

## DISCORDIA TAETRA: THE HISTORY OF A HEXAMETER-ENDING\*

In *Latin Hexameter Verse*, his 1903 manual for composers of Latin hexameters which is still useful as a guide to Vergil's metrical and prosodic practices, S. E. Winbolt states that a hexameter 'must not end with an adjective preceded by a noun with a similar short ending, e.g. ...*flumina nota*' unless the adjective is emphatic, 'i.e. strongly distinctive, predicative or antithetical'.<sup>1</sup> Whether or not his distinction between emphatic and non-emphatic adjectives in this position is wholly workable (predicative adjectives are clearly distinguishable, but it is not clear that the other types are), Winbolt here rightly detects a strong tendency in Vergil and other Latin poets towards avoiding endings of this general kind, which we can conveniently call the 'Discordia taetra' type after one of its earliest and best-known instances in the *Annales* of Ennius (225–6 Skutsch 'postquam Discordia taetra/Belli ferratos postes portasque refregit'). The rarity of this type of line-ending is clear in Vergil; there are only 16 examples, regardless of whether the adjective is emphatic or not, in the 9890 lines of the *Aeneid*. Such a select and easily-defined phenomenon might prove a yardstick of some interest in the history of the Latin hexameter, for it seems to raise a number of questions to which the answers would be significant and useful. Is this type of ending avoided equally by all poets? Is there an increasing tendency to avoid it as time goes on? Is it associated with any particular genres of hexameter poetry? Do poets tend to use in it the same words or phrases as their predecessors? To discover the answers, this article will look at the 'Discordia taetra' phenomenon in Latin hexameter poetry, defining it as the instance where a noun ending in a short vowel (in practice, in '-a') is immediately succeeded by an adjective of similar ending and in agreement at the end of the hexameter, and where such a noun is not a substantivised adjective and such an adjective is neither predicative nor a participle.

The phenomenon must bear some relation to the general issue of word-order within the hexameter. As Winbolt suggested, its avoidance does seem to be connected with the wish not to have non-emphatic words at the end of the hexameter, a position which naturally bears some weight,<sup>2</sup> but there is also a further ground for its infrequency. In this most prominent position in the hexameter above all, Latin poets are surely keen to avoid the conventional word-order of prose, in which the adjective is placed immediately after its noun. This is supported by the fact that a line-ending containing the same words in the reverse order, i.e. an adjective ending in '-a' succeeded by a similar noun in agreement, is common in Latin hexameters: thus there are no examples of the 'Discordia taetra' phenomenon in the 756 lines of *Aeneid* 1, which show seven examples of the converse 'immania saxa' type.<sup>3</sup> Further, the

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<sup>1</sup> S. E. Winbolt, *Latin Hexameter Verse* (London, 1903), p. 153.

<sup>2</sup> In similar vein, Eduard Norden (*P. Vergilius Maro Aeneis Buch VI* (Leipzig, 1916), pp. 400–2, draws attention to the general tendency in Latin hexameter verse to avoid 'indifferent' or non-emphatic categories of words such as pronouns, particles, conjunctions, prepositions and auxiliary verbs at the end of the line.

<sup>3</sup> 1.72 *pulcherrima Deliopea*, 139 *immania saxa*, 201 *Cyclopa saxa*, 430 *florea rura*, 537 *invia saxa*, 678 *maxima cura*, 680 *alta Cythera*.

frequency of this last-mentioned type argues against any notion that the 'Discordia taetra' ending is avoided simply because of the open short vowel(s) at the end of the line, though the tendency of the hexameter to demand a long final syllable might be thought to point that way. Given that it is thus a relatively refined phenomenon, success in avoiding the 'Discordia taetra' ending might be thought to bear some relation to technical proficiency in the writing of Latin hexameters, and we shall see in some cases that this is true. What follows is a survey of the practice of all major writers of Latin hexameter verse from Ennius to Claudian, prefaced with some indications of Greek practice and rounded off with some examples from the Latin Middle Ages and the Renaissance, and some conclusions will be drawn at the end.

### 1. *Greek antecedents*

The potential incidence of the 'Discordia taetra' ending in Greek hexameters should be roughly equivalent to that in Latin, for both languages have roughly the same number of possible combinations where both noun and adjective can end in a short '-a' or '-α' – feminine singular nominative, masculine singular accusative and neuter plural (nom., voc., acc.) in Greek, feminine singular nominative and vocative and neuter plural (nom., voc., acc.) in Latin. In practice, the vast majority of cases of the phenomenon are neuter plural in both languages.<sup>4</sup> The practice of Greek poets will thus be a useful comparison for that of Latin poets. I have chosen two sample-groups for analysis: archaic epic (Homer, Hesiod and the Homeric Hymns) and Hellenistic poetry (Callimachus, Apollonius, Theocritus and Aratus).<sup>5</sup> These might indicate if there is any development over a longish period in the Greek hexameter, and include texts which exercised considerable influence over the Latin poets whom we shall consider shortly.

The figures are as follows. Bare figures only are given here, since the tracing of individual wordings of these line-ends in Greek is not at issue, and are expressed as ratios of those lines which do not show the feature to those which do, a convenient measure which will be used in all the figures which follow.

Homer, <i>Iliad</i>	85 in 15693 lines = 1:185
Homer, <i>Odyssey</i>	97 in 12110 lines = 1:125
Hesiod, <i>Theogony</i>	14 in 1022 lines = 1:73
Hesiod, <i>H&amp;D</i>	6 in 828 lines = 1:138
[Hesiod] <i>Aspis</i>	3 in 480 lines = 1:160
<i>Homeric Hymns</i> 2–5	33 in 1914 lines = 1:56
Callimachus, <i>H.</i> 1–4, 6	4 in 940 lines = 1:235
Apollonius, <i>Arg.</i>	1 in 5835 lines = 1:5835
Theocritus, <i>Id.</i> 1–27	5 in 2629 lines = 1:525
Aratus, <i>Phaen.</i>	8 in 1154 lines = 1:128

Several features emerge here. The first is the general tendency of the Hellenistic poets to have less of the device than archaic epic, as we would expect if its use

<sup>4</sup> Some 96% of the Homeric occurrences are in the neuter plural, and some 88% of the Latin examples listed below.

<sup>5</sup> These texts are all cited from the *OCT*, with the exception of Callimachus (Pfeiffer) and Aratus (Loeb). The discrepancy between the figures for the *Theogony* and the *Works and Days* would be much reduced if all the lines bracketed by West in his *OCT* were removed: 4 of the 14 examples cited for the *Theogony* would then disappear (*Theogony* 305, 835, 848, 955), leaving 10 in 1022 lines, a proportion of 1:102.

decreases with the development of hexameter technique. The second is that the first is not true for all Hellenistic poetry: Aratus shows much the same type of figure as Hesiod, *W&D*. Since that poem was one of Aratus' chief models, as Callimachus famously noted on its publication,<sup>6</sup> this is not surprising, and it is clear that Aratus retains this feature of Hesiodic versification as a matter of *imitatio*. Similarly, the figures for Callimachus' *Hymns* are not as low as those for Theocritus or Apollonius: this too makes sense as a matter of literary imitation, since Callimachus' main model there is the collection of Homeric Hymns, the longer of which show the highest figure in archaic epic. Finally, the figure for Apollonius is astonishingly low, in a different order of magnitude from all the rest:<sup>7</sup> clearly this was one feature of previous epic diction which Apollonius was extremely keen to avoid in his refined Hellenistic version of the Homeric hexameter. So, three general points emerge: the general frequency of the phenomenon decreases between the archaic and Hellenistic periods, some authors appear to revert to previous practices to make a literary point, and authors can develop a practice very different from the general run of their contemporaries.

## 2. The Latin hexameter

Here individual line-endings will be given as well as bare figures, in an attempt to trace use of the same nouns and adjectives in this line-ending. For convenience, poets will be divided into three groups: pre-Augustan, Augustan, and post-Ovidian.

### (i) Pre-Augustan<sup>8</sup>

Ennius, *Annales* (Skutsch), 4 in 623 lines = 1:156

88 *corpora sancta*  
142 *Etruria tota*  
225 *Discordia taetra*  
437 *corpora firma*

Lucilius, *Satires* (Marx), 5 in 1002 lines = 1:200

321 *barbula prima*  
438 *sodalicia omnia*  
1316 *sententia dia*  
1309 *carchesia summa*  
1149 *Capitolia magna*

Cicero, *Aratea* (Traglia), 0 in 575 lines = 1:0.

<sup>6</sup> *Ep.* 27 Pfeiffer, 1: 'Ἡσιόδου τὸ τ' αἶσμα καὶ ὁ τρόπος.

<sup>7</sup> The one example is *Arg.* 1.920, which ends with ὄργια κείνα; this does not appear to be an echo of any other author – cf. M. Campbell, *Echoes and Imitations of Early Epic in Apollonius Rhodius* (*Mnem.* Suppl. 72; Leiden, 1987), p. 17. Likewise, Apollonius has only thirteen examples of the *immania saxa* type of line-ending (cf. n. 3 above) in the *Argonautica*, six of which are quotations of Homeric line-endings: *Arg.* 1.927 (= *Il.* 8.369), 1.996 (= *Od.* 10.219), 2.597 (= *Od.* 9.248), 2.601 (= *Il.* 9.241), 2.628, 2.839, 3.229 (= *Od.* 11.374), 4.38, 4.422, 4.1063 (= Hesiod, *HD* 330), 4.1302 (= *Od.* 11.240), 4.1093. This would suggest a general aversion to writing line-ends of his own with two consecutive words ending with open *a*, an aversion clearly not found in Homer or Vergil (cf. n. 3 above).

<sup>8</sup> Lucretius is cited from the *OCT* of C. Bailey (2nd ed., 1922), Catullus from Sir Roger Mynors' *OCT* (1958).

Lucretius, *De Rerum Natura*, 57 in 7797 lines = 1:137

1.14	<i>pabula laeta</i>	3.310	<i>vestigia prima</i>
1.165	<i>corpora prima</i>	3.368	<i>lumina nostra</i>
1.251	<i>pabula laeta</i>	3.439	<i>corpora prima</i>
1.272	<i>corpora caeca</i>	3.629	<i>saecla priora</i>
1.289	<i>corpora caeca</i>	3.720	<i>copia tanta</i>
1.378	<i>corpora lata</i>	4.85	<i>vestigia certa</i>
1.504	<i>corpora prima</i>	4.123	<i>absinthia taetra</i>
1.515	<i>corpora certa</i>	4.451	<i>corpora bina</i>
1.520	<i>corpora certa</i>	4.512	<i>regula prima</i>
1.532	<i>corpora prima</i>	4.573	<i>loca sola</i>
1.808	<i>primordia multa</i>	4.774	<i>copia tanta</i>
1.856	<i>corpora parva</i>	4.799	<i>copia tanta</i>
1.1006	<i>corpora sancta</i>	4.985	<i>animalia cuncta</i>
1.1054	<i>corpora nostra</i>	4.1021	<i>dolia curta</i>
1.1094	<i>primordia caeca</i>	5.476	<i>corpora viva</i>
2.8	<i>templa serena</i>	5.658	<i>semina multa</i>
2.14	<i>pectora caeca</i>	5.994	<i>vermina saeva</i>
2.89	<i>corpora prima</i>	5.1010	<i>conubia laeta</i>
2.316	<i>pabula laeta</i>	5.1040	<i>vocabula prima</i>
2.337	<i>copia tanta</i>	5.1082	<i>saecla vetusta</i>
2.351	<i>delubra decora</i>	5.1124	<i>Tartara taetra</i>
2.363	<i>pabula laeta</i>	5.1135	<i>sceptra superba</i>
2.433	<i>numina sancta</i>	5.1188	<i>signa severa</i>
2.588	<i>corpora prima</i>	5.1384	<i>otia dia</i>
2.595	<i>pabula laeta</i>	6.68	<i>numina sancta</i>
2.873	<i>pabula laeta</i>	6.128	<i>vesicula parva</i>
2.874	<i>corpora nostra</i>	6.158	<i>semina multa</i>
2.877	<i>corpora viva</i>	6.942	<i>saxa superna</i>
2.1157	<i>pabula laeta</i>		

Catullus 64, 2 in 408 lines = 1:204

36 *moenia Larisaea*      158 *conubia nostra*

The figures for most of these pre-Augustan poets show a fair consistency, at something like Homeric levels for Lucretius and Ennius. Lucilius' figures are slightly higher, but as with Ennius a collection of fragments, which may for accidental reasons misrepresent an author's practices, does not necessarily provide an accurate profile; the same goes for short texts like Cicero, *Aratea* and Catullus 64. Nonetheless, it is worth noticing that Cicero does not have a single instance in his *Aratea*; the shorter Catullus 64 has two instances (one of which, however, involves an adjective derived from a proper noun, more weighty than a simple epithet), and one might expect an imitator of Aratus to produce something like the Aratean figure, especially when that figure is itself something like the 'going rate' for the pre-Augustan period. It would seem as if the young Cicero, painstakingly composing his translation, preferred the more refined practice of Apollonius to that of Aratus himself, though it is fair to say that the Ciceronian *Aratea* has a considerable number of proper names at line-end, which would naturally decrease the frequency of the 'Discordia taetra' phenomenon. As for Lucretius, the frequency of instances with 'corpora' as fifth-foot noun shows that the practice was convenient for a poet writing in Latin about atomic particles, and perhaps provides further evidence for the poet's own complaint about 'patrii sermonis egestas'. Of the 57 Lucretian examples, only one is taken from Ennius (1.1006 = Ennius *Ann.* 88 *corpora sancta*); had we more of Ennius, there would surely be other instances of this kind of imitation (Lucretius does use the Ennian *taetra* as final adjective twice, at 4.123 and 5.1124).

## (ii) Augustan

(a) Vergil<sup>9</sup>

*Eclogues*, 2 in 829 lines = 1:415

*Georgics*, 4 in 2188 lines = 1:547

*Aeneid*, 16 in 9890 lines = 1:618

*Ecl.* 2.44 *munera nostra*

10.39 *vaccinia nigra*

*Georg.* 3.213 *flumina lata*

3.252 *verbera saeva* 4.86 *certamina tanta*

3.385 *pabula laeta*

*Aen.* 4.96 *moenia nostra* 10.72 *potentia nostra*

4.213 *conubia nostra* 10.97 *flamina prima*

6.246 *libamina prima* 10.283 *vestigia prima*

8.74 *incommoda nostra* 10.462 *arma cruenta*

8.574 *numina vestra* 10.466 *tegmina summa*

9.21 *omina tanta* 10.529 *discrimina tanta*

9.143 *discrimina parva* 11.727 *proelia saeva*

9.282 *fortuna secunda* 12.262 *litora vestra*

With Vergil we find the first evidence for development within a poet's career: the *Eclogues* and *Georgics* clearly show the phenomenon more than the later *Aeneid*, and it seems that Vergil continued to refine his technique in this respect. Overall, the figures for Vergil overall are more like Hellenistic poetry than Ennius and Lucretius, as one might well expect, and historically speaking the feature is becoming less frequent in Latin hexameters. The *Georgics* contain a complete line-end of our type imitated from Lucretius (*G.* 3.385 *pabula laeta*, found seven times in Lucretius – see above), which reminds us of the strong influence of the *De Rerum Natura* on the *Georgics*. The figures for the *Aeneid* have one striking feature: 13 out of 16 occur in the second half of the poem, and six of those in the tenth book. This may well be because in the later books of the *Aeneid*, especially those describing fighting, Vergil becomes more Ennian in style, a feature which extends in other ways to line-endings: the triple disyllable at line-end, rare in earlier Vergil, comes to be much more frequent in *Aeneid* 7–12, and is a feature of Ennius' *Annales*.<sup>10</sup> In fact, Vergil does not echo in detail any of the four extant Ennian instances of our phenomenon; in the *Aeneid* he imitates one from Catullus (4.213 *conubia nostra* = Catullus 64.158), and one from Lucretius (10.283 *vestigia prima* = Lucretius 3.310), though there may of course be more inheritances of this kind from lost texts, especially from the vast lost proportion of Ennius' *Annales*.

(b) Horace<sup>11</sup>

*Satires* I, 2 in 1030 lines = 1:515

<sup>9</sup> Cited from the *OCT* of Sir Roger Mynors (1969).

<sup>10</sup> Cf. Norden, *op. cit.* (n. 2), pp. 447–8. Norden records 7 examples of the line-ending in the whole *Aeneid* (9890 lines), all but one in its second half; Ennius has five examples in the 623 lines securely attributed to the *Annales* in Skutsch's edition.

<sup>11</sup> Cited from the Teubner ed. of D. R. Shackleton Bailey (Stuttgart, 1985). *Sat.* 1.10.7 *fastidia nostra* occurs in a passage which most editors agree to be spurious, while *Sat.* 1.4.60 *Discordia taetra* is discounted as a straight quotation of Ennius (*Ann.* 225 Skutsch, see above).

<i>Satires</i> II,	2 in 1083 lines = 1:542	
<i>Epistles</i> I,	2 in 1005 lines = 1:503	
<i>Epistles</i> II,	3 in 486 lines = 1:162	
<i>Ars Poetica</i> ,	2 in 476 lines = 1:238	
<i>Sat. I</i>	1.8 <i>victoria laeta</i>	6.42 <i>plaustra ducenta</i>
<i>Sat. II</i>	2.10 <i>vectigalia magna</i>	8.9 <i>faecula Coa</i>
<i>Ep. I</i>	1.41 <i>sapientia prima</i>	16.44 <i>vicinia tota</i>
<i>Ep. II</i>	1.52 <i>somnia Pythagorea</i>	1.188 <i>gaudia vana</i>
	1.198 <i>spectacula plura</i>	
<i>Ars</i>	268 <i>exemplaria Graeca</i>	286 <i>vestigia Graeca</i>

Horace's usage shows something like Vergilian levels of our phenomenon, in so far as we can judge from his small samples. One special feature is the use of adjectives derived from proper nouns (*Coa*, *Pythagorea*, *Graeca*), which are naturally more weighty than a simple epithet and therefore perhaps less consciously avoided by Horace: it is worth noting that if these were excluded the figures for *Epistles* II and *Ars Poetica* would be closer to those for the other books of *sermones*, and thus the lower totals for Horace's latest hexameter poetry are not likely to represent a significant development.

### (c) Ovid<sup>12</sup>

*Metamorphoses*, 2 in 9997 lines = 1:4999

*Met.* 9.733 *animalia cuncta* 10.618 *conubia nostra*

This is clearly a notable departure from general Augustan practice. Ovid's almost complete avoidance of our phenomenon matches only one poet met so far, Apollonius (see above),<sup>13</sup> and corresponds to our general notions about his strictness in the matter of final word-shape, well-known at the end of the pentameter in the elegiac couplet<sup>14</sup> but less frequently applied to the *Metamorphoses*. Ovid's aversion to our phenomenon as a piece of compositional technique is strongly underlined by the fact that both his two instances are imitations of other poets (*Met.* 10.581 *animalia cuncta* = Lucretius 4.985, 10.618 *conubia nostra* = Catullus 64.158 and Vergil, *Aen.* 4.213); he does it only as a matter of imitation.

### (iii) Post-Ovidian

As in so many other features of hexameter poetry, the ground rules for the use of our phenomenon have now been laid down. Poets who are technically competent in handling the hexameter have three bands of frequency into which to fall: archaic frequency (Lucretius), moderate use (Vergil), and ultra-refined exclusion (Ovid).

<sup>12</sup> Cited from the Teubner ed. of the *Met.* by W. S. Anderson (Leipzig, 1985).

<sup>13</sup> Like Apollonius (see n. 7 above), Ovid also shows an aversion to the *immania saxa* type of line-ending (cf. n. 3), which he has only seventeen times in the *Met.* (1.519, 2.438, 3.204, 4.726, 5.3, 5.669, 7.461, 7.472, 9.126, 10.4, 12.29, 12.417, 13.289 (= Vergil, *Georg.* 4.1), 13.816, 14.47, 14.512, 14.569); Vergil by contrast has it six times in the first book of the *Aeneid* (cf. n. 3). As for Apollonius, this would suggest that Ovid had a general aversion to two consecutive words ending in open 'a' in agreement at the end of the line.

<sup>14</sup> Cf. e.g. W. F. Jackson Knight in *Ovidiana*, ed. N. I. Herescu (Paris, 1958), p. 119.

There is no longer linear development over time. In post-Ovidian hexameters we will find examples of all three; in most cases explanations can be suggested of the poet's particular strategy.

**(a) Manilius<sup>15</sup>**

*Astronomica*, 23 in 4243 lines = 1:184

1.184 <i>fata diurna</i>	3.171 <i>sidera cuncta</i>
1.404 <i>concordia quanta</i>	3.438 <i>sidera cuncta</i>
1.461 <i>incendia tanta</i>	3.444 <i>sidera cuncta</i>
1.694 <i>aplustria summa</i>	3.471 <i>damna priora</i>
1.729 <i>saecula prisca</i>	3.654 <i>pabula laeta</i>
2.293 <i>signa priora</i>	4.542 <i>saecula prisca</i>
2.332 <i>signa quaterna</i>	4.643 <i>litora plura</i>
2.490 <i>cornua laeva</i>	4.807 <i>sidera cuncta</i>
2.592 <i>saecula cuncta</i>	4.864 <i>munera tanta</i>
2.810 <i>fastigia summa</i>	4.870 <i>pectora nostra</i>
2.830 <i>tempora prima</i>	4.897 <i>animalia cuncta</i>
3.109 <i>praemia quanta</i>	

Manilius clearly reverts to pre-Augustan practice in terms of frequency, and his specific imitations of Lucretius suggest that he does this in order to echo the *De Rerum Natura*, the great model for the *Astronomica* and for Latin didactic poetry in general: thus *Astr.* 3.654 *pabula laeta* is a line-ending found once in Vergil (*G.* 3.385) but seven times in Lucretius, while *Astr.* 4.890 *animalia cuncta* is one of the two examples found in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* (9.733) but occurs originally in Lucretius (4.985). As in Lucretius, the repeated vocabulary of Manilius' endings suggest the necessities of getting his subject-manner into hexameters: note the frequency of *sidera*, *signa* and *tempora*, all essential words for a poet talking about the behaviour of constellations. This poet is not afraid to repeat the same rarish formula within seven lines (3.438 = 3.444 *sidera cuncta*).

**(b) Germanicus**

*Aratea*,<sup>16</sup> 12 in 948 lines = 1:79

i.69 <i>vestigia laeva</i>	i.316 <i>miracula nulla</i>
i.81 <i>planta sinistra</i>	i.478 <i>fastigia summa</i>
i.129 <i>saecula vestra</i>	i.715 <i>planta sinistra</i>
i.179 <i>vestigia dextra</i>	iii.13 <i>arva quieta</i>
i.260 <i>corpora parva</i>	iv.98 <i>frigora prima</i>
i.267 <i>tempora bina</i>	v.5 <i>flamina cuncta</i>

This translation of Aratus, probably slightly later than Manilius,<sup>17</sup> shows an extraordinary frequency of our phenomenon, with over twice the frequency we find in Manilius and one and a half times the frequency which we find in Aratus himself. The reason for this is partly imitation of previous didactic poetry (i.478 *fastigia summa* probably echoes the same ending at Manilius, *Astr.* 2.810, and i.260 *corpora parva* echoes Lucretius 1.856), but the poetic difficulties for an amateur in

<sup>15</sup> Cited from the Teubner ed. of G. P. Goold (Leipzig, 1985).

<sup>16</sup> Cited from the Budé ed. of A. le Boeuffe (Paris, 1975).

<sup>17</sup> Cf. le Boeuffe, op. cit. (n. 16), pp. viii–xv, G. P. Goold, *Manilius: Astronomica* (Cambridge, MA/London, 1977), p. xiv.

accommodating Aratus' tough material to the Latin hexameter may also play a part. Adjectives such as *laeva*, *dextra* and *sinistra* (especially the repeated *planta sinistra*) clearly help out the poet in his task of mapping out the relative positions of the stars, and Germanicus' poem, as one might expect from an imperial prince who had other things to do, does not in general show the fluency in handling the didactic hexameter displayed by Lucretius or Manilius (for example, he has more end-stopping than either). Here then the frequency of our phenomenon appears to owe something to difficulties in versification as well as to the desire to imitate the diction of a particular poet or genre; such technical problems will certainly be found to cause frequency of our phenomenon in some medieval texts (see below).

**(c) Minor hexameter texts of the first century A.D.<sup>18</sup>**

Grattius, <i>Cynegetica</i> , 0 in 540 lines	= 1:0
Columella, <i>De Re Rustica</i> X, 0 in 436 lines	= 1:0
Persius, <i>Satires</i> , 0 in 750 lines	= 1:0
Calpurnius, <i>Bucolica</i> , 1 in 759 lines	= 1:759
3.78 <i>lilia prima</i>	
<i>Culex</i> 1 in 343 lines	= 1:343
343 <i>aura secunda</i>	
<i>Ciris</i> , 1 in 541 lines	= 1:541
113 <i>flumina Caeratea</i>	
<i>Aetna</i> , 1 in 645 lines	= 1:645
353 <i>corpora nostra</i>	

These texts are all short, and give little statistical help. On the whole they show a frequency approximating that of Vergil, and rather greater than that of Ovid. The single example in the *Ciris* is a polysyllabic final word including a *σπονδειαζων*, unsurprisingly matching the similarly neoteric Catullus 64.36 *moenia Larisaea*;<sup>19</sup> the single example in the *Aetna* repeats the ending of Lucretius 1.1054, one didactic poet no doubt echoing another.

**(d) Lucan<sup>20</sup>**

*De Bello Civili*, 24 in 8060 lines = 1:336

1.284 <i>proelia pauca</i>	7.689 <i>proelia dira</i>
1.671 <i>tempora multa</i>	8.352 <i>vulnera nostra</i>
3.101 <i>omina festa</i>	8.386 <i>proelia prima</i>
4.98 <i>flumina cuncta</i>	8.433 <i>funera nostra</i>
4.155 <i>agmina summa</i>	8.437 <i>nomina tanta</i>
4.192 <i>saecula nostra</i>	8.556 <i>viscera nostra</i>
4.543 <i>vulnera nostra</i>	8.837 <i>saecula prima</i>
5.473 <i>pignora tanta</i>	9.397 <i>pericula vestra</i>
6.782 <i>Tartara maesta</i>	9.495 <i>sidera tota</i>
7.376 <i>pignora tanta</i>	9.779 <i>natura profana</i>
7.687 <i>tempora laeta</i>	9.985 <i>Pharsalia nostra</i>
	10.389 <i>nomina tanta</i>

<sup>18</sup> Grattius is cited from the text of P. J. Enk (Zutphen/London, 1918), Columella 10 from that of V. Lundström (*Upsala*, 1902), Persius from the OCT of W. V. Clausen, the *Culex* (ed. W. V. Clausen), the *Ciris* (ed. F. R. D. Goodyear), and the *Aetna* (ed. F. R. D. Goodyear) from the OCT Appendix Vergiliana (1966).

<sup>19</sup> On the neoteric style and metrical practices of the *Ciris* cf. R. O. A. M. Lyne, *Ciris* (Cambridge, 1978), pp. 15–32.

<sup>20</sup> Cited from the edition of A. E. Housman (Oxford, 1926).

Lucan's figures are rather higher than those for the *Aeneid*. This must be connected with this poet's general stylistic stance, which is to introduce a 'lower' and more 'realistic' type of vocabulary into the Vergilian-type epic:<sup>21</sup> a (mildly) less refined vocabulary is matched by a (mildly) less refined metrical practice, and both are deliberate authorial choices. Lucan does not echo exactly any of the endings of predecessors such as Lucretius and Vergil, and the kind of nouns which appear in his endings very much reflect the content of his poem – *proelia, vulnera, funera, viscera, agmina*. Here Lucan, as in so many other ways in his handling of the epic tradition, shows a noted independence. Like Manilius, he is quite happy to have two of these rarish endings in close proximity, though not with exactly the same words – cf. 7.687 and 689, 8.433 and 437.

### (e) The Flavian Epic Poets<sup>22</sup>

Statius, *Thebaid*, 5 in 9742 lines = 1:1948

5.253 <i>fragmina trunca</i>	8.604 <i>pignora tanta</i>
5.847 <i>crimina nulla</i>	11.479 <i>pignora tanta</i>
8.44 <i>otia maesta</i>	

Valerius, Flaccus, *Argonautica*, 2 in 5605 lines = 1:2803

3.644 <i>pectora tanta</i>	4.649 <i>promissa superba</i>
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Silius Italicus, *Punica*, 26 in 12263 lines = 1:472

2.294 <i>moenia nostra</i>	11.52 <i>spectacula dira</i>
3.81 <i>cunabula nostra</i>	11.236 <i>munera tanta</i>
4.810 <i>praemia digna</i>	11.238 <i>femina nulla</i>
5.372 <i>medicamina nulla</i>	11.254 <i>primordia tanta</i>
7.202 <i>praemia digna</i>	11.265 <i>Capitolia celsa</i>
7.454 <i>victoria nostra</i>	11.570 <i>praesagia nostra</i>
7.539 <i>suffragia caeca</i>	12.205 <i>gloria summa</i>
8.255 <i>suffragia caeca</i>	13.367 <i>piacula prima</i>
8.300 <i>proelia dira</i>	14.148 <i>proelia tanta</i>
9.200 <i>saecula longa</i>	16.132 <i>certamina prima</i>
10.353 <i>tentoria prima</i>	16.376 <i>ungula prima</i>
10.436 <i>numina vestra</i>	16.531 <i>spectacula digna</i>
	17.461 <i>foedera nostra</i>
	17.497 <i>fiducia tanta</i>

These poets are conveniently taken together, writing similar kinds of mythological epic in the same generation. Statius and Valerius exhibit similar figures: here there is a clear move away from Lucan and Vergil and back to the Ovidian strategy of almost complete avoidance. Two of Statius' five instances in the *Thebaid* show *pignora tanta*, already found in Lucan (7.376), and it may be that others are imitations of lost texts: the phenomenon is not one which Statius himself strives to achieve. Silius, on the other hand, returns a figure not far different from that of Lucan or the *Aeneid*, consonant with other stylistic data but very different from his two contemporaries.<sup>23</sup>

<sup>21</sup> Cf. J. C. Bramble in the *Cambridge History of Classical Literature II: Latin Literature*, ed. E. J. Kenney and W. V. Clausen (Cambridge, 1982), pp. 541–2.

<sup>22</sup> Statius, *Thebaid* is cited from the text of D. E. Hill [Mnem. Suppl. 78] (Leiden, 1983), Valerius Flaccus from the Teubner ed. of W.-W. Ehlers (Stuttgart, 1980), and Silius from the Teubner of J. Delz (Stuttgart, 1987).

<sup>23</sup> In the proportion of dactyls to spondees and of fourth-foot homodyne to heterodyne, Silius and Lucan show Vergilian practice, Statius and Valerius Ovidian – cf. G. Duckworth, *TAPA* 98 (1967), 142.

Indeed, Lucan and (above all) Vergil are his models, confirmed by the fact that one of Lucan's endings and one of Vergil's reappear in Silius (*Pun.* 8.300 *proelia dira* = *De Bello Civili* 7.689, *Pun.* 2.294 *moenia nostra* = *Aen.* 4.96). Like Lucan, Silius is happy to have two such endings in close proximity (cf. 11.236 and 238). Here then is a clear indication from a group of similar poets that in the post-Augustan period our phenomenon ceases to decrease in frequency over time and becomes a matter of individual poetic choice.

#### (f) Juvenal<sup>24</sup>

*Satires*, 8 in 3871 lines = 1:484

6.151 <i>ergastula tanta</i>	8.101 <i>conchyliā Coa</i>
6.498 <i>sententia prima</i>	10.101 <i>vasa minora</i>
8.56 <i>animalia muta</i>	14.16 <i>corpora nostra</i>
8.64 <i>gratia nulla</i>	14.220 <i>limina vestra</i>

Juvenal shows a frequency of Vergilian or Horatian proportions, and this is not surprising, for both are models, Horace of course in terms of the satiric genre,<sup>25</sup> and Vergil in terms of diction in Juvenal's grander form of *sermo*.<sup>26</sup> In detail, *Sat.* 8.101 *conchyliā Coa* clearly recalls Horace, *Sat.* 2.8.9 *faecula Coa*, echoing the rare position of the proper adjective at line-end, while *Sat.* 14.16 *corpora nostra* is an ending from Lucretius (2.874). Note that Juvenal seems to differ in use of our phenomenon from his fellow-satirist Persius (above), though the short text of the latter makes statistical comparison unreliable.

#### (g) Claudian<sup>27</sup>

Claudian, long hexameter works, 3 in 7717 lines = 1:2572

<i>In Ruf.</i> 2.235	<i>discordia nostra</i>
<i>In Gild.</i> 93	<i>funera tanta</i>
<i>Cons. Stil.</i> 1.368	<i>victoria nulla</i>

Claudian, the last great poet of antiquity, clearly falls into the Ovidian frequency-band rather than the Vergilian, which is appropriate, for he is more like Ovid than Vergil in style, poetic interests and compositional facility.<sup>28</sup>

#### (iv) Overall Frequency of Adjectives

In conclusion to this section on classical usage I give a table of the adjectives used more than once in the 'Discordia taetra' line-ending in the texts listed above. Apart from indicating frequencies, this table will also enable those interested in pursuing Winbolt's distinction between emphatic and non-emphatic adjectives to make some

<sup>24</sup> Cited from the *OCT* of W. V. Clausen (1959).

<sup>25</sup> As implicitly stated by Juvenal in his first and programmatic satire (1.51).

<sup>26</sup> On Vergilian diction in Juvenal cf. J. Gehlen, *De Juvenale Vergilii Imitatore* (Göttingen, 1886) and Richard Jenkyns, *Three Classical Poets* (London, 1982), pp. 160–8.

<sup>27</sup> Cited from the Teubner ed. of J. B. Hall (Leipzig, 1985). By 'long hexameter works' is meant those numbered 1, 3, 5, 7, 8, 10, 15, 17, 18, 20, 21, 22, 24, 26 and 28 in Hall's edition, plus the three books of the *De Raptu*.

<sup>28</sup> Cf. A. H. Eaton, *The Influence of Ovid on Claudian* (Washington, D.C., 1943).

attempt to do so, though the project is not an easy one and the criterion for 'emphasis' is far from clear. Adjectives are listed in descending order of frequency.

- 23: **nostra** (Lucretius × 3, Catullus, Vergil × 5, Ovid, Manilius, *Aetna*, Lucan × 6, Silius × 6, Juvenal, Claudian)  
 22: **prima** (Lucilius, Lucretius × 9, Vergil × 3, Horace, Germanicus, Calpurnius, Lucan × 2, Silius × 3, Juvenal)  
 21: **tanta** (Lucretius × 4, Vergil × 3, Manilius × 2, Lucan × 3, Statius × 2, Valerius Flaccus, Silius × 4, Juvenal, Claudian)  
 12: **laeta** (Lucretius × 8, Vergil, Horace, Manilius, Lucan)  
 10: **cuncta** (Lucretius, Ovid, Manilius × 6, Germanicus, Lucan)  
 7: **summa** (Lucilius, Vergil, Manilius × 2, Germanicus, Lucan, Silius)  
 6: **nulla** (Germanicus, Statius, Silius × 2, Juvenal, Claudian)  
 6: **caeca** (Lucretius × 4, Silius × 2)  
 5: **vestra** (Vergil × 2, Germanicus, Lucan, Juvenal)  
 4: **parva** (Lucretius × 2, Vergil, Germanicus), **superba** (Lucretius, Vergil × 2, Valerius Flaccus), **sancta** (Ennius, Lucretius × 3), **multa** (Lucretius × 3, Lucan).  
 3: **taetra** (Ennius, Lucretius × 2), **tota** (Ennius, Horace, Lucan), **certa** (Lucretius × 3), **priora** (Lucretius × 2, Manilius), **saeva** (Lucretius, Vergil × 2), **dira** (Lucan, Silius × 2), **digna** (Valerius Flaccus, Silius × 3).  
 2: **dia** (Lucretius, Lucilius), **viva** (Lucretius × 2), **lata** (Lucretius, Vergil), **bina** (Lucretius, Germanicus), **secunda** (Vergil, *Culex*), **plura** (Horace, Manilius), **Coa** (Horace, Juvenal), **Graeca** (Horace × 2), **prisca** (Manilius × 2), **quanta** (Manilius × 2), **laeva** (Germanicus, Manilius), **sinistra** (Germanicus × 2)

The remaining 30 adjectives all occur once each: **firma** (Ennius), **omnia**, **magna** (Lucilius), **serena**, **decora**, **sola**, **curta**, **vetusta**, **superna** (Lucretius), **Larisaea** (Catullus), **sicca**, **cruenta**, **nigra** (Vergil), **ducenta**, **vana**, **Pythagorea** (Horace), **Caeretea** (*Ciris*), **diurna**, **quaterna** (Manilius), **quieta** (Germanicus), **pauca**, **fasta**, **profana** (Lucan), **trunca**, **maesta** (Statius), **sacra**, **longa**, **celsa** (Silius), **muta**, **minora** (Juvenal).

Two conclusions may be drawn from this list. First, it is clear that around half the adjectives given above are liable to be used in more than one 'Discordia taetra' ending, whether in the same author or another. Second, those occurring ten times or more, i.e. the five most frequent adjectives, account for just over 40% of all cases: thus a few adjectives do a disproportionate amount of the work. Four of these most frequent five are also found in such endings in Vergil, suggesting the central importance of the *Aeneid* and its position on the school syllabus in passing the phenomenon on to later authors. Thus in employing our type of ending poets tend to use the adjectives that they have seen in similar positions in previous poets, especially the poets they have had particular cause to read or study.

### 3. *Medieval and Renaissance Latin*<sup>29</sup>

I have here assembled bare figures for some Latin hexameter texts of the Middle Ages and early Renaissance, for the sake of contrast and comparison with classical texts.

Aldhelm, <i>De Virginitate</i>	41 in 2904 lines = 1:71
Walafridh Strabo, <i>Visio Vettini</i>	0 in 945 lines = 1:0
<i>Vita Sancti Galli Confessoris</i>	28 in 1806 lines = 1:65
<i>Waltharius</i>	3 in 1455 lines = 1:485
<i>Ruodlieb</i>	11 in 2212 lines = 1:201
Walter of Châtillon, <i>Alexandreis</i>	3 in 5406 lines = 1:1802
Petrarch, <i>Africa</i>	21 in 6723 lines = 1:320

<sup>29</sup> Cited as follows: Aldhelm from R. Ehwald, *Aldhelmi Opera* (Berlin, 1919), Walafridh and the *Vita Sancti Galli* from B. Dümmler, *Poetae Latini Aevi Carolini* II (Berlin, 1884), *Waltharius* from the ed. of K. Strecker (Berlin, 1947), *Ruodlieb* from the ed. of C. W. Grocock (Warminster, 1985), Walter of Châtillon from M. L. Colker, *Galteri de Castellione Alexandreis* (Padua, 1978), and Petrarch from the ed. of the *Africa* by N. Festa (Florence, 1926).

Aldhelm, struggling with the hexameter at the beginning of the Latin Middle Ages (seventh century),<sup>30</sup> unsurprisingly shows a very high frequency of our phenomenon, comparable with that for the *Aratea* of Germanicus. Walafridh Strabo, one of the most able of Carolingian poets, writing over a century later in an age of revived learning,<sup>31</sup> shows much greater avoidance of the phenomenon; that this is due to his personal taste and talent may be seen from the very different figure, close to that of Aldhelm, for the *Vita Sancti Galli Confessoris*, a text contemporary with Walafridh and wrongly ascribed to him in some sources.<sup>32</sup> *Waltharius*, probably dating from the tenth century, shows a Vergilian proportion, reflecting the quality of a text which is one of the more classically-influenced of Medieval Latin hexameter poems;<sup>33</sup> conversely, the figure for *Ruodlieb* (eleventh century) reflects its author's comparatively humble skills.<sup>34</sup> Walter of Châtillon, a fine poet in the twelfth century, a great age of poetry and learning in Latin, shows an Ovidian proportion in the *Alexandreis*, not surprising since this epic is particularly indebted to the *Metamorphoses*;<sup>35</sup> conversely, Petrarch's *Africa*, from the fourteenth century, shows a figure comparable to that for Lucan and not far off that for the *Aeneid*, his two main models.<sup>36</sup>

#### 4. Conclusions

Thus in the Middle Ages and early Renaissance we can see confirmed three features which emerged earlier in considering classical poets, both Greek and Roman. The frequency of our phenomenon initially decreases from a high rate of occurrence in archaic practice, but is subject to considerable fluctuation over time once versification has reached a generally sophisticated level. It then varies even between contemporary poets and indicates literary models and loyalties, though it will still in some cases of very high frequency reflect the difficulties of a writer in using the hexameter as a means of poetic expression. Thus the 'Discordia taetra' phenomenon is not merely another relatively meaningless set of statistics about the hexameter: it identifies a feature which was clearly felt by poets writing in Latin, which can be found to fit with other aspects of their style and poetic personality, and which can tell us something of the literary as well as the technical history of the Latin hexameter.

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<sup>30</sup> On Aldhelm's technical difficulties in writing hexameters see M. Lapidge and J. L. Rosier, *Aldhelm: The Poetic Works* (Cambridge, 1985), pp. 19–24.

<sup>31</sup> On Walafridh's considerable talents cf. e.g. P. Godman, *Poetry of the Carolingian Renaissance* (London, 1985), pp. 34–9.

<sup>32</sup> For the erroneous ascription to Walafridh, on whose prose life of St. Gall it is based, cf. Dümmler, op. cit. (n. 29), p. 266.

<sup>33</sup> Cf. the *index fontium* of Strecker's edition (cf. n. 29), pp. 122–51. It is possible that *Waltharius* should be dated to the ninth century rather than the tenth – cf. the views discussed by Godman, op. cit. (n. 31), pp. 72–8.

<sup>34</sup> On the prosody of *Ruodlieb* cf. C. W. Grocock, op. cit. (n. 29), p. 23.

<sup>35</sup> Cf. the *apparatus fontium* in M. L. Colker, op. cit. (n. 29).

<sup>36</sup> For the predominantly Vergilian style of the *Africa* and its borrowings from Lucan see the comprehensive *apparatus fontium* compiled for *Africa* 1.1–300 by F. Friedersdorf in *Jahresbericht des Stadtgymnasium zu Halle A.S. 1899*, 21–41.