

the early history of Rome as 'tantum operis' (3.3.4)? This was precisely the phrase with which Livy, invoking the practice of poets, concluded his preface before embarking on his history of early Rome (13 '... si, ut poetis, nobis quoque mos esset, libentius inciperemus, ut orsis *tantum operis* successus prosperos darent').<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> G. G. Ramsay describes *tantum operis* as 'a common phrase' but quotes no parallels (*Selections from Tibullus and Propertius* [Oxford, 1900], 271); J. P. Postgate quotes Plaut. *Men.* 435 and Liv. *praef.* 13 (*Select Elegies of Propertius*<sup>2</sup> [London, 1884], p. 153), the latter repeated by M. Rothstein (*Propertius Sextus: Elegien*<sup>3</sup> [repr. Dublin and Zurich, 1966]) and Fedeli (n. 1 above) *ad loc.* In addition to Prop. 3.11.70, which some commentators also quote, the phrase is revealed by an electronic search to recur elsewhere in pre-Propertian literature only at Cic. *II Verr.* 1.147, where *tantum* is correlative with *quantum*.

#### A NOTE ON VIRGIL, *AENEID* 5.315–19

Haec ubi dicta, locum capiunt, signoque repente  
corripiunt spatia audito limenque relinquunt,  
effusi nimbo similes. simul ultima signant,  
primus abit longeque ante omnia corpora Nisus  
emicat et ventis et fulminis ocior alis.

The meaning of the expression *simul ultima signant* in Virgil's description of the foot race in the memorial funeral games for Anchises has been controversial since ancient times. The interpretation implied by R. A. B. Mynors's Oxford text printed above is that the word *simul* in line 317 is a conjunction and that the expression refers to the final section of the race. The sense presumably is: 'As soon as they trod the last stretch' Nisus came out in front, whereas previously the runners had all been in a bunch, pouring forth like a storm cloud from the start. This interpretation, which requires a full stop in the middle of line 317, was proposed by F. H. Sandbach<sup>1</sup> in response to problems generally acknowledged in the line as traditionally punctuated, that is, with a lighter pause after *similes* and a full stop at the end of the line—as, for example, in F. A. Hirzel's Oxford text: *effusi nimbo similes: simul ultima signant*. With this punctuation the last three words of the line have been taken to mean either that the runners fix their eyes on the finish, which gives a meaning to the verb which is difficult in the absence of any reference to the eyes, or that other people apart from the runners mark out the finishing line, which gives unexceptional sense to the verb but an implausible timing to the operation: it is odd indeed to leave the marking of the finish until after the race has started. These and other suggestions are discussed by Sandbach and R. D. Williams,<sup>2</sup> who believe that they are untenable.

While it seems to me that the criticism is correct, I think that the alternative

<sup>1</sup> F. H. Sandbach, *CR* 7 (1957), 102–3.

<sup>2</sup> R. D. Williams *P. Vergili Maronis AENEIDOS liber quintus* (Oxford, 1960), pp. 105–8. Williams supports Sandbach but prefers to take *simul ultima signant* as meaning 'As soon as they came in sight of the finish', referring to *A.* 2.423 (*ora sono discordia signant*) for *signare* in the sense of *discernere*. So also in his *The Aeneid of Virgil* i.419. But the reference to sound (*sono*) is important and there is nothing to correspond in 5.317; if Williams's translation is acceptable, it is hard to see why he objects to the traditional 'they fix their eyes on the goal'. For this reason I treat Sandbach's translation as the proper interpretation of the text as he punctuates it.

proposed is not satisfactory, above all because this interpretation of *simul ultima signant* requires an immediate shift to the later stages of the race in the same line as that in which its start is being described. It is true that striking incidents happen in races in ancient poetry only towards the end of the race, but some description at least is given to the earlier part, and without it the transition seems intolerably abrupt. The words *corripiunt spatia*, locked as they are between *signo* and *audito*, and followed by *limen relinquunt*, can hardly refer to anything more than the explosive speed with which the race starts, and not to the progress of at least half of the race. Virgil undoubtedly used as a model the funeral games of Patroclus in Book 23 of the *Iliad*, and in both the chariot race and the foot race there the first parts, though unimportant, are given eleven lines (362–72) and nine and a half lines (758–67) respectively.<sup>3</sup> Moreover, the sense given to the word *simul* seems inappropriate to the context. Why should Nisus' move away from the rest be specified as taking place 'as soon as they begin to trample the last stretch' (Sandbach)? Similar expressions occur in the Homeric competitions. In the chariot race, when the competitors were completing the final stage (ὅτε δὲ πύματον τέλεον δρόμον) back to the sea, then the skill of the drivers became apparent and at once (ἄφαρ) the horses ran at full stretch; then (ἔπειτα) the team of Eumelus quickly got in front . . . (*Iliad* 23.373–6). Likewise in Homer's foot race: they ran at full stretch from the start (ἀπὸ νύσσης),<sup>4</sup> then (ἔπειτα) Aias quickly got in front; but when they were completing the final stage (ὅτε δὲ πύματον τέλεον δρόμον) at once (αὐτίκα) Odysseus prayed . . . (*Iliad* 23.758–68). The pattern of Virgil's race is similar in that the major interest is directed towards the final stage: they were close to the end (*fere spatio extremo . . . sub ipsam finem*) when Nisus fell (*A.* 5.327–9), so certainly it could be argued that the words *simul ultima signant* might derive from Homer's πύματον δρόμον, ἄφαρ, and αὐτίκα. However, it should be noted that the idea of immediacy occurs in Virgil not in the adverbs accompanying the main verbs but in the conjunction introducing the temporal clause. Now, while it is reasonable to say 'When they were completing the final stage, all at once . . .', it is less natural to say 'As soon as they trod the last stretch', for the immediacy now applies to the start of the context within which the interesting event occurs and not to the object of interest itself. When in addition to this one wonders why the verb 'marked' (*signant*) has been selected to indicate this stage of the race, as if the footprints were a relevant factor to be taken into account, it looks as if the

<sup>3</sup> For comparable care in recording the earlier sections of a race see Stat. *Theb.* 6.405–68 and 593–615; Sil. It. 16.317–75 and 482–7; Quint. Smyrn. 4.194–8, 512–24, and 530–62. One case where the early stages are not mentioned is *Theb.* 4.638–41, but this brevity is a rerun in which no incidents of any sort occur.

<sup>4</sup> νύσσα is ambiguous and is used at *Od.* 8.121 to indicate the start and at *Il.* 23.332 and 338 the turning post. Williams (p. 108 n. 2) suggests that *Il.* 23.758 (τοῖσι δ' ἀπὸ νύσσης τέτατο δρόμος), the first description of any part of the foot race, may have been understood by Virgil to mean: 'They went full out once they had passed the turning point'. It is always possible that Virgil so took it, but the interpretation seems to me to be entirely unlikely, in that it would leave the Homeric race without even a *start* ('they stood in line and Achilles indicated the finish/turn; once they had passed the turning point . . .'). Support for the more obvious interpretation may be found in Quintus Smyrnaeus, whose foot race at 4.1 85ff. is closely dependent on Homer: the two contestants come forward, τοῖσι δὲ σημαίνεσκε δρόμον τέλος ὠκυτάτου Ἀτρείδης (193) . . . Eris urges them . . . οἱ δ' ἀπὸ νύσσης καρπαλίμως οἴμησαν . . . (195–6). It is clear that Quintus took τέματα as the end of the race and νύσσα as the starting line, and the latter word is indisputably understood likewise in the chariot race (4.507) and very probably so in the horse race (4.550–51).

words *simul* and *signant* are not quite at home for the job which the new interpretation wants them to do.

With the traditional text, however, leaving aside the disputed expression *simul ultima signant*, Nisus gets away from the crowd at the start; then the description of the position of subsequent runners subtly implies the progress of the race until, with the mention of the fifth runner, there is already a suggestion that the race is well advanced (*si plura supersint*, 325), and then we are ready for the dramatic event towards the very end (*iamque fere spatio extremo . . . sub ipsam finem*, 327–8). This seems perfect and is lost if *ultima* anticipates the indicators of progress. The description is similar to the start of the ship race at lines 151ff.: Gyas is the first to take the lead, then comes Cloanthus, then two ships, *Pristis* and *Centaurus*, vie with each other: *et nunc Pristis habet, nunc victam praeterit ingens Centaurus . . .* (156–7). The description of placing introduces a sense of the ship race as an ongoing process which leads the reader up to the halfway mark. It would be a pity to lose the similar effect in the foot race, and I can only ask the reader to compare the two races in Homer and Virgil's ship race with attention to the progress of the race in order to see how the procedure attributed to Virgil in the foot race is unsatisfactory. That may always be Virgil's fault, but then again, it could be a product of the new reading.

These considerations suggest that the difficulties of the passage are not yet solved and that there is room for further discussion. It could be that the unfinished state of the text at Virgil's death has left us with a passage that never was complete, and that the traditional form, unsatisfactory as it is, represents the best his first editors could do with it. It was long ago noted by Heyne<sup>5</sup> that *simul ultima signant* may have been suggested to Virgil by Homer's *σήμηνε δὲ τέρματ' Ἀχιλλεύς*. The likeness is so strong that I think it should be a central feature of interpretation of our passage, and almost in itself constitutes a considerable argument against Sandbach. It is, however, the whole line of Homer which is relevant, not just the one expression, for this line occurs at the beginning of both the chariot race and the foot race (*Il.* 23.358, 757): *στὰν δὲ μεταστοιχί, σήμηνε δὲ τέρματ' Ἀχιλλεύς*. In both races a general pattern is visible: prizes are announced, an invitation is issued, competitors are named, they assemble in line, Achilles points out the *τέρματα* and the race begins. It should be noted that in this sequence the lining up for the start and the pointing out of the *τέρματα* occur in the same verse. If *simul ultima signant* does reflect Homer, the natural place for it to occur is after *locum capiunt*, linking the two actions as in Homer. It is therefore very tempting to think that Virgil may have had a similar verse, and that 315 originally ran: *haec ubi dicta, locum capiunt, simul ultima signat*, the last words meaning 'at the same time he designated the finishing line'. It is true that there is no explicit mention of Aeneas to match that of Achilles, but if Virgil mentally supplied *dedit* after *dicta*, the omission of the name generates no confusion, for Aeneas has just finished the speech to which *haec ubi dicta* (*dedit*) refers. In Homer the address by Achilles precedes the description of the entrants, so that Achilles needs to be named again when the narrative reaches the time for him to point out the finish, but Virgil has his competitors listed before Aeneas' address, which leads directly into the verse under consideration.

If the line appeared as I have suggested, and the passage were left incomplete at the poet's death, Varius and Tucca may have been confronted with something like this:

<sup>5</sup> C. G. Heyne, *P. Virgilius Maro* 4ii, ed. G. P. E. Wagner (London, 1832), p. 768.

haec ubi dicta, locum capiunt, simul ultima signat.	315
signoque repente	
corripiunt spatia audito limenque relinquunt	316
effusi nimbo similes.	317
primus abit . . .	

In such circumstances it might well appear as if line 315 had alternative endings, when a simple way to tidy the text would be to remove *simul ultima signat* to the end of verse 317 and close up the gaps by treating *signoque repente* as the true end of verse 315, while maybe at a later date *signat* would be changed to *signant* to suit the plural subject by someone who understood it to mean, perhaps, that the runners kept their eyes on the finish. It would also be possible to explain the traditional reading by a mechanical error, a scribe's eye moving down to *signo* instead of *simul*, with the consequent omission of *simul ultima signat*, which would before Servius' time have found its way via the margin back into the text at the obvious but incorrect place at the end of verse 317, to which it would be adapted by a change of number in the verb. This last stage is mere speculation, but at least one can see how the manuscript order might have arisen if, as the Homeric parallels strongly suggest, Virgil did actually write line 315 as above, in a section of text which is additionally marked by the presence of two unfinished lines (294 and 322) as one on which more work still needed to be done at his death.

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#### DIONYSIUS OF HALICARNASSUS, *ANTIQUITATES ROMANAE* 2.30 AND HERODOTUS 1.146\*

In this well-known passage of his *Antiquitates Romanae*, Dionysius of Halicarnassus describes how Romulus and his companions seized and married the Sabine virgins. Romulus justifies his actions by stating that this method of acquiring wives was a Greek custom:

τῇ δ' ἐξῆς ἡμέρα προαχθεισῶν τῶν παρθένων, παραμυθησάμενος αὐτῶν τὴν ἀθυμίαν ὁ Ῥωμύλος, ὡς οὐκ ἐφ' ὕβρει τῆς ἀρπαγῆς ἀλλ' ἐπὶ γάμῳ γενομένης, Ἑλληνικόν τε καὶ ἀρχαῖον ἀποφαίνων τὸ ἔθος καὶ τρόπον συμπάντων καθ' οὓς συνάπτονται γάμοι ταῖς γυναιξὶν ἐπιφανέστατον. (2.30.5)

Dionysius' report of a Greek tradition adopted by Romulus is rather enigmatic. It has previously been noted that this passage bears similarity to passages of Plutarch and in particular his description of the Spartan marriage ceremony.<sup>1</sup> This Spartan marriage ceremony does bear some relation to the situation being described by

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<sup>1</sup> In his Loeb edition Cary suggests it may be a marriage practice similar to the Spartan marriage ceremony described by Plutarch (*Lycurgus* 15.3–5) which is being referred to here (p. 401, n. 1). Cary's translation is based on that of Spelman, whose commentary also discusses similarities between this passage and wedding ceremonies described by Plutarch (Cary, pp. 45–6; E. Spelman, *The Roman Antiquities of Dionysius Halicarnassensis* [London, 1758], pp. 277–80, n. 61). It is interesting to note that Dionysius compares the Sabines to the Spartans in *Ant. Rom.* 2.49.5 in respect of their liking for war and austere culture, and this may have led Spelman to connect Dionysius' *Antiquitates Romanae* 2.30 with the Spartan marriage ceremony of Plutarch's *Lycurgus* 15.