus attests to their zeal to emulate with novel formations of their own the innovation that they recognized in Catullus' *Pelias*. For his part, Catullus stressed the same aspect, and not only by beginning his epyllion with a Greek formation of a type quite possibly unprecedented in Latin verse: he also took pains to select in particular a word that replaced an established alternative (viz., *Pelias* in Enn. Sc. 246 V² = 208 J, and probably in Liv. Andr. Trag. 35 R²).

Tibullus' *non ego vos* [sc. *Musas*] *ut sint bella canenda colo* (2.4.16), in Ovid's *arma . . . violentaque bella parabam | edere* (*Am.* 1.1.1–2, where the enjambment of *edere* and the word itself³⁴ both recall the high style of epic), or in a host of other passages. Thus, although it might be extreme to suggest that the primary significance of *arma virumque cano* is programmatic, nevertheless, the programmatic associations of this theme are so routine in Augustan poetry that they naturally come to mind, even in the proem to an epic. The anti-Callimachean substance of *arma virumque cano* is complemented and re-enforced, moreover, by the non-Callimachean form in which these words are cast. In Callimachus' hexameters, as Wilhelm Meyer demonstrated a century ago, a word beginning in the first foot may not end in either mora of a dactylic second foot.³⁵ In other words, the sequence *cogor habere deos* is alien to the hexameter of Callimachus and in fact does not occur in Theocritus either.³⁶ In the *Argonautica*, however, it occurs "ziemlich oft"³⁷—a significant discrepancy. Callimachus, then, would not have begun the *Iliad* as it in fact begins, and *arma virumque cano* violates Callimachean norms as much in its form as in its sense. The consistency thus achieved between form and meaning is one reason, I submit, why Virgil began the *Aeneid* with a metrical sequence that he otherwise generally avoided.

In the proem to the sixth *Eclogue* the same technique is employed, but to the opposite effect. The epic genre is proclaimed in *cum canerem reges et proelia*—words close to *arma virumque cano*—but it is promptly rejected in a paraphrase of the prologue to Callimachus' *Aetia*. This rejection of epic, however, is already implicit in *Cynthia*,

³⁴ See Franz Bömer, ed., *P. Ovidius Naso: Die Fasten* (Heidelberg 1958) 2.147.

³⁵ Meyer (above, n. 7) 980–986; Maas (above, n. 5) sect. 94. In the *Hymns* and *Epigrams* this norm is violated only twice: *Ap.* 41 and *Cer.* 91. For a revision of Meyer's formulation see Hermann Fränkel, "Der kallimachische und der homerische Hexameter," *Nachrichten der Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften zu Göttingen, Philologisch-historische Klasse* (1926) 197–203; *Wege und Formen frühgriechischen Denkens*², ed. Franz Tietze (Munich 1960) 133–135.

³⁶ See the citations in P. E. Legrand, *Etude sur Théocrite* (Paris 1898) 338–339. If no distinction is made between clitic monosyllables and integral syllables, then exceptions are to be found in Theoc. *Id.* 2.130, 5.8, 10.2, and 25.243 (also cf. 6.25). Four unambiguous examples remain in the Theocritean corpus, all of them found in the spurious *Idyll* 25 (88, 91, 107, and 165). The fourfold recurrence of the sequence in question, which Theocritus completely avoids, is consistent with the overall manner of *Idyll* 25, which resembles Homeric epic more closely than do any of the other epic narratives in Theocritus (A. S. F. Gow, ed., *Theocritus*² [Cambridge 1952] 2.440).

³⁷ Meyer (above, n. 7) 985.

the word immediately following *cum canerem reges et proelia*; for in pre-Virgilian poetry, aside from one occurrence in Posidippus, *Cynthius*, as an epithet of Apollo, is unique to Callimachus, where it occurs three times.³⁸ The “exquisite rightness” which Wendell Clausen attributes to *Cynthius* applies as well to Virgil’s versification, which inserts between *proelia* and *Cynthius* one of only 54 bucolic diaereses in the *Eclogues*.³⁹ Callimachean terminology is thus complemented and re-enforced by Theocritean versification, and both together imply the rejection of epic that is subsequently made explicit. *Arma virumque cano* and *cum canerem reges et proelia* have in common an anti-Callimachean thrust that in the former is re-enforced by the metrical pattern of the words themselves. In the *Eclogue*, however, the aesthetic implicit in *cum canerem reges et proelia* is undermined by the *mollities* of the following diaeresis.⁴⁰

³⁸ Wendell Clausen, “*Cynthius*,” *AJP* 97 (1976) 245–247; “*Cynthius*: An Addendum,” *ibid.* 98 (1977) 362. Elsewhere in Virgil *Cynthius* occurs only in *G.* 3.36, where the context is likewise “intensely Callimachean.”

³⁹ I take “bucolic diaeresis” to apply to a dactylic fourth foot followed by a sense-pause. As for the frequency of these diaereses, *quot homines tot numeri*. My count of 54 is derived from the citations in Herbert Holtorf, ed., *P. Vergilius Maro: Die grösseren Gedichte* (Freiburg and Munich 1959) 1.296, which, however, is replete with inaccuracies (e.g., vocatives per se do not create a sense-pause, 2.74 is counted twice, and 1.38, 3.17, and 8.78 should be added to the “Ausnahmen” where the fourth foot is a spondee). Some other counts are as follows: (i) 63 in W. R. Hardie, *Res metrica* (Oxford 1920) 19, n. 1; (ii) 35 (including 6.3) in Louis Havet, *Cours élémentaire de métrique grecque et latine*⁵ (Paris 1914) 53; (iii) 33 in Louis Nougaret, *Traité de métrique latine classique* (Paris 1963) 41. E. H. Sturtevant, “Word-Ends and Pauses in the Hexameter,” *AJP* 42 (1921) 306, finds bucolic diaereses occurring at the rate of 6.2 per 100 lines, a frequency lower than Hardie’s, higher than those of Havet and Nougaret, and about the same as my own calculation of 6.5 per 100 lines. In any case, the fact remains that bucolic diaereses are infrequent in the *Eclogues*, as ancient commentators such as Atilius Fortunatianus (*GLK* 6.292) and Terentianus Maurus (6.389) already recognized. In contrast, out of 152 lines in Theocritus 1, all but 20 have a bucolic diaeresis (K. J. Dover, ed., *Theocritus: Select Poems* [Basingstoke and London 1971] xxiii). There are even more in Theocritus 5, 150 lines long (Maas [above, n. 5] 94–95). Thus, within the 302 lines of these two poems alone, there are at least five times as many bucolic diaereses as in all the *Eclogues* combined.

⁴⁰ The *mollities* attributed to bucolic diaereses by Holtorf (above, n. 39) 1.296 is evident in the fact that in Virgil dactylic forms of *mollis* are followed by a bucolic diaeresis significantly more often than are dactylic words in general. Out of 680 unelided dactylic words which I count in *Aeneid* 1 and 12, only 28 (4.1%) are followed by a bucolic diaeresis, compared to a frequency of 9 out of 29 (31.0%) for dactylic forms of *mollis* (*molliter* included) in all of Virgil. Thus, it is unlikely to be accidental that the fourth (N.B., *paulo maiora canamus*) is the only *Eclogue* in which no bucolic diaeresis occurs.

But Virgil's primary justification for beginning his epic with the metrically anomalous *arma virumque cano* surely has to do with his intent to adumbrate in the proem the conflation of Homeric epics underlying the *Aeneid* as a whole. It has often been remarked that the organization of the *Aeneid* into an "Iliadic" and an "Odyssean" half is already implicit in the first two words. On a larger scale, however, this amalgam is also reflected in the first seven lines, which in content and rhetorical structure resemble the first ten lines of the *Odyssey*, but in their versification recall the proem of the *Iliad*. From the outset the proems of both the *Odyssey* and the *Aeneid* make reference to an anonymous hero and his manifold adventures, beginning with his departure from Troy, both on land and on sea. This similarity of content is complemented by close verbal reminiscences: Virgil's *virum . . . qui* translates Homer's ἄνδρα . . . ὅς, with both words falling in roughly the same line-position as their Homeric equivalents.⁴¹ Odysseus' many wanderings (1–2) and his many sufferings endured at sea (4) are paralleled by Aeneas' many wanderings on land and sea (3) and by his many ordeals in war (5). Here, too, contextual similarities are re-enforced by verbal and rhetorical correspondences, viz.:

1. πολλὰ | πλάγχθη (1–2) = *multum . . . iactatus* (3).
2. πολλῶν . . . πολλὰ (3–4) = *multum . . . multa* (3–5). Both πολλῶν and *multa*, one the exact equivalent of the other, fall in the first foot, and the line-positions of πολλῶν and *multum* differ by only one foot.
3. πολλὰ δ' ὅ γ' ἐν πόντῳ (4) = *multum ille . . . alto* (3). The imitation here is so exact that not even Homer's ὅ γε is overlooked.
4. πολλὰ δ' . . . πάθεν ἄλγεα (4) = *multa . . . passus* (5).

Compared to this accumulation of unmistakable echoes of the proem to the *Odyssey*, the semantic and rhetorical correspondences alleged between the proem of the *Aeneid* and that of the *Iliad* are remote and tenuous at best. It has been argued, for example, that *Troiae . . . Romae* bracketing *Aeneid* 1.1–7 is paralleled by Πηληϊάδεω . . . Ἀχιλλεύς at opposite extremes of the proem to the *Iliad*.⁴² A more salient symmetry, however, is that between Ἀχιλλῆος and Ἀχιλλεύς at the end of the first and the last lines respectively, not to mention

⁴¹ It is remarkable how often *virum . . . qui* has rather been connected with μῆνιν . . . ἦ in the proem to the *Iliad*: for example, Harold Fuchs, "Rückschau und Ausblick im Arbeitsbereich der lateinischen Philologie," *MH* 4 (1947) 192, n. 114. No reminiscences of the *Odyssey* proem are mentioned in Austin's influential article (above, n. 31) 107–115.

⁴² *Ibid.* 112–113.

Ἀτρεΐδης . . . Ἀχιλλεύς in the last line, imitated in *Albani . . . Romae* bracketing the corresponding line of the *Aeneid*.⁴³ The claim has also been made that the last word in both proems is the most important proper name in the entire epic,⁴⁴ but in an epic entitled *Aeneis*, the claims of *Aeneas* would seem equally as strong as those of *Roma*. Finally, both proems end with references to chronology, but if this similarity is not fortuitous, it is unclear what in Virgil is meant to correspond to Homer's ἐξ οὗ δῆ: whether *dum*⁴⁵ or *unde*.⁴⁶

Nevertheless, Virgil's recall of the versification of the proem to the *Iliad* is obvious from the very outset, for metrically *arma virumque cano* is the exact equivalent of μῆνιν ἄειδε θεά.⁴⁷ Nor can this formal reminiscence be dismissed as mere coincidence: it has been shown above that *arma virumque cano* constitutes a metrical sequence that is in general scrupulously avoided at the beginning of hexameters, Virgil's hexameters included. Thus, not only must there have been compelling reasons for beginning the *Aeneid* with this metrical pattern in particular, but the echo of μῆνιν ἄειδε θεά in *arma virumque cano* calls attention to itself by virtue of the rarity of this pattern. This echo, moreover, is re-enforced by a second, namely, that of οὐλομένην in *Italiam*, both at the beginning of the second line. Thus, it is unlikely to be coincidental, as P. A. Hansen⁴⁸ has suggested it is, that the proems of the *Aeneid* and the *Iliad* are both seven lines long, or that structurally *Albanique . . . atque altae moenia Romae* in the last line of the one parallels Ἀτρεΐδης τε . . . καὶ δῖος Ἀχιλλεύς in the last line of the other. Rather, by reproducing exactly the length of the *Iliad* proem, and by recalling the structure and versification (Ἀτρεΐδης τε ἄναξ = *Albanique patres*) of *Iliad* 1.7 in the seventh line of his own epic, Virgil intended the same result that he achieved with his metrical imitation of μῆνιν ἄειδε θεά and οὐλομένην. As unmistakably as the proem of the

⁴³ See n. 46 below.

⁴⁴ Fuchs (above, n. 41) 192, n. 114; Quinn (above, n. 31) 41.

⁴⁵ So Fuchs, *loc. cit.*, stressing the transformation of Homer's retrospection into Virgil's teleological orientation.

⁴⁶ The structural correspondence, detailed just below, between the seventh lines of the *Iliad* and the *Aeneid* lends support to ἐξ οὗ δῆ = *unde* in the sixth lines. For the same conclusion for different reasons see Quinn (above, n. 31) 41.

⁴⁷ Among the few to have noticed this correspondence may be mentioned Henry Nettleship (John Conington and Henry Nettleship, eds., *P. Vergili Maronis opera: The Works of Vergil with a Commentary*³ [London 1876] 2.519) and W. A. Camps (*An Introduction to Virgil's Aeneid* [Cambridge 1969] 122).

⁴⁸ "Ille ego qui quondam . . . Once Again," *CQ* N.S. 22 (1972) 146.

Aeneid recalls the proem to the *Odyssey* in content, in form, and in versification, beginning with the first three words, its model is entirely the *Iliad*.

In Virgil's hexameters the expressive potential of poetic meter is realized to a degree unparalleled in ancient literature. Indeed, no aspect of Virgil's art is more widely appreciated. Nevertheless, there is a fundamental difference between the proem to the *Aeneid* and the cases to which "expressive verse technique" would normally be understood to refer. From relatively crude examples such as a dactylic line "depicting" galloping horses (*Aen.* 8.596) to subtler cases like *Aeneid* 6.868–869, where two maximally spondaic lines suggest Anchises' grief,⁴⁹ the meter is expressive for the same reason in both cases, that is, because it serves a mimetic function. Meter and context are reciprocal and complementary, meter serving to enhance, or at least to reflect, the meaning or the ethos of the text itself.⁵⁰ From examples like these, however, typical though they surely are, the beginning of the *Aeneid* is different in kind. Here the expressiveness of the meter is entirely autonomous, having nothing at all to do with the meaning of the words themselves. Indeed, meter and context are even, in a sense, contradictory, the one Iliadic, the other Odyssean. By recalling the beginning of the *Iliad* in a proem reminiscent of the proem to the *Odyssey*, Virgil adumbrated in microcosm the basic structure of the entire *Aeneid*,⁵¹ "quasi amborum Homeri carminum instar"; and in resorting to metrical means for doing so, he conferred on meter a degree of expressive power, subtlety, and autonomy that is rare and perhaps unparalleled even in his own superbly expressive hexameters.

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⁴⁹ Norden (above, n. 33) 344, 422.

⁵⁰ See Norden 418–419, where the hexameter line is analyzed as a means by which "der Dichter . . . das von ihm gewollte Ethos des Gedankens malerisch zum Ausdruck bringen kann." The same view of meter as mimesis underlies the section entitled "Varieties of expressive technique" in Wilkinson (above, n. 8) 68–73.

⁵¹ E. A. Fredricksmeyer finds the same result achieved by different means in "On the Opening of the *Aeneid*," *Vergilius* 30 (1984) 11.